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The Nature and Meaning of Broadcasting Policy in the United Kingdom : 1945-1974

TIM JUSTIN ROBINSON

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of
the requirements of the Ph.D. degree.
The City University, London.
Department of Social Science
and Humanities.

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Contents

	Page
Table of Contents	2
List of Figures	7
List of Tables	7
Acknowledgements	8
Abstract	10
Abbreviations	11
Chapter One : Introduction : A Methodology of Policy Research	12
I : Origins	12
II : Methods in Theory	14
III : Methods in Action	35
1 : The Interviews	35
2 : Documentary Evidence	39
Chapter Two : The Meaning of Broadcast Policies	43
I : Introduction : Broadcasting, politics and policy-making	43
II : Ten Theories in Search of Reality	58
1 : Introduction	58
2 : Official Accounts	58
3 : Professional Mystique	60
4 : Political Parties	62
5 : History is the propaganda of the winners	64
6 : Them and Us : political science and broadcasting policy	67
7 : Enter Sociology : builder of repute	69
8 : Marxist theory : the distorting mirror	73
9 : Mass society (i) Popular culture and nihilism	74
(ii) Populist discussion : all's well...	75
10 : Other 'theories' : ad infinitum	76
11 : The End - or the beginning?	77
III : Some Landmarks in Broadcasting Policy	78
IV : Towards a Theoretical Resolution of Meaning	90
1 : Definitions and Determinants	90
2 : Legitimation and Consensus : ideologies of the Left	95
3 : Squaring the Circle : the social system and change	98
4 : Parsons' Social System	101

Page

V : Legitimation and the 'crisis' of capitalism 115

VI : Enter Politics : the Conservative Party and Broadcasting Policy 126

1 : Conservatism as a political philosophy 126

2 : Tories in opposition : reconstructing the Party 131

3 : The Party of Government 135

4 : The 'competition' policy and Selsdon Man 137

5 : Left Out : the Labour Party and broadcasting policy 139

VII : A Comparative Broadcasting Study 141

1 : Introduction 141

2 : France and the Politics of Broadcasting 144

3 : West Germany and the Politics of Broadcasting 152

4 : The European Model of Broadcasting Policy 162

5 : North America and Europe : Market place or the State? 169

6 : Preliminary Notes Towards a Trans-National Theory of Broadcasting Policy 174

Chapter Three : The Coming of Commercial Television 178

I : The Setting 178

II : Legitimation, Consensus, 'Commercialism' and Broadcasting, 1945-1954 184

III : Pushings and Pullings : the Wilson thesis 191

IV : The State, the Monopoly and the Labour Government 202

1 : Attitudes 202

2 : The Beveridge Committee and the Labour Government 213

V : The Broadcasters' Case 220

VI : The 'Government's' Case 233

1 : Preliminary Matters : agenda setting 233

2 : The Commercial Lobby 234

3 : The policy conceived 239

4 : The policy fought for 245

VII : The Policy Won 258

VIII : Conclusions : the aftermath 262

Page

Chapter Four : Complementary Broadcasting : the commercial radio policy 267

I : Why it happened 267

II : The social context 271

1 : Introduction 271

2 : Change in British society in the 1960s 272

3 : Youth culture 273

4 : Affluence 274

5 : The fragmentation of British society 275

6 : Technology 276

7 : Patterns of media use 277

III : The idea of local radio (i) - The BBC 277

1 : Radio frequencies : the BBC defence is found 277

2 : The way ahead : VHF broadcasting 282

3 : The BBC and Pilkington 285

4 : Labour and local radio : the BBC's reward 289

5 : Conclusion : the BBC 'view' of local radio 297

IV : The idea of local radio (ii) - Commercial interests 298

1 : Legal, semi-legal : rumblings in the air 298

2 : Hedging bets : the newspapers 301

3 : Pilkington : the judgements of pragmatism 303

4 : Radio Manx : the breakthrough 304

5 : The set-back : the 'Pirates' 306

6 : The onshore lobby (i) the Local Radio Association 310

7 : Moments of Truth : the Association and the Conservative Party 318

8 : The onshore lobby (ii) other interests 322

9 : The other lobby : those against commercial radio 324

V : Government, the State and the Parties in the 60s and 70s 326

a) The Conservatives

1 : Introduction 326

2 : The Conservative Party in opposition again 327

3 : The Conservative Party and the BBC 338

4 : The GLC Radio Bill 340

Page

VI : Government, the State and the Parties in the 60s and 70s 343

b) Labour

VII : Government, the State and the Parties in the 60s and 70s 349

c) 'Official Discourses'

VIII : The Final Legitimation of Duopoly : 1970-1973 359

1 : The Conservative Government and the debate on the White Paper 359

2 : The White Paper, March 1971 364

3 : The Commercial Radio Bill and the debate in Parliament, 1971-1972 367

4 : The Policy Principle 370

5 : The IBA and the ILR system 372

Chapter Five : The Determination of Broadcasting Policies: Notes towards definitions of meaning 377

I : Introductory remarks 377

II : The Substantive Determinants 383

1 : Government and the State 383

2 : The Committees of Enquiry 387

3 : The Political Parties 391

4 : Broadcasting Institutions 397

5 : Commercial broadcasting to Britain 399

6 : Technical equipment manufacturers 402

III : 'Effective' Determinants 403

7 : Other media (i) Newspapers 403
(ii) Cinema 404
(iii) Record industry 405

8 : Advertising agencies and miscellaneous interest groups 406

9 : Media trades unions 408

10 : Media 'professionals' 409

IV : Stochastic Determinants 411

11 : Inventions and Innovations 411

12 : Foreign broadcasting systems 413

13 : Social and economic change and the audience 415

V : Consensus in Society : Broadcasting Policy and Legitimation 417

Page

VI : Legitimation and Crises of the State 424

VII : Into the future 428

1 : The Annan Committee Report 428

2 : The Fourth Television Channel 431

3 : The New Technologies 433

4 : Hypotheses and a Research Programme 434

Bibliography 437

Appendix A : Question schedules for the Radio Case Study 460

Appendix B : Index of People Interviewed for Radio and Television Case Studies 470

Appendix C : A Short Note on Written Sources 474

List of Figures

	Page
Figure 1 : Parsons' 'First' Level : Highest Generality	101
Figure 2 : Parsons' First 'Grounded' Level	101
Figure 3 : Parsons' Second 'Grounded' Level	101
Figure 4 : The Political Interchanges	102
Figure 5 : The Detailed Pattern - Maintenance Sub-System at the Second 'Grounded' Level	105
Figure 6 : The Detailed Pattern - Maintenance Sub-System at the First 'Grounded' Level	107

List of Tables

Table 1 : A Chronology of Broadcasting and Politics : 1922-1977	88,89
Table 2 : Government, Party, Broadcasting : a comparative chart	177
Table 3 : Pirate Radio Stations : Profits and Losses	308
Table 4 : A Typology of Decision-Taking	378
Table 5 : Elements in the Formation of a Commercial Radio Policy	379

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[redacted]

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The Nature and Meaning of
Broadcasting Policy in the
United Kingdom : 1945-1974

Tim Justin Robinson

Abstract

Interviews of elite actors in broadcasting and politics, and study of documentary evidence, were undertaken to elucidate the details of post-war broadcasting policy. Particular and extended study was concentrated on major policy shifts, in this case the two extensions of commercial financing of broadcasting, first in television, second in local radio. Consideration was given to a full explanation of both these events in the context of the political, economic and social climate of the periods when the policies were under discussion, and being legislated.

An attempt has been made to develop those parts of the theoretical work of Talcott Parsons dealing with 'culture', and that of Karl Marx dealing with concepts of 'ideology', into a coherent framework for policy analysis. Resolution of the main problems encountered in this synthesis has been made through application of additional theoretical insight into legitimation and the modern State provided by Jurgen Habermas.

The theoretical postulates so constructed suggest that the meaning of major broadcasting policy has to lie outside the immediate concerns of broadcasters and other interest groups and is located within the political system. Foremost in this field are the main UK political parties, and the State

Broadcasting policy has remained a particular and continuing concern of the British Conservative Party because of its desire to identify and consolidate a contingent consensus in order to be able to retain political credibility and power during a time of growing State intervention.

Broadcasting helps to legitimate this contingent consensus, intermingling it with an absolute, value-expressive consensus. Broadcasting policy, expressed through growing commercialisation, is linked to economic and social motives, but at a political structural level enables ideological considerations to penetrate values to continue to inject new legitimation during a continuing crisis.

Future broadcasting policy should look at re-structuring the system, based on increased public access and more mixed finance, both recognitions of the links between broadcasting and social democracy, and the indivisibility of broadcasting from values.

Abbreviations used in the text

ABC	:	American Broadcasting Company (USA)
ARD	:	Arbeitsgemeinshaft der offentlich rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik (W. Germany)
BBC	:	British Broadcasting Corporation
CBS	:	Columbia Broadcasting System (Chapter Two) (USA)
CBC	:	Commercial Broadcasting Consultants (Chapter Four)
CDU	:	Christian Democrats (W. Germany)
DFS	:	Deutsches Fernsehen (W. Germany)
FCC	:	Federal Communications Commission (USA)
FM	:	Frequency Modulated
GPO/PO	:	British Post Office (subsequently Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications)
IBA	:	Independent Broadcasting Authority
ILR	:	Independent Local Radio
ITA	:	Independent Television Authority
ITV	:	Independent Television
LRA	:	Local Radio Association
NBC	:	National Broadcasting Company (USA)
ORTF	:	L'office de Radio-Télévision, Francaise (France)
PSB	:	Public Service Broadcasting (USA)
RTF	:	Radiodiffusion-Télévision, Francaise (France)
SDP	:	Social Democrats (W. Germany)
SL	:	Interministerial Liaison Committee (France)
VHF	:	Very High Frequency

Chapter One : Introduction
A Methodology of Policy Research

I : Origins

Although there has been immense interest in the broadcast media by academics over the past several decades (a time span more or less covered by the detail of this study), little has dealt directly with policy; almost none with a sociological interest in its meaning

It is with meaning that I am centrally engaged here: it will be demonstrated that with patience and some luck, the unravelling of single significant broadcast policies can be accomplished. Once unravelled there is sufficient detail to provide a good working explanation of what has happened, for example, in the arrival of commercial television and commercial radio (Chapters Three and Four).

Some authors (notably Anthony Smith, who, to be fair, I think would not describe himself as a sociologist, or even a political scientist) have ably left the issue here (again, Smith goes into more detail in his Shadow in the Cave, but does not look at structural issues outside broadcasting itself).

The key to the absence of literature on policy meanings may lie in the peculiarity of 'media sociology' - a field not a discipline: thus, it attracts branches of social science seeking to find explanation for meanings located elsewhere (deviancy theorists; marxists; the 'effects' researchers in one sense - looking at psychological meanings; role researchers; researchers of 'institutional' sociology, or of socialisation).

What I attempt here is to go beyond the use of broadcasting, its institutional position, and organisational structure, and, vitally, the construction of these, to seek meaning within the social system itself.

Not, what is broadcasting for, and thus at the often-called meta-level, what is broadcasting policy for; rather, how has the invention and innovation of broadcasting been used. Therefore, at the policy level, what forces have come together, or opposed, in order to create a climate in which broadcasting would develop according to the dictates of the sub-systems of the society at large.

I dislike using much of this terminology because it fails to bring

alive the dimension of broadcasting and society - or more accurately, broadcasting in society - which I think is the most important: history. Unless specific times are looked at, specific events, and these matched against the contemporary development in broadcasting, many singular elements in any efforts at theory building get left out.

The problem of meaning in broadcasting policy will arise again and again in these pages; put in context by the history of broadcasting since the war and the rise and fall in fortunes of the Conservative Party, so far the definer of broadcasting's particular reality.

Before this central theme can be properly developed I shall go on in this chapter to consider the methodological problems a researcher will encounter in trying to establish the sociological validity of the material available, both in interview and document. I conclude that documentary evidence has a crucial part to play because it is often (in this field) a part of the public record (although we shall see there are problems here with what has been called 'official discourse').

In Chapter Two I look first at the location of broadcasting within the political system. There is always a danger that a study of this kind, emphasising the definitions within which broadcasting structures will operate, forgets the more tenuous, but critical, cultural aspects of broadcasting in the sense, for example, of the BBC's contribution to classical music.

Nevertheless broadcasting is (has become) a vital part of the modern political system. I move on to look at the various contributions made by various disciplines to the study of broadcasting. Thence, via a short exposition on what I think are the landmarks in broadcasting's history to the central discussion of a possible theory of broadcasting policy. This involves some neo-Marxist theorising of ideology, elements of Talcott Parsons' four-function schema, and finally, the recent functionalist theories of Jurgen Habermas and Clause Offe.

I then turn to the means by which this theoretical mélange may be 'fitted' to the British political party system - and broad-

casting. To help test the theory I look at other European broadcasting systems, in France and West Germany, and at broadcasting in the USA.

Two empirical chapters follow, the first (Chapter Three) dealing in detail with the introduction of commercial television. This chapter is concerned with the principle of commercialism and of its relationship, partly accidentally, with competition (or more accurately, anti-monopoly).

Chapter Four deals with local commercial radio and the complex series of events in the 1960s which led, tortuously, towards the 'duopoly'. It examines the question of pressure groups and, like Chapter Three, concludes (in opposition to the prevailing view) that such pressure groups as exist in broadcasting do not exert much influence at the critical moments; they may, however crystallise issues for discussion and they can keep debate open when otherwise it might end.

Finally, in Chapter Five, I examine the determinants of broadcasting policy in the UK and I relate these to the theoretical postulates outlined in Chapter Two and to the questions of consensus and legitimation crisis. The question of that crisis, and any concrete manifestations of it, return us to definitions of social reality and to the issue of truth claims and the validity of the means of access to such claims: in short, in sociology, to methodology. Here, then, I begin.

II : Methods in Theory

> In social science there is a much greater risk that the prospector will set out in search of one thing and come back with something entirely different, which he has learned to regard as far more significant and important*

More than one academic, at least, has en passant likened the subject matter of this thesis - history and sociology - to poetry, (Bramson, L, 1974) an instructive 'metaphor' which dismisses the

---

*John Madge: The Tools of Social Science, Longmans, 1953.

'experimental' replication of the laboratory and the arid description of the traditional historian for elliptical imaginative forays into a vapourous 'reality'. The description of sociology is problem enough, let alone its imperfect practice; political sociology suffers further from the absence of agreement about the parameters defining its subject. In one respect this study exemplifies that problem.

The central concern of this thesis is the relationship between broadcasting, itself a means, and politics, specifically the use of broadcasting by the main political parties in advanced democracies to hold a ring of legitimacy against the encroachments of 'interventionist' tides of demand by the social system. It has been written at a time when a British Government is attempting to halt the interventionist surge - even to reverse it - but the period covered extends strictly speaking only from 1945 to 1974, some small discussion being allowed for the Annan Committee and its Report, (Annan, 1977), and the allocation of the fourth Channel.

To study the relationship between broadcasting and politics has meant looking at major disjunctures - two, principally - where governments have altered the shape of the system; it has meant, additionally, looking at the more routine enquiries, and the day-to-day links between the broadcasters and politicians.

Behind this empirical concern has lain an interest in constructing hypotheses directed at placing broadcasting within the social system and, more crucially, within the political structures of advanced democracies. It has taken a quasi-functionalist approach, tinged however with more abstract theories of ideology, to do this.

Some discussion of my methods is in order here because of the considerable philosophical problems I have encountered in relating the empirical data to the central theoretical (or hypothetical) concerns. I do not offer a generalisable set of propositions because this is untenable, given the nature of the social reality I seek to explore and explain.

The concentration on social structure has meant a prevalence in my thinking of issues discussed at length by Talcott Parsons within the framework of what might loosely be called 'the problem of order': what sustaining activities are necessary for the maintenance of social

structures in general. Rex, however, has pointed out the other alternate functionalist view of sociology as a concern with the maintenance of particular social relations, and the relationship between sociology and the study of culture

> Both sociology and the scientific study of culture . . . are concerned with the study of norms, but whereas the student of culture is primarily concerned with the relations between one set of norms and another, the sociologist is interested in the role played by these norms in the process of interaction
>
> (Rex, 1961; p.56;p.57)

Much of the discussion here will centre on the question of norms (values) and their reinforcement in an 'open' society; necessarily this leads to questions of motivation, to questions of power (and class), and to questions surrounding self-knowledge amongst those whose words and deeds constitute much of the empirical data available to this study.

Parsons is concerned with integration: the ways in which a society meshes together under voluntaristic rules; he tends to downplay conflict and the role of legitimation. That is, taking the latter concept (which nevertheless he uses) the coercive and ideological mechanisms which ensure a particular set of norms will prevail despite opposition, and against any structural absolute.

I deal with these points at length in my conclusions (Chapter Five). Here the main question is how a methodology may be constructed which allows for the requisite pragmatism. Such a method (or collection of methods) has to take account of the qualitative nature of the material and the requirements of a paradigm unencumbered by strict rationalist and demonstrably false (ie, ideological) 'meaning-frames'. As Giddens puts it 'sociology, unlike natural science, deals with a pre-interpreted world, where the creation and reproduction of meaning-frames is a very condition of that which it seeks to analyse, namely human social conduct' (Giddens, 1976, p.158). This creates a 'double hermeneutic' which I attempt to deal with below, specifically in the analysis of the interviews conducted during this study.

Broadcasting, as a system to study, particularly poses this additional problem, empirically, to the general study of institutions. It is, on the definitions used here, an arbiter of reality, a con-

structer of the very linguistic usages it is necessary, faut mieux, to use to describe it. To study the 'construction and the constructer', then, is my avowed purpose here. And because this involves definitions of what 'reality' is it is, potentially to study the situating and the site of myth. To write poetry, to be a poet here, is maybe no bad ideal.

Prosaically, the methodological, and related epistemological, necessities are not readily to hand. If the touchstone of the relationship between broadcasting and politics is the social mythology of consensus, as this work will argue, how to uncover its operation?

It is for these reasons that a strictly formal functionalist approach of the kind suggested by Merton simply will not do, not least because of Merton's separation of function and motive.

That this leads to a fissure in any investigation of consensus and legitimacy may be seen insofar as the function of consensus may be held (as it is by Marxists) to be the result of a particular set of partial and power-related motives: it is, in these terms, an adaptation, but a specific (and not necessarily vital) one. 'Functional requirements' suggests that functions do not vary independently, of motives in actual social systems: resorting to 'manifest and latent functions, as Merton does, clouds the issue in an empiricist fog.

Habermas has touched upon this issue when he suggests that 'If the object domain is conceived in such a way that not legitimate orders but only orders that are held to be legitimate can belong to it, then the connection between reasons and motives that exists in communicative action is screened out of the analysis' 'Habermas, 1979, p.200), (emphasis in original).

As I deal with legitimation in this way: that is, in looking at what Habermas describes as the 'performative attitude' of those involved in policy-making, this comment is a vital part of a refutation of the methodological validity of strict functionalism.

For Habermas a method has to engage with 'truth claims' and this involves an examination of motives, set against the imputed

functions of, in this case, particular forms of legitimation: 'With the help of which mechanisms can an adequate supply of legitimation be created or through which functional equivalents can missing legitimation be replaced?', he asks (my emphasis). This is the central issue dealt with here (and answered in Chapter Five).

My approach to this one question has been to examine those moments when considerable change occurs. But even here there is the question of the validity of source material. Myth remains so by not revealing its origins, by not lending itself to rationalist explanation. The alternative, hermeneutic method, may be faulted by its reliance of one interpretive mode, rather than another, a choice made arbitrarily.

I am arguing here for a 'creative' flowing method rather than any one definitive framework of approach: such a position also characterises the theoretical discussions of Chapter Two. For example:

> The idea of a method that contains firm, unchanging, and absolutely binding principles for conducting the business of science gets into considerable difficulty when confronted with the results of historical research (Feyerabend, 1970).

In similar vein Phillips writes that it is necessary for a clear understanding of the task of sociology to envisage a wider audience than academics: 'In presenting his arguments the writer depends not so much on correct method as on providing reasons for his judgements' (Phillips, 1973, p.177). Adorno argues that there is a danger in the substitution of good method for good content, a 'primacy of method over the subject-matter' (Adorno, 1976, p.242).

Methodology is inevitably bound up with questions about the nature of man, the method used ultimately has moral as well as conceptual implications (Stedman Jones, 1980); this may be compared with Habermas' concept of communicative competence. Social science has been dangerously reliant on the natural science paradigm (or paradigms, after Kuhn).* In the words of Friedrichs, who himself

---

*This question is excellently and adequately dealt with by Derek Phillips: Wittgenstein and Scientific Knowledge (Macmillan, 1977).

uses the Kuhnian paradigms as a starting point, sociology at present finds itself in a 'dialogical' epistemology.

> One side is a predisposition suitable to the concern for reliability evidenced by natural science; the other appropriate to the risk demanded by a sensitivity to the ground that is personal existence
>
> (Friedrichs, 1970, p.323)

More radical still, on this issue of personal commitment (and this implies, here, a relationship between the concrete scientific evidence available in specific policy-enactments alongside the private individual evidence in respondents, and their personal writing) I am assuming that a 'dialogic' relationship will exist between 'laws' (in the Durkheimian sense that they exhibit, in policy, the characteristics of social facts) and their progenitors in a 'structured' way which will necessarily reflect conditions of power, class (elite-mass relationships), and ideology (expressed as a particular consensus).

Thus with Phillips (1977) (see footnote on p.18),

> The conceptual scheme developed here is simply one alternative among others. Accordingly its legitimation is not a priori and absolute, but rather a posteriori. Its merit can only be determined by an open and democratic competition with rival schemes which also have the goal of organising our experiences ... Practice ... is the arbiter of theory.

What this introduction explores, therefore, is the extent to which my methods of approach are reliable, relative to the source material and, subsequently, to the theory. In order to understand the developments in the main thesis, we must look in some detail at the way in which the study began: the history of the changes of direction do help to explain the methodological and theoretical refinements and the uncovering of elements of source material critical to the final product. Needless to say, such a retrospective adds considerable gloss to the original patchwork progressions.

Originally the study was to concern itself with the meaning of media policy, in general. It was to examine the most obvious attempted interventions by government, beginning with those (UK) Royal Commissions on the Press, of 1949, 1960 and 1974. A part of

the early work consisted in an examination of the evidence, written and oral, submitted to these Commissions.

It would not be over-simplifying to suggest that the reason this was done related to a linear model of policy-making approximating to:

Identified problem -- Official Enquiry -- Evidence -- Report -- New Policy

This model is suggestive of a process, thus:

Examination of the evidence yields both identification - by those directly involved - of the problem(s); these pieces of evidence are then incorporated in the final Report; the Government acts. The meaning of policy may then be related to a consideration of why particular problems - for example, overmanning on Fleet Street newspapers, closures of newspapers - arise when they do. The Royal Commission Reports tend to view policy-making in this way, as do Broadcasting Committee Reports (see Ross, 1947; Shawcross, 1962; McGregor, 1977).

Examination of these Press Reports is not a good starting point to begin a study concerned with present relationships between media and government not least because this is not a policy-making field (see Tunstall, 1980). (There has to be a careful distinction here between the original direction of the research, media and government, and the final, broadcasting and politics). The importance of the Press, as part of the political support system, has declined both in response to the rise of broadcasting, and as part of the growing dependence on circulation and market segmentation a set of concerns that can be also considered commercialisation.

The importance of commercialisation as a movement in media history is another issue central to the thesis. But in the Press, because of the masking of its changed relationship with politics via the market, the intrinsic availability of space to produce and reproduce newspapers, a space not available to broadcasting, political intervention has been insufficient to establish empirical evidence for the hypotheses developed here with anything like the same force. (Hirsch and Gordon, 1975; Cleverley, 1976).

Again, this suggests the kind of limitations that need to be placed, at the outset, on conceptual frameworks. A theory of media

policy-making in general would undoubtedly fail in the banality of the generalities it would be forced to make, in order to cover all known cases. Broadcasting is qualitatively different from the Press: that recognition is intrinsic to policy-making and although the degree of recognition may vary from society to society, nevertheless is understood via technical as well as social investigation.

At the same time certain hypotheses are applicable to all mass media: the relationships of those media with urbanisation, democracy, and the division of labour (industrialisation). Each will bring different pressures to bear; all will tend to operate more or less independently at any one time. Another, related, hypothesis is that a new mass medium will tend to be located within the parameters established by a previous mass medium: radio is words (literature) broadcast rather than sent point-to-point but it is framed by telegraphy legislation; television is words with pictures, and so on.

But we might posit that one parameter of policy-making emerges, slowly, from a recognition that a new medium is not an extension of an old (or not necessarily so); at this point a tension arises between the integrative demands of the system and the potential innovative response to what, in the mass media, can be a legitimating extension.

An examination of the Royal Commission Reports is, by and large, an examination of a static system, merely reinforcing an existing mode. The initial work, then failed, partly because Press 'policies' exist largely by their absence through the invocation of the mythic 'freedom of the Press', a market shibboleth; partly the early study foundered or an insufficient theoretical base: a coherent discourse within which the study could be located.

The aridity of document searching without any deeper base changed to a harvest of fruitfulness when the study changed to a direct case study of a policy shift: the history of the policy for local commercial radio (ILR), culminating in the Independent Broadcasting Act, passed finally in 1973. To begin with there were no written sources obviously available; all the early work had to be conducted via interviews.

Two issues rapdily presented themselves. One, dealt with in detail below, concerned the status and validity of interview information. The second, more diffuse, relates to the nature of the policy-making process and the subsequent efforts of non-participants to comprehend it. Two banal, though illuminating, examples demonstrate the problem. Minutes, taken during a meeting will only reflect very imperfectly what happened not least because they tend to concern themselves more with decisions taken, than with the elements of the discussion which went into the decision-taking.

Second, it is possible to envisage the 'moment of decision', a point fixed in time when an alteration from State A to State B became a foregone conclusion. Sadly, such moments, often occurring in the minds of principals engaged in a decision-taking process, are rarely available for inspection, or validation. There will, in a complex process of change be many moments to discover and illuminate. In the case of the UK and central government decision-taking an additional difficulty is the immense secrecy surrounding even the trivial 'moments of decision', the difficulty of access to any official papers less than 30 years old and the suspicions of the 'Establishment', insofar as 'outsiders' are unwelcome observers of the of the body politic.

For this reason alone it has not proved fully possible to validate all my conclusions, although it may be said none are inconsistent with the available data. Understanding policy-making in the UK has to engage with theory for this reason: without a framework on which hypotheses can be tested, and against which empirical data can be matched and measured, a mere jumble of history results.

What is policy? This study takes it to mean that which is counted as being the existing - or planned - state of affairs; as much an <u>attitude</u> by the protagonists as a concrete reality. It can mean therefore, that a document does not have to exist stating a policy, for there to be a policy. But, sooner or later, such a document will be produced for posterity.

Lindblom (1968) suggests that policy-makers are not faced with a <u>given</u> problem; they have to identify and formulate their problem. This is a useful heuristic to apply to the understanding of broadcast policy.

First, it directs our attention to who defines policy. In the case of commercial radio it was - so far as the change goes - the Conservative Party; the same party which supported commercial television twenty years before. More importantly, Lindblom's conundrum directs attention at the problem. What, in broadcasting, could that be?

Inevitably, the process of arriving at the central problem is complex. In respect of commercial radio, as will be demonstrated, the initiating groups outside the political system had first to convince the major political party most ideologically disposed to help them. They were helped by the realities of power. Commercial radio was in part an electioneering slogan, albeit an insignificant one; more crucially it fitted an economic philosophy, just as commercial television had done earlier.

The key to what problem policy-makers within the Conservative Party faced was, then, the assimilation of a particular consensus - the ideological sale of which all broadcasting is capable of completing. Once that was established as a theoretical base from which to begin the data collected became more readily accessible to further analysis.

The procedure of information collection began with the interviewing of those identified as involved with efforts to change the law towards the licencing of commercial radio stations. All of the people eventually interviewed in this case study (42) may be characterised as belonging to one or another of several elites, categories and some theoretical exposition of which are given below in Chapter Two. Interviews lasted an hour on average. Several interviewees were seen twice (see Appendix B). In a number of cases some documents, mostly personal papers, were examined. The most important documentary sources were the complete set of papers of the Local Radio Association, various confidential papers of the Conservative Party and the Parliamentary debates on broadcasting in Hansard. Discussion of these and other papers (such as the Pilkington Report) follows below.

Before interviewing began a questionnaire was constructed (see Appendix A) based on pre-collected data surrounding the main issues of the introduction of commercial radio. This questionnaire

was inevitably an incomplete document (incidentally, changed considerably over the 42 interviewee settings) because I had to start with the assumption (borne out by the interview data) that it would be from the respondents themselves that a great deal of basic information would come.*

In a number of early cases of interview I maintained this attitude, concentrating as much as possible on the verification of events. This proved untenable: people's memories were simply not good enough. The result was a growing reliance on written data (access to which was often gained by interviewing); the interviews became events to be used for perceptual understanding of the interaction of elite individuals with each other, and for conceptual discussion as my theoretical work proceeded.

What marks off the radio case study from the television case study, is the extent to which the former relies upon the interview as one of the primary sources despite these remarks. This has profound implications. The method of order of interviewing depended on the so-called 'snow-ball' technique whereby those interviewed, beginning with a fairly arbitrary approach of name-picking and responses to letters, were asked to name others who, in their opinion, had played an important role in the formation and shaping of the policy. An advantage was that as events described were recent (not usually going back more than 15 years), memories at least for meetings and actors could be reasonably relied upon.

The interviews were not tape-recorded, written notes being the only method of recording. Although there may be held to be disadvantages - full transcripts not being possible, for example - the general result was a frank discussion of the issues. The interviews were oral evidence in the immediate absence of documents (which became more available as the interviewing proceeded); they provided valuable, if limited, understanding of the personalities involved and a means to judge the integrity of any subsequently discovered written evidence.

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*I relied considerably, in constructing my questionnaires on Merton, R; Fiske, M; Kendall, P: The Focussed Interview (Free Press, 1956).

There were perceptual problems related to the gap between academic concern and political, economic or social commitment. A number of those interviewed found it hard to understand the direction of the research (the growing stress on changes within the Conservative Party, for example when ostensibly it dealt with broadcast policy). Occasionally there were environmental problems, as when interviews had to be conducted in noisy or uncomfortable settings.

From a methodological point of view these incidental attributes are important. Benney and Hughes have pointed out that (in a related field) 'Anthropologists have long realised - if not always clearly - that the transitory interview held with respondents who do not share their view of the encounter is an unreliable source of information in itself' (Benney and Hughes, 1977).

In a more positive sense we might take Bourdieu's (1977) concept of habitus as a starting point of theoretical methodological access to elite interviewing. The habitus is 'the socially constituted system of cognitive and motivating structures, within which an individual, himself located within a social system, exists'. Such a concept enables a penetration beyond the 'rule', which as Weber suggests is only a secondary principle, to the determination of practices related to interests. The habitus is the 'durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations, the way ahead; it characterises in interview, the mode of access to the tribal elements inherent in the game-playing induced in social relations when change is involved; that is, in any social situation.'

Bourdieu argues that tribes (for which here we might legitimately substitute the word elites) constitute a series of practices whose 'orchestration is the production of a commonsense world endowed with the objectivity secured by consensus on the meaning of practices and the world, in other words, the harmonisation of agents' experiences and the continuous reinforcement that each of them receives from the expression, individual or collective, improvised or programmed, of similar or identical experiences.' The resulting problem for the non-participant is the over-coherence of the immediate picture.

To use a slightly different approach a community of interests - with its competing elites - can be looked at as a series of games, to

which an outsider is privy only to the extent he can interpret to the players the rules (read habitus) they operate within.* These games provide players with a set of goals (the implementation of a commercial radio policy) that give them a sense of success or failure.

Integrated within this system - and a part of the 'game' - is the maintenance of boundaries and 'walls'. A community may be held to exist within this system when a common goal (either pro- or anti-) is established (Heclo and Widalsky, 1974). An interviewer is confronted with a pre-existing 'village' of relationships into which he must penetrate. His requirement is that those interviewees he sees should dismantle the walls surrounding their decision-taking; the problem is that by so doing the respondents may expose themselves to others in the village long held at bay. For the interviewer the problem is he has no stake in the village - no wall to dismantle - or to construct.

To return to Bourdieu, the 'front' presented by interview may not help because any explanation proffered may simply relate 'strategies directly oriented towards the primary profit of practice'; these are 'almost always accompanied by second-order strategies whose purpose is to give apparent satisfaction to the demands of the official rule, and thus to compound the satisfactions of enlightened self-interest with the advantage of ethical impeccability'.

This would adequately describe some respondents' reasons for subscribing to the commercial radio policy and creates a serious epistemological problem. Fortunately, in the radio case study, time yielded valuable documentation which could be used as a check against the interviews. If only from the aspect of fallibility of memory this has proved necessary.

What use, then, have the interviews been? (and included here are the rather less number of interviews undertaken for the television case study). Given the outlined constraints on the validity of interviews the approach has been to try to get the interviewee to relate perceptions (to return to the village analogy, the game as played rather than the formal rules by which it is played). At least part of the contention of this study is that the rules - in broadcasting

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*For this following passage I am grateful to Norton Long's paper The Local Community as an Ecology of Games; American Journal of Sociology, Volume 64, 1958.

policy - are ultimately 'mythic' rather than real; a participant in the policy-making process might safely be assumed to get the rules wrong, or to relate them wrongly to the game itself; in short to take an over-pragmatic stance.

The radio case study was the beginning of a significant shift in the whole research project. It deflected attention away from the media in general and onto broadcasting specifically. The empirical data yielded information about the Conservative Party and its central role in policy-making; in turn that led to the construction of a theory dealing with both legitimation and consensus, and to the television case study. The latter may equally be looked at as an investigation into why the Conservative Party broke the monopoly of the BBC.

With the second case study a very different method is evident. Two reasons may be evinced. First by this stage the importance of documentary evidence was apparent; with the television case study more was available: in the Beveridge Committee Report and Evidence, in Hansard, in the Cabinet Minutes published, in numerous books of memoirs. Second, even had the same extent of interviewing as for the radio case study been deemed desirable a number of the principal actors were dead; several more were unable to recall much of their role; others felt, after such a long time, that there was little point in raking over an old controversy.

Unlike the radio case study the 'facts' surrounding the introduction of commercial television are largely extant and, by and large, agreed.

The critical moment concerns interpretation and here, once again, the mode of theorising becomes important. Because the issue split the Conservative Party, a decision was taken to concentrate on the reasons for that split; to look back at the recent history of the Party (from 1945) to determine whether the electoral defeat suffered by the Conservatives at the end of the war could be related to subsequent broadcasting policies. The theory surrounding legitimation can be brought to bear to induce interpretations of <u>power</u> and its meaning for the Conservative Party and the relationship of power to government and to the legitimising of power through popular election.

Eventually, upon completion of the television case study, this

meant a re-evaluation of the evidence and theorising surrounding the radio case study: principally, if the introduction of commercial television could, in part, be related to the Conservative Party and its internal changes, ideologically and structurally, could a similar change have onset a policy for commercial radio?

The result of the investigation into commercial television thus led back to a re-assessment of commercial radio and an effort to re-interpret the data. Partly, this involved re-interviewing. It also meant a documentary investigation into the Conservative Party of the late 1960s.

A final corollary was the need to examine the Labour Party - particularly in Government - to see how broadcasting policy operated (where at all) and whether the Labour Government's lack of policy-making in this area could not itself be related to questions of legitimation.

The documentary evidence available here - in records at the Conservative Party Research Department and in numerous files deposited at the University of Newcastle Library - hitherto not used in this way - lends itself directly to the concern of the Conservative Party after 1945 and after 1964 with rebuilding its image in order that it might govern again.

The epistemological gap and the concomitant methodological problem engendered thereby, is the translation of a set of unquestioned concerns about re-organisation, finance, electoral support, into a desire to see, at least, the ending of the broadcasting monopoly and the extension of the principle of commercial financing of broadcasting. In part this gap has been filled by recourse to interview and to the direct questioning of the link between the television policy and the re-organised Conservative Party. In part it has involved a hermeneutics, not fully grounded, but based on a reasonable assumption of the meaning of broadcasting relative to politics. A return, in short, to avowedly abstract theory.

The critical conjuncture between theory and method occurs, however,when a projection is made, to attempt to link the more diffuse radio policy to similar strands within the Conservative Party. There are, fortunately, linkages, documented in the concerns of those pro-commercial radio Conservatives who were anxious to prevent a

growing corporatism of government. This may be paralelled, in the case of television, by fears of growing monolithic centralism. In both cases a Labour Government was blamed.

There is much left out here which is considered at length in Chapter Two and in the Conclusions to this thesis (for example, the overall position of the Labour Party in broadcasting policy). From a purely methodological point of view it may well be held as unsatisfactory that the interpretative element is so intrusive. The contention is, however, that in a study of this kind method and theory must lay together or not at all; in the latter case mere documentation takes place which necessarily misses the connection between policy, formulation and implementation, and the ideology of power, consensus and legitimation.

With documentary material a legitimate question might be how much status can be afforded to a particular statement, and can a hierarchy of statuses be described? A similar set of questions directed at oral evidence compared with documentary would, given the cultural bias of Western societies, indicate that anything written down must carry more weight. But within and between documents, what then? Is a speech made in the course of a parliamentary debate and then written down more susceptible of the true position of an M.P. than a minuted comment in a private meeting, or a letter written to a close colleague?

In many respects posing a question in this way is unenlightening. Pateman, for example, discusses 'Idle Discourse' and suggests its purpose is to avoid silence between people: silence, in politics, may be held to be a cardinal sin, and, therefore, in the context of the position of the Chamber of the House of Commons, we might assume a 'phatic' communication was the norm (Pateman, 1975 - see also Malinowski). Pateman goes on to consider whether such discourse is not also indicative of powerlessness. (p.47)

Again, speeches in Parliament may indicate a degree of powerlessness; a private meeting could involve a participant in more power-sharing; private correspondence would probably relate a state of mind - unless it were an explication of, or an indication about, current or future policy. We return, inevitably, to the issue of judgement.

The researcher has to make continuous fine judgements based on as many sources as possible. Here we return to the interview which can, given perceptive and sensitive questioning, itself based on considerable prior (documentary or other interview) evidence lead to an evaluation of the actors, their motivations and integrity.

Policy research, perhaps more than many other types, also has to evaluate individual responses against larger more nebulous social forces. The problem relates directly to the nature of any consensus and how it may shift. When the research deals with one of the potential mechanisms for the shifting - broadcasting - the importance of theory is self-evident.

The two case studies might be delineated as examples of a single paradigm in the construction of a theory of policy-making. Is such a view justified? The question of paradigms in social research is another minefield, particularly because of continuing concern over the nature of natural science investigation. As I have discussed it here the 'meaning' of any paradigm has to be a matter of judgement: the decision to investigate broadcasting policy as an arbiter of legitimation in a critical political situation is arbitrary, but based on an orientation to particular sets of evidence.

Studdert-Kennedy suggests that 'In political science and sociology, at least, there are no laws which help to articulate a composition of theory and empirical analysis' and that the social scientist here is left with 'a limited repertoire of observational techniques ... bent to a multitude of theoretical wills' (Studdert-Kennedy, 1975). Paradigms suggest general assumptions, definitions and research procedures tied together in a philosophically satisfactory manner (Kuhn, 1962). Nevertheless within the limited ambit of sociology these two case studies, bringing together considerable elements of functional theory and some elements of neo-Marxism, where deemed heuristic, do constitute a prototype single paradigm, though consciously dealt with as two case studies in the text; in the Conclusions the amalgamation is examined.

The division into two case studies is intended to demonstrate the essential unity of theory, and, incidentally, the unity of broad-

casting policy despite historical differences in emphasis (Wedell, 1968). The problem concerning theory and method remains, however, and will remain as long as social science remains at a pre-Newtonian (or even pre-Copernican) stage. As Studdert-Kennedy says,

> the primacy of theory has to be asserted in a volatile context in the social sciences. The observer is in a special epistemological predicament, because of the diversity and constant modification of social realities, and the constant modification of what is brought to their interpretation through the normative component of explanatory theories.

Theory, as has been stressed throughout, guides method. In the extreme case of 'fact' collection used here - the interview - the status of the evidence is more questioned, more uncertain, as are perceptions gained through interviewing. Texts also require an interpretative theory. In policy research, where those involved may have reasons for not revealing why they did or said something; where (in the UK) the machinery of government works against disclosure; here the researcher must be prepared to draw broad maps; to use theoretical conceptualisations, hypotheses, intelligently, daringly, to complete a minimalist heuristic, or better a plan for further investigation.

Given the continuing efforts of social scientists, in particular sociology, to work towards a 'true' science, and given the traditional methods on which 'true' science is generally considered to be based, can there by any justification for not simply constructing abstract hypotheses but using theoretical schema a priori in the case studies, themselves empirical data collection exercises which might, conceived of as 'science', be thought to precede theorising?

Aside from Marxist epistemologies, portions of which I have said I shall use in the case studies there has been a growing movement in both science and social science to take account of the grounded realities of research work. The work of Kuhn, already mentioned, is a good example of the attempt less to sidestep than to demolish the fact/value, empiricism/theory dichotomies; by demonstrating the reality of scientific discovery rather than adhering to the purist construction of scientific method; methods favoured by Popper and his adherents.

Baldamus puts forward the proposition that the classic relationship between formal theoretical work and formal empirical work cannot hold in the real world. One has to add informal theoretical and empirical processes as well; there are, as with Parsons' scheme for a social system, six sets of paired linkages any one or more of which may be crucial in a particular set of circumstances. Furthermore he introduces the concept of 'pragmatic knowledge',

> the stock of knowledge of modern society that is generated as a latent (unintended) by-product of organisational behaviour. (Baldamus, 1977)

It would not be encompassed within his four-point interaction process but rather surrounds it, belonging to the external environment suggesting the production of theoretical and empirical inquiries.

In this study I have tried to use 'pragmatic knowledge' along with informal processes to flesh out the details of the theoretical concerns surrounding the empirical inquiry. I began with the radio case study, a great deal of empirical evidence and a little theory. Then, the major pre-occupation I had was with the growing power of central government against local, a pre-occupation reflected by remarks made by a number of my interviewees. The introduction of local radio - and its commercial variant - as expressed to me by respondents in interview, lent credence to that theory, and enabled me to consider the major parameters of a social system. The key question to answer was whether local commercial radio expressed integrative functions.

This initial formulation has more and more appeared to be inadequate. Without returning to the details of that study, a formulation concluded in such terms fails to account for political action or economic motive; most important, it signally ignores the 'cultural' function, to use a Parsonsian term; or the ideological, to use a Marxist category. Only an investigation of legitimation appears to bear sufficient weight here. That is, broadcasting is more to do with power and access to it, in this context, than socialisation.

The original debate over commercial television, precisely because it had to deal directly with the question of the monopoly of the BBC,

lent itself to a consideration of the politico-economic linkages, and thereby to a consideration of the ideological. The resolution of the increasingly redundant functionalist-Marxist split is effected through theoretical work partly based on that of Jurgen Habermas (Habermas, 1976(a)) which is detailed in Chapter Two.

Thus one major element of theory brought to bear is that of legitimation crisis. Suffice to say here that Habermas has developed a theory which suggests that capitalism, in order to stabilise itself, has enjoined increasing levels of State intervention. Over time - and there is a strong argument for suggesting the 1920s and 1930s saw the process greatly accelerated in the UK, a process accelerated again by the Second World War - the State has had to all but replace the market. Its own growing levels of 'consumption' requires a growing 'legitimation'; a basis for its authority. Habermas argues that scientific-technical progress fulfill the gap: taking more and more decisions out of the political arena and into depoliticised 'nationality criteria'.

An extension of these ideas will demonstrate that the mass media, and broadcasting particularly, legitimate certain forms of knowledge, crucially, of course, the meaning of the political (Tracey, 1978). At the same time the media become crucial in working out the legitimation crisis itself, for one point of issue has been the nature of the political debate in (again) broadcasting, a debate much altered by the form, say television, takes, organisationally and in output. Simply and only partially put, advertising surrounding programmes helps to divert whole political processes informed through television along some channels rather than others. One might develop this point further. Whereas the 'function' of the Press in the 19th Century may be perceived to fulfill a role deeply embedded in notions of bourgeois democracy and the requirement of 'neutral' (market oriented) information, broadcasting, in the 20th Century, comes to be associated with a passive indoctrination of 'technical' values: information (in this more remote sense) replaces action (Lazarsfeld and Merton, 1957).

To return to an earlier point. If there is a legitimation crisis then the mass media are an integral part, organisationally,

functionally, and in content, of its working out. At the same time that day to day 'events' involving the continuation of any institutions, any organisational forms, careers etc., will continue, there will be disjunctures caused by various social, economic or political pressures, occasionally combining, where a clearer view of what is happening at both the structural and the ideological levels becomes possible.

In fact, by looking for the extreme case - the crisis - more structural elements are uncovered: these involve the nature of policy-making through elite negotiation; the 'interference' of technical and managerial functions (in broadcasting); historically located 'accidents'.

By using the theoretical categories of legitimation crisis as an explicand of the meaning of commercialism the empirical work outlined in Chapters Three and Four becomes clearer; more than that, the direction in which the empirical work has been focussed is dependent on the theory. Otherwise the pivotal elements in the Conservative Party and its changes in the late 1940s and the late 1960s could not be related in any meaningful way to the origins of commercial television, or radio.

Without pressing the point too far, the idea of - to use Friedrich's terms - a dialogic relationship between theory and practice emerges informing each side of the debate. Commercialism in the most crucial of the media replaces the older hierarchical nationalism of cultural unity - loyalty (a category involving the Press as well, in a nationalist sense) (Smith, 1979) - with the baser currency of consumerist ideology in an effort to redirect citizens towards the politics of the marketplace (McPherson, 1962). This theory is embedded within the parameters of the debate over commercial television, the first removal of a particular form of State monopoly and its replacement by a mediated one. In the apparent paradox of State relinquishment of control of the broadcast media in one area the social system - and its legitimation - receives a temporary injection of faith - of motivation and almost incidentally an important means of reaching a mass market for consumer goods.

For, finally, it is the specific historical interactions that

count. 'Explanation consists of a complex engagement with that (empirical) material, at levels that relate and work back on each other, to develop an interpretation of its structure and the logic of its development' (Studdert-Kennedy, 1975). That has been the basis of the methodology of this particular policy study.

III : Methods in Action

1 : The Interviews

Forty-two people were interviewed for the radio case study; thirteen for the television case study. Some were interviewed twice so that, in all, sixty-two interviews all of members of elite groups, took place, over a period of approximately two years. (Full list is in Appendix B).

As I have pointed out, the radio case study involved many more interviews because of early problems in obtaining documents. The interviews here were of sufficient number to merit a proper classification of views which I have used, less in the case study text (because of problems of validation), more to guide my hand to other sources, and to check against theoretical propositions.

It cannot be stressed too much that an examination of the detail of these interviews reveals a large number of problems over the exact use to which they might be put in a study like this. There has been a trend towards ethnographic study - particularly of broadcasting practice (Schlesinger, 1978 is an excellent example, as is Burns 1977) - where detailed consideration of the spoken passage is undertaken (or implied).

Schlesinger had one advantage and that was he was dealing with daily practice in which those taking part could identify and discuss their motives and attitudes. My immediate problem was that all the events under scrutiny were at least five years old, reaching back (in the television case study) to thirty-five years: interviewees could not remember details and, based on other evidence, glossed certain issues. Their perceptions at the time - their motives - have become integrated into a coherent account, in which any contemporary 'cognitive dissonance' has receded or been eliminated.

The major problem becomes unravelling this account; and in judging how far attitudes expressed now were true of the times they relate back to; finally, if such attitudes have been consistent, whether they could have had a material effect. In the early days of policy little is decided, little is written down (at least any indication of intent): do current perceptions adequately express the past?

To take one pertinent example: the BBC. How might its position be characterised in the mid- to late- 1960s? A large number of those interviewed made specific comment on the BBC, of which the most was from, unsurprisingly, the late Sir Charles Curran, just ex-director general when I first saw him.

Curran (RCSI 9)* said that the major issue in the BBC in the early 1960s was the allocation of the third television channel. At the same time the BBC had always thought of local radio (both were discussed in detail by the Pilkington Committee) as providing a specialist community service; in the early 1960s, the Corporation believed this could only be provided on VHF. He continued that the 1967 re-organisation was made earlier than the BBC had intended, that it was a move suggested by the Labour Government who thought that if the BBC remained entirely national it would not remain viable, as an institution. Yet Curran also felt that 1969 was the 'best' year for the BBC in the 1960s: it got a long-asked for licence fee increase and authorisation to build up to 40 local radio stations. Without prejudicing my comments below about this volunteered material, I think it worth noting that 1969 was the year in which Curran became director-general.

Curran's comment about 1969 and the licence fee may be matched with that of Gerald Mansell (RCSI 27), when interviewed managing director of the external services, who felt that Stonehouse (Post Master-General in 1969) had 'sold the BBC down the river' over the licence fee: 'too little, too late'.

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*Interviews are ordered in sequence of first meeting: R stands for for radio; T for television.

Similarly, on the question of the 1967 re-organisation, Frank Gillard (RCSI 32), retired when interviewed but a key senior BBC radio man (see Chapter Four, p 297), thought that the BBC offered to set up Radio 1 (to replace the pirate stations) and that there was no government pressure to do this; neither was the agreement by the BBC to reorganise (a discrepancy exists here, note) anything to do with the Corporation's wanting to start local radio: it was, therefore, a coincidence that the 1966 White Paper bracketed the two.

From the Labour Government's side, Edward Short (RCSI 17), Post Master-General during 1967, said there were many discussions with the BBC in 1967 about re-organisation but there was no question that they were being imposed upon: they were 'very co-operative' (my emphasis).

On the Conservative side the BBC was viewed (retrospectively) very differently. Eldon Griffiths (RCSI 25) said that the BBC was not providing the right kind of programmes so demand was met by the pirate stations. This comment is important because Griffiths used the demand argument to justify Conservative Party policy at the 1966 Annual Conference: it had to be an ex post facto position to take: the truth is that the pirate stations created the demand. Interestingly, Eldon Griffiths had been a columnist for New York papers: doubtless there he learned what a market-place for broadcasting could mean too.

Conservative views of the BBC in the late 1960s tended to be similar to those of the late 1940s: that it was being run by 'lefties' and it was out of (public) control. Patricia Hodgson (Paul Bryan's research assistant on local commercial radio: RCSI 1) said the BBC's attitude in the late 1960s was one of 'naked power'. One issue not in doubt during the interviews, over the BBC and the main political parties, is that, dangerously for the Corporation, the late 1960s was probably the first time both Conservative Opposition and Labour Government carried a substantial weight of opinion against the BBC and all its works. Hugh Jenkins (RCSI 34), Labour 'Equity' MP, considered the BBC an arm of the corporate state (a view much canvassed by Conservatives at the time, Harold Wilson's view is well-known, yet he glosses over his attitude to the BBC completely in his major work on the period)(Wilson, 1971).

A consideration of the import of these comments and the extent to which they can be used as solid evidence, means an assessment of numerous factors, all of which have to be weighted. There is a question of memory (and of perception rather than fact); there is a probability of special pleading; a question of influence (the more influential possibly under-playing their role); a problem of the desire to appear constructive.

Into this we have to fit the special 'rules' surrounding political life where rhetoric tends to override argument. In both cases studied here this factor is doubly important because the issues are not resolved and many of those interviewed continue in public life. The outcome of this study could reinforce one set of views against another and it becomes, therefore, a political document in its own right.

My decision has been to downplay the material of the interviews for these reasons and to use the material they provide as illustration of the contemporary debate rather than as definitive evidence.

Another problem about any use of statements made by interviewees is that of coverage: the extent to which some elites were interviewed against others. In this research setting the BBC turned out to be exceptionally helpful: a quarter of those interviewed for the radio case study were BBC or ex-BBC personnel.

There were difficulties in getting to see a number of people associated with the commercial lobby (although, as I shall detail below, these same elusive people tended to be exceptionally helpful with documents). The most difficult group to locate (and interview) were ex-pirate radio station operators.

But this group were closely followed in difficulty of access by Conservative MPs, active in the pro-commercial lobby. Difficulty here extended beyond mere access to the interviewees. As I have suggested in the theoretical discussion above, a major difficulty in the interviews seemed to be perceptual: those interviewed found it hard to appreciate the exact purpose of the research and had difficulty in conceptualising their thoughts. Hence, on the question of a 'lobby' for commercial radio, one senior Conservative politician assumed this meant youths barracking the Houses of Parliament with

placards.

The television case study interviews revealed a different order of problem: numbers of those involved were dead, others very old and indifferent to the issue now. I concentrated therefore on establishing the documentary evidence before talking to anyone: here the interviews were much more involved in presenting ideas for discussion by the interviewee who could make suggestions as to correctness of approach. One advantage in this case study was the existence of the controversial Hugh Wilson book (see Chapter Three, p.191, below for discussion of this); coming in 1961 it had had the effect of reviving interest some years after ITV had begun and those I interviewed remembered it well: it provided a starting point for discussion. But in these interviews, more than with those of the radio case study, great care is needed in the precise use to which the material is put.

2 : Documentary Evidence

It is possible to classify the documentary evidence used here into two categories: official and 'personal'. Official documents include all the proceedings in Hansard and in Parliamentary Committee Proceedings; Cabinet Minutes; BBC Archive material and that of the IBA; published documents and books where they relate directly to the issue.

Personal documents I have classified as private correspondence and annotated documents; further, I have included under this broad heading a number of confidential Conservative Party and Local Radio Association minutes, seeing the 'personal' element in the internally produced coherent view expressed. In this regard I have noted the comments of Gottschalk, Kluckholm and Angell (1945) in general, on the validity of documents and the problems associated with interpretation.

The major primary source was Hansard, in both case studies. The debates revealed the actors involved at the overt political level; it put forward their 'public' posture (although the element of bargaining was noted: that is, public speeches can be a negotiation as well as a standpoint). Critically, however, the position of debates

(and the statements therein made) within the constitution of the UK, determines that such utterances cannot be taken as an endpoint: debates are a public avowal (or denial) and they tend not to help a structural examination of policy-making.

Nevertheless, to take the readings in Parliament of, say, the Television Bill can inform us of the extent to which modifications may be made in the legislation planned; and the Debates often reveal the depth of feeling on a particular issue.

Public (in the sense of published) documents, like White Papers, are useful only in that they define policy at a point. Similarly, although much less available, are Cabinet Minutes (tantalisingly, for this study, opened only up to the point just after the Beveridge Committee was appointed). I have included among 'official' documents, the government departmental memoranda available in the Public Record Office because, although 'private' in first circulation, civil servants recognise they are on the public record. These memoranda can be more revelatory and they move this study decisively towards the substantive issues in policy-making. To maldadapt Lasswell's famous dictum: Who Says What In Which Channel To Whom With What Effect? It is possible to trace the departmental concerns from 1944 through to 1949 where broadcasting is involved. But basically the whole of the period with which this study deals is closed under the 30-year Rule.

The BBC Archives fill some of this gap. In many respects they are organised like Government Papers (but rather more efficiently); they extend later and, used carefully, again bearing in mind the need for the BBC personnel to appear in a good light, can and do provide further evidence for the kind of concerns under discussion here.

By contrast the IBA had little to offer: its Archival material remained closed to this researcher for reasons which were never made clear. The only available material from this source was interview and published notes which went some way to closing the gap.

Private documents, however, have been an immensely fruitful source. In the case of television, invaluable material has come to light in what I have dubbed the 'Swinton Archive', a collection of

often confidential papers of the Conservative Party from the 1940s up until the early 1970s (though sadly incomplete and uncatalogued), currently deposited at the University of Newcastle Library (June, 1980).

Many of these documents are avowedly 'private': they are copies of letters written between Conservative politicians; others come well within my working definition as they were clearly not meant for public perusal. I consider, therefore, that weight can be given to the 'genuine' feelings expressed in many of these papers.

In a slightly more ambiguous position lie the private papers of Lord Orr-Ewing. Self-consciously, these contain a note 'setting the record right' for the BBC Archives over the question of the ending of the monopoly (and, specifically, the allegations made by Professor Hugh Wilson). Nevertheless, the correspondence is not 'doctored' and, again, some weight can be given to much that Orr-Ewing discusses in letters and memoranda.

A similar weight has been given to the Minute Books of the Local Radio Association (and associated records all of which were made freely available). These too I have classified as private although clearly they had a limited public circulation among members of the Association. They do constitute evidence for the concerns of much of the commercial lobby; similarly the records of Local Radio Services, which contain many press cuttings of value.

Finally, one has to consider the official broadcasting committee reports and the associated evidence. The evidence is vital because it provides a mass of detailed material from the major protagonists (although almost inevitably excluding the Conservative Party). It has been much used here to give the impression of public positions taken up by interest groups (here I include the BBC as well as Government). It constitutes the moment when change - or more accurately discussion about possible change - has been sanctioned; the nature of the evidence reflects this.

Finally, what of the actual texts? I have steered well clear of any effort in content analysis, preferring to use any text (including interview notes) at its face value, after a careful

perusal of what is being said and the subsequent events. In this sense alone I have induced some causal relationships. Interpretation of documents, even superficially is dangerous: I have tried to let the 'facts' speak for themselves, framing these in what I hope is an adequate set of hypotheses and concepts, to which I now turn.

Chapter Two

The Meaning of Broadcast Policies

I : Introduction : Broadcasting, politics and policy-making

> 'One can imagine the stresses and strains,
> the pullings and pushings behind the scenes,
> arguments and counter-arguments, drafts and
> redrafts'
> (Lord Reith: House of Lords Debates Vol.176,
> c 1290)

It is appropriate that this theoretical chapter on broadcasting policy, should begin with a quotation from Lord Reith on the subject. Reith's impact on broadcasting policy has been consistently exaggerated - even by Briggs, not normally taken in by pomposity and self-aggrandisement.

The full force of the ire - and the irony - of Reith's pronouncement on the commercial television Bill is lost. This thesis is in part about the irony that, in the end, the man who many still consider to have invented the BBC, 'explained' British broadcasting policy - and policy-making in general - as if it were something to be deplored.

Reith would have despised an extended discussion of broadcasting and broadcasting policy based on the centrality of concept of consensus.

Many commentators on British politics have noted the extraordinary degree to which the British 'system' coheres: rotates around central tenets which are inalienable. Among these are ideas of balance, fair play, parliamentary sovereignty, party government.

Thus Heclo and Widalsky (1974, p.366) conclude that 'left to its existing inclinations the Government will, for the most part, put community above policy'. They refer to the internal community of the State system, not the public. Similarly Middlemas (1979) suggests that political stability has been a prime goal between the 1920s and the 1970s, the period within which the total history of public broadcasting falls.

If Middlemas is correct about the struggle for and establishment of the political consensus between 1916 and 1926 then the BBC is a component part of it, a structure within what Middlemas calls the 'corporate bias'; such centrally organised bodies like the 'cultural' BBC include ICI, Lever Brothers, British Oxygen, Metropolitan-Vickers.

Harris (1972, p.73) considers that 'Up to about 1947 (from the 1930s), the leadership of both parties were united in pursuing the aims outlined in étatiste corporatist plans of the inter-war period.'

Politicians have also remarked on the similarity - the centrality - of goals between the two main parties of the period (1916-1966, for Middlemas). Thus Attlee : 'There was not much real opposition to our nationalisation policy ... the Conservatives had themselves been forced by the logic of facts in 1931 to carry through Morrison's London Transport Bill...' (Attlee, 1954, p.165) (my emphasis). Butler (1971, p.127) had wanted the Wartime Condition to stay after the end of the War, in 1945, 'until the social reforms upon which we were in general agreement had been passed ' (my emphasis).

The BBC, along with the Central Electricity Board, was an early example of Conservative Party 'nationalisation', and an example of that Party's comparatively undogmatic attitude to centralisation and institutional change. The Conservative Party has been overwhelmingly the political party of innovation in broadcasting policy (even including 1980: breakfast-time television; the organisation of the fourth channel). In sixty years of broadcasting the Labour Party has contributed little: even the beginning of BBC local radio had been agreed by a previous Conservative Government in principle.

This study seeks to examine and to answer two questions: first, what are the relationships between the consensus established in Britain for almost the whole time of broadcasting's history and that history? That is, what are the relationships in policy-making between broadcasting and the political and, deeper, ideological, uses made of it? Second, why has the Conservative Party consistently made policy in this area, not at all undirectionally (ie, towards increasing commercialisation)?

There are many cross-cutting subsidiary questions as well, mostly linked to the policy-making processes: how does policy arise; how is change integrated; where does pressure group influence bear; do audiences have any impact?

All of these, and the two major issues, are subsumed into one hypothesis. This is that broadcasting is of vital interest to politicians in a liberal democracy because it legitimates their position within it; the meaning of broadcasting policy will therefore ultimately engage with this question of survival; whatever effects studies demonstrate or deny, broadcasting is deemed here to have the profoundest effect on the political system and in particular upon its individual (and usually elite) members. Over time the balance has shifted from radio broadcasting to television, but each medium has a unique part to play. Television, however, is a quantum leap more significant than radio because of the battery of effects it appears to have, both on the performers and the audience.

Blumler (1970) addresses himself specifically to television and remarks that from twin sets of tensions in broadcasting, between autonomy and accountability, and between individual rights and majority satisfaction, two deep contemporary crises emerge.

First, in the relationship between party politicians and television journalists; second as a crisis of access (who gets to use television?) Pressure arises, Blumber says, 'because many politicians perceive TV as a very powerful medium and they depend on it for a direct unmediated access to the mass of the electorate.' Blumler elaborates on this theme, adding that politicians are afraid that television journalism is unbalanced or, more critically, falls outside their definition of consensus. Finally, there is a fear that television sensationalises and trivialises.

The feeling of crisis is taken up by Tracey: 'pressures from the political structure ... have become internalised and understood as given routines of programme-making which, though they do not overtly threaten the sense of autonomy prevalent within broadcasting institutions, nevertheless remain as a permanent underlying state of crisis ' (Tracey, 1978, p.16).

Tracey delineates four determinants of 'political' television:

a) Broadcasting organisations and the governing party

b) Programme-making and a non-governing party

c) The legal system and programming

d) Programming and the commercial context.

This typology which emphasises both political party and State and commercial pressures deals with the most obvious set of relationships between broadcasting and politics: the making of overtly political programmes where clear-cut questions of political balance (ie within the consensus) come into play. Here we are concerned with the structure of the consensus itself and how broadcasting policy is both shaped by and shapes that consensus.

But the short-term (in which, possibly, politicians most live: a week is a long time in politics) moulds the long-term and the daily output of political television is a battleground fought for important reasons.

Wyndham Goldie (1977, p.90 ff) relates in detail how the early days of post-war television were increasingly dominated by left-right, Labour-Conservative arguments over access to television. There was, with programmes like Inside the News , pressure brought to contain those appearing not only to a strict relationship of Labour Party and Conservative Party representatives; also to 'representative' MPs within the parties.

The Director of BBC Television, Barnes, wrote to Michael Balkwill, producer of Inside the News, in May 1951:

> This impartiality does not consist only in maintaining a balance over a period between members of the parties... It consists also in maintaining a broad impartiality within each party... (BBC Archives, Caversham).

Wyndham Goldie notes that a problem that began with a single programme spilled into all television: a number of Labour MPs were good presenters and could have been used for any number of documentary and other series: Aidan Cranley, Christopher Mayhew, John Freeman, Woodrow Wyatt. All were used and the Conservative Party complained that the result was biased television:

> ...it was right, as well as expedient, to try to find some Conservative members who might be just as effective on television... in the process I discovered that, during these years at any rate, the attitude of most Conservative members of Parliament to political communication by television was quite different from that of such members of the Labour Party as Mayhew and Crawley, Wyatt and Freeman (**Goldie, op cit**).

Wyndham Goldie goes on to suggest that this attitude by the Labour men was 'disillusionment with the party political battle'*: that is, television politics, or commentary on politics involved a denial of conflict: this is a pure definition of consensus. Whereas, Wyndham Goldie goes on, the Conservative approach was that 'they were prepared to give time to television if this were considered to be of advantage to the Party.'

This raises some important points. First, it suggests that the Labour MPs mentioned by Wyndham Goldie, and, presumably, a number of others, were unwilling to use television as a direct political instrument because they understood it better. Television, indeed, expresses the rhetoric of consensus through entertainment (ie non-conflictual goals). The Labour Party is immediately disadvantaged by this because particularly at this time it was a radical party of change. Put another way, the codes through which television worked absorbed the Labour men: Conservatives had no need to bother to get involved in what was, by and large, doing their politicking for them.

It was not just the programming: the structure of the BBC was a conservative one too. What we have to answer is why, then, did the Conservative Party break the monopoly, and in television, given these factors?

From the beginning broadcasting was seen to have a political dimension. The Sykes Committee noted that 'It may be that broadcasting holds social and political possibilities as great as any technical attainment of our generation' (Reith, 1949) and this then was greatly

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*It may be a coincidence but all four presenters she mentions eventually left the Labour Party: disillusionment or 'professional' ambitions?

elaborated in subsequent broadcasting committee reports.

It is perhaps revealing of a deeper understanding of the technical limitations, as well as opportunities, that in the first 'broadcast' election, in 1924, Baldwin spoke via radio in a studio, while MacDonald and Asquith simply had public meeting speeches relayed from their respective venues (Wedell, 1968).

Such discrepancies in presentation would not be allowed again as politicians sought to ensure parity in all ways with their rivals. But alongside arguments about balance between the various political parties there has been a recognition by the consensus parties that they have common cause against broadcasters in their efforts to hold the definition of what constitutes fair or legitimate political broadcasting - against the broadcasters' own desires for interesting and controversial programmes, their concept of professionalism, in fact.

The continuity of approach by the two main political parties of this period, the Conservative and Labour, suggests this second issue may be of greater structural significance than the parameters of much broadcasting policy. The post-war Labour Cabinet discussed political broadcasting in December 1945, in particular the resumption of party political broadcasting (the only area of broadcasting where the main parties have complete control). The thrust of the discussion concerned ways of keeping the power of decision on such broadcasts out of BBC hands, and between the two parties.

Wedell notes that by and large in the UK it has been public, not government policy which has regulated broadcasting because with the few exceptions which constitute the case studies here the main political parties maintain a joint policy.

Thus, John Stonehouse, Minister of Posts and Telecommunication, in the House of Commons in July 1969, summing up a debate on the BBC's document, Broadcasting in the Seventies, said:

> 'This has been a remarkable debate. It has been marked by an absence of political controversy...'
> (Stonehouse, 1969).

Earlier, Herbert Morrison, also in the House of Commons, speaking

on the second White Paper on broadcasting policy issued by the 1951 Conservative Government, noted that, 'As a whole, broadcasting has hitherto been kept out of party politics' (Morrison, 1951).

The feeling that a consensus on policy was established was also accepted by elements of the Conservative Party. Lord Hailsham, discussing the same White Paper as Morrison, said that 'It (broadcasting) has been beyond the range of party politics...' (Hailsham, 1951).

Even Churchill, in 1946, talking about the allocation of time for Party Politicals said 'that he did not think that there was much between the Government and the Opposition. They were united in wanting fair play...' (BBC Archives, Caversham).

It was out of desire to come to terms with the main political parties' own definition of 'fair play' that the BBC Governors put forward the 14-Day Rule which forbad the BBC from discussing any matter which might arise in either House of Parliament in the ensuing fortnight. Part of the confusion about the role of broadcasting in political life arises from the BBC's own formation as a 'cultural' organisation. But by the time the BBC was formed 'culture' meant a good deal to do with setting limits as well as allowing creativity. Burns suggests that Reith, 'the visionary, the born leader, the living embodiment, even the twentieth century, of the Protestant ethic, brimming with moral certitudes and ambition' was complemented by his deputy Carpendale, 'a disciplinarian' (Burns, 1977). Both helped to form a unity of purpose with the centralised bureaucracy in maintaining a middle of the road ethic: it may not be stretching credulity too far to compare the BBC with the Church of England in its first 30 years. The secular religion the BBC plugged filled the gaps in the churches' own declining ministry.

Culture, in the 1920s and 1930s, was becoming politicised, as most other hitherto consensual aspects of British life were to be. The impetus for this movement has been traced by Middlemas (1979) among others. (Middlemas' remarkable contribution to British government theory will be cited a number of times as it brings together a large number of themes upon which broadcasting policy has depended.) It is rooted in the endemic economic crisis, in the gradual realisation of the inflationary meaning of democracy and in the establishment of a

grand consensus. The seeming paradox, that a consensus leads to increased politicisation relates to the surface only. A deeper tension is exposed when a consensus is established which in the British case has led to a left-right polarisation. The BBC's cultural role, accepted at first by the right, becomes deeply political when the left (ie a Labour Government) comes to power.

Again, Churchill notes, in 1948, in discussion with the BBC, 'the undue prominence being given by the BBC to Communist and near-Communist speakers ' (BBC Archives, Caversham). At around the same time Greenwood, a Labour Government Minister, in a long memorandum to William Haley, the director-general, notes: 'The BBC is not a political instrument. It is a cultural agency, a medium for entertainment, a means of worship, a forum for discussion, and a disseminator of news ' (BBC Archives, Caversham).

He suggests that political broadcasting may be difficult to define within those categories. It is worth noting the order of Greenwood's 'explanation' of the BBC's role. Yet recognition that, as Burns puts it, broadcasting has 'immense potency' ultimately in politics and power, based simply on the notion that one man may address millions: this recognition has kept the 'cultural' agency of broadcasting firmly limited. It has been the extension of the general crisis of legitimacy, the rhetoric of broadcasting techniques, especially in television, and technical factors, which have forced politicians to allow broadcasting more and more political space. But I shall argue that the parameters of this space have been kept under control through broadcast policy, the final exclusive control of which resides with politicians and the State. Increasing commercialisation and general financial control operate against the inherent power of the political parties, debasing their power and eventually deepening the legitimation crisis, although it may lead to short-term 'gain'.

As we shall see part of that crisis is managed through 'technical' rationalisation: the State (a term which I use to include particular governments but which goes well beyond mere government through politics) increasingly uses organisational innovation like the BBC to solve potentially divisive political problems. Thus control of broadcasting is removed from 'party political debate' - as has been

noted - to become a neutral arbiter of that debate (in theory). Gordon notes that it is a 'commercialisation of public administration' (that is, the market is neutral, consensual) and he adds:

> Perhaps no feature in recent thought in applied economics in this country is more striking than the rapidity with which it (the public corporation) has gained favour among almost all sections of opinion ...
>
> (Gordon, 1938).

Herbert Morrison used the models of the BBC and the Central Electricity Board (which pre-date the BBC by a few months) when he set up London Transport. The changes in the British economy all through the early history of broadcasting are important. As Gerbner points out 'the mass media are the chief cultural arms of the industrial order from which they spring' (Gerbner, 1969).

I have already noted that politicians take an ambivalent view of broadcasting. This may be related to the apparent cultural function on the one hand (and commercial pressure to 'neutralise' the political impact - and divisiveness - of broadcasting in order to maximise audiences) and, on the other hand, to the needs of the political system.

Hence Blumler and McQuail note: 'whatever the academics might say about the marginal impact of persuasive campaigns, the politicians behaved as if the mass media mattered and used them avidly' (Blumler and McQuail, 1968), while Hood (1972) concluded that 'politicians and governments ... believe it (television) to be an important medium capable of influencing public opinion and swaying votes'. Katz (1971) also suggests that television has 'activated' a substantial number of people hitherto indifferent to politics, while Blumler and McQuail in the study cited above found that television could affect voter preference for a third party (outside the two main contenders in a general election).

Television has transformed the quality of political broadcasting and forced a massive extension of the definitions

of what programmes have political content. Long before television however radio was demonstrating political 'effects'. O'Brien suggests broadcasting is 'essentially political in the widest and classical sense of that term' (O'Brien, 1937); writing in 1937 he was describing the daily operation of BBC radio. Haley expands this broad definition of the 'political' when he writes: 'Broadcasting is a most persuasive medium ... It is natural, therefore, that the main preoccupation of most governments when they consider broadcasting is its political responsibility ...' (Haley, 1948).

In an important article Gurevitch and Blumler (1977) outline the linkages between the media and politics. They point out the need to examine the formal and the informal mechanisms used by government when it engages with the media, both in obtaining information about it, and operating upon it.

Two sets of institutions, political and media organisations are involved in the course of message preparation in 'horizontal' interaction while 'vertically', separately and jointly, engaged in disseminating and processing information to and from mass audiences.

They identify sources of media power as structural, psychological and normative. The first relates to audience delivery capability; the second to the media's credibility; the third to the freedom of expression it allows. Two kinds of actor operate in this system: political spokesmen and media professionals.

> The interacting parties on both planes are perpetually caught up in a tension between the needs of mutual accommodation and various sources of conflict. (Gurevitch and Blumler, op.cit., p.280).

They note that politicans often view media people as 'middlemen'. In this sense they are brokers in the political arena with the addition that their commodity - information - may be partially regulated by the sellers - politicans - less so by the buyer - the elector.

As we have noted it is only party political broadcasting which political parties have any claim to completely control (and even there time has demonstrated the necessity to use broadcasting presentational codes). In another study Blumler, Gurevitch and Ives suggest with Katz that 'election campaigns (ie General Elections), for all their faults, may be the major learning experience of democratic politics.' (Blumler et al, 1978).

The authors assumed from the outset:

> that television exerts a formative influence in shaping election campaigns, certainly in affecting politicians' behaviour, and possibly in guiding voters' perceptions and reactions as well.

Again, it is worth noting the extent to which commentators refer to <u>television</u> specifically. Rose says:

> of the greatest importance to politicians in this period (the early 1950s) was the introduction of television. The first party political programmes appeared on TV in 1951, but television did not achieve comprehensive coverage of the electorate until 1957; at this time, extremely stringent rules governing the televising of politics began to be relaxed (Rose, 1967).

I would argue that the overt use of radio for political purposes developed during the war; prior to that <u>covert</u> use, in the structural sense, is evident: the BBC reflected the establishment by and large although oppositional controversy (the blanket term for the avowedly political) did exist (Scannell, 1980). The turning point for codified political broadcasting was the Ullswater Committee and its Report.

Clement Attlee was a member of this Committee which accepted that there was 'an inevitable tendency ... of the Corporation to devote more time to the expression of new ideas and the advocacy of change in social and other spheres, <u>than to the defence of orthodoxy and stability</u>' (Ullswater, 1936, p. 28, Cmd 5091) (emphasis added).

Of equal importance, in the next paragraph, the Report goes on to relate what it describes as the 'trial' of Parliamentary institutions:

> If that be so, broadcasting is an instrument of great potential value in keeping Parliament before the minds of the people ... broadcasting should look towards Parliament as the focal point of political thought (my emphases).

Political broadcasting is thus firmly located within the two-party contest and is geared to existing and established political routines. The Second World War intervened and delayed implementation of the Committee's recommendations. By 1945 everything else had changed: as has been noted, politicians felt sufficiently strong (accidentally backed by BBC timidity - over the Second Reading of the 1944 Education Act), to enforce for the last years of the monopoly, a rigid control over political discussion via the 14-Day Rule. It was the last moments of the old system which television was to overthrow: first, by being a growing cultural force; second, by being competitive (ie two channels).

The real change in political broadcasting was introduced by a commercial television station, Granada, in 1959:

> The increasing significance of television as a means of communication and the use of politicians as TV performers made politicians personally conscious of the ability of the modern media to reach millions ... simultaneously (Rose, op.cit., p.21).

Politicians, then, are intimately connected with, and aware of, the broadcasting institution: they inhabit numerous parts of its structures and organisations; they are performers and audience (but, note, not as much as others: 'Politicians never watch television, they only appear on it' (Critchley, 1971)).

It is another paradox of broadcasting, however, that despite the daily interactions, of which the most important relate to the party control exercised through the Chief Whips' offices in Parliament over 'political' content and notions of equal time, broadcasting policy is not by and large a constant matter of government (ie Cabinet) concern. Major structural change is uncommon.

This lack of upheaval is, of course, routine. Heclo and Widalsky, cited above, note that by and large policy consists of 'a series of ongoing understandings built up by political

administrators over time, understandings left to run when practicable, repaired when necessary, and overturned when they are desperate,' and they add that

> rare in any system will be the policy which results from a minister's bright idea never thought of before, carried on his shoulders over the bodies of his officials, through the dark valley of Treasury review and upward to final Cabinet triumph. (p.346).

Rose (1976) believes that policy is best understood as a process; in broadcasting we might reasonably look at the role of the Post Office as that State body with the most continuous record of involvement.

It is certainly true that the GPO set the parameters to broadcasting policy from the beginning: it defined especially the emphasis on technical limits still being accepted in the late 1970s, and it started the financial debate: most important, it established a principle of public service broadcasting.

According to Rose, (1976, op.cit), four models of change may be discerned: static, cyclical, linear, discontinuous. The first 'negative' state may lead to real change just as inexorably, he says. Cyclical change is 'coping' rather than eliminating; linear change is the easiest to chart; discontinuous may involve a repudiation or substitution (ie of principle).

This typology is descriptive rather than explanatory. Part of the problem of policy research relates to what is meant by policy in the first place. There are two distinct and opposed meanings. The first, and the one which manifests itself in any number of organisations, concerns the means by which policies are chosen between: the grounds on which optional choices are resolved. The second, and the one with which I am concerned here, is properly social scientific and examines the meaning of particular policies. Nevertheless, I am not discussing the mechanisms of decision-taking in the normally accepted sense.

The discussion here is about structure and function. Given that this is the case it is worthwhile constructing a specific

typology of decision-taking in broadcasting policy and where broadcasting issues are apparent. The Rose model may be seen to partially 'fit' within the first five categories.

First, it is possible to distinguish five forms of decision-taking as such: pragmatic, establishment, incremental, technical, nodal. Pragmatic decisions are political, as in the Wilson decision to re-set up in 1974 what became the Annan Committee.

Establishment decisions are both political and 'service' (ie emerging from the State). It is here worth making a clear separation between government and state elites: those who come and go and those who, by and large, stay put. An example of establishment decision-taking might be either the daily monitoring and regulation of political broadcasting by the major parties and their bureaucracies; or the operation <u>in practice</u> of legal constraints on both Press and broadcasting (ie official secrets) and their <u>practical</u> implementation (ie the issue of D-notices); or the <u>allocation</u> of frequencies.

Incremental decisions are those which engage with individuals - in the changes of personnel for example in departments, or in the shuffling of ministers and their responsibilities. Tony Benn's relationship with the BBC between 1964-66 is a good example. The point to make is that such events can make substantial differences not only to what happens but how it happens.

Technical decisions involve allocation of research funds to, say, the development of colour television systems, or to international agreements.

Nodal decisions are public statements of enactment of its planned-for likelihood. These decisions are the ones most fruitful to study, bearing in mind the other forms which in some respects go to make up the nodal points: both commercial television and commercial radio may be located here.

It is pointless to suggest that this is anything but a crudely distorting typology in that all five types delineated here interact and that in identifying each in any circumstances is merely for convenience. To aid the scheme I would like to add

three perceptual categories: reinforcement (consensual); legitimating; crisis intervention. This is an attempt to tie up outcomes with the actions of individuals and those parts of Government and State organisations concerned with particular issues.

Finally, to bring the typology into broader social and economic relief we have to add external categories: ownership; control. These may be broken down between licenced and non-licenced media; between those operating in a free market; an oligopoly; a monopoly. Perhaps to this one might also be added questions of national or international market (audience); single or multi-media interests; media or diverse ownership. But I want to stress that audiences do not generally figure in media policy other than marginal 'publicity' for interest groups and elites.

One more dimension is needed. This is a 'typology of opportunity' which ties together a number of parts of the outline above.

Here it is possible to distinguish possible relationships of elite groups to one another and to particular interests of individuals. Thus we have an intellectual component; economic motives; political motives; documentary evidence; stochastic events; technical innovation; political opportunity. These may be related to both parts of the typology of decision-taking and to the social setting of such decision-taking.

Again, it is worth stressing that this typology is offered here as the starting point for condensing out a complex set of relationships, often hidden from public view. It is a beginning only; a means to aid the theoretical problems and possibilities which follow.* I have, however, used it loosely to guide my interpretations in the two case studies.

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*See Chapter Five, Table Four, for further details of this typology.

II : Ten theories in Search of Reality

1 : Introduction

When Daniel Bell wrote his polemic against the dangers of predicting from ill-sorted and thought-out theory (Bell, 1962), he concluded that, 'no matter how far our social science sophistication has come, it cannot take the place of that practical flexibility which is demanded by two necessary humilities: an awareness of the limitations of our knowledge, and of the openness of history'.

I want now to examine a number of 'explanations' of the broadcasting mass media, particularly in the UK. Some of the works cited have tried to develop coherent theories: others seek merely to throw light on particular aspects of the relationships between broadcasting institutions and political institutions: the bedrock of media policy. I have divided the various studies into ten headings which broadly cover the main emphases. Other students might well sub-divide in a different way.

2 : Official accounts

These may be divided again into Acts of Parliament relating to broadcasting; 'official' accounts in the Houses of Parliament (in debates on broadcasting); statements emanating from Departments like the Post Office; White Papers, Reports of Committees of Enquiry.

As the Government and the State make policy they tend to disregard any debate about what it might be for, except in the most obvious and straightforward sense. The 'theory' such documents put forward is that it is the State's duty to regulate and control. For example under the Television Act, 1954 'the Post Master-General shall satisfy himself ... persons (members) shall 'furnish to him such information as (he) considers necessary.' In this respect the Acts are the theory made manifest: they are the parameters within which broadcasting operates. Government statements in Parliament reflect this concern to control: but at a distance

because in the interests of freedom Government and State must delegate to other authorities who express the public interest on its behalf.

There is a difference between the IBA and the BBC. The former, controlled ultimately by Act of Parliament, is both more constrained by legal provisions and yet freer to ignore the day to day strictures of Government. Thus the annual IBA handbook hardly mentions Government policy at all. The BBC annual handbook devotes considerable space to this question. Since it has been recognised (from the beginning of ITV) as the national instrument of broadcasting this is not surprising. The 1977 Handbook quotes James Callaghan (who expresses a standard Government view) that 'In this country it is the broadcasting organisations which are responsible for programme content ... the fundamental principle (is) that the influential medium of broadcasting is free from political control and will so remain' (BBC Handbook, 1977, p.270) (my emphasis).

The publically maintained fiction that broadcasting control in the UK means technical control only cannot be maintained. In the case of the BBC the Government may demand it refrain from broadcasting any matter it sees fit to ban; much more imporant it appoints Governors and Members: this can be used politically (see Tracey, op.cit.); technical control over frequencies can materially affect policy (and was used to delay commercial radio and, arguably, limit commercial television). But the public position is maintained in evidence to Committees of Enquiry (see, for example, Beveridge Committee, Appendix H; Pilkington Committee, Appendix E).

The Treasury Memorandum to the Beveridge Committee notes that although the BBC might be thought of as a public corporation falling within the range of socialised industries, unlike those industries the BBC was not directed to act in the national interest: 'These arrangements may not be susceptible of very close definition on paper and there may well be room for modifications and improvements ...' (Appendix H, op.cit., p 267).

The Committees (Reports: Sykes, 1923; Crawford, 1926; Ullswater, 1936; Beveridge, 1951; Pilkington, 1962; Annan, 1977) dealing with all extant broadcasting reiterate the Government and State position. Thus, Pilkington: 'it had become the agreed policy of successive Governments, and accepted by Parliament, that the Corporation (the BBC) should be independent of the Government ... When the ITA was created this same view of broadcasting prevailed.'

But when the Annan Committee sat, things had changed: 'the ... difficulty in reconciling the desires of the public with those of Government, the management of broadcasting organisations **and** the producers of the programmes themselves, remains a problem of our times' (Annan Report, p.16).

This philosophical expedition, which runs through the Annan Report, is unusual. The 'official' explanation of policy is that it is unproblematic: adjustment to an already finely balanced system. The uproar with which the Annan Report was received suggests that the issues the Reports touched upon were sensitive - at least to the political and broadcasting systems.

3 : Professional Mystique

If Government and State have tended towards complacency about the meaning of policy, broadcasting institutions deal in the coinage of mysticism, wrapped around producer (professional) attitudes about the limits to creative freedom.

For the BBC, which tends to lead on philosophy about policy, the policy function is fulfilled by allowing the Corporation to get on with informing, educating and entertaining: 'It has been the policy of successive Governments to leave to the Corporation a wide independence in the conduct of its services, and, in particular, in the choice of its programmes ... The Corporation hopes that this policy will be continued' (Beveridge Report, Appendix H, p.90).

Fraser, speaking about ITV, suggests it was a 'great political compromise, the successful political compromise in creating a system of private enterprise under public control ...

a rough and ready best' (Fraser, 1970; Fraser, 1955) which says little about subsequent policy. Other authors (notably Thomas, 1962, 1977; Jenkins, 1961) have remarked in passing or directly on the autonomy of ITV from the kind of daily Government 'policy' through interference, compared with the BBC. In one sense independent seems to have meant from the Government not of the BBC*.

Producers, particularly of political programmes, have been conscious of the way Government policy can mean more than channel allocation, frequency planning, or periodic inquiry by Committee. A whole level of policy is daily or weekly, relating to the alleged abuses by broadcasters of their constitutional position with respect to balance. That broadcasters themselves have failed fully to articulate what balance means has not helped their case (see BBC General Advisory Council, 1976; Schlesinger, 1978; Glasgow Media Group, 1976 and 1980; Hall, 1973, among many others).

Early post-war television ran into problems over this question of balance: In the News mentioned above p. 46 tended to use equal numbers of left and right politicians but from the Parties' point of view, not from the mainstream of opinion. (Goldie, 1977). There is much correspondence on this matter in the BBC Archives (see also Briggs, 1979; interview with A J P Taylor, TCS I 7).

The BBC had policy problems over the broadcasting of Party Politicals, and, more vitally, the 14-Day Rule: in both cases the two main political parties were at one in trying to shackle the Corporation (see BBC Archives; Swinton Archives).

The Corporation mystified these clashes which tend to be manifest at the highest managerial levels (see Boyle (1972) or Reith's 'conclusions' about relations between the BBC and the

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*This question of what 'independent' means (from the Government, from the BBC) may be deliberately fudged: see Burton and Carlen (1979) on 'official discourse' (and dealt with in greater detail in Chapter Four, p.349).

Government and State; Normanbrook (1965) on the role of BBC Governors; Peter Eckersley (1942) gives another, rarer, internal opposition view).

Producers, either writing about or being studied, emphasise the control exercised by both the broadcasting organisations and, above them, the Government, or political parties, although a bland early view is found in Roger Eckersley (1946). At the same time they idealise their power, influence and motives (Bakewell and Garnham, 1970), while under-estimating the extent of their relationships or engagement with society (see Breed, 1952, 1955; Carey, 1969; Silvey, 1970; Elliott, 1972; Blumler, 1969; Kumar, 1977). Burns, in an extended review of BBC personnel and their attitudes, considers that one determinant is the failure by Government and State to allow the BBC at least to develop into a fully fledged institution:

> for more than fifty years, the BBC has been exposed almost incessantly ... to self-interested cossetting and to hostile suspicions from Government and Opposition.
> (Burns, 1977, op.cit.).

The BBC, to break free, will have to make its own policy, he concludes. This view is naive and is a fault of isolating the broadcast institutions from their society (equally common, incidentally, among 'left' and 'right' authors).

4 : Political Parties

In one important sense the major political parties have to be separated from any Government their leaders may form. We shall see this process operating in both the television and radio case studies. The factions within a political party may well be fighting for opposite policies. The Conservative Party of the early 1950s was split by the question of commercial television; less so but still in part by the possible introduction of commercial radio.

The leaderships of both parties have often agreed on policy: hence the Labour Party of the 1920s supported the establishment of the BBC; the Conservative Party the setting up of the Beveridge

Committee. More striking, on questions like party political broadcasts, or on the 14-Day Rule, the leaderships have been working together to establish a common policy usually aimed at restricting broadcaster freedom.

But one prominent concern of the Conservative Party of the late 1940s was the way the Labour Government used 'Ministerials' on the radio (broadcasts about Government policy in specific areas which did not carry an automatic right of reply by the Opposition). The Labour Government may well have felt that broadcasting offered a chance for them to overcome the generally hostile Press of the times: to use a 'neutral' channel to put policy proposals to the public. But in practical terms this meant 37 Ministerials (approximately one every ten days) in 1946, the peak year for legislation, especially on nationalising, and when the row over the Health Service developed (16 took place in 1947; 21 in 1948; 23 in 1949). Fair play to the Conservative Party might have been developing a policy to break the Government's monopoly on these broadcasts.

In the 1960s when Labour was in power again it saw the BBC, in particular, as undermining its path and one result was The People and the Media (Labour Party, 1974) and the Annan Committee. Crossman (1968) felt that it was the arrival of commercial television which had changed, not just broadcasting, but the nature of democracy: from 'participatory' to 'plebiscite'. Wilson also had put Lord Hill into the BBC as chairman of the Governors to (he hoped) curb its excesses; Aylestone into the ITA was to do a similar job (by doing nothing) (see Tracey, 1978; Annan, 1977).

If the Labour Party has resorted on occasion to Enquiries and political appointment, the Conservatives could be seen as tinkering with the structures of broadcasting. Again, the political parties ascribe policy in this area as developing freedom of choice or access while operating almost daily to restrict both. (The BBC Archives are full of letters from the two parties 'blacklisting' their own extreme members and trying to prevent the general public

from discussing political issues in open forum.)

5 : History is the propaganda of the winners

The most extensive history (Briggs, 1961, 1965, 1970, 1979) is complete enough up to 1955 to constitute an archive in its own right. In terms of the meaning of mass media policy it suffers from too much close detail, and concentration on the BBC.

Nevertheless it is Briggs who informs us of the early days when the Post Office was at pains to restrict the nascent broadcasting transmitters with regulations not dissimilar to the 'red flag' rule imposed on early motorists (Briggs, 1961, p.73). The early interest of the armed forces is also made explicit.

Briggs stops his monumental work at the moment when commercial television begins and he may be criticised not unfairly for having written a history, not of broadcasting in the UK but of the BBC's part in broadcasting. This study seeks to correct one bias that Briggs inevitably brings: that it was the BBC that overrode all other consideration in broadcasting. The histories of the French-based English-Language commercial station, Radio Normandy and the more famous Radio Luxembourg remain to be written, yet if we are considering policy their importance becomes clearer.

By using BBC sources to the degree he does Briggs errs - as historians are wont to do - on the uniqueness of broadcasting, its novelty and its impact. But there were other events of the time: Briggs mentions the change in political climate when Britain effectively became a one-party State - for 14 years - but concentrates over-much on the broadcasting to be able to locate- situate- the change.

There were two ways of approaching his 'Golden Age' of wireless, he says: one, was to concentrate on the development of the BBC as an institution (pace, Burns); the second was to concentrate on the impact of broadcasting on society. 'The second line of approach is extraordinarily difficult' (Briggs, 1965, p.7), and reflects one difference between historians and social scientists.

Despite acknowledging that it is easy to imagine it was wireless that ended the isolation of rural life, or knit together a nation 'divided by age, class, education and region', whereas in truth factors like cars, or a change in popular entertainment, probably did as much or more, Briggs inevitably moves closer to his material than is realistic.

Alternative methods have been tried. Smith (1974) has produced a source book of some one hundred documents running from the 1863 Telegraph Act to material of the late 1960s. He considers there may be detected a singularity of ideal which, loosely, is that of cultural democracy. This helps us to think about the location of broadcasting policy which Smith would, I think here at least equate, as we might expect an ex-professional broadcaster to do, with balance, fairness, and standards again, based round professional impartiality. Elsewhere he has argued that policy towards broadcasting reflected ideas about mass society (q.v. p. 74) 'in that the instrument was thought to be not a means for developing or changing the shape of democracy but of containing it' (Smith, 1973, p.74). I shall argue that this is an error, again a fault of over-ascribing to the power of broadcasters.

Both Briggs and Smith subscribe to the cultural theory of broadcasting in both the popular and sociological sense: this means that policy in their view is a compromise between the demands of the political system in the modern world against a form of alien culture which is creative freedom, consistent with broadcaster norms. Thus Smith (p.182): 'The broadcast interview the standard formula of political communication, is a fusion of a journalistic technique with a theatrical one,' and 'Broadcasting has thus emerged in itself as a special source of political power'.

Although I think there is an important heuristic here, it does not contain sufficient information to form any hypothesis about broadcasting policy - or its determinants - which would be consistent with the evidence. Indeed on this reading politicians would have kept much stricter control.

Briggs is much better than Smith (who moves uneasily between historical material and quasi-social scientific jargon, mixed in with self-experience) in allowing a high degree of redundancy and conflict where he theorises: 'It is necessary ... to recognise that the social atmosphere ... of the ten years after 1945 (he writes in Volume Four, Sound and Vision) was very different from that of the contrasting 1960s and 1970s.'

The historical studies, including those of the more 'structural' writers (Paulu, 1956, 1961, 1967; Wedell, 1968, 1970) tend to suggest a unitary movement in policy, Wedell for instance seeing unity in the joint party approach to issues - with a few exceptions. I have argued here that it is precisely the exceptions - in their concrete form - which determine everything else. Wedell grasps the party point but with no theoretical base cannot relate this to all the changes: he makes what I consider to be an arbitrary distinction between 'public' and 'government' policy. Paulu, while detailing the change in policy brought about by ITV sees it as 'a commercial version of the BBC' (p.58) again implying a unitary model.

Aside from the historical studies, other authors, looking very often through historical lens, have sought to locate broadcasting and policies towards it, within an economic framework. Among the better of these is Coase (1950) whose British Broadcasting: A Study in Monopoly attempts to show that the economic expedient of efficiency (a Post Office argument, Coase says) leads to (in his view) false policy. Coase corresponded with Ian Orr-Ewing about breaking the BBC's monopoly, after the war and Orr-Ewing (TCS I 3,3(2)) says he was very helpful in his views to the pro-commercial Lobby (an academic argument for policy change: economics perhaps being more 'neutral' than ideology).

Robson (1937), Gordon (1938) and O'Brien (1937) all try to locate broadcasting policy within the changes in general government and state attitudes towards public utilities: thus, like forestry, water, electricity, gas and so on, broadcasting is a public utility (a common carrier we might now say, a term much used in the USA

carrying value connotations of benevolent neutrality and monopoly) and should be thus regulated. Monopoly follows naturally as does a general freedom to organise probably within a definition of national interest, although as I have noted O'Brien suggests broadcasting's operations are 'essentially political'. Robson, while lauding the organisational arrangements wanted regional devolution (the issue to haunt Beveridge 12 years later).

Post-war writers of the 1950s had the commercial system to laud or condemn. With an alternate model, the economists unsurprisingly split into left and right on their interpretation of government policies. Caine (1968), Altman et al (1962), feel that Government had been over cautious in the development of ITV and that a market model (as with the Press) should be allowed to develop. Government policy might be seen as moving, albeit slowly in that direction. Wiles (1962) takes an extreme view on the 'market' in broadcasting but pulls back from the programming implications.

Other authors have considered policy (rarely) from the extension of the audience (Bain, 1962) or from the relationship between the audience as a market and the ownership of (commercial) channels (Brown, 1971). The 'true' left-wing policy theorists are considered in greater detail below since they constitute a separate strand in the 'ten theories'.

6 : Them and Us : political science and broadcasting policy

There is a wealth of material on broadcasting and politics: here I am concerned with only certain elements of that material, where political science has directly or indirectly engaged with the relationship between broadcasting, the political system and policy.

Some themes are self-evident. Thus the extent to which broadcasting is related to questions of political support, mobilisation and a substitute for, or complement to, more traditional media.

Seymour-Ure has argued (1968, 1974, 1977) that the Press has become less partisan: this is a commercial pressure (neutral markets) but could also be related to the rules surrounding balance and fair play which circumscribe broadcasting and spill over as an effect of one set of professionals on another. But he also considers that the parties have lost direct control over broadcasting (in the sense that party political broadcasts do not have the significance they once had); in my view he exaggerates this point unduly.

Broadcasting as a political support mechanism is highlighted by Barker and Rush (1970); Rose (1967); Windlesham (1966) and by Paletz et al (1971). A more technical version is provided by Deutsch (1963). Peripheral to broadcasting policy but with concepts important for my general discussion is Kavanagh and Rose (1977) who look at the decline of credibility in government at a time when it was beginning to suffer from 'overload' (see King, 1975; Etzioni, 1977 and below p.118).

In other terms policy towards broadcasting might be understood in terms of elites and masses (Guttsman, 1965): 'There exists today in Britain a "ruling class", if we mean by it a group which provides the majority of those who occupy positions of power...' Broadcasting policy, in this rather naive scheme is a transmission belt of cultural assumptions organised to ensure the organisational arrangements keep the mass in its place (see also Stansworth and Giddens, 1974).

A similar assumption probably underpins Wilson's discussion of broadcasting policy in terms of a pressure group (Wilson, 1961) and, by implication, therefore, a plot. More sophisticated discussion of the impact of pressure groups is undertaken by Finer (1958) and Stewart (1968). the main 'pressures' (the first of which Wilson ignores entirely) are the broadcast organisations, other media industries, cultural organisations (like the churches), and the audience - or audiences. Pressure internal to the major political parties (which as we shall see is crucial to broadcasting policy: see Chapter Three and Chapter Four) is discussed at length by Mackenzie (1967) among many others.

American authors, whose experience of mass media policy - especially in broadcasting - is very different from Europeans' (see p.162) have concentrated their attention on broadcasting policy as minimalist and encouraging competition. Hence Casey in (Smith, B. et al, 1946) suggests the rise of modern mass media may be attributed to democracy, industrialisation and urbanisation: the power of the modern media with respect to political life demanded as much competition as possible.

This study, like many of its time, derived from a period when theorists had convinced themselves the media - again, especially broadcasting - were profoundly affective of audiences (see McQuail, 1977). This view coloured attitudes towards media policies and could be given as partial evidence why politicians immediately after the war were probably over-sensitive to media monopolies (but by no means the only reason: Germany's experience with Nazi-dominated media, and the spectre of the Soviet system undoubtedly had more impact on politics and its relations with broadcasting).

Later studies (Trenaman and McQuail, 1961; Blumler and McQuail, 1968) suggest otherwise and recommend that broadcast policy related directly to election politics ought to give the audience more choice precisely because there is little evidence of direct influence (and, therefore, not much danger of domination by one party or another).

Political science (and I have classified broadly, note) deals mainly with the small change of broadcasting as support for the political system: policy is designed to help legitimate existing institutions, to help fit a new medium into the constitutional arrangements largely designed to operate within the two-party model, Government and Opposition: we have rediscovered 'balance' again.

7 : Enter sociology : builder of repute

A number of conflicting themes have been developed by sociologists in considering broadcasting (or, more commonly, mass media as a whole). Some of the differences may be ascribed to cultural, political, social and economic differences between

Europe and North American. North American authors have been concerned with the continuing freedom of the mass media increasingly at variance with the requirements of social responsibility and public accountability. This concern arose with the press (see Siebert et al, 1956; Rivers and Schramm, 1957) and has become entangled with broadcasting, mainly television (for example, Bogart, 1960; Tebbel, 1974: 'Broadcasting ... has become the centrepiece of a gigantic struggle for power').

Some of this writing has been concerned to examine the way in which broadcasting can effect social change: in the broad sense all this writing and research (the two do not necessarily mesh: a great deal has been written not based on empirical research) can be contained within 'effects' theories classically stated by Lasswell: Who says What In Which channel To Whom With What effect (Lasswell, 1948).

I deal in detail below with the political effects theories which fall under structural-functionalism (see p. 90). All the research of this kind (although nominally related to the Press) has been admirably summed by McQuail (1976) in Review of Sociological Writing on the Press.

Representative of the theories of political 'effects' are Petersen et al (1965): 'The growth of the mass media in the United States greatly affected the development of American political institutions...' (p.32), and more discursively Cox (1968) who was an FCC Commissioner.

Belief that broadcasting in particular could lead to rapid social change (and media policies should therefore take this into account) led, in the 1950s, to a number of studies of media in developing countries, often funded with a view to preventing Communist expansion, by development of Western norms in policy-making and programming (Schramm, 1964; Lerner, 1957). In part this work can be linked to more overtly political studies like that of the seminal Politics of Developing Areas (Almond and Coleman, 1960) and The Civic Culture (Almond and Verba, 1959).

Effects theories have necessarily concentrated on audiences; in turn this has led to an absence of discussion, in general, of the production of programmes, the institutional arrangements for that production and especially the regulation and control of broadcasting. Where effects theorists, particularly working in Britain, are concerned with politics some prescriptive discussion of policy has emerged (Blumler and McQuail, 1968; Katz, 1971), suggesting that there should be a relaxation of political party control. This has been taken up recently by Blumler et al (op.cit.).

Other authors have concentrated on the institutional and social factors which have shaped broadcasting. Defleur (1970a) has examined the rate of diffusion of media and the likely consequences of a rapid growth and then decline in use. This theme, narrowed to television has also been explored by Robinson (1969) who says that television has had a massive impact on American daily life responsible for a greater 'rearrangement of time usage' (sic) than the car. This apparent obsession with television may be seen in the number of studies on the effects of television on children, outside the scope of this study but significant for their potential impact on policy (restriction of, and increased accountability of, broadcasters). In fact one author (Blumler, 1965) suggests accountability has been a consistent theme in British broadcasting policy but evidence in this study suggests such accountability has generally been limited to elites. In the same article Blumler suggests British broadcasting may be divided into two historical phases, with an early stable period lasting until 1945. He considers that this was due to the monopoly compounded by a desire by an educated elite to keep broadcasting to (and for) themselves. Post-war change may be linked to commercial and political pressures from the right paradoxically allied to 'the working out of the implications of Britain's democratisation' (p.170). Defleur (1970b) has likewise turned round the question: what impact has broadcasting on society to what impact has society on broadcasting. This is a vital step in understanding the 'true' position of broadcasting particularly in the political system.

This position, which I take up, is the question of the legitimation of a status quo (Gerbner, 1972), a general theme which appears

more and more (see McQuail, 1972; Tunstall, 1970; Curran et al, 1977: readers which contain discussion by a number of authors on this general theme*).

Legitimation - and the related question of consensus - shades, at points imperceptively, into questions of media ideology or ideologies, both overt (Gerbner, 1961; Brown, 1969) and covert (see the next section). Gerbner, for example reports that

> the revolutionary aspect of modern mass communication is its 'public-making' ability: that is the ability to form historically new bases for collective thought and action quickly, continuously...
> (p.206 in The Sociological Review Monograph Number 13,1969).

Brown suggests that in order to appreciate what the media is about more work needs to be done on 'media practitioners'. This has implications for a study of policy-making: we might surmise that recruitment, training and socialisation would be enormously important in pre-shaping attitudes. If these are added to the pressures of external policy what implications then remain for legitimation or consensus?

I have noted (see p. 60)that there is an inherent conflict between broadcasting organisations (and their 'creative' personnel) and the political system, but that this conflict is not by any means detrimental to the system. A 'cognitive dissonance', it could be argued, actually enhances a consensual outcome because it allows deviance without anomie. Such speculation is continued below (p.95).

Sociological approaches have been generally bedevilled by fragmentation of approach which has split between broad theoretical exposition, and generally micro-empirical study. Merton's plea for the middle range has generally gone unheeded. A sociology of mass communication which would seek to integrate empirical work with a rounded theoretical base has not emerged; the policy-making side has been the most underdeveloped, most effort being concentrated on a concern

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*As I shall demonstrate (see p.115)this question of legitimation runs through much 'left-right' social scientific debate in different forms. (In particular see Lazarsfeld and Merton, 1957; Adorno, 1957; Adorno and Horkheimer, 1973; Parsons, 1960.)

> with mass society, its politics and its culture, the other stemming from the great expenditure of resources on empirical studies of the direct effects of mass communications on the opinions, attitudes, information and behaviour of the individuals exposed to them. (McQuail, 1969).

8 : Marxist Theory : the distorting mirror

Although there have been a few comparative approaches (Burrage, 1969) most studies of the media have remained in one camp ('Western' sociology) or the other (Marxism). Marxist studies have concentrated around the assumption that the consciousness of a society is in one form or another, to a greater or lesser extent, determined by both the economic base or cultural superstructure. Despite sterling efforts notably R. Williams (1961; 1974; 1975) they have remained, at one level, determinist and have sought to explain the mass media at that level. (see McQuail, op.cit., 1976).

There has been a three-fold split in methods of approach, however. First, there has been a theoretical strand, always strong in Marxism which looks at texts in the original works of Marx and Engels, particularly, of late, at the Grundrisse and the concept of information as a commodity (Marx, 1973).

This aspect is taken up by a number of authors who have sought to place the mass media in terms of ownership and control of information and its flow, and the concomitant relationships between selling information and its ideological message (Murdock and Golding, 1973; Tuchman, 1978; Hoch, 1974 among many).

Others have examined questions of accountability of the media to audiences (Heller, 1978), the relationship between politics and manipulation of audiences (Collins, 1976; Pateman, 1974) and between structures in broadcasting and output (Garnham, 1973; 1979).

Connected with the 'ideological effect', amply discussed, if somewhat obscurely by Hall (1977) and Enzensberger (1974), has been the effort to link directly the message to some form of ideology, either in its production (Althusser, 1971) or in the text itself (notably Barthes, 1973 and recently, Hartley and Fiske, 1979). These

latter positions derive from linguistic theory (Saussure, 1974)and conclude that the messages reflect dominant power structures: policy is not considered separate from that; this is true of Miliband (1969) also who has a conveyor-belt concept of media policy.

In general, Marxist theory does not separate sufficiently the elements which go to make up any policy: it is ultimately concerned to prove some kind of determinancy and fails both at the empirical level and in explanation (apart from epistemological paucity).

Nevertheless, in the various studies cited and in numerous others, a series of focii are provided around particular concepts: ideology, legitimation (Marxist sense), consensus (derogatory, Marxist sense), power and class. These concepts provide extremely important points of reference in any study of media policy and, allied with sociological weapons in methodology and theory enable a closer more informative look at the formation and meaning of media policies.

9 : Mass society : (i) popular culture and militism

There are linkages here with political theories of elite domination, sociological theories of media effects, and Marxist theories of ideology. Mass society theory can be seen to be a response to the origins of sociology, (Bramson, 1974) and produced within its frame a split between left and right. Both groups of theorists are characterised by pessimism and by a belief that policy is either destroying civilisation by allowing too much freedom (Ortega y Gasset, T.S. Eliot follow this line) or by too little, (for example, Adorno and Marcuse).

Some efforts were made to 'empirical' work (Dexter and Manning White, 1964; Rosenberg and Manning White, 1957) but the tradition remained negative: the media had to be 'contained' in some way.

Out of the 'left' tradition emerged the Frankfurt School (Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, notably) whose experience, first of German control of broadcasting and, subsequently, American 'liberalism' convinced them of this aspect of negativity. In post-War Germany the more positive theoretical aspects (but not the

negative conclusions) have been developed in conjunction with the systems theories of Talcott Parsons. I hope to demonstrate (see p.101) that this can lead to a resolution of meaning in policy formation which is not necessarily negative in outlook.

9 : (ii) Populist Discussion : All's Well ...

For the sake of space I have concentrated only on British writers - and then superficially. Many themes amongst this group are not dissimilar to those of the broadcasters (many of the palpably 'populist' writers are ex-broadcasters) and some mass society theorists, except that with respect to the latter the populist writers are overwhelmingly positive in their consideration of policy.

Even the titles betray this: Shulman's, Least Worst Television in the World (1973) although critical accepts its title as valid; Beadle's Television, a critical review (1963) and Ross', Television Jubilee (1961) are laudatory of the established organisations and of the beneficial effects of British governments' policies. Whale (1969) is more critical: it is worth noting how many of these authors concentrate on television.

Earlier writers, among which were a crop of 'dissident' BBC ex-personnel, are less sure of the impact of broadcasting, or how it might sensibly be controlled (Siepmann, 1950; Eckersley, 1942, op.cit.; Matheson, 1933; or even Reith, 1924).

Manvell (On the Air, 1953), writing when commercial television was a major consideration in broadcasting (see Chapter Three) points out that a number of the populist writers favoured competition with the BBC, having left it under a Reithian cloud: this is linked to later ideas of the BBC as part of the Establishment, not a term heard in the early 1950s.

ITV became, says Manvell, 'we, the people' and he goes on to suggest the audiences were motivated by the Id rather than the Ego (see also Adorno, op.cit., 1957). This suggestion might be compared with a recent survey of working class use of television (Piepe et al,

1975) which found that 'commercial television is more closely tuned to the community values of the working class than is the BBC (p.15). Whether this means Id rather than Ego is another question.

Psychological study of broadcasting some tied closely to policy issues (ie Cantril and Alport, 1935) (again, outside the scope of this study) has been prominent as have more idiosyncratic approaches, which I deal with last.

10 : Other theories : ad infinitum

Broadcasting's impact on modern society would be manifest merely by reading a bibliography of works solely concerned with it. The shoals of theoretical positions increase dangerously as a reviewer approaches the landfall which is broadcasting itself. I have examined a number of clearly identifiable 'traditions' in works on the broadcasting system, be they official or otherwise. I want to conclude by remarking on a few of the alternatives outside of what I consider to be the mainstream areas.

Of these the most unusual is the technological worship exhibited by McLuhan (1964) in all his major works on media. In Understanding Media, he dazzles rather than informs, a victim (as have been many others) to the admittedly spectacular technical achievement of electronic innovation. Needless to say he has been heavily criticised, notably by Finkelstein (1968).

Also unusually Leymore (1975) uses structuralist theory to code and explain advertisements: carried by media, especially television, these are the equivalent of ancient myth (and fulfil a social purpose). More culturally diffuse purpose is suggested by Adler and Cater (1976) specifically for television and Chaney (1972).

Continuing a similar theme, deviancy theorists have suggested the importance of media in constructing events and in 'explaining' them. (Cohen and Young, 1973). Policy issues here will presumably reflect certain core 'myths', especially those concerned with objectivity and balance and (with Leymore) 'resolution' into, again, some agreed cosmic consensus.

Running through all these positions is a deep concern about the mass media and their collective impact.

11 : The End, or the Beginning? Towards a Resolution

Classifying mass media, particularly here broadcasting, studies in this way is only one possibility. Studies of mass communications might be classified according to the stages in the production of content: from reality through mediation to audiences. Particular messages may be followed (Braestrup, 1978, is a very good example here; also Halloran et al, 1970).

Theories may additionally be looked at as ideologies of particular interest groups, either involved in production, or 'agenda setting', in the audiences, as elites or 'mass' or, as power groups (for example, political party hierarchies).

But, as I hope to demonstrate, it is possible to draw a broad general line between critical theories (which very often have a Marxist or neo-Marxist base) and approbatory theories. The critical theories tend to deal with the question of market determination and its implications, either in concrete form (structures) or abstract-ideological (functions).

Approbatory theories tend to suggest the integrative nature of mass communications against fragmentary trends. But in dealing with concepts of consensus and legitimation I consider they fulfil an important theoretical lacuna in Marxist theories and that this may be characterised as the failure of the critical theories to come to terms with necessary integrative social forces (ultimately preventative of anomie).

As I have shown extent of concern about the mass media has fluctuated (see also McQuail, 1977) but, in the past decade (based on numbers of titles published and their emphasis), a decisive return has been made to a consideration that particularly broadcasting is impinging upon social life, probably at the structural level of values.

We need to resolve the issue of how that works and how it reflects a social necessity in the formation of policy. We can ask, directly, two questions: What function is fulfilled by broadcasting in a developed late-capitalist society? How does

broadcasting policy ensure an evolution within such a society of the organisations required to effect the functions required?

III : Some Landmarks in Broadcasting Policy

Broadcasting has had a short history: less than a lifetime so far at 58 years. But in the period between birth and its present uncomfortable middle age there have been many 'landmarks' in the relationship between its institutions and those of Government and State. The following brief history seeks to outline these prominences in order to contextualise the main body of the argument in this chapter. The landmarks are signposts directing our attention along particular paths: what we might address ourselves to answering is: a single or a multitude of directions? a plan or a pragmatic reaction to events? or to use the terminology of structural-functionalism: is broadcasting part of a pattern-maintaining sub-system or does it lie between sub-systems? are its goals consistent? does the political system, in making policy, relate directly to those goals - or, concomitantly, direct them?

Two apparent landmarks dominate all others: the formation of the BBC and the formation of the ITA: both statutory authorities in their different ways seem to have defined British broadcasting; everything else is a modification of these patterns. It is possible to demonstrate a relationship of these two events to crises in the State and in the particular crises the larger upheavals produced in the Conservative Party (see p. 126). In the case of the BBC, a centralised authoritative body is set up, along with many others in industry and in the quasi-government area, in order to help stablise the system: the cartelisation of British industry during the 1920s which does not prevent a severe recession, and which may have precipitated it, enables more central government control when that crisis finally breaks.

Middlemas points out that 'the period saw the rise of Lever Brothers, British Oxygen, the Association of British Machine Tool-makers, and the Metropolitan-Vickers combine as well as the first

moves towards cartelisation of the iron and steel industry...' (Middlemas op.cit., p.179). Metropolitan-Vickers was one of the companies which formed the original British Broadcasting Company.

While this economic process was continuing, a more mundane political pressure was acting upon the Conservative Party. During the 1920s it was the Conservative Party which expressed a coherence fleeing from the Liberal Party and not yet fully manifest in the growing strength of the Labour Party. A prosaic consideration of broadcasting policy has to take into account the fact that for the first twenty years of broadcasting, only the Conservative Party remained publicly unchanged in the political market. But, as many commentators have pointed out (notably, Mackenzie and Silver, 1968, p.243), in order to retain power when the votes of propertyless manual workers have dominated elections, the Conservative Party have had to use, crucially, the single idea that they alone are the party of the whole nation: 'One Nation is thus not an ideological frill for Conservatives, it expresses one of the conditions for their survival as a political force' (Gamble, 1974). In the 1920s, Gamble maintains, the Conservative Party was anxious to restore the pre-war 'politics of power'. This is separate from the 'nation' (politics of support), relying as it does on the State as an instrument. On this conception (developed at length below, p. 151 the policy which introduced the BBC was a 'balancing', an effort to unite the nation, while continuing to practice power politics elsewhere (as in the confrontation of the General Strike).

The BBC had acted for the government in that Strike but 'appeared' to be neutral (explained in densely mystical terms by Reith in a memorandum to his staff after the Strike had ended); that is, it had played power politics. The reward was the first major policy: the Royal Charter (symbolic of 'nation' and establishment) embodied both a centralised control (through the Post Master-General's veto) and a generalised diffuse identity with British culture.

However, it is possible to argue (as Coase, op.cit. does in part) that the equally vital landmark during this period was the

formation of the Company because it introduced both principles of monopoly and also commercialism. The formation, four years later, of the Corporation was a response to anomalies created by the compromises of the Company. Principally the anomaly, as the Sykes Committee reported, was the growth of amateur set-building (an early example in broadcasting of audience effects) which was seriously undermining the position of the manufacturers who owned the BBC. Those manufacturers had seen the formation of a broadcasting company in terms of the provision of a programme only to be received through their radio sets - the sale of which was their 'real' business.

The financing of that service was to come from a tax on those sets as well as from the licence fee. Amateurs, building their own sets, were evading the licence fee and knocking the Company's scheme. The phenomenal growth in radio sets may have first alerted the Post Office to the social potential of broadcasting.

In the later euphoria over the discovery of public service broadcasting it is often forgotten that the BBC (company) was set up to enable British radio set manufacturers to obtain this monopoly of the British market (another example of cartelisation) and that the programmes were secondary to that. The licence fee was partly a device to ensure government surveillance of owners (Sykes, 1923) (and might be linked to the concerns of committees like that of the Wireless Sub-Committee of the Imperial Communications Committee).

Advertising on the radio at this point had not been 'invented' even in the United States (see Barnouw 1966): the commercial aspect there too was set sales. Nevertheless commerce had been introduced as a fundamental part of broadcasting. The Corporation, in its public disavowal of commerce (although for a number of years it allowed a form of indirect sponsorship) 'unbalanced' the twin principles the GPO had allowed: a central commercial interest and monopoly.

The Sykes Committee, in 1923, was set up to look at the BBC (Company) and the way it was financed. By then advertising was beginning in a number of countries. Given the breakdown of the original idea (a tax on sold radio sets supplementing licence fees), the Committee looked at advertising. Its conclusions are

instructive for the whole subsequent history of British broadcasting, especially given the importance of precedent in the English constitution.

There were, thought the Committee, and given no reliance on the taxpayer for the financing of broadcasting, three alternatives on advertising finance:

> a) that advertisements should be the main source of revenue of broadcasting;
>
> b) that they should be banned absolutely as at present; and
>
> c) that they should be accepted only to such an extent as may prove necessary to supplement the main sources of revenue and make ends meet
>
> (Sykes, op.cit., par.41).

The Committee concluded that 'certain supplementary sources of revenue should be the subject of early consideration.' At the same time it allowed that a monopoly in broadcasting might be broken: 'the Government should keept its hands free to grant additional licences, and should consider various alternatives...' to the BBC.

The breakdown of the badly thought out commercial - or at least quasi-commercial - aspects to the first scheme led to a broadcasting institution based on a licence fee and, increasingly, wedded to public service broadcasting. The Crawford Committee, in 1926 in a much shorter report, had to consider the growing potential of the new medium:

> Broadcasting has become so widespread, concerns so many people, and is fraught with such far-reaching possibilities that the organisation ... no longer corresponds to national requirements ...
>
> (Crawford, 1926, Cmd 1908) (my emphasis).

These first two committees of enquiry set the pattern for all future ones: they managed to both extract the principles of monopoly and commercial involvement and to enshrine them: in fact they demonstrate consensus at work: inclusion and exclusion, allowing any government to pick and choose. As we have seen, the Conservative Government of 1926 chose monopoly and with it, the value national unity: in that scheme commercialism could only debase, divide; akin to allowing money-changers in the temple.

The development of the broadcasters' links between the concepts

of public service broadcasting and the monopoly continue from 1926 to 1954: in policy terms the 'landmarks' of this second period are the Ullswater Committee Report of 1935 and the Labour Government's White Paper on broadcasting of 1946. Indeed one follows from the other: Ullswater, more than any other report (with the possible exception of Pilkington) lauded the BBC and all its works. At the same time it recognised the relationship between broadcasting and politics and their need, mutually, to come to terms.

The question of television, expressly allowed by Ullswater to have an existence of its own, is dealt with in more detail below. The Labour Government of 1945 was implementing Ullswater's recommendation of a ten-year charter when its 1946 White Paper continued the BBC for five years, from 1946: the War was a hiatus in the Government's view. It is significant that this Government accepted the Coalition Government's own report on broadcasting (see p.210): that Wartime Cabinet Committee had been dominated by Conservatives and included Woolton.

What is significant about the 1946 White Paper is that it demonstrates a major premis of this study: that the Conservative Party has dominated broadcasting policy. Originally the Labour Government were to continue the BBC Charter for ten years from 1946. This would have delayed any Committee of Inquiry until 1954 by which time the BBC's tardy development of television (see p.220) would have been ended with its later development plans well under way. For BBC television to have been in this position could have meant any Conservative Government of the time would not have tried (or even necessarily wanted) to introduce commercial television. Certainly, the BBC would have been in a strong position.

But just after the draft White Paper of 1946 went to print Cabinet Minutes (CP(46)241) record that a 'formidable' list of Conservative MPs had put down a motion calling for an Inquiry into broadcasting. Although the Minutes suggest resisting the call for a Joint Select Committee of the House they note 'the demand ... must be treated seriously'. The outcome was renewal of the Charter for five years, which undermined the BBC's stability and which can be

seen as the Conservative Party considerably moulding broadcasting policy even when in Opposition and in some disarray. This first Labour Government to have a clear majority continued Conservative Party policy: the irony was to be that the Conservative Party was changing precisely because of that Labour Government.

The real landmarks in the third period precede it - that is to say they are embedded in another part of the politico-cultural system: the Woolton and Maxwell-Fyfe reforms of the Conservative Party (see p.131) and the actions of the Labour Government, particularly between 1945 and 1948. Among these actions was the setting up of the first Royal Commission on the Press under pressure from the National Union of Journalists (Ross, 1949) and their use of Ministerials (see p.63)

Within the period the Beveridge Committee Report which was highly critical of the BBC as it was then organised; the minority report by Selwyn Lloyd; most of all, the Conservative victory of 1951 with its influx of new young MPs of the radical right, contributed to the 'balancing' of broadcasting through the eventual setting up of the Independent Television Authority.

In much greater detail below (p.184) I examine the premis that it was a desire of the Conservative Party that it should reduce the power of the 'left-wing' BBC by introducing a 'right-wing' (ie commercially based and commercial selling service). This premis necessarily ignores the larger issues of policy-making; in particular that policy-making is a complex network between interest groups and individuals aligned in different (and sometimes oppositional) sub-groups of society. Nevertheless it does provide a focus for what has to be an initial step in policy-making: visibility within those political structures which can formulate and implement concrete policies. And it is true that the Conservative Party was split by the issue and that it was not popular in the country (neither was it unpopular: the public appeared indifferent).

The main argument here is that the coming of commercial television was as important at the structural level as it was more superficially: broadcasting qua legitimation (see p.115) was

unbalanced by the BBC: as an example, the use of broadcasting by the Labour Government as an instrument of government, had led to concern (and ties up with the growth of other direct government propaganda arms, like the Central Office of Information during this time).

The principle of advertising finance had never been conceded one way or another: television provided the technological novelty which aided the 'other' way of financing to be introduced. It was, therefore, as Conservative Party spokesmen have never tired of saying, genuinely the monopoly which precipitated the argument.

What then, are we to understand by the extension of commercial financing to radio, albeit, in principle, local radio? One striking point about the post-World War Two period is the rate of landmarks (as I have defined them) greatly increase: this is tied directly to change and innovation in broadcasting; also to the growing recognition of broadcasting's true potential for politics. This is uniquely true of television.

The fourth period here is 1966-71, although a further classification would very probably isolate 1960-64 as well: the growth of the debate about commercial radio; the third television channel, a new line definition, colour television, the impact of television on children, the impact of commercial television, the impact of television on the 1959 General Election. Although television appears to dominate it was in radio - starting with the pirate off-shore commercial stations - that the major changes were wrought on the public and the Conservative Party. (Radio Manx (see p.304) almost certainly had a bigger impact on the State, especially the Post Office.)

Precedent, as I have noted, counts in Britain more sometimes than the law. The pirate radio stations demonstrated three things: one, that the BBC was not catering for the burgeoning teenage market of the 1960s; two, that radio could sell a great deal of advertising; three, that because of teenagers, a political impact was inherent both in youth and its cultural style.

The fourth period sees a Labour Government banning - censoring in the jargon of the right - the 'free' expression of the pirate radio stations, and authorising the BBC to reorganise and to introduce local radio. (The latter had been nominally accepted by the out-going Conservative Government.)

At the end of the period we find the seeds of the BBC's eventual destruction: inflation and a generic re-organisation which finally lays to rest Reith's mixed programming for a unified national audience; and a new Conservative Party, again re-generating after a major defeat, under a banner of aggressive capitalism aimed particularly at small business. A commercial local radio fits with this model (see Chapter Four).

Finally, briefly, the latest period begins in 1977 and will probably continue intil 1982 when the fourth channel may begin. Inevitably, with the apparent 'total' balance (what Annan in his Report inelegantly describes as the 'duopoly') created by a local commercial radio system which exhibits substantial elements of a disguised national system* (see Jory, 1980), and the existence of IRN), any further development may either continue the balance or attempt to radically restructure it.

The central argument developed here has been the relationship between broadcasting and the needs of the political system. The Conservative Party, as arbiters of power in that system tend to regulate major change in broadcasting's direction.

And Thomas (1959) notes

> It is a significant comment on the confused state of British opinion that, in recent years, the BBC has had no more enthusiastic defenders than the Labour Party, although it has done more than any other body to buttress the most conservative institutions in the country, to create and perpetuate reverence for the orders, the privileges and the mysteries of a conservative society (p.191).

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*The original Conservative Government plan to have 60 ILR stations to 20 BBC might also be seen as balancing the national BBC system with a disguised national commercial one.

Thus, following the Annan Committee Report, which was another Labour Government's committee (as was Beveridge), the rather messy (although theoretically, that is, rationally, sensible) recommendations fail to achieve State support (in this case the Home Office). The result is that once more the Conservative Party defines the system (see p.431). Again, they see it as balance (Might this be between Gamble's politics of support (the BBC) and the politics of power (the commercial system into which the fourth channel will fit)?).

In this discussion of landmarks television has been left to the end. Invented during the early 1930s (no single date will suffice), when the BBC was in its golden age of wireless, it got appended as wireless with pictures, surely one of the most inaccurate descriptions ever to dominate policy-making (see Haley, 1949, also).

The Selsdon Committee and then the Ullswater Committee 'gave' television to the BBC, whose pre-war development of it was minimal. It was clearly going to be expensive and it seemed early on to be best suited to a kind of music-hall presentation. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the minutes of a discussion between members of the BBC Control Board and the Director of Television about the formal opening of the television service:

> D. Tel suggesting obtaining Princess Elizabeth to open the official service. C(E), C(A) and C(P) joined in regarding the proposal with horror: as one person put it, it was exactly the sort of thing that you would expect Bairds to try to do if they were running Television. The feeling was that it was to some extent a prostitution of the Royal Family. D. Tel urged the proposal on the grounds of sentimental appeal (a sob in the throat of every woman looker): from the point of view of the others, this statement was a very effective crystallisation of their objections ... (BBC Archives, Caversham, T16/195)

This minute is unusually full: it was to be the 'sentimental appeal' of television that politicians of the post-World War Two period recognised. Television is in the home where audiences are relaxed; unlike radio it demands full attention; audiences tend to sit deliberately in front of a television set while radios are not a focus in the same way.

Because television is best at spectacular exposition of the intimate, or at emotional commitment, it beguiles. It opens windows on the world and makes the audience believe its images are real (the camera does not lie). Politicians after the war began to notice television in a way they had not radio. Ironically, few MPs possessed, or had the time to watch, television sets. Yet they clamoured to appear on it, or to stop their opponents from so appearing.

There were other reasons: it was new and under-developed and could more easily accommodate to change; unlike BBC radio which in the early 1950s rode on a crest of Wartime memories, television had no past. Commercially, the selling of visual advertisements looked more attractive - and could bring in more revenue. Finally, there is evidence that the Treasury was not averse to raising revenue for television via advertising (see p.178); in 1939 as Briggs has related (Briggs, 1965, p.618) the Treasury were pushing hard to get the BBC to finance future television developments with some form of sponsoring: the Ullswater Committee specifically named television as a possible recipient of sponsored programmes and the Wartime Hankey (1943) Committee had also made recommendations potentially permitting of advertising.

Before the war there had even been one or two quasi-sponsored television programmes, all of which created precedents. Television policy has never been far removed from commercial concerns, as it has never been far from political minds. It is worth noting, therefore, that although this is not a case of technological determinism, the technical development of television (with the associated costs) and the time of that development, have played crucial parts in policy-making. In the 1980s this is still true now that technical developments in co-axial cable, wave-guides and fibre-optics create, along with computer home terminal units, an entirely new framework in which video (a word which defines a change of use already) has to be fitted (see Chapter Five).

Table 1 : A Chronology of Broadcasting and Politics : 1922-1977

YEAR	INTERNATIONAL EVENTS	BROADCASTING 'EVENTS' (UK)	BROADCASTING 'PEOPLE' (UK)	INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING (UK)	INTERNATIONAL B'CASTING (EUROPE)	UK BROADCAST INSTITUTIONS (BBC/ITA)
1922		1922: BROADCASTS FROM WRITTLE. 1925: FIRST RELAY EXCHANGE. NATIONAL RADIO	1922: REITH JOINS BB C.	DECEMBER, 1921: RCA OPENS FIRST RADIO STATION 1922: WEAF BROADCASTS FIRST COMMERCIAL. 1924: OVER 500 RADIO STATIONS.	1925: INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING UNION	1922: BRITISH BROADCASTING COMPANY SET UP.
1927	1929: WALL STREET 'CRASH'	1927: NUMEROUS BAIRD TELEVISION EXPERIMENTS 1931: RADIO NORMANDY ENGLISH (COMMERCIAL) SERVICE	1927: REITH APPOINTED DIRECTOR-GENERAL BBC		1929: PRAGUE CONFERENCE ON FREQUENCY ALLOCATION	1927: BBC ROYAL CHARTER FOR 10 YEARS
1932	1933: HITLER IN POWER (GERMANY)	1933: RADIO LUXEMBURG B'CASTS REGULARLY TO UK. 1936: HIGH DEFINITION TV SERVICE BEGINS.		1933: ROOSEVELT'S FIRESIDE CHATS 1934: COMMUNICATIONS ACT FCC SET UP MBS (MUTUAL BROADCASTING SYSTEM) BEGINS		
1937	1938: MUNICH 1939: WAR BETWEEN EUROPEAN POWERS 1941: WORLD WAR	1939: TELEVISION CLOSES HOME SERVICE. DOWN 1940: FORCES RADIO SERVICE	1938: REITH LEAVES BBC. OGILVIE BECOMES D-G	1938: 'CHAIN' B'CASTING PROBE BY FCC 1939: LIMITED COMMERCIAL TELEVISION BEGINS		1937: BBC CHARTER TWO: 10 YEARS.
1942	1945: WAR ENDS.	1946: BBC TV RE-STARTS 3RD PROGRAMME	1943: JOINT D-Gs (FOOT AND GRAVES) 1945: HALEY BECOMES D-G.	1943: ABC BEGINS AS THIRD MAJOR NETWORK.		1944: BBC VOLUNTARILY INTRODUCES 14-DAY RULE.
1947	1950: KOREAN WAR	1949: BBC TV 5 YEAR PLAN 1951: ABAC FORMED		1948: FCC 'FREEZE' TV DEVELOPMENT	1948: COPENHAGEN CONFERENCE ON FREQUENCIES 1950: EUROPEAN BROADCAST UNION 1950: ARD (GERMANY) FOUNDED	1947: BBC CHARTER THREE: FOR 5 YEARS.
1952	1956: SUEZ CRISIS.	1952: CORONATION TELEVISED 1955: ITV STARTS BBC VHF RADIO STARTS	1952: IAN JACOBS BECOMES D-G 1955: IAN FRASER HEADS ITA	1952: FCC RESERVES TV CHANNELS FOR EDUC. NET SET UP. TV 'FREEZE' ENDS. 1954: McCARTHY TV 'EXPOSURE'.		1952: BBC CHARTER FOUR: FOR 10 YEARS 1954: ITA SET UP
1957		1960: BBC 'CLOSED' CIRCUIT LOCAL RADIO EXPERIMENT	1960: HUGH GREENE BECOMES D-G	1959: TELEVISION QUIZ SCANDALS 1961: UNRESTRICTED FILMING OF PRESIDENTIAL PRESS CONFERENCES	1961: GERMAN 'CONSTITUTIONAL' DECISION ON B'CASTING	
1962	1962: CUBA MISSILE CRISIS	1962: ITV NATIONAL COVERAGE COMPLETE 1964: PIRATE RADIO RADIO MANX. 1967: BBC RADIO 1 1967: BBC LOCAL RADIO BEGINS	1962: LORD HILL BECOMES CHAIRMAN, ITA	1962: TEL — STAR : 1962 1962: NON-COMMERCIAL TV AIDED BY FEDERAL MONEY 1965: EARLY BIRD : 1965	1965: CONCORD ON PIRATE RADIO.	1962: BBC CHARTER EXTENDED FOR 2 YEARS 1964: BBC CHARTER FIVE: FOR 10 YEARS TELEVISION ACT.
1967	1969: MAN WALKS ON MOON AND IS TELEVISED LIVE	1967: BBC COLOUR TV. 1969: ITV COLOUR TV 1969: BBC PUBLISH: BROADCASTING IN THE 70s.	1967: WILSON TRANSFERS HILL TO CHAIRMAN, BBC 1969: CURRAN BECOMES D-G, BBC	1969: 'VIOLENCE AND TV' DEBATE GROWS. 1969: AGNEW SPEECH ON BROADCASTERS.	1967: PIRATE RADIO STATIONS OUTLAWED (UK)	1968: NEW ITV FRANCHISE
1972	1973: 4TH ARAB-ISRAELI ENERGY CRISIS. WAR	1973: LOCAL COMMERCIAL RADIO BEGINS 1975: PARLIAMENTARY BROADCASTING EXPERIMENT	1972: JOHN THOMPSON APPOINTED HEAD, RADIO DIVISION, IBA.		1975: FRENCH BROADCASTING RE-ORGANISED.	1972: IBA SET UP 1974: BBC CHARTER EXTENDED UNTIL 1976 1976: BBC CHARTER AND IBA ACT EXTENDED 3 YEARS.
1977			1977: TRETHOWAN BECOMES D-G, BBC.		1975—1979: EUROPEAN DIRECT SATELLITE BROADCASTING PLANNING	1979: CHARTER AND ACT RENEWAL DELAYED UNTIL 1982.

Table 1 : A Chronology of Broadcasting and Politics : 1922-1977 /continued

YEAR	UK: GOVERNMENT/STATE	UK: POLITICAL PARTIES	UK: INQUIRIES AND POLICIES	UK: PRESS	UK: PRESSURE GROUPS	UK: AUDIENCES ETC..
1922	1922: GPO BROADCASTING 'CONFERENCE' 1922: CONSERVATIVE GOVT (BONAR LAW - BALDWIN) 1924: LABOUR GOVT (MACDONALD). 1924: CONSERVATIVE GOVT (BALDWIN).	1922: 1922 (CON) COMMITTEE FORMED	1927: SYKES COMMITTEE 1926: CRAWFORD COMMITTEE	1923: NPA TRIES TO PREVENT BBC NEWS SERVICE.		1922: LICENCE FEE SET AT 10/- (50p) 1924: ONE MILLION RADIO LICENCES
1927	1929: LABOUR GOVT (MACDONALD) 1931: NATIONAL GOVT (MACDONALD)	1929: EMBRYO RESEARCH DEPARTMENT (CON)			1929: RADIO PUBLICITY LTD PRO-COMMERCIAL ↑ RADIO NORMANDY	
1932	1935: NATIONAL GOVT (BALDWIN - CHAMBERLAIN)		1935: ULLSWATER COMMITTEE SELSDON REPORT		AND RADIO LUXEMBURG IMPACT ON 'REITHIAN' SUNDAY	
1937	1940: COALITION GOVT (CHURCHILL)			1938: PEP REPORT ON PRESS ↑ 1939: NEWSPRINT RATIONING PRESS HEAVILY		
1942	1945: LABOUR GOVT (ATTLEE)	1945: MODERN RESEARCH DEPARTMENT (CON)	1943: HANKEY REPORT 1946: WHITE PAPER	CONTROLLED UNDER MINISTRY OF INFORMATION DURING WWII	1944: CROWTHER ARTICLES IN ECONOMIST PRO COMMERCIAL BROADCASTING.	1946: RADIO LICENCE £1 RADIO + TV LICENCE £2
1947	1950: LABOUR GOVT (ATTLEE) 1951: CONSERVATIVE GOVT (CHURCHILL - EDEN)	1947: INDUSTRIAL CHARTER (CON) 1949: MAXWELL-FYFE REPORT (CON) 1951: ASCHERTON REPORT (CON) ON BROADCASTING	↑ 1949: BEVERIDGE COMMITTEE ↓ 1951: REPORT. 1951: WHITE PAPER	↑ ROYAL : 1947 PRESS COMMISSION ↓ REPORT : 1949	1949: EVIDENCE TO BEVERIDGE COMMITTEE MOST SO FAR.	
1952	1955: CONSERVATIVE GOVT (EDEN - MACMILLAN) 1956: FIRST PM BROADCAST ON TV (EDEN)		1952: WHITE PAPER 1953: WHITE PAPER 1954: TELEVISION ACT	1955: NEWSPRINT RATIONING ENDS	1952: POPULAR TELEVISION ASSOCIATION SET UP IN RESPONSE TO NATIONAL TELEVISION COUNCIL 1956: NATIONAL BROADCAST DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	1952: ONE MILLION TV LICENCE 1954: MIXED LICENCE £3.
1957	1957: 14-DAY RULE ENDS 1959: CONSERVATIVE GOVT (MACMILLAN) - DOUGLAS HOME		↑ PILKINGTON COMMITTEE 1960: ↓ 1962: REPORT.	↑ SHAWCROSS ROYAL 1960 PRESS COMMISSION ↓ REPORT : 1962	1960: MEMORANDA TO PILKINGTON COMMITTEE 1961: PYE LTD DEMONSTRATE LOCAL COMMERCIAL RADIO	1957: MIXED LICENCE £4
1962	1964: LABOUR GOVT (WILSON) 1966: LABOUR GOVT (WILSON)	1964: POLICY COMMITTEES PROLIFERATE (CON)	1964: TELEVISION ACT 1966: WHITE PAPER	1966: 'TIMES' AMALGAMATION	1964: CLEAN-UP TV CAMPAIGN (LATER : LOCAL RADIO ASSOCIATION)	1965: RADIO LICENCE £1.5/- MIXED LICENCE £5.
1967	1969: 'MIN POST TEL' 1970: CONSERVATIVE GOVT (HEATH)	1969: URWICK #22 REPORT ON LOCAL COMMERCIAL RADIO (CON)	1967: MARINE (OFFENCES) ACT 1971: WHITE PAPER (ILR)		1967: PRO-PIRATE POPULAR LOBBIES	1968: COLOUR TV LICENCE £N ABOLITION OF RADIO ONLY LICENCE 1971: OPEN UNIVERSITY STARTS
1972	1974: LABOUR GOVT (WILSON - CALLAGHAN) 1974: BROADCASTING	1975: 'PEOPLE AND THE MEDIA' REPORT (LAB)	1972: BROADCASTING ACT ↑ 1974: ANNAN COMMITTEE	↑ MCGREGOR ROYAL : 1974 PRESS COMMISSION INTERIM REPORT : 1975	1974-on : ANNAN COMMITTEE INUNDATED WITH MEMORANDA.	
1977	RECOMES HOME OFFICE RESPONSIBILITY 1979: CONSERVATIVE GOVT (THATCHER)	(1980): MEDIA COMMITTEE SET UP (LAB)	↓ 1977: REPORT. 1978: WHITE PAPER 1979: WHITELAW CAMBRIDGE SPEECH ON 4TH CHANNEL	↓ FINAL REPORT : 1977 1979: 'TIMES' DISPUTE		1977: MONOCHROME TV LICENCE £9 COLOUR TV LICENCE £21

IV : Towards a Theoretical Resolution of Meaning

1 : Definitions and Determinants

In the last few years considerable doubt has been expressed over the advisability of trying to construct a theory of mass communications because it assumes that the mass media can be located at the centre of social life (Murdock and Golding, 1976). I have tried in this study to avoid this trap and this theoretical chapter devotes a considerable amount of space to a consideration of the linkages between broadcasting and politics, the emphasis being on the way in which broadcasting is fitted into the political system.

Murdock and Golding in their paper, Theories of communication and theories of society, go on to say

> the primary task of mass communications research is not to explore the meanings of media messages but to analyse the social processes through which they are constructed and interpreted and the contexts and pressures that shape and constrain these constructions.

I concur with this and here wish to construct a bridge between two generally antagonistic theoretical bases - Marxism and Functionalism in order to locate media (broadcasting) policy.

I have concentrated on neo-Marxist theories of class, political power, ideology and the state; in functionalist theory I have tried to elaborate the work of Talcott Parsons who, curiously, has written little directly on the mass media.

But Parsons was mostly exercised by the need 'to find new bases of legitimacy for the American elite' (Gouldner, 1971, p.154); he considered he had found the answer in 'professionalism', thus escaping both Weber and Marx. In one sense, important to this study, the legitimacy of the media may be seen to be reinforced by the growing emphasis on professionalism and the concomitant credibility this is supposed to engender.

My principal use of Parsons' theories is not so directly tied to this particular emphasis. Rather, I concentrate on the four function scheme despite its mechanical faults and Parsons' own addiction to the number four (Lessnoff, 1980). Lessnoff suggests that Parsons went wrong when he changed emphasis from action to

system theory. Less harsh judgement on this shift has been made by Menzies (1976) and Rocher (1974), the former stressing the 'social' image Parsons' theory contains, the latter, in part, the 'dynamic' and conflict-laden heart of the AGIL framework.

Parsons assumes that men are social and that hides an implicit reasoning on consensus. Up to a point I follow this: any society to survive must enjoin a consensus: 'a general connexion between the different parts of a nation's civilisation' (Williams, 1976). The same 1861 definition Williams quotes warned of **not** confusing this with biological functioning - another fault of Parsons. Nevertheless, at this level consensus cannot be held to be undesirable - as it has become for many when it implies an evasion of issues in order to derive an electoral advantage.

Broadcasting expresses consensus: this is central to my argument and it is one which changes within structural constraints and assumptions made about the political system. What Hall calls the 'relative autonomy' of broadcasting 'secures, effectively, the reproduction, within broadcasting, of the prevailing definition of politics (the two-sided struggle ... the pre-eminence of the Party system...)' (Hall, 1976).

The point of departure here is the assumption that this is static: that is, such a consensus cannot change; that, as with the foreclosure predicted by many mass society theorists (Marcuse, 1968; Adorno and Horkheimer, 1973), broadcasting operates to prevent change, an accusation of the same theoretical weight as that often hurled by these same 'left' theorisers at the 'static' systems of the functionalists!

A more fruitful line is one which examines, as I do, change within the theoretical concepts offered by both 'left' and 'right'. Such change does not imply a lack of consensus. I hope to demonstrate that, not surprisingly in a changing society, consensus must adjust and the system must seek to locate new inputs for those adjustments, lest the edifice crumble.

Broadcasting came to fulfill, especially after the Second World War, an input function, providing legitimation from outside

the political system (via a rhetoric of entertainment and, increasily, populist mass pseudo-involvement: what Lazarsfeld and Merton penetratingly describe as audiences coming to mistake knowing about problems of the day for doing something about them (Lazarsfeld and Merton, 1957, op.cit.).

Before the war, when the interventionist state was being properly founded, the BBC had an anodyne role, barely bothering to investigate social conditions or comment on them (Scannell,1979). (For the difference in post-war television compared with pre-war, radio see Scannell (1980). Middlemas notes the 'byzantine mentality' of the Corporation, reinforcing Reith's concept of balance but points out that this operated against the right (Mosley's fascists and Edward VIII's pro-German attitude) as well as the left.

Even at this stage broadcasting was concerned with legitimacy - the second of the central issues here. It is the way in which legitimacy is enforced, coerced, or consented to, which brings broadcasting more and more into the political arena. Quite simply broadcasting is seen by politicians as a means to address their total constituency at the moment when democracy (in terms of the franchise) is being fully realised and when the Press, partly because of increased literacy and the growth of an early consumerism, is deliberately beginning to exhaust political positioning for commercial.

The Ullswater Report (1935) is the first codification of the political 'recognition' of broadcasting in the strict constitutional terminology used at the time: the State had already 'captured' broadcasting for central government, for mobilisation and surveillance (Blumer, 1946; Wirth, 1948; Janowitz, 1952). Wirth, note, argues, as do I, that it is the pre-existing consensus which the mass media help to effect, and this reinforces the effectiveness of it: they transmit rather than create.

The legitimation of the system goes beyond mere politics into ideology: 'The British mass media are both economic institutions and ideological agencies' (Murdock and Golding, 1978). I am anxious, however, not to get entangled in the debate about ideology (see

Althusser, 1971; Hall, 1977; Marx, 1968; Gramsci, 1971) preferring to use the concept to indicate merely that, with Marx, ideologies mask particular interests while claiming to themselves, the truth (see Bell, 1962).

Ideology is not entirely compatible with a particular consensus: people may agree to differ, to coin a phrase, thereby maintaining a consensus, whilst acknowledging different versions of the truth. The epistemological problems created by various definitions of ideology as closure may be resolved by reference to power. Power enables one group to determine a prevailing definition of reality will be publicised, over time causing alternate realities to become pale and uncertain. Whether this leads to Gramsci's 'hegemony' is more problematic (G. Williams, 1960).

Much writing on this subject is bedevilled with slapdash and indifferent empirical evidence. Thus,Poulantzas, whose analysis gives a semblance of creativity and vigour, suggests there was a 'transition in Britain after the Second World War from a stage of pre-war private capitalism and liberal state to state monopoly capitalism and a strong state,' (my emphasis) a complete nonsense, especially as he denies there ever was an interventionist state (Poulantzas, 1975, p.155).

But Poulantzas does help define the state - and power - and argues that legitimacy is a vital question for current political science.

The state, then, following Poulantzas is (i) organiser of the labour process; (ii) organiser of capitalist exchange through the judicial system; (iii) an educator - its ideological role; (iv) maintains political order in 'political class conflict'. I wish to expand this general definition, and to ground it.

I have attempted to distinguish between government, state and party because I consider that despite the considerable overlap, particularly between government and party, and government and state, there are distinguishing unique features to each and these do have material effects in policy-making.

Strictly speaking, for this study, the State (capitalised)

exists when Party does not: it is the residual apparatus of bureaucracy and coercion which retains a continuous right to order a society. In this context it is important to note Middlemas' contention that since World War One a mere handful of policies have been pushed through against ministerial officials' advice (and Treasury disapproval).

Giddens' (1973) distinctions between ruling class, governing class, power elite, leadership groups, become important here because it enables us to examine what Giddens calls recruitment and 'issue-strength'. He assumes, as I do, that 'social relations within and between modern societies are radically, though variably, inegalitarian' (Murdock and Golding, 1976, op.cit.).

The British case* Giddens seems to be arguing is that of a governing class: a uniform or established elite with a relatively closed type of recruitment but with differential integration (which I also have assumed, would also include oppositional and conflicting interests). Power holding is hegemonic or democratic: that is, diffused although not necessarily restricted (the hegemonic case).

It is possible, therefore, to separate a State series of actions, from Government, which does have other concerns (Gamble's 'politics of power' and 'politics of support' are relevant here).

Government is partisan but limited within the constructed consensus. If Middlemas is right then this revolved, for forty years, around the incorporation of capital and labour into the central structures of the interventionist state: Government means the concrete expression of policies designed, at one level or another to maintain that consensus - long term crisis avoidance.

The two main political parties are the 'disciplined mechanisms built into the institutions charged with the articulation of political needs' (Offe, 1976). This may be favourably compared with the

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*Middlemas distinguishes usefully between 'British' and 'English', rightfully pointing out that we ought really to consider the 'English' case - London-dominated political and cultural outputs.

Government - State axis (which because I agree, with many authors from left to right - Hall, Althusser, Middlemas etc., - is increasingly oriented to the State, I shall hereafter generally refer to as the State alone), and its 'opportunistic adaptation of consumers to market strategies of monpolistic competition' the 'ironic form of the consumer autonomy' (Habermas, 1976).

To sum: I want to define broadcasting policy-making in terms of consensus formation (which by no means need be negative in imputation) and legitimacy, in particular of existing political institutions. To begin to understand such policy an appreciation of more general issues - power-holding, the class basis of much of advanced societies, ideologies - is important. I want now to turn specifically to a closer examination of how neo-Marxist themes may be fitted into a dynamic version of Talcott Parsons' systems concept.

2 : Legitimation and Consensus : ideologies of the left

Most writers on the left concur in the identification of the central aspects of broadcasting output as concerning both consensus formation and legitimation. There is as well, an implied identity of the roots of ideology with the hidden side to what is published. Hall (1972) suggests that the growing crisis in broadcasting in the early 1970s was due to a transcendence of a consensus. Broadcasting institutions are undermined because while 'formally autonomous of government and the state (his separation, note), (they) have always operated under guarantee of a sort of transferred legitimacy from those institutions'.

Elsewhere (Hall, 1976; 1977) he has remarked on the 'remarkable exactness' with which broadcasting has reproduced the forms of parliamentary democracy. The thrust of Hall's argument is towards the 'legitimacy of containment' (Hall et al, 1978) which replaces consensus. Evidence for this is patchy and comes close to a classic Marxist position (asserting more than explaining) that broadcasting (and the State) '... is an institutional complex which

is the political embodiment of the values and interests of the dominant class' (Parkin, 1971).

Some of the 'complaint' evident here is directed not at analysis but towards political action. Westergaard laments that the 'bourgeois' media support 'bourgeois' political parties (for example, Westergaard, 1977), as does Garnham (1979) in attacking BBC proposals for election broadcasts.

This concrete engagement with the action theory of Marxism (if it can be so characterised) shades into the more philosophic: ideology as 'masking' as I prefer to see it, to ideology as 'the social-imaginary, not reducible to alienation or false-consciousness: rather as cohesion' (Poulantzas, op.cit.).

It is possible to identify some of the concern with media output in this regard - constructing an image

> for providing the images, representations and ideas around which the social totality, composed of all those separate and fragmented pieces can be coherently grasped as a 'whole' (Hall, 1977, op.cit.)

as recognition that, as Miliband notes almost en passant (Miliband, 1969), that politics and ideology do not make up the bulk of media output.

The 'ideologists' consider, reasonably enough, that a full inventory of broadcasting would reveal highly 'functional' themes of family, religion, free enterprise, and so on. This view is not new: '... media not only continue to affirm the status quo but, in the same measure, they fail to raise essential questions about the structure of society' (Lazarsfeld and Merton, 1957); or '...the hidden message frequently aims at reinforcing conventionally rigid and "pseudo-realist" attitudes similar to the accepted ideas' (Adorno, 1957).

This may be unfair and naive: if broadcasting remains a central element in modern political systems' legitimation then it is hardly likely to call on these structural 'destructors' : self-interest by professional broadcasters will limit the debate, irrespective of external constraints. The Pope does not deny God.

If we seek to build hypotheses, or construct a theory of broadcasting policy, an examination of the relationship between an authentic ideology of the mass media and the broader cultural (in both Marxist and social-anthropological senses), necessities of the social system must be examined.

Marx suggests in part that ideologies are either abstract and false thought related to the failure to ground ideas in material practice and production, or that they consist in those forms in which men become conscious of the conflict arising from the conditions and changes in condition in economic production. The second sense is elucidated in the Preface to the Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy: 'ideological forms (are those) in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out.' (Marx, 1968).

The first sense - false thought - is the one I shall concentrate on here, not in the literal sense that men are 'fooled' by ideological formations but that in the interplay between elites for a particular definition of reality, ideologies serve to mask reality, that they re-cast concrete relations of, say, dominance within a boundary set by themselves masking off what reveals, for example, power.

Gouldner (1976) has suggested both that ideology is failed, ie, inauthentic, science and that it is a produce of societies which are unable to order the mass to do something: that is, ideology is linked to persuasion. There is no sense here that ideology is determined by and determinate of property relations: that it has a material base which it simultaneously realises as immutable, presumably the strict Marxist position.

Gouldner also considers ideology as distortion and inhibition. This might be perceived as not going far enough: ideology at the level of policy formation under discussion here, suggests a deeper more structured internalisation, both in individual roles and in institutions.

This suggests in turn that ideology has a material force, an idea grown strong in neo-Marxism. Gramsci, for example, replaces

the marginality of traditional Marxist ideology with a hegemonic formation where

> a certain way of life and thought is dominant, in which one concept of reality is diffused throughout society in all its institutional and private manifestations, informing with its spirit all tastes, morality, customs, religions and political principles, and all social relations, particularly in their intellectual and moral connotations (G Williams, 1960).

Similarly, Althusser (1971), in his discussion of ideology, has shifted it to a central position (within the ideological state apparatuses). Murdock and Golding (1978) point out that both these authors

> present the sphere of culture and ideology as increasingly central to the maintenance of modern capitalism's relations of production, but both are at pains to emphasise that the domain of ideology is relatively autonomous and has its own specific dynamic and its own unique effectiveness.

Ideologies underpin via political, social and economic power. Consensus, for the left, derives from this under-pinning and is a 'false science' (expanded into 'effects' theories in media research, and functionalist definitions of stability in sociology). Legitimation, in this scheme is the operator joining ideology to consensus via institutions and roles (see Miliband, 1969, op.cit.).

My argument attempts to restructure these three concepts by using Parsons' scheme.

3 : Squaring the Circle : the social system and change

In a penetrating review of Marxist and Functionalist theories Merton (1957) demonstrates the parallel investigation of religion to show how the logic of functional analysis is adopted by Marxist theorists. I have a milder intention here, merely wishing to adapt certain Marxist postulates, using them positively as heuristics rather than negatively as polemic.

Horowitz (1967) notes that few words are more reassuring

than consensus to much sociological theory; nevertheless he identifies seven 'shadings of meaning'. First, 'adjustment of social dissension'; second, accord between role behaviour and role expectation. Third, there is a cultural definition : where an opinion is widely held and cuts across all groups in society; fourth, 'when two or more parties want to maintain a relationship which each regards as in its own interest'. Game theory suggests, fifth, that two groups, playing for a maximum, may be prepared to settle for less. Sixth, consensus can be seen as a curb or hedonistic impulse and instinct and with the Durkheim notion of solidarity and social cohesion; finally consensus may be merely a 'sharing of perspectives'.

This is sharply at variance with the 'false' science, the 'masking' which ideology in Marxist terms creates consensus from: or, the realisation of the idealisation of coercion.

Horowitz suggests that consensus theories arose as a response to earlier 'conflict' theories: so-called 'crisis ideologies' (Hobbes, Marx, Mosca, Simmel). At base the problem has been to explain human co-operation. The most widespread axiom of consensus which has emerged is that it is a necessary condition for social structure: this is basically the position I take up here, denying, as Horowitz asserts, that to put consensus as a foundation to social structure is to necessarily ignore 'problems of coercion, pressure groups, social classes, political myths, cultural clashes, racial strife' (p.276).

Despite the ready acknowledgement that a society is moved by such continual strife - physical, emotional, intellectual and moral - there is a coherence that prevents a descent to violence in the streets: change occurs all the time without bloodshed. That has to be 'explained' along with the more manifest public displays of conflict of interest. Consensus, understood as a foundation to social structure (agreement about something), plays that role: what I wish to do is to link it to broadcasting as an institutional means of legitimising what consensus ultimately expresses: rules about values; and at the same time to distinguish between basic values and imposed values, the latter being an expression of ideologies.

In this I concur with Gouldner: ideologies arise at the point in a society's history when it no longer becomes tenable to

order people en masse to do something:

> Dominant groups need not issue orders to sub-ordinates and they need not exercise force and violence over them under the following conditions: a) if they can determine the rules by which sub-ordinates' behaviour is to be governed, and this would include their processing of information - that is, the rules of data processing; and b) if the resultant definition of the situation - the "What Is" - is established in conformity with these rules... (Gouldner, 1976, p.197).

What then, is legitimation in this system? For Marxists, as we have seen, it is an expression solely of power: the enforcement of one set of values (ideologies) through one form of coercion or another. Again, I differ, for while recognising that such forms exist, I take Parsons' definitions which deal with a need for external inputs (that is, not closed by considerations of property and class relations).

Thus, 'the societal community is dependent on a superordinate cultural orientation system which is, above all, the primary source of legitimation for its normative order' (Parsons, 1969).

Parsons elaborates this point:

> This community must be the 'bearer' of a cultural system sufficiently generalised and integrated to legitimise normative order. Such legitimisation requires a system of constitutive symbolism which grounds the identity and solidarity of the community, as well as beliefs, rituals, and other cultural components which embody such symbolism (Parsons, op.cit., p.19).

We have now to look more closely at Parsons' Systems (there are more than one), to note some criticisms, and to see whether some advancement of understanding of broadcast policy is possible. One crucial aspect is whether the social system Parsons envisages is not as 'closed' as any Marxist: that change, described as rupture in the Marxist epistemologies, does not simply become 'interchange' here: permanently fixed in a sterile perpetual motion between the four-functions.

4 : Parsons' Social System

There are any number of points at which Parsons four function scheme, in its final version, may be approached - points or levels for Parsons' elaborated a vertical as well as a horizontal framework. Thus, we have the first level of abstraction:

Adaptation	Goal-Attainment
Pattern-Maintenance	Integration

Figure 1 : Parsons' 'First' Level: Highest Generality

Figure One gives the general theory of action which, according to Parsons, can be used for the analysis of any part of the grounded systems. A second general but 'grounded' level is given in Figure 2.

Behavioural Organism	Personality
Culture	Society

Figure 2 : Parsons' First 'Grounded' Level

Parsons had a clear view of the role of social science with respect to the second grounded level: sociology was to be concerned with the societal community; economics, the economy; political science, the polity. The fiduciary sub-system creates problems because in earlier schemes (prior to 1973) Parsons identifies this as 'socialisation' and considers it reasonable ground for psychology or social anthropology:

Economy	Polity
Fiduciary System	Societal Community

Figure 3 : Parsons' Second 'Grounded' Level

The extensive elaboration of the basic system (AGIL, after Adaptation, Goal-attainment, Integration, and 'Latency' (Pattern-

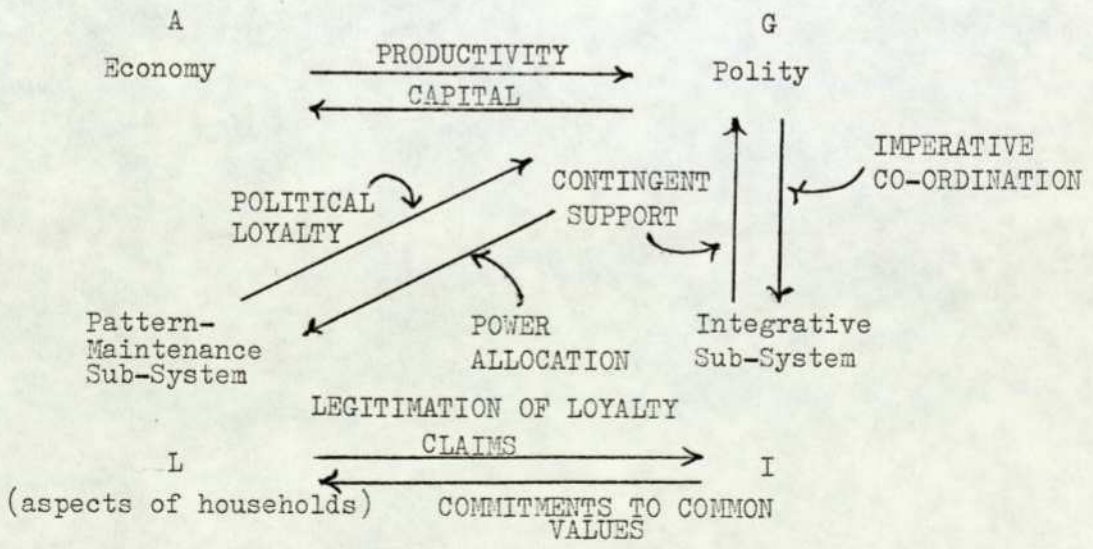
Maintenance)), continues throughout Parsons' academic life (over 40 years) and, increasingly, attempts to identify more and more sub-systems. More than merely seeking to expand on the original abstractions, Parsons concerned himself with linkages: specifically with internal inputs and outputs, although the action theory enables him to identify each sub-system at the grounded level of social system both with 'higher' levels (including generalised 'culture' and 'personality' and, much more important still, with the outside environment).

It is therefore facile to imagine the whole system (vertical and horizontal) as a series of nested boxes (rather like Russian dolls) or in any state of equilibrium. It is a dynamic concept frozen as in a camera shot but normally in motion (if that metaphor does not equally distort with an implication of uni-directional travel).

Crucial to an understanding of the dynamics of the social system are the interchanges and what Parsons calls the media of exchange. For the economy this medium is money; for the polity, power; the societal community 'influence'; and for the pattern-maintenance sub-system, 'value commitments'.

We need to look in detail at these media and their penetration of the sets of roles each sub-system encompasses. I have left out

Figure 4 : The Political Interchanges



several interchanges from Figure Four in order to prevent confusion. Parsons changes his mind a number of times about the precise nature of the interchanges and their meaning. Each sub-system in Figure Four he divides into four (each with its own AGIL): some of these are highly contingent to this study and I examine them below. What we have to recognise here is that the L-sub-system provides legitimation to the polity; policy decisions emerge from the polity directed at the societal community; consensus is directed back to the pattern-maintenance sub-system (what Parsons calls commitment to common values.)

If at this stage, rather artificially, we link this directly to broadcasting policy-making we can identify the 'stochastic' factor (see Chapter Five) which could trigger a change as the output from the economy of 'commitment of services to the collectivity'. This could be simply the possibility that a new source of revenue be found for financing broadcasting, or that a new invention had been introduced.

Parsons defines 'input' as a category of resources from a sub-system to another: output is that category of product, similarly from one sub-system to another. The means of exchange now need to be considered. Again, I have concentrated on those three which have a direct relevance to the abstract consideration of media policy. I am well aware (and Chapters Three and Four discuss in detail) that the missing medium of interchange (money) has been considered by many authors as the major factor behind changes in broadcasting structure. As I have remarked above this is undoubtedly true considered as an input factor interchange between economy and polity: it does not however explain the reasons why change occurs when it does, nor does it begin to approach the relationships between legitimation and consensus.

Gouldner (1971) points out that Parsons' conceptualisations are 'ends in themselves. They really need no research to fulfill their symbolic function'. Thus Parsons' idea of 'power', while naive in some instances (force as only an ultimate deterrent seems to take Weber's defintion of the State and mystify it), does provide a guide to how power (via authority) may work in policy-making: it

is the capacity to alter the priority system within a collectivity (Parsons, 1957; 1963).

Similarly with 'influence', which Parsons suggests as a highly specialised language. Influence, as with the other media of exchange, has to contain four elements (four again!): a category of value, a category of interest, a definition of the situation and a normative framework. Influence, containing these elements, is a means of persuasion: there are four kinds: political, fiduciary, loyalty 'appeals' and norm oriented (Parsons, 1968). The fiduciary 'case' I deal with below as it has critical meaning.

What is apparent, more in the discussion of 'influence' than elsewhere, is the extent to which Parsons inhabits a middle class universe: 'being "one of us" is a factor enhancing influence, whether it be membership in a local community, an occupational or professional group...' (Parsons, 1969, p.418). The emphasis on convincing, winning the argument through debate may be held to be an emphasis on a society where basic clashes over differential holdings of wealth or power do not occur. This may be related to Parsons' concepts of voluntarism and professionalism.

If this is so then one interpretation of the system may be to relate it more to elites and their behaviour: in media policy-making, precisely because it deals at what might be described as the meta-level of meaning, elites will be more influential (and indeed are) than more diffuse mass groupings. The elite-mass split, though not to be taken too literally,may also be related to the question, raised by Habermas and Offe, about a shortfall of legitimation amongst and for power-holders.

The final medium to consider is value-commitment (Parsons, 1968). This medium of exchange is related to pattern-maintenance which Parsons ultimately defines as that sub-system concerned with 'the maintenance of the boundaries between a system of reference and its environment' (Parsons (and Platt), 1973, Technical Appendix, p.429). Value 'patterns', says Parsons, define a direction of choice and, consequently, a commitment to action; they activate obligations and have a moral force.

One problem here is in relating the level at which value - commitments appear to operate (in the social system) with the more generalised concrete referents of organism, personality, culture and society. Parsons' use of the term culture is not entirely clear. At one point it is

> codified systems of meaningful symbols and those aspects of action directly oriented to problems of the meaningfulness (sic) of such symbols (Parsons, 1973).

Parsons is anxious to relate this to socialisation at the next level (grounded societies) and, therefore, to connect this with the family; but how far does he take account of the socialisation provided by modern educational systems?

As we have seen, in the most complete exposition of the social system Parsons modifies and expands 'socialisation' into what he calls the 'fiduciary' sub-system, fiduciary meaning something akin to 'trust'.* A shift of interest here might be noted, possibly reflecting recent US sociological interests directed towards a sociology of knowledge (Gouldner, 1971, 1976; Friedrichs, 1970).

What we arrive at is a pattern-maintenance sub-system as shown in Figure 5:

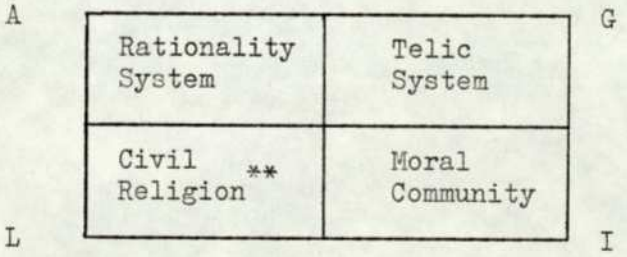


Figure 5 : The Detailed Pattern-Maintenance Sub-System at the Second 'Grounded' Level

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*Elsewhere it appears to have affinities with 'loyalty'. But Parsons lays great store by the two 'coordination standards' of pattern-consistency and consensus: by consensus he says he means: 'the voluntary status of ordered participation in the collective life of ... communities.'

**Could be broadcasting per se (see p.107) under some circumstances.

It is, I submit, possible to see this re-constructed sub-system as a form of description of 'grounded' ideology (again, I am assuming, following what I consider to be the thrust of neo-Marxist texts, that ideology would more normally be associated directly with culture. Here, we are concerned with the relationships between the fiduciary sub-system and the polity. Parsons now divides the polity into four sub-systems: administration; constitutional-judicial; legislative; executive.

> The main emphasis, however, is to the action-conditions of effective goal-attainment, including the availability of the relevant human resources at the level of participating personalities and the general-action grounding of the normative order of the society, coming to focus in its legitimacy (Parsons' emphasis).

That is, the fiduciary system feeds legitimation:

> The L subsystem of a society relates to the aspect of the cultural system which articulates meaning that define the situation .... The cultural system .... is a focus of the legitimation, not of authority, but of the institutionalised values underlying the moral authority of the more substantive normative order of a society (my emphasis).

The 'articulated meaning' that Parsons refers to is, I submit, one guise of ideological formations. Within the fiduciary system (an extended form of grounded ideologies as well as absolute values) the cognitive symbolic function (rationality criteria) is related to education; the moral-evaluative symbolisation (moral community) to integration with a social community (socialisation per se?)

This highly condensed formula needs to be spelled out because it involves two vertical levels. The cultural level is the 'relatively autonomous and stable' one, and may be sub-divided as in Figure 6. Although I am uneasy about the easy vertical identification of the AGIL system in Figure Five with that of Figure Six, certain identities do follow, as I have suggested. We might reasonably surmise that Parsons' Civil Religion does have a relationship with Constitutive Symbolisation. What I am identifying is the cultural system as outlined by Parsons with a partial ideological function.

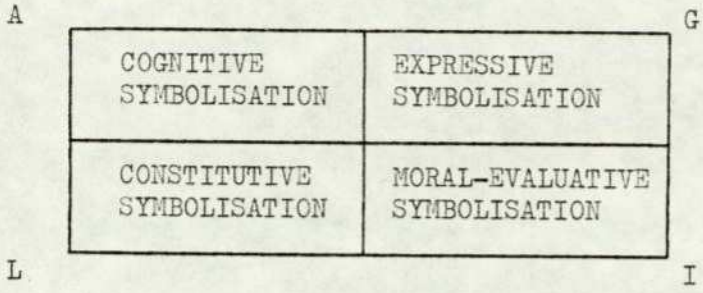

Figure 6 : The Detailed Pattern-Maintenance Sub-System at the First 'Grounded' Level

At the same time ideology (ideologies) do not constitute all of the cultural system: Parsons sees Constitutive Symbolisation as concerned with religion, just as, in the social system level he identifies the Telic (goal-attainment) function as desires and fears. I would identify, therefore, an output called ideologies between the L-sub-system of the 'higher' level with the G-function of the 'lower'.

The 'primordial' focus of telic functions, says Parsons, has been kinship and he introduces the Freudian terminology of cathexis in synthesising the individual to the collectivity through values. In a highly differentiated (and increasingly secular) society we might replace religion with the material values often overladen with ideological crust (like consumerism) and the telic system with a re-cathected setting of individual rather than kin: this is another way of describing alienation, but it also has overtones of Gesellshaft replacing Gemeinshaft.

The constitutive symbolisation (civil religion) predominantly concerned with 'religious' values is a focus of mediation, however, and one which, in the context of broadcasting in the UK in the 1920s and 1930s might be equated with the function of the BBC in replacing organised religion as a secular commitment to central values (this is an argument Scannell and Cardiff (op.cit.) come close to suggesting; certainly Reith (op.cit.) seemed to believe it).

We have already identified legitimation as an output of the fiduciary system and an input into the polity. The additional system we need to bring in, to complete any understanding of the relations between the primary systems involved in ideological 'work' is that of the societal community, whose generalised function is

integration. Whereas we expect the fiduciary system to provide legitimation to the polity; and the polity to provide 'decisions' to the societal community; this latter reflects consensus itself back to the fiduciary system.

The societal community, besides receiving policy decisions (and 'leadership responsibility') from the polity 'gives' political support (note, not legitimation according to Parsons) and makes interest demands in return. With respect to the fiduciary system it 'receives' commitment and is given legitimated claims to loyalties; in return the societal community inputs justifications for the allocation of loyalties and outputs (as a product to the fiduciary system) commitments to common values (consensus).

The polity 'gives' the fiduciary system moral responsibility and inputs 'operative responsibility'. The distinction here is between factors and products and in the 'hierarchy of control'. Our interest is largely between the fiduciary system and everywhere else (although because we are dealing with the operation of elites and indirectly with ideology, the economy is not involved in any determinate way at this operative level).

We might consider the social systemic level to be the third level, the generalised scheme the first level; between them, the second level deals with the socio-physical environment: only 'culture' here at the second level is important for us. It is in this sense we have to interpret Parsons in saying

> Culture is the least active (at the second level) because in itself it does not act. It contributes symbolic and normative elements.

This, then, I have defined as a possible site of ideological formations.

Parsons considered that pattern-maintenance is an instrumental and internalised function (hence its original location as socialisation, and its opposition to consummatory, and external functions like adaptation, or internal and consummatory functions like integration). Furthermore pattern-maintenance is distinguishable from the other three generalised functions by its attachment to the

pattern variables of neutrality and universalism, in advanced societies.

Change, to which advanced societies are intimately wedded, is allowed for, and prioritised, in the twin circulation of 'energy' and 'information': the two circulate in opposition. Thus for information change and control the most important function is pattern-maintenance; for energy it is adaptation.

We have seen the 'medium of exchange' for the pattern-maintenance system at the grounded third level is value-commitments. These are patterns at the cultural level (ie level two, operative ideology) which can by institutionalisation, become determinants - of course never alone - of empirical social process (Parsons, 1969(b), p.441). They are 'concepts of the desirable': this may be interpreted as 'socially' desirable, that is, from a system point of view.

The pattern-maintenance system, and the specific role of values creates a special set of problems. This is because 'the primary function of this sub-system concerns the maintenance of the effective cybernetic control of the value-pattern'. What this appears to mean is that as the pattern-maintenance system is at the top of the 'hierarchy of control' with respect to the processes involved in the transmission and utilisation of information the problem is quite simply in the origination of ideas. The question of creativity as change is one Menzies (1976) suggests Parsons fails to come to terms with in the change from 'action' to 'system' theory.

This question of origination incidentally may be compared with Althusser : that the equivalent of Parsons' dilemma is the 'reproduction of the relations of production' and that this is secured in advanced capitalist societies by the dominant ideological state apparatus of the educational system. Two points are worth noting here: first, that this may be linked directly to the fiduciary system through cognitive symbolisation; secondly that the mass media might be seen as an extension of the educational system, not simply in its relatively minor overt educational role, but more generally in the sense of a compulsive consumption by the use of an entertainment rhetoric: they serve to organise and channel leisure, as well

as engaging in more currently vogue ideas of agenda setting or reality definition.

The epistemological impasse arrived at over the origination of the conditions of concrete social existence and its interpretation may, I submit, be resolved. The obverse of information flow is energy: the value hierarchy here is reversed. Concretely this means the economy has primacy. It is not too facile to suggest that a resolution of the 'origin of ideas' lies in the determination of the last instance:

> The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationship, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas..... (Marx, 1947).

Hence, as with Althusser in ideology, in culture at the second level, the reproduction of the relations of production is continuously effected. Parsons notes that the value principle is a focus of stabilisation:

> Because of the evolutionary continuity between the genetic component in the structure of organisms and the cultural component in the structure of action, the core of this stability - and 'reproducing' - function lies in the code aspects of the symbolic system that comprises the core of cultural systems (my emphasis).

That code, I would suggest, is the mode of production of the relations of production.

Both at the general system level, where the role of the media, as we shall see, comprise political, integrative and socialisation functions, and transmit and develop ideologies in so doing; and at the level of the political economy of the mass media themselves, in both cases the 'code' is crucial to understanding what underpins continuity and change.

While I shall argue that the introduction of commercial broadcasting is a product of structural forces in the realm of 'ideas' and of political adjustment through a legitimation of a particular consensual formation, nevertheless it is also about economics: those directly involved at the political and State levels

may not have had direct economic interests in every case; but they hoped the result would be economically viable.

The crucial point about Parsons statement on values is that he notes - following Weber - that the value system legitimises the implementive, goal-oriented, political system; it is a highly complex interaction having to cope with continuous shifts. Structural changes occur even when the value-pattern is stable. But, he concludes 'the generalised medium permits the unit to have the freedom to make its own decisions of legitimacy.' At the same time, according to Offe,

> the pluralist systems of organised interests excludes from the processes concerned with consensus formation all articulations of demands which are general in nature and not associated with any status group; that are incapable of conflict because they have no functional significance for the utilisation of capital and labour power. (Offe, 1976)

That is, although there is a theoretical room of manoeuvrability for value-patterns in establishing legitimacy there are concrete conditions where it becomes impossible to achieve. These, I would like to suggest, with Offe and Habermas, exist where concensus formations is

> no longer.... controlled .. through positive rights... but through disciplined mechanisms: when it is institutionalised into structures. (Offe, op.cit.)

This is a strategic description of modern political parties seen as the articulation of needs 'rationalised' because of the crucial lack of legitimation needed to keep the systems in general in stable (dynamic) equilibrium. One shortfall in legitimation I shall argue is provided by broadcasting.

To sum: Parsons provides an extremely elaborate framework which tries to take account of the entire social system and its operation. The complete conceptualisation ranges from the individual and his unique inputs, (Parsons, 1954) to the social system. Parsons only deals in part directly with the mass media (Parsons, 1960) but for this study the real value of the immense output of Parsons is in setting a conceptual framework around concepts of value and consensus, linking these via legitimation, to the polity.

This is not the first attempt to link at one level or another (and this exposition skims the surface) Parsons and Marx (see Van Dan Berghe, 1963; Wolf, unpublished manuscript, less certainly). There are, besides the clear connection in neo-Marxist thinking between legitimation and the mass media, other questions raised within the disciplines of Marxist thought about the media, also touched on by functionalism: the problem of order (particularly, in fact, Parsons: see Burger, 1977, for a critique of Parsons' theory in this respect); of integration and a self-sociology of knowledge (Breed, 1958; Wright, 1960);or of the coercive nature of government (Siebert, 1948, although he also delineates government as facilitating and participating).

One of the more neglected functionalist approaches to the relationships between government and mass media has been Karl Deutsch's Nerves of Government (1963). Inter alia Deutsch suggests we need to look at the 'symbols' of legitimacy, an examination which he wonders, might lead us to a recognition of these symbols as 'currency in some of the interchanges between politics and culture': as I have defined a part of the functionalist meaning of culture here, that means an exchange between potential ideologies and the polity: the legitimating symbols carried by broadcasting are: balance, impartiality, fairness: all, as we have seen, laden with sumbolic meaning, and undoubtedly 'circulating' as a political currency.

But Deutsch warns against overestimating the significance of the mass media. Incomparably more important are daily face-to-face contacts, one form of proof of which might be Labour Party electoral victories despite (before the 1950s) an overwhelmingly hostile Press. On the other hand it could be argued that only since broadcasting (and its rules) has the Labour Party achieved power (and that broadcasting (television) can 'seem' to be face-to-face).

The introduction of the individual actor leads us on to the question of input into the legitimation system, and in particular to the motivation crisis Habermas outlines as behind the larger question surrounding his belief in a legitimation crisis. We enter this debate with a fuller knowledge of consensus but not a clear-cut conceptualisation of its origins or working-out; where it interlaces with

ideologies (dysfunctional) and where it underpins basic values (functional).

I distinguish therefore between necessary (or absolute) consensus and contingent consensus. The problem in broadcasting (and in broadcasting policy) is the separation of these two. It could be argued that the consensus between 1926 and 1966 (if we accept Middlemas' dates) confused the issue at two levels: a) between the enforcement of contingent as opposed to necessary consensus; b) in the struggle over legitimacy between the two political parties competing for power over who would define the boundaries of the consensus (the amalgam of both kinds). I shall argue below (p.126) that the Conservative Party 'won' in broadcasting policy (and, therefore, at a crucial ideological pivot) because it was closer to the realities of power (prepared to change with the contingent consensus rather than impose it).

But there are philosophic problems: one, now to be looked at in more detail, concerns the 'legitimacy' political parties have and whether, in an advanced society, this legitimacy is not running out faster than it can be replaced.

V : Legitimation and the 'crisis' of capitalism

We have to begin with another question: does 'late' (I have tended to use this term interchangeably with 'advanced') Capitalism follow a classic crisis pattern with a tendential fall in the rate of profit? Alternatively, are the principles on which it is organised so altered by, for example, the interventionist state, that the systems of accumulation which Marx identified as the engine of the system are themselves so altered that they no longer produce the same order of problem which threatened the system's existence? (Habermas, 1973).

The economic system in such a society (and Habermas would identify the UK as such a society, as do I), may be distinguished by the separation between private and public sectors. Private economic production is market oriented, partly regulated by competition; another part is oligopolistic, where actors tolerate marginal competition.

At the same time in the State sector large enterprises are

able to implement investment decisions independently of the market. In the monopolistic and public sectors it is the high-capital industries which predominate; in the competitive sector it is the high-labour industries. Habermas argues that advanced Capitalist societies ward off system crises by concentrating their integrative forces most at potential points of fundamental issue. Thus, wage bargaining, which has taken on a quasi-political face, and price fixing - compulsory where necessary. He argues that the results of 'labour power as a commodity with a political price' are four-fold. First, disparate wage increases; second, long-term inflation; third, long-term crisis in state finances with 'public' poverty; four, inadequate compensation for disproportionate economic developments in both sectors of the economy (ie agriculture) and geographical regions of the economy.

The function of the State apparatus is to regulate the entire economic cycle by means of global planning and to improve the conditions for capital exploitation:

> While global planning manipulates the marginal conditions of private enterprise decisions, so as to correct the market mechanisms with regard to dysfunctional side-effects, the state replaces the market mechanism everywhere where it creates and improves conditions for the exploitation of surplus accumulated capital.

This it achieves in a number of ways, the most obvious being State unproductive consumption (arms, space programmes); by improving the infrastructure; intensifying social work (education and services); by erecting a welfare system.

To do all this the State requires increasing inputs of legitimation: it is not only guaranteeing the conditions necessary for the production process, it has also to play an initiating role in it. But, says Habermas 'functional weaknesses of the market and the dysfunctional side-effects of the market mechanism entail the collapse of the basic bourgeois ideology of just exchange.' (Habermas, 1976). At the same time it is no longer possible to fall back on 'tradition' - the very stability which competitive capitalism undermined. Furthermore, capitalism itself introduced a universalistic value system which extended the franchise, making Government dependent on the legitimation of the popular vote: in one sense

democracy itself is inflationary (Calvocoressi, 1979).

The answer has been to 'formalise' democracy and for a new legitimation to be found. The process of legitimation secures the loyalty of the mass but avoids their participation. My argument, in extension from Habermas, is that broadcasting functions precisely in this way. As Habermas himself puts it 'In the midst of a society which is political in itself the citizens enjoy the status of passive participants, with the right to withhold their approval.' This is done partly through modern political parties (see below, p.126).

What Habermas is seeking is not explanation but change:

> the principle that defines the democratic form of decision-making ...(is)... rationalising decisions in such a way that they can be made dependent on a new consensus arrived at through discussion free from domination (Habermas, 1971).

As things are he believes there is a systematically distorted communication system: a discrepancy exists between levels of communication and he has suggested that psychoanalysis might be used, 'reduced to a theory of deviant communicative competence' (Habermas, 1976(b)).

Petryszak (1977) believes that

> Habermas has recognised the necessity of explaining what lies behind the apparent ideological consensus (my <u>contingent consensus</u>) that is presented as fact and which by its very nature supports the dominant tradition of the time - a tradition of monopoly, corporate and political interests.

This, at the instrumental descriptive level, is a framework for broadcasting, institution and organisation. Habermas deals at length with the <u>ought</u> of the question of what he calls communicative competence. And although in one respect he is discussing the individual, much of what he discusses is relevant to broadcasting <u>organisations</u>.

A discussion free from domination is a <u>legal</u> definition of the operations of the BBC and the IBA: thus, although Habermas is describing what <u>ought</u> to happen, concretely in the UK this

becomes the justification for what is, in the UK, a fundamental principle. In this way - through what we might call 'ideological slippage' - the Humean demonstration that 'ought' cannot be derived from 'is' is made to seem possible in a society claiming rationality both as aim and justification.

The advanced capitalist state needs new legitimation, partially obtained from 'rationalising' decision-taking through scientific and technical progress (Hence the GPO reliance in broadcasting policy from the start on the technical question of wavelengths).

The State has been increasingly interventionist (Habermas dates this from the last quarter of the 19th century): all in the name of stability:

> A new conflict zone, in place of the virtualised class antagonism and apart from the disparity conflicts at the margins of the system, can only emerge where advanced capitalist society has to immunise itself, by depoliticising the masses of the population, against the questioning of its technocratic background ideology: in the public sphere administered through the mass media (Habermas, 1971, p.120) (emphasis added).

The aspect of system crisis Habermas touches on here (and he tends to discuss this issue at a very high level of generality) is also noted by King (1975) and Etzioni (1977). The latter notes, in respect of what I would here call a legitimation shortfall, that

> Television is one of America's greatest common denominators. It seems to promote a nationwide pre-occupation with consumer products. Recent attempts to reduce the role of national networks... weaken the role television can play in forming national consensual bonds.

There is here an identity between the consumption of capital-produced goods with consensus (Chapter Three explores this issue in the introduction of commercial television in the UK).

In the origins of the liberal-capitalist state the 'principle of publicity' ensured that an unambiguously critical function of the Press kept people informed (Seymour-Ure, 1974; 1977) today, 'the ever more densely strung communications network of the electronic mass media...is organised in such a manner that it controls the loyalty of a depoliticised population' (Habermas, 1974).

Between them the economic system and the state in advanced capitalism are creating needs incapable of satisfaction. And the whole system is vulnerable from four directions: the economic system not producing the requisite quantity of consumable values (I shall return to this point); the administrative system not producing sufficient 'rational' decisions; the legitimation system not providing enough 'generalised' motivations; the socio-cultural system not generating enough 'action-motivating' meaning.

Habermas' point about 'densely strung' communications networks controlling loyalty can be equated to both the entertainment (and commercial) rhetoric of much broadcasting (an increasing amount: see Glasgow Media Group, 1976; 1980; Caughie, 1978; Robinson, 1978; inter alia), and to the idea of information as a commodity (Marx, 1974).

Bell (1979) remarks that 'exchange relations, that of buying and selling, have permeated most of the society.' He suggests that it is no longer possible to take a holistic view of society: there are three realms: techno-economic, polity and culture, not congruent and with different rhythms of change, producing the contradictions.

The 'system' (if by that he means the resultant events) would move according to pressures exerted within, between, and by those realms: we could link them to Habermas' three function-scheme alone (itself based on Parsons) minus legitimation. This is significantly absent from Bell and I submit it constitutes the 'hidden' ideology of his position (that is, Bell considers the social system of advanced capitalism to need no legitimation of itself: see Bell (1976), where he effectively argues a new post-capitalist society already exists with, presumably, a new source of legitimacy rooted in technological progress).

Each of Habermas' systems leads to a particular form of crisis. What Habermas is at pains to identify is the precipitating - the original - crisis. His conclusion is that, at base it is a legitimation crisis - but one based on 'motivations'.

> Economic crises are shifted into the political system through the reactive-avoidance activity of the government in such a way that supplies of legitimation can

> compensate for deficits in rationality and extensions of organisational rationality can compensate for those legitimation deficits that do appear (Habermas, 1976(a), p.93).

There is a hierarchy of crisis tendency: from a government's point of view a degree of substitutability is possible but there are limits - on the one hand prescribed by the 'fiscally available quantity of value' on the other by supplies of motivation from the socio-cultural system.

The less the cultural system is able to supply motivation the more must meaning be replaced by consumable values:

> The definitive limits to procuring legitimation are inflexible normative structures that no longer provide the economic-political system with ideological resources, but instead confront it with exorbitant demands.

One way out would be for the pressure for legitimation to be removed 'by transposing the integration of inner nature in toto to another mode of socialisation, that is, by uncoupling it from norms that need justification.' It is possible to see the mass media beginning to do this: Habermas argues for a communicative discourse as a liberation; the structures of the 'governing complex' might, however, have worked to 'freeze' levels of legitimation through a consensus aimed at transposed 'freedom': to passive comsumption. Commercial broadcasting may have done this by helping to create an 'information' society; as I suggested by recoupling the value-system to the economic via information (values) marketing.

Before I can begin to examine this point we need to look much more closely at the conceptualisations of legitimation crisis - and their relationship to motiviation crisis. (see also Bell, 1979, on culture and the individual).

The shift to the administrative system - the polity - of the general crises inherent in the system at large occurs when the class relationship has been 'repoliticised' and the state has taken over the 'market-replacing' as well as 'market-supplementing' activities: the dominant class relations no longer rely at this point on the law of value but on 'factual constellations of power'.

In the polity, according to Offe (1976), 'the principal function .... (now).... may be described as cautious crisis management and long-term avoidance strategy.' In fact the economic crisis has been intercepted and transformed into a systematic overloading of the public budget: if government crisis management fails it lags behind programmatic demands it has placed on itself. As the result of this is a withdrawal of legitimation the scope for action contracts at the precise moment when it ought to be expanded.

The administrative system, as we have noted, has to separate itself as far as possible from the legitimation system. This is done, says Habermas, by separating the instrumental functions of administration from the expressive symbols that 'realise an unspecific readiness to follow'. Thus issues are personalised: hearings, expert judgements, and advertising techniques all play a part. The political system keeps the public awareness of structural problems directed below a threshold of attention: it takes over the tasks of ideology planning.

The 'cultural' systems, however,is vulnerable to inroads of this kind: it remains alive only as long as it is unplanned, nature-like in manner - or is shaped hermeneutically. (see Bell, 1979; Elliott, 1972, for example). Cultural contents retain an 'imperative force' - guaranteeing the continuity of history by which individuals and groups identify with themselves and with each other. When culture is 'objectivistically prepared and strategically employed' this force is lost. Tradition, that is, retains a legitimising force only as long as it is not torn out of interpretive systems which provide identity.

Broadcasting, in general, may do this. One problem is related to 'culture shock'; at the intra-societal level this is caused by a constant feeding by the media of certain images which show a material gap between rich and poor; and a cultural gap in values. Television may not 'cause' violence but it may help produce it in reaction to a frustration of generalised - inarticulated and possibly, because ideological, unarticulable - wants. (see Noble, 1975, for extensive literature on TV violence)

What Habermas argues is that the state is forced to move into areas previously guaranteed to be individual, private. This expansion produces a disproportionate increase in the need for legitimation

> not only because the expansion of administratively processed matters makes necessary mass loyalty for new functions of state activity, but because the boundaries of the political system vis a vis the cultural system shift as a result of this expansion. (Habermas, 1976(a))

Examples of this would be in educational curriculum planning, in administrative planning, in family planning (state support for birth control). But,again, broadcasting impinges directly on the family and could be seen as a potential for State intervention in the private. This particular worry was partially behind Orwell's 1984, partly as was the construction of the Welfare State.

All these state activities produce an awareness of the contingency, not only of the contents of tradition, but also of the techniques of tradition - that is to say socialisation. A counter-effect to this interventionism becomes growing demands for participation: Local radio (see p.267) is a part of this movement but here it is important to note that its introduction was 'thematised' by the State first; only later did participation at the local level become an issue.

The State cannot simply take over the cultural system: rising demand means a growing need for legitimation; 'value' that is, motivation, replaces meaning: both are scarce.

> A legitimation crisis arises as soon as the demands for such rewards (system-conformity) rise faster than the available quantity of value, or when expectations arise that cannot be satisfied with such rewards. (Habermas, 1976(a)p73)

Habermas asks whether such a crisis is avoidable. While theoretically it is, Offe (op.cit.) has suggested that the form of procurement of legitimation has made it necessary for competing parties to outbid each other in their manifestoes, thereby continually raising mass expectation. This is worth considering in the light of what happened subsequent to 1945 and bearing in mind the immense expansion of government activity in the six years prior to this date.

Whereas during the war nationalism, loyalty to abstract (and note, traditional) symbols, and simple biological survival all contributed to legitimate the state, from 1945 those inputs could no longer be counted upon. At the same time the war had decidely altered the consensus towards increased support systems.

At base, however, a legitimation crisis must be connected with motivation:

> a discrepancy between the need for motives declared by the state, the educational system and the occupational system on the one hand, and the motivation supplied by the socio-cultural systems on the other (my emphases).

With the introduction of the notion of motivation crisis we approach the empirical 'link'. What, asks Habermas, are the most important motivations contributed by the socio-cultural system in advanced capitalist societies? They are concepts of civil and familial privatism. This conceptualisation of these two realms is worth quoting in full.

> Civil privatism here denotes an interest in the steering and maintenance performances of the administrative systems but little participation in the legitimising process, albeit participation appropriate to institutionally provided opportunities. Civil privatism thus corresponds to the structures of a depoliticised public realm. Familial-privatism complements civil privatism. It consists in a family orientation with developed interests in consumption and leisure on the one hand, and in a career orientation suitable to status competition on the other. This privatism thus corresponds to the structures of educational and occupational systems that are regulated by competition through achievement (my emphases).

Broadcasting enters here as a diversion: it provides information (of a highly specific kind) as a substitute for direct participation. In this sense it fulfills a role akin to legitimation by 'putting off' (ie, distancing) a demand for it. Similarly, politicans as individuals play out roles as entertainers: their need for legitimation is displaced as a part of the political system becomes involved in a quasi-fictional myth. (A perfect example of this was the Nationwide (BBC) Pantomine, The Wizard of Oz, which had Denis Healey and Norman St John Stevas playing parts. (see also Brunsdon and Morley, 1978).)

The erosion of tradition - and Habermas is determined to show that capitalist ideologies depended on traditional civil ethics and on religions - is not replaced by 'genuine' bourgeois ideologies because these are, effectively, isolationist and nihilist. He suggests that the remains of pre-bourgeois tradition - in which civic and familial privatism are embedded - are being non-renewably dismantled; that core components of bourgeois ideology like possessive individualism and achievement orientation are being altered by changes in the social structure.

As far as pre-bourgeois tradition goes he cites Weber's rationalisation criteria: the scientisation of professional practice: expansion of the service sector through which more and more interactions are subsumed under the commodity form (including, note, information); and commercialisation of culture and politics.

Social change is also affecting the basis of privatistic orientations. Although bourgeois ideas point to rewards distributed on the basis of individual achievement, a pre-condition for this remains equal opportunity to participate in a competitive market. Yet there are signs that educational opportunities neither do - or can - lead to success. Additionally, production is being organised so that evaluation according to individually accountable achievements is less probable - professional roles are becoming more important in conferring occupational status (again, we might see a link here with growing professionalism in broadcasting (Burns, 1977)).

More important still bourgeois society was (under liberal capitalism) an instrumental group that accummulated wealth privately: economic growth was the resultant of competition between people. This system depended on private economic subjects recognising and calculating needs that remained constant and that could be satisfied with individually demandable goods. In advanced Western societies, however, basic needs are a pre-requisite of the system as a whole. The preference system of the individual is unclear.

Habermas suggests that this means free communication is replaced by 'massive' manipulation, what he has described as 'opportunistic adaptation of consumers to market strategies of monopolistic competition' (Habermas 1976(a), p.83): this, he says,

is an 'ironic' form of autonomy, a disguise of the meaning of true legitimation (a political order's worthiness to be recognised - Habermas,(1979) and its replacement by 'regulated competition between political parties.'

Among other things this has institutionalised oppositional roles, formalised the process of legitimation (and rendered it permanent); involved everyone in legitimation through voting. Where, then, does broadcasting fit into this system?

I have spent some time on Habermas' legitimation crisis because I believe it focusses sharply on one role of broadcasting (and policy, therefore, operates to institutionalise (de-ideologise) that role). If Habermas is right then the mass public have both to be persuaded of the right of the modern State to intervene in their lives, simultaneously denying their right (in a democracy) to continuous active participation in that political system of which the State is a dominant part.

Using the evidence available from three sources: broadcasting policy; political broadcasting; the bulk of television output (entertainment programmes), I think it is clear that broadcasting legitimises the parliamentary party system to the virtual exclusion of all else; and that, by involving politicians (against their will, often) in an entertainment 'mode' provides a non-participatory audience spectacle which appears to give democracy meaning (that is, politicans are human, fallible).

The additional legitimation a modern State requires is partially filled, then, by the apparent access broadcasting gives (and increasingly so: in the UK, broadcasting of Parliament itself). But this exposes the frailty of the consensus (people demand more because they know how to; they also respect politics less because they are privy to its operations). The power of the two main parties has ensured certain exclusions - for example fringe parties from most political discussion on television. Not all trends are one way: but politicians need the apparent legitimation broadcasting provides.

Legitimation may be increased by extension (lowering the voting age; reducing central government by extending local by introducing a new element - commerce as a market, a substitute for ideas). Local radio may be seen as an expression of these trends (appealing to the

young and, theoretically, improving local political communication).

The problem at base is that a democratic system cannot direct: broadcasters have their views too (as do audiences). Hence, a good deal of the change of style of political broadcasting could be laid at broadcasters' feet: they wanted to 'jazz things up'. Politicians, in the democratic age of the common man, had to participate to retain a legitimacy they might have lost altogether had they remained at the fringes of the broadcasting universe.

Does this mean there is a general legitimation crisis?

I think the answer is yes but only weakly so particularly as here it does take us further along the road to understanding one of the engines of broadcasting policy, beyond a consideration of consensus and the questions surrounding ideology. But in British broadcasting policy, the Conservative Party dominates: is its interest ideological or something else (absolute consensus concern by a party of 'tradition')?

We cannot, I think, escape from the necessity to examine the political party of tradition and its own need for legitimation alongside that of the system; this begs a very big question about the Labour Party (see p.139) especially bearing Habermas' remarks in mind. Neither may we lose sight of a need to examine on a larger scale the relevance, or otherwise, of Habermas' theories.

Many authors, starting from diverse points, converge on the view that 'the control of knowledge has come to assume a strategic importance in the advanced societies' (Rex, 1978): what I now wish to do is to focus on the Conservative Party and broadcasting policy to help to eventually determine the relationships between it and British broadcasting (see Chapter Five). Then I look at US and European broadcasting for comparative purposes and to see if the theoretical proposals suggested here might be widened.

VI : Enter Politics : the Conservative Party and Broadcasting Policy

1 : Conservatism as a political philosophy

Although I have concentrated my efforts in much of the discussion so far on political parties and policy-making I ought

to make clear that policy is by no means just made by political parties when they are in government. Many other groups - and individuals - are involved: all may shape, mould, initiate, block particular policies. The literature on this is extensive (Heidenheimer et al, 1976; Castles et al, 1971; Porter et al, 1976), on theoretical views. Richards, 1968; Crossman, 1975; 1976;, 1977; Finer et al, 1961; Finer, 1958; Mills, 1956, for extended views on the political pressures both including and excluding political parties).

Nevertheless, political parties provide a focus for policy: they represent the constitutional node of the process whose other main axis is the enactment into law of policy; they articulate interests, devise means for compromise between factions, both inside government and at large in the nation. In a democracy which extends its operations beyond formalism political parties seek to understand and capture the national will. This is, I am aware,an unusual way to express their activities. But, despite the differences in emphasis and the acute ideological schisms on the fringes of each main party, in order to win elections the bulk of altutidinising will be about an admittedly shifting, but central core of belief. This is the consensus on one definition.

What we need to answer is whether the Conservative Party has not used broadcasting policy to act as a counter-vailing force to a consensus generally drifting to the left (as democracy works its way into the system); that Conservatism in fact is a generally pragmatic political praxis which is interested more in the acquisition and exercise of power; rather than, in the Labour Party the retention of that power for a specific purpose (quasi-ideological in emphasis and, therefore, more restrictive); at the same time that the Conservative Party has been drawn closer to questions of legitimation: that is, how can a 'traditional' party of hierarchy be legitimate in a modern democracy?

The BBC itself was set up by a Conservative Government but in the context of the period between 1922 and 1926 it is relatively easy to see that the State, more than a particular party, lay behind this move. Middlemas (op.cit.) charts in great detail the elaborate net-

work of propaganda and intelligence set up towards the end of the First World War and continued after it, to undermine the unions and the political left (see pp 131-132).

Middlemas goes further than I would, in describing the whole thrust of this period to increasing State power: 'Long before 1945, Parliament had ceased to be the supreme governing body, and became instead the electoral source of the majority which provided the party element in government ' (p.22).

He describes the consensus which was formed eventually after the General Strike, as an alliance between State, employers and unions: the BBC on these terms is an expression of that consensus: 'generally Conservative', and, because of the other factors - the Post Office, the horror of an American model of chaos, Reith - supremely acceptable to the 'patrician' hierarchy of the Conservative Party, expressing middle-class values in a rigidly paternal organisation. Later the Conservative Party would claim the BBC as its invention (Woolton, 1951).

The BBC did not, of course, deal solely with politics in the early days: far from it, concentrating on general talks, classical and dance music. But it was centralised and co-ordinated in a nationally organised cultural straitjacket: 'Reith ... did not invent the radio monopoly ... but he rationalised and perpetuated it, making it acceptable to the state and the public (Scannell and Cardiff, 1977), (emphases added).

This national emphasis was to parallel developments in government in the 1930s: the one-party state, in a weak form in the UK (Middlemas' destination of the 'Journey to the Centre'), had a reflection in the broadcast organisation; as is well known it kept dissidents - like Winston Churchill - at bay.

The War, and its massively increased emphasis on State control over all aspects of individuals' lives, and the growing awareness of the Soviet Union and its power, led to the growing cry within the Conservative Party for a reversal of the trend. Post-War Conservatism (until 1979) was to reflect a philosophical rift (not necessarily between left and right) of those who were more concerned to continue

State intervention and those who wanted considerably less.

This philosophical debate had to be contained within the general consensus: the assumption was that certain forms of 'Statism' or 'Corporatism' were acceptable (no return to the 1930s); thus an increasing marginality of policy may be discerned. Political scientists have disagreed about the extent of this, Beer suggesting that there is still a fundamental schism between Conservative and Labour, Mackenzie suggesting there is not (see also Kornberg and Frasure, 1971).

Beer divides the Conservative Party into 'Old Tory' and 'Liberal' wings roughly: this corresponds with the major distinction between order and freedom. The Labour Party introduced a 'Collectivist' emphasis, but, says Beer, whereas the socialists have an economic class theory of government, 'Tories' have a political class theory: this latter leads on to an independent authority of government: Beer argues that the 'framework' of collectivism was set by Conservatism.

Elsewhere he has remarked that

> The tendency will be to stress the sense in which a political party is a coalition of interest groups and a mechanism for winning elections, but to neglect the sense in which it may be the bearer of values and ideology and an instrument in their development
>
> (Beer, in Wahlke and Enlau, 1959, emphases added).

The key moment, he says, is consensus and its formation. This is a fundamental tenet of Conservatism and may be cited as an example of the shifts the party is prepared to undergo (or has been) in order to measure its future electoral chances. Thus,

> the only text-book of Conservatism is the history of the British people, their institutions, their traditions, their accumulated wisdom and their character (Clarke, 1947).

Later, Clarke contrasts the two conceptions of society, in one aspect a contrast between Durkheim and Weber (or Marx)

> One is the conception of a living organic community resting on a rich variety of qualities and concerned to evoke the greatest variety and the highest qualities through every agency. The

> other is the conception of a State which casts the institutions of the country into a rigid mould at the cost of variety and quality.

Gamble (1974) argues that the Conservatives (at least at the leadership level are more concerned with what he calls electoral perspectives than electoral ideologies (the State counts more than the Party). The dilemma they face is the extent to which the Party has to be placated in order to obtain State power.

He identifies the decline of the Liberal Party as the event by which 'Conservatives acquired a remarkable and undisputed degree of legitimacy. The party was associated with all the dominant institutions and values of British society': the Conservative Party works at 'identifying the consensus of the state'.

Harris (1972) says that up to 1948 the main Conservative Party emphasis continued that of the 1930s: from 1948 until the late 1950s, the party became increasingly influenced by a recreation of certain elements of economic liberalism (of which commercial television was a part): from the late 1950s the party swung back to a selection of ideas it had abandoned in 1948.

He notes, significantly for broadcasting policies (see Chapter Three),

> Neither major party was concerned with monopoly <u>per se</u>, although both used the term as one of denigration whenever it suited their purposes. For example, the campaign for commercial television was conducted almost entirely in terms of the BBC's 'monopoly'. Yet in practice MPs were rather more concerned with practices associated with cartels and oligopolies. Few Conservatives saw monopoly as intrinsically bad... (pp.220-221).

This is borne out by Attlee's comment. (<u>op.cit</u>., above, p. 44)

Following the 1945 defeat, however, the Conservatives had to find a weapon with which to beat the Government. Monopoly might not have been intrinsically bad but

> In the past few years, under the impact of Socialism, the institution has become of central importance ... for it has been used ... not ... on an <u>empirical</u> basis ... but on an <u>obsessional</u> basis (see Maxwell Fyfe, 1948, p.32; also Kilmuir, 1964, my emphases).

2 : Tories in opposition : reconstructing the Party

There is no doubt that the nature and magnitude of the 1945 defeat left the Conservative Party in a state of deep shock A generation later the Party chairman of the time, Ralph Assheton could introduce himself to the author by remarking that he was the man who gave his party its biggest ever defeat (he was chairman of the party, 1944-1946: TCS I 5).

According to Gamble (1974) only Butler among the Conservative leaders appears to have predicted what happened. The result left the Party in disarray and Churchill demoralised. For nearly two years he appears to have done little in parliament or out to rally the Party (see Lindsay and Harrington, 1974; Blake, 1970, p.258); criticism of him as leader continued, along with arguments over the precise nature of the Conservative challenge to what was seen by many Conservative leaders as a new orthodoxy - of planning and state intervention. Woolton, whose reorganisation of the Party was to prove crucial remarks of this time, 'everywhere there was a slant towards socialism' a slipping into what he called the 'Servile State (Woolton,1959).

At the same time it was clear to many younger Tories that the Party could not slip back into either the image or the policies which had, sometimes unfairly, been associated with, particularly, laisser-faire economic management. Sixty per cent of Conservative MPs either lost their seats or retired at the 1945 General Election. Any new Conservative Government was going to have to rely on the support of considerable numbers of 'new' Tories. This, as much as anything would determine the shape of the Party and its policies.

As far as breaking the monopoly was concerned the balance between the new and the old Party was to prove vital. Yet it would be an error to identify the 'right progressives', first manifested in the Tory Reform Committee of 1943, and having many of the younger Conservative leaders associated with it, with a desire for an expansion of competition or breaking of monopoly.

The Tory Reform Committee was set up to urge a new political settlement on the Party, urging it to agree to implement the Beveridge Report on Social Security, trying as well to get an agreement by the Party to greater management of the economy. Its

noisy publicity-conscious character may be contrasted with Butler's Post-War Problems Committee, officially set up to look into the same kind of problems. The TRC included MPs like Quintin Hogg and David Gammans, who were to find themselves on opposite sides during the commercial television debates.

The TRC urged a return to the 'One Nation' policies of Disraeli; an end to the subserviance of the Party to big business. At times the statements of its members sounded much like those of the Labour Party. Behind the rhetoric lay a recognition that the Conservative Party has never been a party of dogma: the changing nature of capitalism, the need for 'interventionism' and state planning, could easily be accommodated.

The loss of the 1945 General Election was not due to any grave differences in policy between the two major parties - except on the surface on nationalisation. The Depression and the War had combined the thinking of both Labour and Conservative politicians that unemployment had to be kept permanently low by Government action, and that planning worked. Where the Conservatives went wrong (and it could well be they could not, under any circumstances have won the 1945 Election) was in believing that what Gamble describes as 'electoral perspectives' were more important than 'electoral ideologies'. What voters wanted in 1945 was a Government committed wholeheartedly to reform; they looked at the record of the Conservative Governments between the wars and saw a Party apparently wedded to social apathy.

For the re-organisers of the Conservative Party, men looking at the policies as well as the structures, this identification was the one to lose. At the same time no political party can throw out its old ideologies without potentially losing large parts of its support. A good portion of the Party believed in a minimal rôle for the State. A key moment in the 'new' Party would have to be the reconciliation of interventionist policies with freedom, both in a market sense and an individual one.

It is important to realise that, as much as anything, we are not dealing in the coinage of fact but of perception. The Con-

servative Party has never been the party of untrammelled capitalism. Its role has been to play out a mixed ideology within the structures of the State, which, while allowing a capitalist economy to function, nevertheless operates on a reconciliation of both pre-capitalist and post-capitalist interests. In this respect might be understood the combination of Aristocracy and working class votes (Mackenzie and Silver, 1968; White, 1957).

The Conservative Party of 1945 was a party already moving towards a political settlement which would take account of Keynesian economics. The route, although different from the more overtly ideological one of the Labour Party, was not so unrecognisable. Woolton, who joined the Conservative Party on the day of its defeat because, he says, he saw the dangers of Socialist dogmas, drew the major - possibly only - distinction between Conservative and Labour Parties by their differences over nationalisation.

He insisted the Labour Party be referred to as the Socialist Party to draw attention to their demands for nationalisation, just as he desired to call the Conservative Party the Union Party, to symbolise its 'family' nature (see Conservative Political Centre, 1950). In deciding, as the Party did, to fight the Labour Government on the single central issue of nationalisation, the Conservatives had already handed to a group of young party members the hostage to fortune that would become ITV. For, although a Conservative Government creation, under the rubric of 'National', the BBC was the most glaring example of a State monopoly. A monopoly moreover, which almost daily could be accused of acting on behalf of the Labour Government. (see p. 63).

Because Woolton, as chairman of the party, was responsible for the overhaul and reconstruction of the party machine, as much as Butler and his committees - and research department - put together the policies, he, Woolton, was continually aware of the need for the right kind of publicity. In fact, Woolton organised the biggest propaganda exercise ever mounted by a British political party. Butler was also aware of this aspect of propaganda.

At the same time Woolton was early on involved with a committee set up to look into the new BBC Charter (of 1946). One

other member was Ralph Assheton. He may also have been a member of another Committee which was to examine the political activities of the BBC (Cranna, 1947). At this time (1947) the BBC was apparently 'admitting' privately to Central Office officials that there was too much left-wing propaganda.

What we might conclude reasonably about the re-organisation is that those in Central Office and surrounding Churchill, the leader, were concerned enough about the future of the party to try to return it to an examination of first principles. David Clarke, director of the Conservative Research Department in 1947 said: 'The verdict of the electorate forces a defeated political party to go back again to its fundamental principles ' (Clarke, 1947).

He suggested that because Conservatism is not doctrinaire it emphasises what the current orthodox doctrinal politics ignores. Thus when 19th Century liberalism emphasised individualism conservative politics stressed man as a producer with 'duties'; in the 1940s he said, when socialism emphasised the State, conservatism had to reflect the individual - as a consumer, for example.

There was another trend - expressed by Macmillan, Oliver Stanley and Eden which would have moved the Party closer to guild socialism; labour, that is, in an active industrial partnership. Both emphases are in stark contrast to the centralism of the State and its bureaucracies. When the 1950 General Election was announced this contrast between setting the people free and state regulation was the overriding Conservative theme. At that stage the Woolton reforms had built a new party from the ground. At the same time the Central Office, the leadership and the attendant organisations had been re-vitalised and properly financed. Large numbers of young radical new prospective MPs were lined up, a very different breed from pre-war candidates, who had been aided by the change in the rules that had hitherto encouraged local constituencies to select only the rich: now the able could put themselves forward with confidence (Hoffman, 1964).

The ideological battle in 1950 came, inevitably, over home affairs and nationalisation. And although the Conservatives did

not win they came close to victory. The image the Party found was that of the Marshall family of Guildford. Tory Challenge, one of the new kind of propaganda newspapers launched by the Central Office under Woolton's direction, explained that this 'real' family were middle class because they strove to be independent of the State.

The breakthrough in this form of party ideology was not with the Marshalls of the nation as such - it was unrealistic to expect a nation to consist of small producers (Mr Marshall was a builder). It came in the adoption of the phrase a property owning democracy. By extension, unspoken at the time, this had to be a consumer society that would demand a growing level of consumer goods to service it. New industrial opportunities, new marketing opportunities lay ahead. The lobby for commercial television was able to capitalise on this key element in the Party's programme.

3 : The Party of Government

It took two elections for the Conservative Party to regain power. By 1950 they had re-organised and they made substantial inroads into the Labour Government's majority. Nichols (1951) notes that the manifestoes of both main parties overlapped a great deal: 'a most striking feature', he notes (p.119). R A Butler (1971) is, then, reiterating the consensual shift by the Conservative Party when he says: 'The overwhelming defeat of 1945 ... impelled (us) to re-think ... with a thoroughness unmatched for a century.' (and TCS I 8).

It was Butler's neo-liberalism which was to 'fit' the affluence of the 1950s. Hoffman (op.cit.) considers that the 'democratisation' of the party did not increase the numbers of decision-takers but vastly expanded membership and educated party workers. The re-organisation was significant because of the perceptions of the Conservative Party it changed. Against this, the 1950 and 1951 Elections had to be set in the context of the Labour Government's loss of energy and momentum (they had fulfilled all the 1945 Manifesto) and the redistribution of seats which favoured the Conservatives (Butler, 1952).

Liberal votes also tended to go to the Conservatives; yet their slogan of 'set the people free' must have resonated in many hearts

after a decade of tightening economic and social controls. Nevertheless, a year before the 1950 election Macmillan was warning 'we cannot suddenly unravel the tangle that we shall find. The only way we can undo some of the harm is by a policy of decentralisation, devolution, the encouragement of local responsibility.' (Conservatism, op.cit., p.104).

The Conservative Party in Government was able to exert its identity again:

> The Conservative leadership has normally organised its One Nation perspective around the established consensus, the prevailing priorities of the politics of power. It has then appealed for support on the basis of national, not class issues, its capacity to provide national leadership, and its identification with national institutions (Gamble, op.cit., p.208, emphasis added).

Or, as Finer et al (1961) say, whereas the Labour Party often resembles a coalition, the Conservative Party 'is a collection of evanescent pressure-groups existing to promote or impede some highly specific, concrete policy' (p.112). It was one of these pressure groups within the pariamentary party which was anxious to ensure that one principle - ending monopolies - was to get a public airing - in all senses - by the ending of the monopoly of the BBC.

Meanwhile phrases in propaganda material issued by the Conservative Party stressed a 'property-owning' democracy: a slogan for casting a net for support much more widely. I shall argue (see Chapter Three) that the commercial television policy (in its pure form) was an expression of dogma: and in the context of the new consensus ran into great difficulty because of that. It was from such dogma - and from a deep-seated fear within the Party that it would get identified with one faction, big business - that the most tempestuous debate emerged. This became condensed around a single word: commercialisation. It is legitimate to see this agonising as being about the change in the Conservative Party since 1945 (with its new recruiting base for MPs among marketing and public relations men) as well as about British culture. As we have seen the Conservative Party relied on an identity hidden somewhere between the two.

The 1950s were the era of the 'right-progressives' (see Conservative Political Centre, 1955) to use Gamble's evocative terminology : the Conservative Governments of the 50s were in many ways extensions of the previous Labour Government (and the era drew forth the term: Butskellism). The 1960s were to see the emergence of a new force: it meant that the next alteration in broadcasting decisively towards commercialism was to come from the Party hierarchy, more involved all through with an extension of competition and free enterprise generally, in a centralised economy.

This contrasts with the struggle within the Party over commercial television where the Butlers of the Party were unwillingly forced to compromise with those Party ideologues determined to make a gesture towards denationalising in a very public way indeed.

4 : The 'competition' policy and Selsdon Man

Any major electoral defeat will determine, for the political loser, a thorough-going examination of policy and, behind that, philosophy. The Conservative Party of 1964, in defeat, and aware that it would face another early election which it would probably lose, set its collective mind to winning the next election but one. It meant there was time to rethink all policies.

When Heath was elected as leader in 1965 he set about establishing a wide range of policy committees (36 by the end of 1965). Broadcasting came under the nationalised industry committee (a grouping of some significance). This Committee produced a major internal report in 1968 (Swinton Archives), which recommended a massive selling off (steel, air corporations, travel, parts of the coal industry, road haulage, aircraft builders) and a 'BP solution' of half government, half private, ownership.

Heath wrote to a local councillor in 1968: 'The need is for a policy which enables us to strike an appropriate balance... We are working on various aspects of the competition policy' (Heath letter in Swinton Archives: 31st October, 1968).

Gamble suggests the Party underwent a 'crisis of ideology' between 1964 and 1970: the competition policy emerged out of this.

A 'new right' was emerging, in sharp contrast to what had gone before. Whereas the defeat of 1945 had led to an acceptance of the changed consensus, that of 1964 was now to lead to a breaking of it; the 1970s have been characterised by sharp divisions between the two main parties on most matters of substance and on increasing electoral volatility (Butler and Pinto-Duschinsky, 1971; Butler and Stokes, 1974). I note below (p.139) the first emergence of a Labour Party philosophy of broadcasting suggestive of a realisation that a 'left' consensus might be a necessary imposition.

Part of that philosophy emerges from Labour's experience of government between 1964-1970, and Wilson's antagonistic relations with the BBC. But for the Conservative Party too broadcasting was becoming problematic in a fashion akin to its concern in the late 1940s.

Now the dilemma related to the BBC's increasing 'permissiveness' and the easy identity of such liberalism with Labour and youth (and future voters). As Gamble notes

> Opposition to permissiveness lived uneasily alongside economic individualism. In the 1950s a strong lobby had waged a successful campaign for the introduction of commercial broadcasting. Its supporters urged that any monopoly was totalitarian, and that to leave broadcasting in state hands was to pass a vote of censure on the British public, and to accept the principle that the state knew better than the citizen ... The opposition to commercial broadcasting had stressed that the high standards of the BBC would be endangered if competition were allowed ... There was only one British way of life and one moral code.

He suggests that here was a real dilemma, to surface again in the 1960s: 'Were there areas in society which should be protected from the ideology of the free market?'

Eldon Griffiths, at the Conservative Party Annual Conference, in 1966, said that higher standards in broadcasting could not be legislated: 'they can only be achieved by increased competition and by widening the area of choice.' This argument was accepted: at the same time, as Gamble points out, if the Party agreed that the

State had no business in controlling broadcasting (and, by implication, the content) then ought it to ensure the State withdraw from all areas of social life? (p.112).

In practice Griffiths' statement was ideological: the Conservative Party (including Heath) was split over what to do about commercial radio (see Chapter Four). The depth of feeling was muted because the principle of commercial finance had already been won. And by the late 1960s the patrician element in the Conservative Party was waning (as was the moral and political power of the House of Lords). At the same time moral standards at large were relaxing: the Conservatives themselves had unwittingly contributed to this with the Profumo Affair. Finally the existence of the pirate radio stations were to prove important as a precedent (see p.305).

In electoral terms commercial radio may also have had a marginal appeal to first time voters, especially in the south-east.

5 : Left Out : The Labour Party and broadcasting policy

The Labour Party accepted (and applauded) the establishment of the BBC; immediately after the War when in government it accepted there ought to be an early inquiry into the BBC (see p.82). As a party it sided wholeheartedly with the 'old Tories' opposing commercial television.

The first real opportunity to make significant changes in broadcasting came between 1966 and 1970. As I shall show (Chapter Four) its efforts, when clear, were fumbled and uncertain: it tended to follow the State lead (reinforced by the BBC) in introducing local radio on the BBC's terms.

At the same time it was this Labour Government which attempted to increase political control over the BBC through its appointment of Lord Hill to be Chairman of the Governors, and through its refusal to increase the licence fee in line with inflation. Some of these moves may have encouraged Conservative Party ideologues to push for the introduction of additional, advertising-financed, broadcasting organisations.

It has only been in the 1970s beginning with the first (aborted) appointment of the Annan Committee (and the publication of People and the Media in 1974) that the Labour Party may be said to be getting properly involved in the central issues of broadcasting policy.

If we look at the Labour Party's election Manifestoes since 1945, broadcasting has figured just two times. Once in 1959 when the Party promised not to end commercial television and to look at giving the third television channel to neither BBC nor ITV but to a new corporation; secondly in 1970, when, I have argued, the Party was beginning to develop ideas about broadcasting.

The questions surrounding the reasons for this general absence of policy (or, in the early days, concern) are extremely problematic. One resolution, which I have suggested here, is that the Labour Governments have tended to accept State definitions of broadcasting: the Post Office (one assumes), a nationalised industry, is prominent here.

Additionally, and returning to the typology of decision-taking I have outlined (see p.57)we have to consider 'opportunity': Labour Governments have tended to inherit established positions of some strength (hence ITV had proved immensely popular with Labour voters before any Labour Government had a chance to modify it).

With the BBC too, Labour politicians have felt ambivalence. Although until the 1960s it expressed overwhelmingly middle class values, it did have a legal requirement (or quasi-legal) to be fair and impartial, unlike the Press, where again, most Labour Party hostility has been directed.

The conclusion has to be related to the questions of power, class and legitimation discussed above. The Labour Party has been unwilling to change broadcasting too radically because it (broadcasting) is locked into an established value system (itself related to power) which the Labour Party has had a problematic relationship to: does it overthrow capitalism or modify it?

The Labour Party leadership has been generally middle-class and therefore has supported the 'old' BBC while probably despising the

support ITV has had from its mass of supporters. This relationship between elite and followers favours the status quo.

Finally the Labour Party may not be concerned with legitimation in anything like the same way as the Conservative Party, firstly because the contingent consensus had moved in its direction for the first thirty-odd years after World War Two; second, because of its instrumental concern for power (contrasted with the absolute concern expressed by the Conservative Party.)

We might also surmise that a legitimation crisis does not necessarily impinge in the same way on a political party anxious in part to induce a crisis in the underlying economic and social system: the immediate post-War Labour Government wanted the public to withdraw legitimation from the capitalist system as it had manifested itself between the wars. This last point ought not to be over-emphasised but it is, I think, pertinent to some extent. It does, however, lead on to questions of why the 1960s and 1970s Labour Governments acted in crisis avoidance in the way they did.

VII: A Comparative Broadcast Study

1 : Introduction

One test of a theory is its generalisability. If the theoretical resolution proposed so far for British broadcasting policy is to be more than just parochially interesting it has to be tested in a wider political, economic and social market. To that end there follows an examination of three other political systems in relation to the development of broadcasting policies. The three countries chosen are France, Germany and the United States.

As is the case with British broadcasting policies, in order to begin to organise a relevant theoretical frame, the broad parameters of the political system and its history, along with the historical development of broadcasting need to be sketched first. For purposes of direct comparison the same period since the Second World War up to the mid-1970s has been taken.

An initial distinction needs to be made between the UK, France and Germany, and the United States. The European context introduces a major fissure which pervades all aspects of broadcasting policy. It arises from a European concern with physical boundaries, with nationalism per se, and, another division, with the effects and aftermath of the Second World War.

Within the European context another distinction lies here, between the UK, whose territorial integrity remained intact, and France and Germany, both of whom were invaded, and in the case of the latter, dismembered as a unitary state.

Broadcasting in all four countries had been highly developed in the period between the two world wars. Divergences were principally located in the degree of State control and the degree of advertising finance allowed. In both respects the UK may be said to have developed a unique system which, although tied by tradition and constitution to a number of norms inconsistent with long-term system-maintaining goals, nevertheless resolved those tensions through post-War change which have continued to dominate Fremch and German broadcasting, although prior to 1935 all three countries had similar patterns of broadcasting.

The United States constitutes a separate case: the absence of a need for national regulation of the same stringency, that is, the availability of the entire radio spectrum, combined with a systemic commitment to commercial freedom provides a paradigmatic case: this is dealt with as if it were a 'pure' commercial model and compared with the European systems below, in a separate way.

Briefly, what is suggested is that these other countries exhibit three more manifestations of the theory, developed above specifically for the UK case. The two continental European nations exhibit symptoms of 'acute' statism, allied to the failure of either to develop a lasting national consensus, or to maintain one. Britain, by contrast has, with one major upheaval, consistently balanced conflicting demands - cultural, social, economic, political, technical - into a relatively stable broadcasting system in which change - the touchstone of stability - can take place.

The British 'case' is problematic where it is linked to the United States, by language and cultural proximity: here is the source, so potent in realisation, of the commercial model. The physical proximity to Europe led to the organisation of governmental constraints, the cage if you will inside which British broadcasting developed for the first 30 years.

It may fairly be argued that the Second World War released British broadcasting from one cage, as much as it (the War) failed to provide a satisfactory means to identify the 'species' of French or German broadcasting. But the latter's problems have finally to be related, not to some abstract concept of broadcasting, but to the political system and its requirements.

During the course of the journey towards this 'grounding' it is worth noting that television has had a more profound impact in the course of its development, than radio. Both the financial implications and the recognition of its political force have driven television's development closer to political matters and therefore regulation, formal and informal, than was the case with radio, although radio has had its own brand of struggle to maintain programme freedom.

Television, which again it is worth noting, is largely a post-War development in all four countries under scrutiny, has introduced a new dimension into political and social life, the full implications of which are still being worked out. Why <u>is</u> television different? Briefly, it

a) Distorts reality and heightens 'dramatic' effect;
b) Reaches homes where people feel safest (ie most receptive because <u>secure</u>), creating a situation of passive absorbtion;
c) Technological gadgetry intrigues, captivates (mosaic of colours);
d) It has enormous audiences (socialising effect);
e) It creates a myth of the real ('I saw it happen').

Yet,

f) It cannot handle complex events and in simplifying tends to (a), above;

Finally,

g) It prevents imagination (alternative 'realities') by presenting a chosen-for-viewer picture (closure).

h) Incidentally, as a mass medium, it also uses up most audience free time.

For these reasons alone, television policy has dominated much of the discussion here. And it has been the cost of television which has been the ostensible reason for allowing increasing proportions of broadcasting finance to come from advertising revenue. Problems of finance have afflicted all European broadcasting institutions to a greater or lesser extent. Part of the debate about policies - and control - have centred on finance and financial accountability; crudely, Governments have often argued, in private at least, that he who pays the piper ought to be able to call the tune.

European broadcasting policies run deeper than mere money considerations would demand however: it is possible to isolate the structural restraints the political system and its needs force on broadcasting institutions and their output: to uncover, behind the rhetoric of public service, the reality of political expediency.

Macridis and Ward have suggested that in macro-political terms the goals of government in the UK, France and Germany are, respectively, equality, political consensus and constitutional government (Macridis and Ward, 1967 pp.3-4). Without becoming embroiled in the nuances of this assertion, it is a reasonable assumption that, whereas by and large the UK has maintained a consensus (agreement about both the <u>what</u> (in goals) and the <u>how</u> (procedures), both France and Germany have struggled to identify goals and <u>that</u> has profoundly affected the <u>how</u> questions. Because of the immediate past Germany has attempted to organise considerable effort directed the location of the <u>what</u> (the substantive agreement), via a constitution guaranteeing all those rights denied by the Nazis.

The French, with a century and a half of constitutional history, have consistently tried to establish procedural agreements: in the French nation this struggle for an agreement on <u>how</u> to develop has had a profound effect on broadcasting.

2 : <u>France and the Politics of Broadcasting</u>

The first regular French radio programmes began in November 1921. They were broadcast from a military transmitter located in

the Eiffel Tower. Two years later the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphy had its brief extended to cover radio.

The system which developed thereafter differed from other European countries: although the State had a legal monopoly it sold permits to private companies which operated alongside the State network. This dual system lasted until the war, although there were no new permits issued after 1929, and there were repeated indications that the State wished eventually to take over the private concerns.

The Second World War may be viewed as a decisive break point for French broadcasting. The occupation of the country and its subsequent liberation, largely from outside, created a new situation into which broadcasting had to be fitted anew.

But it is questionable how far the solutions to the post-War problems were new, or simply repeated the past. Tunstall suggests that present-day French orthodoxy has 'invented' a post-War 'Golden Age' of the French media but that this is mythical:

> The French media had indeed been reborn in 1944 - but, rather than a completely new birth, the clock had been put back to 1920; while the French media of the 1950s repeated the 1920s, the 1960s were to repeat the 1930s (Tunstall, 1977, p.255).

The single most important structure of post-war broadcasting, Radiodiffusion--Télévision Française, was set up by a decree of General de Gaulle's wartime government in October, 1941. It came under the 'tutelage' of the Prime Minister's office and remained so until television provoked new thinking in the 1960s (Smith, 1973, p.73).

Following the liberation Vichy radio law was revoked en bloc and all private station licences were revoked, driving commercial companies outside French borders where they came to constitute the périphérique.

Thomas (1976) suggests that popular feeling, as well as economic necessity, favoured widespread nationalisation; in the case of broadcasting 'it was felt that State supervision, far from being repressive, was the only way to guarantee freedom from the more dangerous control of commercial interests.'

This would seem correct. Cobban says that the Constituent

Assembly of 1945 was overwhelmingly left, although a new centre, which was to become a crucial element in popular Gaullism, began to manifest itself among women voters at this time (Cobban, 1965). The first governments of the 4th Republic, set up after the resignation of De Gaulle, an uneasy alliance of Mouvement Républicain Populaire, socialists and communists, rapidly nationalised the railways, the coal industry, the banks and insurance companies, gas, electricity, the airlines, Renault Car manufacturers - and broadcasting.

Some of the Vichy radio laws were cannibalised and re-enacted in the legislation creating RTF as part of the 4th Republic. RTF was to be a State monopoly and public service directly attached to the Prime Minister and Minister of Information and financed by a government subsidy subject to annual review. Licence fees went directly into the Treasury. The legal framework for RTF was that of a civil service department.

The post-war period between 1945 and 1949 is characterised, in broadcasting by considerable uncertainty, a reflection partly of government incompetence and instability. Between 1944 and 1959 there were 80 broadcasting workers' strikes, symptoms of a general malaise and concern over the inappropriateness of the structure of RTF.

During this period television hardly touched the surface of French life. Although the technical system was good, the decision to develop an 819 line system (in 1948, for protectionist reasons) cut French television off from the rest of Europe. The earlier line definition (441) meant that for many years two cameras had to transmit, simultaneously, each programme. The public, unsure of what government policy would do next, forewent buying sets. In January, 1954, there were only 60,000 sets in France (compared with 3 million in the UK). It was only in 1958 that a million set level was reached.

Much of the uncertainty concerning broadcasting policy lay in government instability. For example, between January, 1947, and June, 1954, there were 15 Cabinets. French political life has been described as a Manichean consensus (de Tarlé, 1979), where the State serves the party in power. Once that party is in power - elected through the ballot box - it cannot, by definition, be 'illegitimate'

for it to use any means to stay there: defending itself it defends the national interest.

But this, for broadcasting, means that violent swings in the political composition of the government, can lead to equally violent change in broadcasting. As we have noted, broadcasting must have stability of purpose in order to develop. The exigencies of French political life between 1945 and 1959 prevented this from happening, at a crucial stage in its institutional life.

The changes in RTF in 1959 - following shortly on the Algerian Crisis, the re-emergence of De Gaulle, and the birth of the Fifth Republic - were a response to the changed political circumstances. RTF was to enjoy financial autonomy: it was to be a State public establishment, of an industrial and commercial character, and with an autonomous budget: nevertheless it was to remain under the authority of the Minister of Information.

Proposals, made at the time by the new director-general, Christian Charanon, that the Information Ministry ought merely to have 'guardianship' not 'authority' over broadcasting were rejected, as was an advertising agency's scheme for a second, advertisement financed, television channel.

The contradictions of the 1959 Ordinance may be traced to the political upheavals which led De Gaulle to reconstitute the authority of the State under the leadership of a strong executive. The new settlement could hardly allow broadcasting the autonomy it required. The new force which rapidly drove the Gaullist system to reform broadcasting structures was the explosive growth of television under, paradoxically, the relatively stable presidential governments now established. Thus, the change of RTF to L'office de Radio-Télévision Française in 1964 may be seen, not as a desire to liberalise, but brought about because of the pressing needs of the development of new technology, untrammelled by a rigid bureaucracy. The 'strong' state enabled this to occur while the 'solution' set up future conflicts. These conflicts, which did not at all remain confined to broadcasting eventually exploded in May, 1968.

It is worth noting that the intensity of the debates about

television broadcasting, which occur all through the 1960s in France, may partly be related to the continuance of a government monopoly. In radio, because of the existence of, and indirect French government support for, the peripheral radio stations, listeners had a choice - and used it. Border stations in Andorra, Monte-Carlo, Saarland and Luxembourg provided US-style programme formats: although the French Government bought into this system, the alternative remained, eventually forcing national French radio to change its output.

In television there was no alternative but, as Tunstall points out, there was sufficient proximity to other European television services for viewers to recognise the poor quality of French television and its subservience to the state.

'L'office' was set up in 1964. The Minister of Information, in consultation with the Finance Ministry, supervised an Administrative Council. This Council, with half its members from the State, half chosen by the State from a list of nominees put forward by various organisations, had a formal role in determining policy. Nevertheless finance was not under its control and there remained strong governmental links: the Cabinet, for example, appointed the director-general.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that successive governments from 1956 directly interfered with broadcasting. The growing crisis in Algeria and, as far as television was concerned, a realisation that the audience was reaching a significant size, were two contributory factors. Thomas suggests there were not 'precise' mechanisms but that daily conferences between RTF and the Ministry of Information (before 1964) date back to the mid fifties (Thomas, op.cit. p.9).

It was this kind of detailed control the 1959 Ordinance was supposed to correct: its main failure lay in the lack of guarantees for political independence. In the statutes which introduced ORTF in 1964 also, the additional compromises made - the introduction of 'tutelage', the Administrative Council, the degree of financial independence - nevertheless enabled a continuing government control.

The growth of the television audience coincided with the rise of Gaullism. De Gaulle has noted that it was during the Second World

War that he became aware of a second De Gaulle, the product of radio broadcasts aimed at occupied France and its colonies. Smith says that on his return to political power he made television his instrument, emerging over the heads of squabbling politicians to become a symbol of the French nation.

> 'He spoke in archaic syntax a series of speeches which kept alive the de Gaulle he had discovered in Douala. In some of them he announced policy which had only just been communicated to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, sometimes it turned out to be news for them as well... During the gathering crisis of May, 1968, he was seen endlessly moving through the various stages of a state visit to Roumania, as if issuing a silent and implied comment to the French people on the strikes (unfilmed by the ORTF) which were already paralysing France ' (Smith, op.cit., p.80).

The period between the start of ORTF and the May, 1968, 'revolution' was one of considerable movement in French broadcasting. In 1964 the second television channel had opened. A year late, in December, 1965, The French Presidential election had given the French public an unusual opportunity to see Opposition politicians on their terms on television contesting the election. Perhaps significantly, De Gaulle failed to gain a clear majority on the first ballot. This 'experiment' in democratic television was not repeated.

In April, 1968, the Diligent Report was presented to the French parliament. This was the result of a committee of enquiry set up by the Senate in late 1967. Its start coincided with the government's announcement that it intended to permit brand advertising on television. The timing of the Report ensured its relegation to history. The May, 1968 upheavals and the 11-week strike by workers at ORTF overtook any possible discussion of the proposed reforms.

The strike, which was more to do with issues surrounding 'professionalism' and the rights of ORTF personnel to be freed from government pressure than sympathy for students and workers, was a failure in itself and it led to many dismissals.

But following the elections of 1969, themselves following the resignation of De Gaulle, major structural changes were made. The ORTF became the direct responsibility of the Prime Minister, Chaban-

Delmas, who promised there would be reforms. In November, 1969, for example, the two television channels instituted a system of competitive news. Changes were also made, in 1970, in ORTF's fiscal status. The Paye Commission was established to look into the future of broadcasting.

The Commission recommended ORTF be given the third regionally organised (in their recommendation) television channel but that L'office should become merely a holding company for the whole organisation which would be split into a number of specialised companies. The recommendations were eventually implemented in 1972 and 1974.

Between 1970 and 1974 new issues arose. The relaxation of controls ended and in 1972 the Ministry of Information, abolished in 1969, was re-established: once again it exercised supreme control; the autonomy of the news departments was ended.

During this period André Diligent, author of the 1968 Report, disclosed the degree to which clandestine advertising had been allowed on television, corrupt payments being organised via the government owned advertising agency, Havas. The changes of 1972 were reputedly the government's response to these revelations.

The government, however, may be seen as using the advertising scandal as an excuse to tighten its grip on broadcasting, after a time when the liberalisation had led to clashes between government and broadcasters. Programming, in the view of many people got worse between 1969-1972.

By 1972, therefore, ORTF had returned to much the same position it had been in at its start, in 1964. But in the ensuing twelve years a third television had been added; advertising had begun and there had been May, 1968. The organisation was still wracked by strikes.

The agonies of ORTF came to a head in 1974 following the death of President Pompidou. The journalists at ORTF published a document detailing the history of censorship in French broadcasting. This tract became an important issue in a five week strike in the summer of 1974 which, says Smith (op.cit.), brought L'office to its knees.

At this time another parliamentary investigation was under way,

presided over by Roger Chinaud, a parliamentary deputy. The Report, completed during the strike was published in August, 1974 and, in effect, it led to the implementation of the decentralisation proposals of the 1970 Paye Report.

Thus, in 1975 the ORTF had been replaced by a new transmission authority, also responsible for technical research and development. It operates under a Board of Governors, half appointed by the government, half representing parliament, programme companies and staff.

Four new organisations, one for radio, three for television, make programmes, along with an additional production company. These companies are set up with the State as sole shareholder.

The core of the theoretical discussion lies between the conflicting demands of finance and political support within broadcasting structures - and, therefore, in terms of the validity of particular policies. As has been demonstrated in the UK, historical, social, economic and political factors combine, to induce a strong set of policies mediating an initially 'extreme' (in the UK 'model') solution. The direction has been relatively consistent and unitary. (see Wedell, op.cit.)

The French system has to be understood in both traditional terms - the search for a political consensus - and historic - the pre-war broadcasting experiences and the occupation. French broadcasting policy exhibits the desire by governments to use broadcasting as a direct instrument of political mobilisation. In the absence of a consensus which may be related partially in the immediate post-war period to a strong French Communist Party each government has been concerned to insist that broadcasting operates within its own - partisan - definition of the prevailing circumstances.

French administrative tradition involves a unitary political system in a centralised decision-taking system where the state is encompassing. Broadcasting policy reflects this but since the war it has become mediated by financial pressures and, one might surmise, the growing influence of European broadcasting. But the immediate source of mediation may be traced to the peripheral stations, in whose financing and control, the French State has a considerable

stake. I will return below to a further discussion of the question of legitimation crises and French broadcasting.

3 : West Germany and the politics of broadcasting

As is the case with France, any understanding of post-war German broadcasting has to begin with the events of 1939-45, the allied occupation (which parallels the German occupation of France), and the subsequent failure by the wartime alliance to reach a satisfactory solution to a German Peace Treaty.

If a short-hand for French political problems has been the elusive search for political consensus, and for UK political problems the growing price of such a consensus, for Germany the principal issue is its division into two parts. The search has been for the meaning of constitutionality under these circumstances.

The fact of the Nazi dictatorship and the traumatic effects on the State and the meaning of legality, coupled with the total defeat in wartime of Europe's hitherto most economically powerful nation have also compounded the complexity of the post-war settlements, not least in broadcasting.

The pre-war model which all parties to a German future have decided is anathema was the overly federal state dominated radio system, subverted by the Nazis to a pure propaganda instrument. Coupled with British, French and American disquiet that 'German attitudes towards politics have often oscillated between an insistence on the virtues of being non-political or "above the parties" and a willingness to accept the most extreme partisan commitments' (Macridis and Ward, op.cit. p.34), these concerns have ensured that, however else it may be described, German broadcasting since the war cannot be characterised as centralised, despite the pressures we have noted exist through much of Europe.

The immediate legacy of the occupation of what has become West Germany was three types of broadcasting institution (British, French and American), all loosely based on the institutional (and therefore, political) model of the BBC. But whereas the Americans

set up four regional stations (at Munich, Frankfurt, Bremen and Stuttgart) which aped their experience of city-based radio, the British and the French both established single corporations in their respective zones, the giant Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk (NWDR) and the Sudwestfunk.

Despite discrepancies in size, politically all the original radio stations, which with the break-up of NWDR into two and the eventual addition of the Sender Fries Berlin (SFB) and the Saarländischer Rundfunk constitute the nine back-bone organisations of German radio and two of the television services, are based on the Land, the regional governments.

It is worth noting that, according to Sandford, 'In their attempts to set up a new responsible radio system the Americans and the French were in fact at least partly, rejecting the premises on which their own domestic broadcasting was based ' (Sandford, 1976).

But it may be inferred that the corporate model adhered to the 'British solution' was a political expedient, in that in their respective zones of occupation the Allies were unable to conceive any immediate commercial possibilities, whilst more statist solutions were, given German history, unacceptable.

Constitutionally, the stations adhered to two broad subdivisons, each a local attempt to create pluralism. The top of each organisation consisted of a Rundfunkrat, a broadcasting council which considers, as do the governors of the BBC, all issues of importance. This Council usually elects the Verwaltungsrat , or Administrative Council, which in some cases, elects an Intendent, or Director-General. The Intentant in other cases is elected by the Rundfunkrat or jointly by the Rundfunkrat and Verwaltungsrat .

In addition, both Norddeutscher Rundfunk and Westdeutscher Rundfunk have Programmbeirat, Programme Advisory Committees, elected by the Rundfunkrat on the recommendations of various public organisations, and whose job is to advise the Indendant on programming policy.

The corporations from which this essentially unitary system is derived were established following the formal ending of occupation control in the American zone in 1948-49; in the French zone in 1951; and in the British in 1955. The legal basis for broadcasting is

enshrined in Land broadcasting law and, where a station serves more than one Land, by a State Treaty between the Länder.

The 'invention' of the Federal Republic of West Germany was a corollary of Allied fears of irrendentism by a new central German state. Thus the principle of federalism agreed upon by the Allies in 1948 returned Germany to much earlier ideas of a German 'nation'. The Basic Law which established the FRG is not a constitution. Although the enforced division between East and West Germany is recognised it is not accepted: unification is a goal. Formally, the FRG was created by the Länder who adopted the Basic Law: it was ratified by them, not by a national assembly or plebiscite. The Länder were the first political and state bodies organised by the occupying forces, along with early Allied efforts to revitalise political parties.

As has been decisively shown broadcasting, and the policies attaching to it, is intimately connected with various political constituencies, of which, in the developed West, political parties are the most important. Broadcasting legitimates political activity as represented by parties. In a situation where the consensus is in doubt, or where the underpinning ideology of the State is missing we might infer quite contradictory outcomes in broadcasting policy.

To take the French example as one where the consensus is missing: here broadcasting is seen as a weapon or a fortress, to be captured, legitimately, for the political party's own interest. In Germany, where there is no lasting ideology of the State other than unacceptable opposites (a Nazi past and a Communist doppelgänger), we would expect an obsession with those formal elements of temporary constitutionality which present a credible liberal alternative.

One is regionalism and the denial of central government control. Another is the 'balance' created by the existence of political parties with alternate programmes of policies. But, as far as broadcasting is concerned, this has not automatically led to a resolution of conflict: rather it has institutionalised it precisely because there is no fundamental ideology of constitutional acceptance within German society. Thus we get the penetration of political

nominees into broadcasting organisations, whose role is to continue to maintain a balance in the absence of a final German constitutional solution. Their presence epitomises the obsession with the past with its monolithic unity, set besides a present East German equivalent.

There are other important themes, many of which emerge with the growth of television and, in the 1970s, Europeanism. One is familiar: the rising costs of television, the introduction of additional channels, and colour, all lead to pressures for commercialisation. In the German case a curious footnote to its organisational history is that modelled as it is on British ideas, a strong movement for the introduction of a German 'ITV' can be tracked from the mid-fifties until the second television, Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF), begins in 1961. In fact, the original regional system (of television as well as radio) is closer to ITV, ZDF closer to the BBC. But the movement for commercial television clearly owes something to the introduction of ITV in the UK, following it by just a few years. As we have seen the British case is the subversive one for Europe, not least because, hitherto, the BBC represented such a pure example of public service broadcasting. Once the virginal UK broadcast system had been broached, lesser more venal broadcasters might cheerfully follow its path to a commercial future.

Another theme that may be identified in the 1960s is producer freedom. This closely matches the growing politicisation of broadcasting and, according to at least one commentator, may be traced directly to the growth of the Freundenkreise, political meetings held immediately before meetings of the Rundfunkräte (Smith, 1978, p.64).

As much as anything any crisis that may be discerned in German broadcasting has to do with what Williams describes as

> a pincer movement by two opposed forces, the controlling groups and the production teams ... Both these developments present obvious dangers to the position of the intendant and it is he who most directly embodies and upholds the balance of the system (Williams, 1976, pp.79-80).

The last point is contentious in the extreme and as Williams himself says 'the concept of balance is far from simple'; but it was an effort to introduce a formal notion of balance that the Rundfunkräte were organised in the way they were.

Although the internal structure of the broadcasting stations is fairly uniform, the manner in which the various councils that serve them are elected or chosen is not. There are two main ways in which members of the Rundfunkrat may be elected. In the south of the FRG a standisches Modell predominates whereby members are chosen in part by the Land government but the majority represent various interest groups. As defined by the Federal Constitutional Court in 1961, each have a right to delegate one member to the Council: groups include trade unions, employers' organisations, universities, theatres, press, local government, refugees, the churches, youth and sports organisations.

This system is designed to prevent party political domination and it is significant that it emerged in the American and French zones. Part of American political life is dominated by the periodic re-election of hundreds of officials on party political lines: and in France the potential and actual subversion of broadcasting by political parties has been noted.

Yet, perhaps inevitably, the 'non-political' interest groups have frequently found it expedient to nominate people who are active members of political parties. The alternate organisation of the election to the Rundfunkräte is the Proporz system, introduced by the British in the NWDR in 1949. This system of proportional representation means that in both WDR and NDR the Rundfunkrat reflects the political constitution of the Land at any time.

The only political party which survived intact from the Weimar period in the 1920s to immediately after the War was the Social Democratic Party, the SPD (see Mann, 1974). The Christian Democrats, the CDU, was a post-war formation by middle-class conservatives. The other potential major political force, the Communists, were made illegal in 1956. A less significant party, the Free Democrats may be likened to the UK Liberal Party.

Macridis and Ward suggest that no two party system has been 'stabilised' in the FRG and this may be connected with the provisional nature of the State. During the 1950s the CDU predominated, the State being heavily financed via American money. Since then the SDP has held power several times, a shift in forces which might be compared with the British case, of a shift to Labour Governments predominating instead of Conservative ones.

Increasingly, German society has been accused, by its internal critics, of retaining a facade of democracy within a growing authoritarianism based on provisions in the Basic Law concerning citizens' duties to protect the constitution which,Grosser says, is a substitute for a devalued and inadmissable patriotism (Grosser, 1979). The cracks in German society which these accusations reveal came to dominate the period of the CDU-SPD coalition between 1965-69 when the producers' movement began, at a time when political discussion had been effectively nationalised (and, thereby, silenced as irrelevant).

Television, as had been discovered generally around this time, had a role to play in representing issues: in Germany, because of the provisions of the Basic Law, and because of the past, the major emphasis on political discussion has been between the CDU and the SDP. In the period between 1965-69 even this was potentially extinguished.

Problems relating to the central issue of balance ran deeper than appointments to the administrative and Broadcasting Councils. Early on the original radio stations set up the Arbeitsgemeinshaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik (ARD) or Working Committee of the Public Broadcasting Corporations of the FRG, to coordinate their activities and to act as a common representative. The ARD arranges networking and, for example, when a political programme is networked from a station,in, say, a CDU area, this can lead to immediate accusations concerning balance.

Despite the networking that occurs, all nine stations on radio provide three services. Decentralisation and the enforced provisions of the Copenhagen radio conference of 1948 meant Germany had poor medium wave allocations. The hidden advantage was she was forced

to develop VHF radio (FM); West Germany is still one of the few countries where VHF listening is the rule. There is no doubt that the system of regional stations is haphazard. It has, however, proved resilient to change, an example of the conservatism of German political life, anxious as its practitioners are to preserve what constitutionality they began with, however it emerged.

When post-war German television began, in 1953, it was immediately obvious that cost would prohibit nine regional programmes (or seven as it then was) from developing. The coordination of a single service was discussed at the ARD Conference in March 1953, and a Fernsehvertag, or Television Contract, was signed agreeing to networking and the inputs of the various stations. The immediate result was Deutsches Fernsehen (DFS), the first television channel. The ARD co-ordinates each day's programmes, much as the IBA now does. Since 1964 the regional stations have been broadcasting an additional regional television programme for several hours.

The regional programme began three years after the setting up of the second West German television channel, Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen, the occasion of which followed the first major constitutional and political crisis in post-war West German broadcasting. All through the 1950s the CDU Government in Bonn attempted to restructure West German broadcasting to bring it closer to a centralised system directly accountable to the Ministry of Posts. This, had it succeeded, would have lined up the formal organisation of German broadcasting alongside the French and to some extent the British systems.

It is interesting that, as in Britain, the immediate precipitating causes of what eventually became a turning point in broadcasting, lay in the issue of who was to run the second television service. In May, 1957, the ARD announced plans for such a second service but it was refused by the Ministry of Posts when it applied for frequency allocations.

There is evidence that the Federal Government was negotiating with various private interests to establish a commercial network. This may be seen as a direct parallel with the Conservative Government's 'dialogue' with private companies and interest groups five years

previously; and, in general, to one of the same ends, namely to reduce the power of the incumbent broadcasters. But, as we have noted, other more overt political pressures, to centralise, not decentralise (as in the UK) broadcasting within an ostensibly conservative state lay behind Adenauer's efforts.

In the event the Federal Government set up two radio services, Deutschlandfunk and Deutsche Welle but deleted references to a television service. Various industrial and publishing interests had meanwhile set up a company to produce a commercial television service and in 1959 this company was given permission to proceed.

In July, 1960, Adenauer and his Minister of Justice, the latter ostensibly acting on behalf of the Länder, formed a private company, to be responsible for a second television channel, intended to start in January, 1961. The upper house of the German Parliament had already rejected a similar proposal in the previous year and outrage was immediately voiced that the Government should use public money to circumvent a constitutionally legal decision. The Länder too, angered by the Minister of Justice acting for them without consultation, acted to have the company declared illegal and the Federal Government's actions unconstitutional.

An injunction was granted to Hamburg and Hessen Länder to prevent the Federal Government from opening a second service at the beginning of 1961. In February, 1961, the Federal Constitutional Court delivered the Fernsehurteil, the Television Verdict, which has had profound constitutional effects on broadcasting policy in the FRG.

In brief the judgement reserved the rights to develop broadcasting to the Länder; the future penetration of the broadcasting stations by political parties may be located in this decision insofar as national political control was lost because of this decision: what may be described, politically, as individualistic political control therefore followed.

It is worth examining why this is so. I have suggested that broadcasting fulfills a crucial legitimising role although at a cost and, additionally, that it transmits ideological data, on politics

and cultural pattern-maintenance.

I examine below the crucial theoretical notion that post-war developed societies, particularly in Europe, might have been engaged in a series of legitimation crises, particularly based on political parties and their roles as providers of potential governments (states-in-exile).

Given these premises, the failure by a political party (significantly, as in the UK and France, a 'Conservative' Party) to allocate broadcasting correctly (in liberal democratic systems) to a national (ie nationalising) role we might expect a partial subversion of broadcasting into a more strictly deterministically 'balancing' role within the party structure, rather than, as in the UK, outside it. The problems this creates are exacerbated by the lack of constitutional agreement. Germany is an anomaly twice-over: in having a cultural doppelgänger with its economic,social and political alternative and in being a strongly federal state surrounded by traditions of centralism.

Apart from these political pressures, stemming largely from the lack of constitutional - and therefore institutional - alternatives or models, the other main consideration in terms of change is financial, in particular the shift we have noted occurring in the UK and France, towards commercialisation.

The two most palpably 'British model' stations, WDR and NDR still do not permit advertising on radio: all the other stations do to a greater or lesser extent (commercial income is about six per cent of the total radio station income). Both television organisations allow some television advertising (constituting 12 per cent of income). In the main West German broadcasting continues to rely mostly on the licence fee, individual stations receiving a proportion of it according to a complex 'equalisation' scheme which takes account of geographical area and commitments to produce network programming. The ZDF is not a part of this system, getting an automatic 30 per cent of the television licence fee.

A key issue has been the stagnation of licence fee income

with the saturation of television and radio coverage (as in the UK). In the main, for ARD stations commercial income is still a useful supplementary source; for ZDF it is a vital component because West German television advertising is competitive and severely limited between certain times of the day. Additionally however ZDF has been involved in a tax dispute with the Federal government which has potentially damaging outcomes.

In general, the pressures to increase the level of commercialisation continue. One attempt was made by the CDU controlled Bavarian Government, in 1972. It wished to introduce a privately owned entertainment oriented radio service while keeping Bayerischer Rundfunk (BR) to a public service programme. The scheme, linked with a change in BR's constitution which would have ensured continued CDU control of the station's Rundfunkrat, was rejected after a statutory plebiscite and a substantial public campaign opposed to the changes. But there is a financial crisis in German television and the easy solution is continued commercialisation. The West German broadcasting system is an example of a 'frozen state' between the completely mixed variant now supplied by the UK (in financing) and the more aggressively State-commercial model of France. The allocation of broadcasting to the Länder must have relevance here: the needs of broadcasting, in particular television, pressure for centralised operation with considerable political weight to obtain finance from any source. In the UK the growing crisis of the BBC is evidence that inflation mounts faster than political pressure to obtain the necessary finance can act under normal circumstances. The West German system of broadcasting could best be 'thawed' if a constitutional solution were found: the implication of this is a German Peace Treaty. Alternatively commercial pressure could build for an extension of advertising time, but a central concept in this study, is that commercial (and other strictly 'non-political') pressure is insufficient for major change, given the legitimating powers of broadcasting.

In West Germany, as Williams relates 'the courts have constantly upheld the monopoly position of public broadcasting and in so doing have provided some hints about when and how private, commercial

interests might become involved. The main emphasis of the courts' thinking has been on the prevention of the control of broadcasting media by one individual or group.' (Williams, op.cit., p.67)

Therein is the echo of recent history which has determined, more than any other factor, the developments of the past 30 years.

4 : The European Model of Broadcasting Policy

One of the central arguments of this study has been that policy derives, in broadcasting, from what has already been: it is moulded by history. Many reasons for this may be found. One is that the imagination that went into the invention of the technological equipment of broadcasting confounds established institutions and, paradoxically, leads them to want to contain it within a recognisable structure. Engineers might be forgiven for seeing a 'wireless' signal as only different in kind from that sent along a telephone wire.

The European 'solution' to broadcasting - its strict technical regulation within varying degrees of organisational freedom - is bound to European problems of nationality. The ostensible reasons for control, that wavelengths are scarce and need to be internationally agreed upon, may be equated with other continental scarcities - land, resources and possibly human imagination (all potent sources of legitimacy problems).

Again, broadcasting became a potent force at a time when Europe had just failed to make a peace with itself, at the same moment creating the myriad nationalisms radio seemed so eloquently and effectively to express. The coming of television, post-war, has to be located within European ideas and experiences of welfare capitalism, consumerism and the growing efforts towards European unity.

Although in the UK we have until recently been able to ignore many of these dynamics, makers of broadcasting policy have always been acutely conscious of international pressures. Charles Curran makes the point about frequency allocation and the inertia built up once allocations have been made. (Curran, 1979, p.147) But the crucial

point, for Europe at least, is that the initial decisions are made on a broader than single nation basis. Once again history is important: following the Second World War, the Copenhagen Conference of 1948 was generous to victorious Britain in her allocation of medium wave frequencies; parsimonious with a dismembered defeated Germany.

Yet the fact that Britain did so well meant that the development of VHF broadcasting was delayed; more important still, British manufacturers saw no need to equip radio sets with a frequency modulation capacity. That original international agreement thus affected the nature of British radio broadcasting for a generation.

Curran makes the point too that international agreements on frequencies affect programme strategies - local opt-outs for example - and the whole planning cycle for national and local radio. The allocations also determine how channels may be nationally parcelled out: the UK's original VHF television allocation determined the limits of channel availability, as did its UHF allocation. The mere availability of a theoretically allocated space leads to pressure to fill it, as has been seen in the past decade in the UK with the fourth UHF television channel.

All this is not to suggest that the international dimension is ultimately determinate; but that it does set limits and that the reasons for these limits are historical. For Europe the European scale is the setting for national broadcasting policy. An additional factor in Europe has been the growing extent to which European nations view each other's broadcasting systems. The most obvious manifestation is the esteem in which the BBC as an organisation and programme maker is held.

Policy also is shaped by investment in equipment which follows from the proper exploitation of the physical resources, wavelengths, This investment is large - particularly with the development of television - and long-term. It consists of large-scale institutional equipment - transmitters, studios etc - and small-scale domestic receivers which nonetheless represent a potentially large-scale piece of capital for individual families. We have noted how French govern-

ment failure to decide on exactly what technical standard to adhere to after the War led to a stagnation of the domestic television set market for a decade. Again, if such sets have four channels and only two or three are currently used, individual political pressure may exist for the use of the remaining capacity.

The development of broadcasting in the early 1920s meant pressure on governments: that they regulate it to prevent utter chaos and in order that its political - and in Europe, international - impact be controlled; that they discover ways to fund it; that they invent or approve its organisational and institutional future. In the case of two of the three European nations studied here the astonishing fact is that twenty-five years after having come to some conclusions on all these points, broadcasting had, so to speak, to be re-invented.

It is possible to view this abrupt change as an opportunity to start afresh but one which, in both cases, political considerations largely prevented from being fully taken up. On the other hand the unified structure of British broadcasting continues, largely as a result of major policy remaining in the hands of the political party most ideologically concerned with the nature of power and its allocation and the moulding of that power to the changing political consensus.

In France the failure to discover a proper structure for broadcasting mirrors the lack of consensus and, simultaneously, the search for it. But three events cut into French broadcasting: the war and its recriminatory aftermath; the Algerian revolution; May, 1968. The first event prevents a commercial solution within French boundaries while licencing those on the edge. The second determines that broadcasting, like French politics at large, becomes a continuous crisis (the period of potential legitimation crisis) while the third has led to a partial resolution in broadcasting, if not politics, of that crisis (see Grandi, 1978; Flichy, 1978).

West Germany may be cited as an example where a new structure was found but where that structure has fitted uneasily into a Federal political structure, based as it largely was, on a previously unitary state. The major post-war crisis of German broadcasting was

the central government's attempt to assert state power over the Länder coupled with, fuelled by, a desire for commercial broadcasting. We may surmise that German history prevented the Bonn Government from winning this battle. The ensuing solution has led to a chronic under-financing of German broadcasting.

It is worth comparing this financial difficulty with that continuously affecting British public service broadcasting since the mid-1960s. The reasons are the same. The BBC felt it had to be, at least the first, preferably the sole, representative of broadcasting trends. But whereas German broadcasting has been able to enlarge its definition of public service to include an element of advertising, the institutional norms on which the BBC is founded, and the strength of the consensus which permits an alternative in commercial broadcasting, cuts off British public service broadcasting from a major potential financial lifeline.

The licence fee, to which all three nations have adhered, to a greater or lesser extent, has failed to keep up with inflation: politically, raising it too often is considered impossible. The saturation coverage of radio and television has gradually excluded the main source by which broadcasting organisations who were recipients obtained an annual increase. The coming of colour television also enormously raised costs, as did the coverage of international events where recoupment of the money spent could not be made from permitting advertising.

The commercial and political pressures have grown however as broadcasting is used to sell, not just products, but the system and its need for continuously raised levels of consumption. The pattern of advertising on radio and television has also changed in the past thirty-five years and now includes more services and service agencies, paralleling the shift in Western European economies from a secondary to a tertiary level.

The growing need for broadcasting to find politically 'neutral' sources of income has meant that in all three countries a greater or lesser degree of advertising is permitted. The British solution has been the most extreme. As I have shown this has to be understood in

relation to the consensus, and its strength, the cultural proximity of the American model, the endurance of the BBC as a 'pure' cultural body and the historical factor of a continuous broadcasting history.

In France the failure to accommodate growing commercial pressures led eventually to the clandestine advertising scandal of 1972. At the same time, France has been able to 'let off commercial steam' through the peripheral stations. German experience may be equated more with fears of commercial domination (the pre-war Hugenberg empire's support for the Nazis; the post-war growth of the Springer empire), where a de-centralised public service network acts as a bastion of an uncertain liberal democracy.

Any consideration of West German finance has as well to take into consideration the party penetration into broadcasting and the likely atrophy this will create in any consideration of major change. Nevertheless German broadcasting has yielded to commercial pressures to allow more advertising, a fact tied closely to its financial problems.

Structurally, all three countries have evolved broadcasting systems with close State links. But whereas in the UK there has been a slow evolution (by no means complete) towards increasing autonomy, in France the State has tended to retain close formal links. In West Germany the Federal State does have close links via the Ministry of Posts; indirectly, too with the involvement of the political parties. The Länder is the level at which this involvement with government is most obviously manifest. In all three countries informal links are important and, if we include political parties as a part of the political system external to the State in many manifestations, in both the UK and West Germany it has been the political parties which have counted as much as more obvious State structures. For France, the shifting alliances have led to political parties exhibiting weak structural links but Gaullism, as a symbolic political force, has been one pole of a continuum which the 'left' has by and large occuped at the other. There is significance in the fact that the British Conservative Party, the French Gaullists, and the West German CDU have all effected, and continue to effect major policy changes in broadcasting. As we have seen we may relate this to the

question of power, the nature of the economic system, and to the central idea of a particular ideology and its legitimation.

It is demonstrably the case that the three European countries studied exhibit certain common traits in broadcasting policy. But what is less clear is whether the policies that have existed are related sufficiently to the underlying issue of legitimation crisis. Does broadcasting policy in the UK, West Germany and France seek to help fill the gap in political expectation and state-government performance, by creating a series of ideological justifications and a cultural underpinning additional to, and complementary with, that traditionally supplied by other mechanisms in the political system, in particular, political parties themselves and tradition?

Another set of questions needs to be put alongside the central issue. How far have those political parties concerned with power per se allied themselves successfully with commercial interests and with the underlying source of the original crisis in order to resolve it?

In the case of France the underlying issue of consensus has not been resolved in the broadcast media, unless one includes the peripheral stations to produce what amounts to a weak British case. Broadcasting policy has failed to fill a gap between expectation and promise: the point of explosion came in 1968. In Germany, where, be it noted, the theory of legitimation crisis arose, the search for constitutional government has led to a freezing of the crisis in broadcasting policy: the central State, wherein classic European constitutionality lies, is unable to use broadcasting; the political parties have occupied broadcasting, denying the German State one of the most crucial legitimising functions: consensual neutrality.

The British 'solution' has been to adapt broadcasting to political change itself. As I have suggested, we might talk of a legitimation crisis emerging at certain points in the history of broadcasting and the subsequent alterations in broadcast policy. But, until recently, it is more difficult to see a continuous crisis. It must be borne in mind that broadcasting does not resolve a legitimation crisis although one effect, I have assumed, is to

alleviate it. Broadcasting policy though has to concern itself at a structural level - even if this is rarely articulated - with the ideological underpinnings: in the UK it has done so successfully.

The early institutionalisation of change, or its possibility, through Committees of Inquiry sets boundaries, so that if they are to be exceeded they are recognisably jumped, with public debate following. This apparently easy institutionalisation is however the product of a consensus broadcasting is directed to protect. Other European nations have not been so fortunate.

If then we are to assume that European nations have been variously afflicted by legitimation crises, the key one being the Second World War and its aftermath, and that political parties have, in or out of power, variously tried to mediate these crises, a general conclusion would be that only where a pre-existing consensus is discernible may any success be found. This has, by and large, been true of the UK. In both Germany and France it is much less so. The German solution has been more successful only insofar as the threat of its doppelgänger continues to exert an equivalent, if more minatory, version of the French 'periphérique'. Both nations have contained a serious legitimation crisis enduring since the war but broadcasting has been marginalised.

May we then surmise that broadcasting works best as a political channel only when there is a consensus pre-existing? Given the European limitation on frequencies and an attempted political settlement between capital and labour in Welfarism and the interventionist State, this would in fact appear to be true. The findings of the Glasgow Media Group (1975; 1980) are thus not surprising: in the UK at least the consensual limits set by broadcasting underpin the very settlement which pre-dates that consensus: break broadcasting's own rules consistently and the result is either a German-style domination of the organisation by political parties of, possibly, all colours; or the French-style capture of broadcasting by a dominant power group. Either way credibility is undermined.

There is a third possibility, outside Soviet or Third World structures. If there were large numbers of frequencies, or even just more than at present, could a market model intervene? For

example, if Western Europe were to pool its frequencies would a commercial system dominate involving classic liberal Press theories of a market-place of ideas? It has already been shown that the impetus for continuous growth of the commercial 'sector' already exists. But this commercial factor in Europe is itself dependent on the political settlement, that is, or a consensus between all parts of society.

As a final test of the validity of broadcasting policy as a tool of legitimation, we need to turn to the United States, where the lasting image is of a complete electro-magnetic spectrum in which politics may market its wares, and a policy, or policies which, largely, exist in absence.

5 : America and Europe : Marketplace or the State?

American radio was born in chaos with stations opening on the same or similar frequencies and then attempting to blast their opponents off the other. Government regulation, which came slowly, was aimed at reducing the anarchy of the airwaves; it was requested by the industry (Tuchman, 1974).

There was early condemnation of advertising and at the very beginning advertising had not been considered as a source of financing, the money for providing programmes coming from the sale of sets (this parallels what happened in Europe). The 1920s may be viewed as a time in American broadcasting where no clear patterns had emerged but where all the elements of the eventual system were present. Advertising was increasingly important as a source of income: Federal legislation did exist but it was weak; there were numerous local stations relying on entertainment as programme material; RCA, the biggest radio manufacturer, was developing its networks.

As in Europe the idealistic view in the early days was that radio would aid democracy, end the isolation of rural life and help to unite the nation (Barnouw, 1978). There was then, at this level, an impetus for the extension of local stations into something wider. This centralising shift emerges most clearly after the 1929 Wall Street Crash when CBS moves into a strong financial position vis a vis the two NBC networks (owned by RCA). Goodman has made the point

that the development of broadcasting took place at a time when increasing concentration of capital and centralisation of control was the norm; there was a 'superstition' that the more centralised and the bigger the organisation, the more efficient the operation and the better the product (Donner, 1967).

The 1929 stock market crash and the subsequent demise of much of American industry lent impetus to this attitude. More significantly it led to a considerable increase in federal government regulation. The radio networks were developing at great speed during this time (between 1927-1931). Barnouw suggests that early commitment to high programme standards - including not mentioning product prices - was eroded by the 1929 crash and the rise of CBS - desperate for business.

Elsewhere Barnouw (1968) has pointed to the centralising shift coinciding with the New Deal (Roosevelt came to power at the start of 1933). Shortly after Roosevelt's instalment the Congress passed the Federal Communications Act (1934) which set up the Federal Communications Commission. Barnouw says the Act, the one enduring state legacy in American broadcasting, was based on the invalid premise that American broadcasting was a local responsibility exercised by station owners. The networks were effectively ignored.

Thus, the lynch-pin of US broadcasting is absent from any direct control. The eventual break-up of the two NBC networks (red and blue) is an indication of the FCC's problems: it managed to force through this break but had been unable to enforce the more crucial decisions on programming and policy. There is a comparison here with the IBA in Britain which, by and large, may occasionally make large-scale alterations to the ownership of the system of commercial television but which has much less power to insist on more local controls and changes. But like the IBA, although the FCC has long periods of quiescence, it does from time to time move more forcibly (see Cox, 1968; Minow, 1964).

The Federal Communications Act replaced the Radio Act of 1927. The latter had long been held, via the Federal Radio Commission which it authorised, to have been a means for business and advertising interests to obtain, with ease, legitimated sanction of whatever radio station they might choose to operate.

The battle in American broadcasting - which continues into the 1980s - is largely about the merits of commercial broadcasting in the restricted marketplace provided by technical possibility and the networks, versus the educational lobby. This battle could be viewed as one between the loose coalition of the political right (Republican) and of the political left (Democrat). By and large the 'right' has retained control, paralleling the situation, albeit weakly, in Europe. Nevertheless, there has been some movement away from the early emphasis on radio as obtaining business to broadcasting (including television) as a public service fuelled by business. (see Barnouw, 1970, pp.335-344).

Economic factors have ensured that direct sponsoring has died away to be replaced with the more ethically neutral 'spot' advertising. The FCC has managed to implement some degree of public service broadcasting through the National Education Television and other local stations, using VHF frequencies.

Despite, however, these tendencies American broadcasting - which in terms of absolute political, economic and social power has meant more in America than elsewhere, television - has retained a powerfully commercial orientation. The second factor, alongside the use of broadcasting to sell domestic American consumerism - has been the extent to which American television is sold abroad.

There is insufficient space to discuss the impact, both in the United States and internationally, of this factor. The extent to which American media set the pattern for Europe and the world is extensively discussed by Tunstall (1977), Schiller (1970), Nordenstreng and Schiller (1979), Mattelart (1979). As far as legitimation, in the sense I have used it, is concerned, it would be unlikely in the extreme that the commercial model presented by the United States broadcasting system did not have an effect on Europe as well.

But culture and pattern-maintenance are concerned with the preservation of things, not only their replacement, and therefore the economic model of American broadcasting has been overwhelmingly negatively received in Europe. As broadcasting itself deals with

legitimation directly we would expect considerable tension in European systems to exist between the idea of commerical finance and any other kind in broadcasting: this, I have demonstrated exists. The introduction of commercial financing therefore may be said to lead to a broadcasting crisis, even where the political system is stable (UK),and for the broadcasters this is their legitimation crisis: but by no means all broadcasting is political.

The relationship between broadcasting and the political system in the US is not a clear-cut market one; for example, the two major political parties buy air-time and advertise their programmes. Since the 1960s, when, as in Europe, the impact of television on politics became a growing matter for debate and concern by politicians, one element introduced in American broadcasting has been the 'Fairness Doctrine' and concepts of equal time.

Any consideration of the broadcasting and political system linkages in the US has also to examine the federal government structure and the relevance of local radio and television stations: here, rather than at network level, more virulent politicking takes place, but particularly in radio; again however, not necessarily overtly.

At network level, despite the apparent lack of direct FCC control, national considerations are beginning to dictate (as they have for some years) a closer control. Allied with the immense commercial thrust of US broadcasting this has tended to produce bland television, much condemned by academic commentators (Barnouw, 1975). The geographical position of the network companies has also led to accusations of distortion in news coverage (Epstein, 1973).

But the heartland of American broadcasting lies between the networks: and, as with the European systems, these are national, developing national themes and involving Federal Government, indirectly or directly. The history of the networks is,as much as the history of the BBC, a central component in any consideration of the US broadcasting system (Friendly, 1967; Metz, 1975).

It is possible to visualise the American system as developing from the base upwards: from a rapid and unregulated melee of tiny radio stations to an increasingly nationally organised series of

services; today radio has returned to its roots while television remains locked into a vast national technology. As time has progressed American Governments have found it expedient to exercise growing controls (although these are extraordinarily weak by comparison with Europe).

There have also been slowly emerging pressures for more public service broadcasting organised via a 'fourth network' and funded on an entirely different basis to the commercial mainstream. If European systems have gone through sub-system crises over the introduction of commercial finance, we might predict a radical form of public finance for any PSB network would induce a similar public crisis in the US.

Such a suggestion ignores specific US factors. First, despite the networks, an underlying growth point has been local media, of which a small but significant number are non-profit and public service. Second, a national financing of public service broadcasting is unlikely, given the traditions of American broadcasting. More likely is a continued reliance on programme interchange between PSB stations and possibly regional opt-ins using satellite links (for example, currently in California). Meanwhile technological pressure from cable all lends weight to more-local-still channels.

American broadcasting constitutes a form of ideal case because it, like the British system, is integrated with the broad social values which underpin its society. In the US there is a continuing emphasis on entrepreneurial activity, a negative attitude to Federal Government, a community-centred ideal. Relations with the outside world, and the rapid changes of advanced capitalism, have led to more interventionism; the political system has, as in Europe, appropriated part of the broadcasting system. Nevertheless commercial norms dominate American broadcasting.

In Europe, however, politics dominates broadcasting, which is not to argue that all broadcasting is about politics (anymore than it is to argue that all American broadcasting is about commerce). But I am suggesting that the rhetoric of European broadcasting is couched in the language of politics, not commerce.

And in the UK, the injection of commercial finance was directed at political ends (increased legitimation towards a balanced society,

in the language of consensus politics) much more than commercial ends. In Germany and France this is less true, less obvious, because they reflect less consensual societies.

The changes in broadcasting policy are the results of a multitude of factors dealt with most completely in Chapter Five. Any major change is felt at the political level (even in the US): broadcasting is a politician's dream: simultaneously, it is his nightmare.

6: Preliminary Notes Towards a Trans-National Theory of Broadcasting Policy

Before moving on to consider the empirical evidence surrounding the introduction of commercial television and local commercial radio, it is worth summarising the main theoretical points made in this chapter.

The first point is that broadcasting is of profound importance to the political system, whatever the overt nature of its output may be (for example, entertainment). This is accepted both by academic commentators and politicians; both groups also concur in believing the relationship to be problematic and in a continuous crisis, not of legitimacy exactly, but of definition. There is also general agreement that, for whatever reason, television has exerted more pressure on broadcasting because of its expense.

It is fairly simple to demonstrate that in the UK the expansion of political broadcasting itself has remained locked in the constitutional precedence of the established main-stream political parties: this has condensed, certainly from 1945, into agreements between Conservative and Labour Parties over the lines to be drawn around politics in broadcasting. A good deal of conflict, affective of policy change in broadcasting, derives from growing professionalism amongst broadcasters, anxious to establish their autonomy.

Broadcasting, we have seen in this chapter, has been of increasing importance to the academic community. A number of disciplines have engaged in study of it, with differential and often conflicting results. There has, however, been little direct study of policy making and no meaningful attempt to locate any policy discussion

to sociological theory, outside of Marxist polemics.

Despite its epistemological 'ruptures' Marxism does provide one starting point for a theoretical consideration of broadcasting policy insofar as it introduces concepts of power, class, elites and ideology - values expressed as a partial account of reality. This does not go far enough in a consideration of broadcasting policy, however.

Broadcasting, aside from its involvement in the political system, expresses culture, both in the popular sense, and sociologically. It provides a means whereby values are discussed, or simply reinforced. Because of its technological capacity broadcasting may also help facilitate change itself, a vital component of advanced societies. But change, in order not to cause serious disruption, works better in consensual societies. The missing part in Marxist theory is consensus (it is only discussed negatively).

The provision of consensus, both as absolute (consistent to all societies at root) and contingent (more an expression of power in class-based societies) leads to questions of both legitimation, integration and power. The first two (along with the mechanisms by which consensus is effected) are ably dealt with by Talcott Parsons, the latter question returns us to Marx.

We have therefore a potentially unified theory, which involves Marxist and Parsonian sociology, around the central concepts of ideology, consensus and legitimation. Both Marxist and Parsonian theories suffer from different rigidities: neither of necessity accounts for, in Marxist theory, change without rupture, in Parsonian theory, relatively sudden change within the system.

Provision of this final theoretical element comes from the neo-systems school of German sociology, notably Habermas and Offe. Habermas is concerned with systematically distorted communication and the matrix of State-Government interventionism, characteristic of post-World War Two European societies, which may lead to a crisis of legitimation; Offe connects this more to political party than State apparatus.

By studying (in Chapters Three and Four) the large changes in UK broadcasting towards commercial financing, and the involvement of the Conservative Party in this, I have been able to link a number of elements of the theoretical positions outlined here to the empiric.

Briefly, broadcasting helps to express both absolute consensus and contingent (a form of ideological hegemony); it also legitimates elements of the political system by appearing value-neutral (precisely because it transmits those values). In the UK established structurally when a consensus (both absolute and contingent) was created around interventionism (in an early phase), it legitimated that interventionist philosophy and carried seeds of post-war welfarism.

The political party of power - the Conservatives - not trammelled by an ideology outside of the system they had formed themselves within (capitalism itself), were placed in an internal crisis by the post-war election of a Labour Government committed to continued and increasing intervention.

The crises in the Conservative Party, however, parallel the crises in the State because both are linked to a shortfall of legitimacy. For electoral purposes (indirect: the Conservatives are more concerned with the climate of opinion which broadcasting may materially affect), the post-war Conservative Governments have, from time to time, tried to change the basis of their legitimacy by increasing commercialisation of broadcasting. This has had an indirect effect of generally legitimising the interventionist state in the short-term through the concept of balance (note that this also is intertwined with broadcasters' own professionalism).

This is not the only factor in broadcasting policy but it is the structurally vital one. A study of European broadcasting policy in West Germany and France, and a comparison of these two countries and the UK, with the USA (and what I have here designated a market model),* suggests the importance of broadcasting to legitimacy and the political parties, but particularly to that political party most enamoured of a status quo rooted in existing economic institutions.

I want now to turn to the empirical evidence for these hypotheses, before returning to a final theoretical discussion in Chapter Five.

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*For a comparative chart see Table 2.

Factors	UK	US	W.Germany	France
Political System	Unitary national State Precedence over Written Constitution	Federal Written Constitution	Federal Written 'Basic Law'	Unitary national State Written Constitution
Political Aims	Equality?	Maintenance of Freedom?	Constitu-ional (plural) Government	Political Consensus: national identity
Main Political Parties	Conservative Labour ideological conditions	Republican Democrat fluid conditions	CDU SDP ideological conditions	Gaullists (fluid) 'Left' (fluid) ideological conditions
Democratic 'meaning'	Balance = consensus (parallel with class system?)	Freedom = consensus	Plural parties in the absence of consensus	State in the absence of consensus
Broad-casting system (trend)	Mixed, centralised BBC IBA	Mixed, decentralised networks local	Mixed, decentralised (ARD stations) ZDF	Mixed, centralised ex-ORTF
Broad-casting 'ethos'	Unitary Public Service	Commercial (market place)	Plural Public Service	Unitary State Service
Broad-casting Finance (mainstream)	Licence fee Commercial	Commercial	Licence fee Commercial	Licence fee Commercial
Technical Limits	European Convention Limitations	'Unlimited'	European Convention Limitations	European Convention Limitations
'Crises'	over commercial finance over monopoly over centralism over inflation over broadcaster power	over network power over public services over broad-caster power	over central govt. control over commerc-ial finance over broad-caster autonomy	over state control over commercial finance over broad-caster autonomy

Table 2 : Government, Party, Broadcasting : Four Nations

(for general comparisons between broadcast systems see UNESCO, 1975)

Chapter Three

Words with Pictures : The Coming of Commercial Television

I : The Setting

Although for the sake of historical continuity I have chosen to discuss the policy which led to ITV first, it was studied after the detailed look at the way commercial radio was introduced into the UK. This is worth pointing out because it was as much as anything the discrepancies of theory and practice in the radio study which suggested the original introduction of overt commercialism into British broadcasting would bear fruitful examination.

This has proved to be the case. The debates and arguments of the period 1949-54 (between the announcement of the Beveridge Committee and the passing of the Television Act, 1954) may be reduced, upon study, to two, directly related to broadcasting: should there continue to be a monopoly; if the monopoly is to be broken, should the competitor or competitors be permitted to finance their service through advertising revenue?

These deceptively simple questions however disguise numerous others related, as has been noted in Chapter Two, to very large structural issues. Those who are involved in policy-making in broadcasting or in production may in some cases be aware of these larger questions (Goldie, 1977). The nature of broadcasting is such that those close to it can see, dimly or with penetrating insight, that their work, as producers, or as policy-makers, can affect how people think, more importantly, what they think about (Glasgow Media Group, 1975). Thus Sir John Rodgers, interviewed in 1979 suggested that 'the power you give people who own a television station is unbelievable - fortunately most people have not realised it.' (TCS I 2).

The issue of commercial television, away from the more abstract concerns already discussed, came, in one instance, to be one of vulgarity versus good taste (the latter represented by the BBC). This was not a small side show. It was not simply seen that advertising was vulgar: that was in one sense accepted as unquestionable by large numbers. It was that television was inherently vulgar

(see Chapter Two p.86): by allowing advertisements one reinforced the trend. In 1979, in interview, Lord Butler continually emphasised the feeling at the time that a number of the Conservative Party's senior men 'found the whole thing silly and vulgar - awful advertisements for baby power and such like.' (TCS I 8) He claimed that Churchill could never follow commercial television programmes because he mixed the advertisements up with the production being shown. Norman Collins also suggests that within the BBC television, specifically, was looked upon with horror. He relates that one time he had to order 'one gross powder puffs' for the make-up department at Alexandra Palace. All orders had to be routed through the administration at Broadcasting House who reacted with a frisson of distaste that the television service should have brought the service to the level of the music hall in its requests for 'equipment'.

The overall significance of the levels of taste argument should not be exaggerated; neither should its impact be underestimated. It almost certainly stopped sponsorship from emerging in British broadcasting right up to the present: the concession by the pro-commercial Lobby was a rigid separation of advertising material from the programmes (pace Churchill). It probably prevented an immediate extension of commercialism to broadcasting.

It ought also to be borne in mind that for the Conservative Party, too, there was an issue of taste. The 'new' Party of the Maxwell-Fyfe reforms and 'Uncle Fred' Woolton, was offensive to many as an expression of unnecessary populism in the fight against the Labour Party. The new brash intake of MPs in 1950 and 1951 would have been upsetting to many Conservative peers. Commercialising broadcasting would have confirmed their worst fears. The fight over commercial television may be seen in one part as a fight for the 'old' Conservative Party, for its spiritual (and therefore ideological) soul.

Lord Woolton, one of the most influential protagonists for breaking the BBC's monopoly (what I have identified as the real issue), apparently asked the 'young Turks' - Rodgers, Profumo, Orr-Ewing - the most vociferous of the commercial lobby in the Commons:

'will you promise not to break the BBC's monopoly in radio as they did such a wonderful job in the war?' (TCS I 2, op.cit.).

Yet, as has been suggested, it was the 'wonderful job' that indirectly led to the attacks on the BBC during the late 1940s for being arrogant and, critically, left-wing. The power of a single centralised broadcasting institution, during the reign of a 'new' radical government, when Europe looked as if it might turn into a set of socialist or communist states, was another factor.

From the evidence, however, it can be demonstrated that the outcome was a close run thing. Had the pro-commercial lobby not recognised the power of television, both as a commercial prospect, and as a political instrument, and linked them together, thereby concentrating their attack, commercial broadcasting (and, therefore, competititon) would not have arrived until much later.

It is the case that the BBC hierarchy misunderstood television from the start. Although there were visionaries like Gerard Cock, the first (pre-war) controller; Ian Orr-Ewing, one time head of outside broadcasting, and, apocryphally, Norman Collins, the post-war director of BBC television who left in disgust in 1950, the powers in the Corporation viewed television with either distaste, or incomprehension, often both.

William Haley, the director-general in the post-war period, chose to divert money into his pet Third Programme rather than give capital to building television transmitters. Although the BBC finally announced a five-year transmitter development plan in 1949 the four years of stagnation since 1945 had lost them the initiative. (Generally, the period was one of replacing war-damaged Britain.)

In fact the true recognition of television as the medium which it had become, did not take place until 1953 and a Ten-Year Plan:

> The critical change in BBC attitudes towards television development as a whole and the allocation of a growing share of its own resources to it came with the acceptance in 1953 and 1954 of the idea of a prospective 'Television Plan' capable of adjustment and review... (Briggs, 1979).

This recognition took place after the Conservative Government had made it plain they would introduce a competitor in television and

must be a response to that challenge. The BBC, in making these tentative moves, sets the stage for the 1960s and the era of Hugh Greene. Meanwhile its standard response at the time to the attacks on its monopoly was to mobilise all those establishment forces which would defend it.

A major question has to deal with the eventual influence of these groups, among which was a powerful lobby of Conservative peers. At one time the issue of commercial television was bid fair to break the Conservative Party in two: the compromise reflects structural shift; that is, unless the issue had been about fundamental change within the Conservative Party itself, and the relationship between that Party and the holding of State power, we might surmise the argument would have split the Party. As it was, the peers involved compromised under duress to the exigencies of power, Whether that is a constant and unsurprising feature of British political life is another question: I would argue not (see Chapter 2, again) because broadcasting is expressive at a deeper meaning level than, say, foreign policy.

Major emphasis in this case has to be given to finance. This ties in with the problems the BBC had generally in the immediate post-war period. Television was clearly an expensive medium and even before the war, in 1939, there had been Treasury pressure on the BBC to accept additional revenue on the television service via advertisements. There was, then, a latent pressure working within the system to find money for television development outside the agreed system. The technological newness of television made an innovatory financing more feasible.

What of the State? Coase suggested in an article in The Times that 'the bulk of the cost of the television service is borne by the Treasury' (Coase, The Times, 1950), because, he argued, if there had been no television the Treasury would have taken much more than 15 per cent of the licence fee. Treasury influence is hard to pin down, Crucial documents relating to the post-Beveridge Committee Report phase, both of the Labour Government of 1950-51 and the Conservative

Government, are not yet available in the Public Record Office.

What there is intrigues rather than enlightens. In its discussions about evidence to the Beveridge Committee, the Treasury was apparently more exercised about the question of control of broadcasting. One memorandum to the Beveridge Committee argues that there is no reason why television should not be developed out of the licence fee because not to do so would imply that the licence holder had a right to an immediate return on his fee. This would imply, in turn, that there was a relationship of control (à la stockholder) between the broadcasting authorities and the listener/viewer which would be unhealthy.

At the same time the Treasury was arguing (in some parts) that it would be better from the State's point of view if the BBC got a grant from Government, rather than having the licence fees handed over. One memorandum says: 'There is... a close connection between the question of control and the question of increasing the present licence fee...' (Public Records Office Treasury File, T162, 1946)

The Government Department most closely connected with broadcasting, the GPO, also had interests. Among the most important was the control of wavelengths. Any extension of broadcasting (which naturally competition implied) would be re-allocation. Another major factor was provision of special land-lines for high quality transmission between studios and transmitters. The coming of ITV meant that the GPO had to delay extension and improvement of the domestic telephone network, a source of revenue, to get new cable links installed for television.

At the same time at least one senior GPO figure, Sir Ben Barnett, deputy direct-general, was apparently 'ideologically' in favour of the breaking of the BBC's monopoly (TCS I 10). It has been suggested that the real power in the Government-State complex before 1951 was Herbert Morrison. Morrison was afraid that someone would 'rock the broadcasting boat': at the time (late 1940s) various US organisations were using radio in Europe to sell America (Radio Free Europe, for example). In the Labour political establishment, and in the civil service (GPO, Lord President's office, Foreign Office,

probably the Treasury) there was a general desire that the BBC continue: Attlee, as Prime Minister, was for the Corporation.

Morrison also apparently insisted that GPO officials worked through his office: the Post Master-General had to do what Morrison wanted, who, as Lord President had the senior responsibility for broadcasting. This image - particularly with Morrison as the Minister - may have disturbed senior Conservative politicians.

The most often cited factors surrounding commercial television have concerned the pressure groups, both formal and informal which publicly and privately attempted to mould the outcome to suit their immediate preferences. The major informal groups are dealt with below (p.233); their significance was not as great as one authority suggests (Wilson, 1961); but, as with the other factors cited here, they did have effects.

The two public bodies, the National Television Council, and the Popular Television Association, noisy though both were, were less successful (see Mayhew, 1953, for the 'tone' of the NTC). Christopher Mayhew, who was behind the NTC, says his aim was more to split the Conservative Party than to rouse popular support (TCS I 11). The PTA appears to have been more overtly concerned with getting genuine public, ie, audience, support (which incidentally makes it unusual) but it too had little impact (see p.253).

The commercial television policy <u>is</u> important to this study because it provides the most clear-cut disjuncture (at one level) in broadcasting policy history. It may be studied as a concise example of the concatenation of the forces needed to break an established agreement - at all levels including the structural ideological, and consensual - in order that new rules of procedure apply.

From the beginning broadcasting was seen to be a significant technological weapon for capturing mass audiences on a huge scale: politicians <u>and</u> commercial interests rapidly were made aware of this, and continued, if anything, to become more aware.

For example, in August, 1962, William Deedes, then Minister without Portfolio in Macmillan's Government, wrote to Martin Redmayne, then Chief Whip:

> No field of communications offers greater possibilities in the time of our disposal before an election, say 18 months, to improve the public mood towards government than that of broadcasting and <u>television</u> (Swinton archives Box 517, 1962) (emphasis added).

Deedes expresses at the political pole what led to commercial television in the UK. It was at the commercial pole that the engine was found to power the ship of state in this particular direction.

II : <u>Legitimation, Consensus, 'Commercialism' and Broadcasting, 1945-1954</u>

In Chapter Two I have dealt extensively with the theoretical parameters of broadcasting policy. The importance of the Conservative Party has been examined and the changing nature of that Party in the post-war world of the 1940s has been related to the desire for <u>power</u>. This theme has been linked to legitimation and the crucial question of consensus. The period from the late 1940s until the end of the 1960s may express the only time a deep-seated consensus has existed in a fully democratic Britain: the central issue here remains whether this can be related to commercialism in broadcasting, or whether such commercialisation follows <u>from</u> such a consensus. Commercialism, I have attempted to demonstrate, is related to Welfare Capitalism and consumerism.

Habermas argues that within Western 'welfare and warfare' states the preferences of consumers become unclear: the system has filled the gaps of the old basic necessities and what remains is a 'constant interpretation and re-interpretation of needs .... In this process, free communication can be replaced only by massive manipulation, that is, by strong indirect control' (Habermas, 1976(a)).

This indirect control may be equated to 'opportunistic adaptation of consumers', a suggestion which fits well with a remark made by Lord Strang in the House of Lords in 1962, when discussing the introduction of commercial television:

> There is no mystery about it. But it marks, I venture to say, some transfer of allegiance away from the <u>respectable principles</u> of the older philosophic conservatism towards the idols of the market place. (Lord Strang, 1962) (emphasis added).

Before taking a close look at the evidence available on the formation of the commercial television policy, it would be a reasonable diversion to look in more detail at what Habermas has called 'recoupling the economic system to the political' with its demand for additional legitimation; second the relationship of this to commercialism and the question of consensus in post-war Britain; finally whether the coming of ITV did not additionally involve an ideologically structured 'recognition' of late capitalism: a capitalism whose society would involve an intimate dualism in ideology, perception and output: a dualism which broadcasting could publicly express.

How might a 'recoupling' be described? Leaving aside what 'pure' economic motives there might be, the stress on 'competitive' broadcasting directs attention onto a system which, while supporting the welfare state, wishes to stress possessive individualism and consumer autonomy. A mixed broadcasting system counternances a dualism of self-help and state support.

By financing the competitor through advertisements the crucial input of 'commerce' is effected - itself a 'recoupler'. Commercialism is a concept with condensed meanings: it suggests 'freedom' (in the sense that consumers do not pay to watch its programmes); it also 'frees' society from monopolistic or oligopolistic domination (by the state, in this case). It also means, concretely, an 'energy' input: an economic shift involving capital and injected directly into the polity (note early on that the Conservative Government intended to ban all political and religious programmes from commercial television) and into the socio-cultural system - the latter being critically concerned with a shortfall of legitimation (see Chapter Two, p. 115).

What, then, are we to make of the Conservative Party's adoption of the commercial television policy after the same Party had stressed the importance of monopoly when it had backed the BBC in 1926? The vital element to bear in mind in studies of this kind is concrete history. In the case of the Conservative Party a part of this history is the loose and shifting nature of the coalition which in reality it is. (See Chapter Two, p. 126)

The changes in the Party between 1945 and 1949 reflect an understanding by most of the hierarchy that a new balance of forces was required (see, especially, p.131 above); the 'old' guard - the 'philosophic conservatives' - a shifting mixture of Tories and Whigs (Beer, 1965; O'Sullivan, 1976), concerned with order, status, balance (this is Coleridge) and hierarchy have to go. There is a strong corporatist tendency too in the older Conservatism which supports state bodies like the BBC.

But if both major parties were broadly collectivist from 1945, two distinctions can be drawn between them. First, a philosophical point, that the Labour Party (and Governments) has shown a remarkably consistent trend in dealing largely with the economy, that is, in Marxist terms, the base. 'Welfarism' may be seen in this light, as contributing to the infrastructure of the economy yet, simultaneously, penetrating the superstructure with political questions. This, I submit, is why the 1945 Labour Government was seen as such a threat to the 'natural' order by the 'ruling' party, the Conservatives.

Hitherto, as the Conservatives maintained, a good deal of social legislation had lain with them (although they exaggerated the amount). For, if the Labour Party deals, post World-War Two, with the economy, the Conservatives - the 'natural' party of government - has dealt with politics. The danger for the Conservative Party in 1945 was that given the recoupling of the economic to the political, which the interventionist state they had aided in introducing from the mid-1930s entailed, a Labour Government was 'natural'.

Ian Orr-Ewing, in an article in Truth in March, 1953, outlines the advantages within the consensus established by the Welfare State, of a new medium, television, in selling Conservatism under the emotional sloganising originated under Woolton's Chairmanship.

> The Socialists have consistently appealed to the emotions of the electorate, and because that is a simple approach they have captured a large proportion of the unthinking voters, particularly amongst the under-thirties ... Now comes a new element in the political scene. The very people who possess little desire to read about political issues or attend meetings are the first to want a television set... For the first time there is an opportunity for Conservative speakers to enter their homes under

> favourable conditions... The advantage should lie with the Conservative Party, because the more vulnerable Labour voters will be exposed to a new form of persuasion...

He ended by suggesting that '... It may well be that TV will turn out to be the most potent political force since Caxton set up his printing press.'

Aside from any emotional appeal the concrete symbolisation needed to attack Labour was provided by nationalisation - in the economy and in culture, particularly symbolised through the BBC. The nature of legitimation crisis suggests, however, that more input still was needed to help break the monopoly: after all, that monopoly could have been broken by creating parallel public corporations. This addition, crucial to motivation, was commercialism - a direct input, again using Marxist terminology, from the base to the superstructure working as a value - ideologically - and creating concrete opportunity for economic expansion.

As Gammans said, during the Third Reading of the Television Bill

> it is the ending of the BBC's monopoly that is the basic principle .... We have made it quite clear from the beginning that the main revenue will come from advertisements... We take the view ... there is nothing wrong or unsound in this method of financing television... If we took the view, if we believed that the cost of advertising must always be loaded on to the price of goods, then we should logically find ourselves possessed of a State shop, which would do away with the need for advertisements because there would be no question of choice and certainly no competition (Gammans, 1954) (emphasis added).

The Conservative Party was desperately divided over the issue more or less up to its final outcome (see below p.245). On the one hand the 'new' party tended to concentrate in the Commons (for fairly obvious reasons), on the other hand - the 'Tory' element was in the Lords. Among the Commons 'radicals' were the 'One Nation' group which included John Rodgers, along with Edward Heath, Ian Macleod, Angus Maude, Robert Carr and Enoch Powell.

The group were anxious for a balance between rights and duties, although these were not necessarily equal and opposite. They quoted Woolton in their first published booklet and agreed with him that

they 'strongly opposed, and shall do our best to reverse, the Socialist tendency toward the centralisation of all Government.' (One Nation, 1954).

In 1954 - the year the Television Act came into force, after passing Commons and Lords - an altered One Nation group (some previous members were now in Government) but still with Rodgers, Maude, Powell and Carr, published Change is our ally. The group were anxious to dispel the idea they wanted a laisser-faire economy. Their theme was change.

> This means a reversal of the trend of the pre-war era. In the 1920s and 1930s rationalisation, whether under public or private control, was the order of the day. Employees and owners of capital saw in it an insurance against sudden and complete defeat; employees thought that it offered some guarantee against the worst forms of unemployment. The whole emphasis was on the defence of the status quo (emphasis added).

Since 1945, however, there has been a need to 'change' - which has met public resistance, their collective mind conditioned by memories of the 1930s.

> The right way to promote change is to provide opportunities for the enterprising elements in society and to create the atmosphere and the industrial structure in which change is facilitated and spurred on.

While One Nation were not the Conservative Government a number of their members went on to be in that Government, suggestive at least that their general ideas were consistent with the ruling philosophy. It is possible to see here the tension between creating the possibility for a Conservative consensus which does not undermine a public sentiment for support systems with the 'need' for change, competition.

More strident is a pamphlet of the Conservative Party of 1953 - There's free Speech - Why not free Switch? written by Mark Chapman-Walker. The issue of commercial television had by this point conveniently shifted to a party political one, enabling party managers to avoid trying to patch internal dissension. Thus the pamphlet explains the Labour Party oppose commercial television because 'they

are the party of State monopoly; of nationalisation; the unvarying opponents of free enterprise and freedom of choice.' It continues that the real issue is freedom of choice: 'the principle of freedom is at stake...the public is denied freedom of the air.' Most significantly it adds that

> the whole weight of the attack on commercial television rests on the grounds of possible abuse and bad taste. But if these arguments were accepted then there should be censorship in every other walk of life where freedom now reigns (emphasis in original).

It was the potential abuse of 'culture' (in the narrow sense) that opponents in Parliament concentrated on. As we have noted in the political sense this meant Conservative Peers; defending 'taste' they were also defending a philosophy of order and hierarchy, the same ideas which Reith had carried into early broadcasting.

Among the most eloquent of the 'old' Tories (age had little to do with it in reality) was Lord Hailsham. This debate he thought

> takes place in the context of the great debate in our national affairs between the two rival principles upon which goods and services can be supplied - the principle of public service, sometimes called monopoly, and the principle of free enterprise and competition (Hailsham, 1953).

He suggested that previous to this issue broadcasting had been kept out of Party politics - that is, that it had been a fundamental part of the structural organisation of society. Now, however, a 'disaster' had occurred because

> the machinery of democracy, of which our broadcasting is a vital and indispensable part, should be outside the range of ordinary controversial Party politics (emphasis added).

So concerned was Hailsham about this that he made an effort at alliance with the Labour and Liberal Parties during this debate - both of whom had not put their Whips on, unlike the Conservatives. Many other Peers spoke on similar lines.

Throughout the period after the Conservative Party returned to power in 1951 the Labour Opposition tended towards a low-key attack on the television proposals (see below, p.245). It is, of course,

extremely difficult to assess this absolutely: but to return to the earlier theoretical points: commercial television was an elegant target: it was as a medium, new, and neglected by the state monopoly; it clearly needed a great deal of finance; it could be 'given' to the new Conservatism as a hostage to fortune. Thus, Lord Kilmuir (ex Sir David Maxwell Fyfe) in 1962:

> My view is that after the Conservative Party were returned to power in 1951 there was always a majority among our Members in the House of Commons in favour of breaking the monopoly but it was recognised that there was a great problem as to how it should be done. To prove the case against monopoly was not to prove the case for commercial competition (Lord Kilmuir,1962).

As we have seen, however, there is an extra advantage in financing television through advertisements: it provides in a unique fashion, a legitimation from the economic to the socio-cultural sphere: it feeds a consensual possibility via that region into the political. But that the working class voted two more times for the Conservative Party - and almost put them back in government in 1964, does not suggest that commercial television was directly responsible.

What commercial television did was to provide the equivalent of 'free beer' or as another writer put it:

> Because the Conservative Party is so largely identified with the status quo, it cannot help but be benefitted, indirectly and almost accidentally, by the insistent presentation to the electorate of stories and programmes which in one way or another make the point: 'Things are going Fine'. 'There's nothing to complain about' or 'If you have problems change yourself, not society'. The Labour Party suffers because it requires a widespread sense of social discontent to gain more voters. The media are uninterested in social problems... (Wilson, 1961).

In this sense, as Professor Wilson points out, the political significance of commercial television has to be evaluated along with other Conservative Government policies of the early 1950s: reduced restrictions on hire purchase; lower mortgage deposits; all the efforts designed to produce a 'property-owning democracy' - part of the new legitimation the interventionist state requires.

I have based my case thus far on the recoupling of the economic

to the political: the Conservative Party is, par excellence, the governing party of the political, as the Labour Party has come to be the governing party of the economic. This is not to suggest there are no cross-currents; it is to direct attention to particular trends. At the ideological level commercialism has profound significance implying an individualistic philosophy of right yet also santctifying the modern interventionist state.

To end this section it is worth quoting Lord Kilmuir again, when he discusses Wilson's book (see above, p.190).

> He said that the Conservative Party sanctioned a development which, its critics maintained, speeds the movement towards a society which would glorify middle-class consumption goals and the commercialisation of all institutional and personal relationships and values. He does not get on to what is the real problem of democratic Governments - namely, that a Government must be at once the leaders and representatives of the people. If they were not leaders, they should not be a Government. If they are not representative, it would not be a democracy. In forming their policies, members of the Government must take into account what ordinary people want and desire.

Kilmuir has described, precisely, the 'real' problem: the relationship between legitimation and motivation. The political party system is the mechanism by which this can be effected: the 'disciplined mechanisms' Offe discusses. Because of their monopoly position vis a vis institutional power Offe suggests

> it is no co-incidence that analysis from the world of organised markets come so readily to mind. (Offe, 1975)

Offe goes on to discuss the ways in which modern political parties have to compete on marginal issues to distinguish between themselves. Marginal issues can become structural: this is the case with the commercial television policy.

III : Pushings and Pullings : the Wilson thesis

There have been two well-documented studies of the introduction of commercial broadcasting in the UK. The one historical, by Briggs, says that 'a few people had come to the conclusion that television

was a "medium of the future" which need not be linked to sound broadcasting' but he concludes a little later that the end of the BBC's monopoly 'was the result of a building of new economic and political forces. There was no grand design - or plot - to produce the Television Act of 1954' (Briggs, 1979), and, he points out that, we may see in retrospect that the Act was full of compromises and that it satisfied neither pro- or opponents.

It is the other work - devoted solely to the commercial television issue - that I wish to deal with in some detail. Pressure Group by Professor Hugh Wilson is based on the premise that a 'very small group of nominally politically insignificant Conservative backbenchers' defeated the Conservative Government through an alliance with powerful industrial and manufacturing concerns.

What the subsequent fuss was about with its various threats of libel actions was the suggestion made by Wilson that MPs involved in the parliamentary campaign for ITV had been unduly influenced by their commercial backgrounds. In fact Wilson's underlying thesis is not far from my own. As he puts it: 'the introduction of commercial television must inevitably speed the commercialisation of society.... the introduction of commercial television needs to be viewed in conjunction with other policies of the practical Conservatives who were inspired by Lord Wootton to crusade against the Labour Government's declared intent to make operative a social ethic.' (Wilson, 1961, p.16).

Wilson notes that Woolton's programme was 'designed to associate "Tory democracy" with the consumption aspirations of the majority'. The United States had demonstrated how 'people's capitalism' could be sold: commercial television operates to

> interlace the consumption expectations of their readers and listeners with the interests of their backers and advertisers.

As I have already extensively argued (see p. 184) this seems to be the case and, more significantly, to make sense in the structural sense that such major alterations that were occurring in the economic sphere found a reflection in the cultural - and ideological. When Wilson talks about the 'Americanisation' of Britain he means the

cultural: but it is worth noting that the 'literal' sense of this after 1945 was in the economic, the more determinate sphere. Where I take issue with Wilson is in the nature of the 'campaign' and in the policy-making process. His simplification of a highly complex process fails to take into account 'interest group' politics: that is, the working out of compromise within the system. His study, significantly, stops at the point where many of the compromises are made: after the Bill was published.

One civil servant working in the Post Office department of the period notes that during the late 1940s there was a broad agreement between the Labour Government and Conservative Opposition. The mistake Attlee made, he thinks, was to make commercial television a party-political issue, thereby ensuring a closure of Conservative ranks (Baker, TCS I 6, op.cit.).

It is possible to see here the reaction of a single elite (Giddens, 1973, p.114) - Government parties - to public scrutiny; although for more general reasons this is not a point worth pursuing too far. Wilson's inability to structure his argument around, for example, the reasons why the Labour Party did not raise the issue more, are related to his determination to see the policy as a plot. By definition plots are never very public.

Wilson also shows a curious attitude to what may constitute an ideological position, effectively holding the view that a Conservative Party which introduced the BBC was acting ideologically; one that set out to commercialise broadcasting was not (Wilson, op.cit., p. 17). One reason for his attitudes was given by Lord Francis-Williams, in a debate called by Lord Reith on Wilson's book in the Lords in 1962. He was, says Francis-Williams 'a careful and rather conservatively-minded man....He had a tremendous belief in British political institutions, and he had also an idealistic and perhaps, as it seemed to me, a romantic conception of the British Conservative Party ' (Francis-Williams, 1962).

Briggs, wrongly in my view, chooses to concentrate the idea of 'pressure group' on the two public bodies, the NTC and the PTA. He

quoted Crossman who, reviewing Wilson's book, thought 'there was trouble in store for anyone...who gives the first truthful account of British Parliamentary politics since 1945'. Yet as Briggs points out this Wilson did not do, failing to cover the Second Reading Debates in both Houses in anything like the necessary depth, and concentrating instead on extra-Parliamentary manoeuvrings.

Part of the furore created by the publication of Pressure Group arose over its timing. In 1961, again as Briggs is quick to note, 'Old battles were still being fought': the Pilkington Committee (see below, p.285) was in the process of delivering a series of well-calculated blows against the commercial system. Wilson's thesis fitted the time perfectly and may have contributed to the Report.

For Briggs, Wilson's mistake (if the errors can be reduced to a single underlying cause célèbre), was in failing to appreciate that 'pressure' was a permissible part of British political life. There is also the question of the monopoly which, as I have attempted to demonstrate, was the true heart of the matter.

Briggs approaches this point when he quotes from The Economist of the time which asked why broadcasting should expect to be treated in a different way to other media: the objection was in principle to leaving, for example television, in the hands of one Corporation.

In emphasising the extent to which 'commercialism' dominated the contemporary discussion Briggs hits upon one aspect of crucial significance: as with Wilson and his 'Americanisation', the structural questions raised are about attitudes, values - an ideology of the hard sell. But we are discussing the United Kingdom and even at its worst ITV had more soft than hard sell to offer.

Nevertheless both commercialism and pressure are not to be discounted. Where Briggs, in my mind, begins to lose the underlying theme is in his extended efforts to track the influence of, for example, the Popular Television Association. The PTA and the NTC, its döppelgänger, existed in a matrix of 'pushings and pullings', where, as Wilson rightly hints, a great deal of money was on offer: in the end the decision had to be made by Parliament; more narrowly than that, in a Cabinet where a number of Ministers were actively or

passively opposed; several more indifferent. Only an issue of profound principle might appeal and that was setting broadcasting 'free', a symbol of potenty in the Conservative Party's new found philosophy (See also Briggs, TCS I 9).

Wilson worries at this point but does not grasp it: the monopoly in question was his beloved BBC and one suspects that it was inconceivable to him to imagine a major political party, whose history he revered, could undo its own work from principle on high rather than from plot within.

Aside from details which are wrong in Wilson's book there are these major errors of interpretation. Wilson suggests that Churchill's 'Overlord' scheme - appointing peers with authority to co-ordinate departmental policies - with its immediate effect of making certain Parliamentary questions inoperable, led to a series of backbench revolts. This seems not to have been the case by and large.

He suggests that the arrival of over 100 new Conservative MPs changed the opinions and 'temper' of the Parliamentary Party and surprised the Conservative Government. The fact is that the overwhelming majority of these MPs arrived in 1950 18 months before a Conservative Government. The hierarchy of the Party already had a strong idea how these new members felt about the broadcasting monopoly. Doubtless they made their collective views known about many other issues as well. Any incipient 'revolt' would have been apparent to the Whips long before it arose.

Berrington (1973, p.173) notes that after their near victory in 1950, 'there is some, but by no means conclusive, evidence that there was a systematic tendency for the 1950 intake and the younger Members to sign more frequently than the older' the Early Day Motions he takes as evidence of opinion. It was the 1951 victory, he thinks, which meant it was less easy to maintain unity - a distinguishing factor of the Conservative Party between 1945 and 1951.

Governments have to govern; the back bench Conservatives saw in the choices being made a reneging of the ideology of Opposition. But, Berrington points out, there is no identifiable 'right wing' consistently applying pressure, only temporary and ad hoc coalitions who came together for specific purposes.

On broadcasting the Whips were able to report much later (February, 1952) that a large number of backbenchers were strongly in favour of ending the monopoly. Wilson seems to waver between the neatness of a plot of a few back-bench MPs with identifiable interests and a full-scale revolt. Any Government, unless it has a huge majority (as the Labour Government did in 1945), would be courting disaster within its ranks unless it understood the mood of its own supporters. The term 'revolt' in Parliamentary terms can mean many things. A Party Committee (The Assheton Committee) had already recommended breaking the monopoly before the Conservatives came to power (see p.239). One of the most senior and noted members of the Party, Lord Woolton, had endorsed the Report, tacitly, in July, 1951, during the debate on the Labour Government's White Paper.

On the question of the relationship between MPs and their outside interests, past or current, Wilson again fails to differentiate sufficiently. Clearly interests, in the broadest possible sense, do affect voting, otherwise Parties would not exist. But to identify the Conservative Party as the 'party of business' does not do justice to the concept of coalition so vital, in elite terms, to a coherence of a generalised consensus as it is worked out in national political terms. Quite simply people do sometimes put principle (the ideological) before sectional interest (crudely, in this case, money).

The question Wilson never confronts is how policy is to be made. His own prejudice against commercialism blinds him to this one point, the natural allies to which were the BBC and public indifference. When Wilson points to the fact that the Broadcasting Study Group, probably formed soon after the Conservative Government in late 1951, although there is some doubt,* was a reflection of the attitudes of those 'in the vanguard', who were committed, not only to the breaking of the BBC monopoly, but to the introduction of commercial broadcasting (Wilson, op.cit., p.85), the implication is plain. What

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*Ian Orr-Ewing, now Lord Orr-Ewing, in a note for the BBC Archives in his private papers says that he thinks some kind of Broadcasting Committee existed in the Parliamentary Conservative Party in the 1945-50 Parliament. Some confusion may arise, he thinks, because of the ad hoc nature of PCP study groups.

he does not emphasise is that this Group came together as a result of an invitation from the Whip's Office and that its composition might be seen to reflect a goodly body of Commons opinion.

The debates turned in the final phase into an internal debate about the direction of the Conservative Party itself. This is another complex issue revealing cross-currents of opinion. There was an establishment group, more identifiable with hereditary wealth and ancient scions, but not entirely so. There were those who conceived of a Party wedded to much the same principles as the Labour Party (Butskellism): these two groups over-lapped.

There were those who wished to re-introduce at one level what was being removed at another. If a welfare society was to exist then at least inject competition, willy nilly, in certain public arenas: in television for example. Doubtless there were, within the Conservative Parliamentary Party, many who felt largely indifferent to the whole matter. What else are we to make of the fact that out of some 250 backbench Conservative MPs only a third attended a crucial 1922 Committee meeting on broadcasting in February, 1952. As all but 2 voted to break the monopoly (and one of the two, Beverley Baxter was closely allied with newspaper interests - Beaverbrook) can we assume there was no support for the BBC within the ranks of Conservative MPs?

Such a conclusion would be equally false, as false as not being aware of the large numbers of Conservative Peers who wanted competition and commerce. What clear-cut distinctions miss are the agreements and compromises, the same 'stresses and strains, the pulling and pushing behind the scenes, arguments and counter-arguments, drafts and redrafts' that Reith deplored, yet are the nature of bourgeois democratic parliamentary systems.

As an example of the attitudes of the hardline commercialist MPs Wilson quotes from the 'Future of British Broadcasting', the Broadcasting Study Group's publication of early 1952. The paper warned the Government that 'on this issue we are not prepared to compromise'. We have to examine the meaning of this statement before it becomes clear that this is precisely an offer to negotiate. After all, what else could it mean? Half a dozen MPs consistently trooping

into the No Lobby on any debate on broadcasting policy which did not recommend an end to monopoly? But in these cases the Labour Party would vote with the Government: the point was to get the Government to agree, thereby ensuring backbench support not opposition.

Wilson further accuses the Group of placing the BBC in the 'cockpit of party politics', a place it had not been before. Well, that of course depends on definitions. It was true to say that until the issue of monopoly the BBC had never been a direct source of contention between the major parties. Nevertheless since its beginning, it had never been out of the political limelight and, as a good deal of the evidence submitted to Beveridge shows, large numbers of organisations - and, in reading Hansard, numbers of MPs - were convinced the BBC was politically very controversial indeed.

It is a pity Professor Wilson does not penetrate the meaning of what can broadly be called the two Conservative Parties. As I have discussed in Chapter Two it is possible to see the BBC as a symbol of cultural elitism and governmental paternalism consistent with Disraelian Conservatism; the 'new' Party had no equivalent symbolic cultural shibboleth and, because of the ambivalent meaning of welfarism for a 'right-wing' Party ambiguously committed to free enterprise, the commercial lobby were able to 'capture' a policy and create ITV.

There was considerable understanding of the ambivalence and its meaning at the time. 'Welfarism' was intimately connected with control-planning. Ian Orr-Ewing says, for example, that the war had been fought over the issue of liberty: after the Conservative Party was struggling to break through to re-establish markets. When they came to power they found it was easier to allocate but they knew it was not democracy. But he adds: 'we broke out where we could break out' (TCS I 3,3(2)).

In one sense a minority did beat a majority; but the majority was uncertain of purpose - even arguably indifferent on this issue - and commercial television in the 1950s was small beer to the bigger questions, like housing. Later (see Chapter Four) another group of Conservatives, in many ways not dissimilar to the commercial TV

Parliamentary lobby, were to discern an ideological weapon in local commercial radio as a means to attack a logical extension of conservative welfarism - corporatism.

In the end even Wilson has to admit 'it is still not clear how so small a group was able to make its influence decisive' (Wilson, op.cit., p.129). My answer has been two-fold: first, that that small group were the highly vocal part of a much broader and more important trend; second, that only by looking at the deep structural changes in British society between 1940 and 1950 can any sense be made of what happened.

First, I have argued that the policy was a partisan issue. This distinction may appear gratuitous until one examines the source of most policies. Increasingly during the period 1950-1970 they are not partisan. This has been the basis of much comment on the British political scene (see Middlemas, op.cit.). Secondly, as we have seen, the debate about the policy was largely intra-political party rather than inter-party.

The paradox is not between the Parliamentary Parties and their fairly obvious positions at the end (negatively, that the Labour Party would be anti-commerce), but between the Parties and their supporters. Paulu notes that

> most Conservative voters as individuals opposed it (commercial television) while Labour voters tended to favour it in spite of their party's strong objections. (Paulu, 1961, p.33).

Paulu notes the importance of commercial interests as part of the 'active' promotors of commercial television: particularly Charles Stanley of Pye, Norman Collins, and the small group of advertising agency men who wanted commercial broadcasting but who were anxious not to push too hard for sponsored programmes. But although groups like this held regular meetings with the Post Office and although they may have helped the Government resolve its difficulty over sponsoring by substituting 'spot' advertisements, as I have argued, the central battle was in Government and State. But all these interests appear, initially, to have begun their active work, such that it was, after

the first Conservative Government White Paper, admitting an 'element of competition' in television.

Other commentators have noted the significance of the 'mind' question: that is, that in broadcasting, as a confidential memorandum to the Conservative Chief Whip (Redmayne) from William Deedes (Minister without Portfolio) said in 1962, politicians have a vital force:

> no field of communications offers greater possibilities....than that of broadcasting and television...because ... their impact on the public mind is immense. (Deedes, 1962)

Another commentator, this time an ex-BBC producer of political programmes, Wyndham Goldie, thinks that,

> Behind Conservative Party attitudes to commercial television....lay a good deal of suspicion and dislike of the BBC, which made them inclined to support any move to break the monopoly. The defeat of Winston Churchill and the party he led in the General Election of 1945 and again in the General Election of 1950 had been a shock to Churchill and to the Conservative Party as a whole. They could not believe that the country would have rejected Churchill...unless subversive influences had been at work...Many Conservatives were convinced that the BBC had fomented a radical attitude in political matters and that....it was biassed against Conservatism. Winston Churchill himself believed that the BBC was infiltrated by communists (Goldie,1977).

Wedell (op.cit.) suggests, with many others, the fatal mistake at a turning point in the history of the policy was the Labour Party's 'reservation' of 'our full right to frustrate this retrograde innovation.' He says that opinion polls suggested, as Paulu (op.cit.) said, although the public wanted a second television service, many people felt the BBC was being slow in developing television. Thus although there could not have been said to be an overwhelming desire for commercial television it was not brought into existence against the wishes of the majority.

Lord Simon, finally, who had been a controversial Chairman of the Board of Governors of the BBC thought, bluntly, that to many Conservative MPs the idea of monopoly was or became 'odious'.

> Many Conservative seem to have felt that to renew the Charter of the BBC - a 'Socialist monopoly' - was contrary to Conservative principles and contrary to the interests of the Conservative Party (Simon, 1953).

We might conclude, therefore, with Briggs, that 'commercialism provided a dynamic', and with Gammans, the Assistant Post Master-General who felt that commercial television would be a big 'money-spinner'; or with the anonymous British advertising man who apparently told a US senator in 1955 that

> some of our people don't realise it, but they're due for such a huge demand for their goods that neither the production nor distribution system at the outset will be geared for it. Our people have been starved of the good things of life so long, have known austerity so long, that demonstrations of modern products will give them on TV are going to create vast changes in the economy (Briggs, op.cit., p.12).

There is one other factor - a vital one - I have hardly touched on in this case study although it features considerably in the case study on commercial radio. It is the purely technical one: wavelengths. Whatever else got decided in the early 1950s this issue remained inflexible. Until UHF space became feasibly available, then any extra television service was likely to be confined to one channel. 'Competitive' television, however it was financed was going to have to be between the BBC and one and only one rival. This technical consideration has fundamentally changed and ordered the face of British broadcasting. I have left it to the end because it could not have been argued for or against - unlike the radio debate where questions of the lowering of standards come in as well (releasing more waveband space).

And, finally, there was a more nebulous question still. Nebulous yet determinate: the economy and the rate of allocation of resources. Issues like re-armament after the start of the Korean War fundamentally affected the rate of production not only of television cameras and transmitters but, more vitally, television receivers for domestic use, and the amounts available to consumers as wages.

But the dominant theme was ideological: the 'capture' of a means of mass communication not overtly for a single political cause - for these alter and shift, like the mind - but for a consensus: a notion of 'democracy' and what that means, and the good society, a series of

ideas that eventually condensed into one: affluence. Television was seized upon as a mass cultural vehicle for the inchoate framework for that particular short-lived philosophy; just as local commercial radio became part and parcel of a different, more restrained, concept - community - in the late 1960s, at a time when the State once more loomed large in people's minds.

Wilson's concentration on the basely commercial aspect of what became ITV misses these deeper themes. Money there had to be; interest, where not already formed, had to be roused. But the pressure groups, working inside and outside Parliament and the State did not determine the outcome; they merely kept the juggernaut rolling at times when the weight of its logic bogged it down; and, to be critically accurate, they strained to get the policy along certain paths, by no means successfully.

IV : The State, the Monopoly and the Labour Government

1 : Attitudes

It might appear perverse to place here both the attitude of the State - the administrative structures of, most important of all, the GPO, the attitudes of the staff - and the 'policies' of the 1945-1951 Labour Governments. My purpose in so doing is two-fold. First I want to distinguish as carefully as possible between Government and State in broadcasting policy. This is hard to do except insofar as, on the whole, one can say that overtly, Governments make policy, the State administrates them.

Even this is simplifying. There are many occasions when a department of State may be said to be making policy: for instance, the Foreign Office's pro-Arabism. Or, where broadcasting is concerned, the Committees of Inquiry (vide infra). I have chosen to place these Inquiry Reports with the State 'apparatus' other than with Governments of their day because they are much more clearly linked with a continuation inherent in administration, rather than the discontinuity rather more characteristic of government.

Clearly there are strong cross-cutting links between the two; but to take one reason why Committees of Inquiry into broadcasting

may be said to lay with the State: their use of civil servants as a secretariat and the technical (in the exact sense) problems of broadcasting. The expertise required to appreciate broadcasting's limitations has given the relevant department of State an edge over any Committee: indeed many Committees begin with a pre-ordained limit on their powers through a technical memorandum.

There is a further reason for placing the broadcasting committee reports with the State. Their outcome, the recommendations they produce tend to be viewed as a public form of civil service advice. Apart from the earliest Reports, post-World War Two Reports have been honoured more in the breach. This began with Beveridge - who is on record as being personally furious about the way his Report was 'ignored' - and has continued both with Pilkington and Annan.

The second reason for joining the State to a particular politics is that for the period of the Labour Governments the 'effective' policy followed was State policy. This is not tautology and it relates to the central problem of State and Government and how far the State can determine policy.

Certainly inertia plays a part. Thus having created a monopoly the State will tend to view the future within the confines of that single body. This does not suggest alternatives are not possible, but that civil servants grow used to a routine where they deal with others in a unitary relationship: creating something new involves pattern-breaking and is inherently uncomfortable.

A central question to be answered here is why successive Labour Government's failed to make major policy in broadcasting (and, strictly speaking up until 1980, still so fail). There have been enquiries under Labour Governments and changes and extensions to existing systems (the Beveridge and Annan Committees and BBC local radio). One answer is that the Labour Party have had nothing to change: the BBC is symbolic of their commitment to public service under some form of public control. The Conservative Party makes the running because, as Chapter Two demonstrated, it is seeking to adjust to the demands of changing legitimation.

Such a formulation does not quite explain. The missing link in that explanation of British political life is the Labour Party

as part of the 'system'; that is, that the Labour Party fulfills a role in a dualistic and ritualistic battle between one side and the other. The obsessive desires, by both broadcasters and politicians to maintain a balance reflects this: British politics exhibits more than a passing reflection of a Taoist universe. In it, the media have tended to see the Labour Party as oppositional, the Conservative Party as that which is opposed.

A striking example of the Labour Party (and Government) following policy previously decided upon takes place in 1945-46 over the future of the BBC. (see also below, p.211 and Chapter Two, p. 82). The Labour Government White Paper (Cmnd 6852) almost completely reflected the War-Time Cabinet Broadcasting Committee (Attlee was a member). This Committee was dominated by the Conservative Party and inter alia its draft report (submitted by Woolton in February, 1945) and the subsequent Labour Government version (of November, 1945) say

> The replacement of the BBC monopoly by a system of competition would involve a very great upheaval in the organisation of broadcasting in the United Kingdom and there is no reason to believe that such a radical change would be justified by the results
> (Cabinet Conclusions, 1946).

Clearly a Labour Government would not be in favour of commercial alternatives to a monopoly in broadcasting. But the extent to which Woolton's original Report is accepted suggests that the Labour Government was happy to follow on a predominately Conservative Party line. And it was Conservative pressure which led to that same Government agreeing to renew the BBC Charter for only five years from 1946. (Cabinet Conclusions, 1946: 'the list of sponsors is formidable... clearly, therefore, the demand for a JSC (joint select committee) must be treated seriously': see below, p.212 for details of the attempt by the Conservative Party to get the BBC Charter renewal examined in more than passing detail.)

What is worth reflecting upon finally here is that Woolton, in favour of the BBC monopoly in 1945 should turn to the other camp by 1951. This suggests his understanding of the power of broadcasting in his campaign to get his adopted Conservative Party back into power and to keep it there.

First we have to consider why the broadcasting monopoly began

at all: and, in so doing, to distinguish between the State's position, in 1922, and the Conservative Government's position in 1926.

Coase (1950, p.18), the best source on this question is adamant that the establishment of the monopoly was because of Post Office policy. He dismisses the idea that the Post Office created a monopoly because of the dangers of interference, although he does say that the incautious would think that this was so in looking at the statements made in 1922 by the Post Master-General, Kellaway, to the House of Commons.

The precipitating factor had been various applications, prominent among which were those of radio manufacturers, for permission to broadcast. As far as the radio manufacturers were concerned their aim was to secure the sale of as many sets as possible. Twenty four such companies met the Post Office in May, 1922: the larger firms divided into two groups and initially there seemed to be little chance of agreement between them. But during the negotiations between these two, Marconis-led on one side, Metropolitan Vickers-led on the other, over the allocation of wavelengths, it became clear co-operation would be to the benefit of both. A unified scheme was therefore devised.

Coase points out that had this agreement not been reached the Post Office would still have not had the problem of wavelength allocation, there being only two needed. And their other 'difficulty' - who to licence and who to forbid - was an illusory problem too because the two groups had already agreed any bona fide radio manufacturer would have been able to join one or other group. He concludes, therefore:

> Yet the Post Office still preferred that there should be a monopoly. The reason is fairly clear. There would still have remained (with two rival groups) the problem of the allocation of wavelengths and districts between the two groups. And the Post Office could not have avoided responsibility for the solution of these difficult problems. And there is also reason to suppose that the Post Office considered that it would be more economical to have one company instead of two or more (Coase, op.cit., p.23).

Given that the Post Office did not want to operate a service itself the only solution was to establish a monopoly. It was, therefore, an administrative convenience: the view that monopoly was better for

the listener was imposed later. The 'technical' problems - wavelength allocation - had not been decided, originally, by the Post Office. The relevant State body here was the Wireless Sub-Committee of the Imperial Communications Committee: on it the Services were strongly represented (three to one Post Office official).

But the origins of the monopoly as fulfilling the proper purposes of broadcasting were to come later: this time as the outcome of Government policy at a time when the whole apparatus of State and Government had been called into question. The British Broadcasting Company had a nominally (and unchallenged) exclusive licence to broadcast until the end of 1926. The Sykes Committee had kept an open mind on both the monopoly and the means of financing broadcasting:

> Subject to existing rights, the Government should keep its hand free to grant additional licences, and should consider various alternatives for the operation in the future, either by the Company or by other authorities of local or relay stations in addition to large stations (Sykes, par 76, 1923).

Two years later the Crawford Committee felt able to make a firm recommendation for a public 'Commission' to take over the broadcasting monopoly. What had happened? According to the standard versions - Coase's among them - the answer was John Reith, who, as managing director of the Company, had been able to impose his peculiar views of broadcasting. This will not do. Although Reith had a profound influence, that influence fitted the times: doubly so because it enabled people to believe in the myth of individualism and its impact and it reinforced Government (and State) concern for the welfare of the country.

By 1926 Britain was approaching the major social crisis of the General Strike. In that Strike the BBC capitulated whatever independence it had to the Government (Tracey, 1978). As a reward (the Crawford Committee had reported but the Government had not yet acted) the Corporation was created 'independent' of Government. Reith's view of broadcasting had already been set out in his Memorandum to the Sykes Committee, and in his oral evidence. Under question Reith agreed that the 'economy' he meant, when he defended the monopoly, related to 'control'. Asked if the Post Office could not 'censor' programmes

just as effectively Reith pointed out that currently there was:

> an executive officer (himself) in charge of broadcasting all over the country, and the various stations conform to general instructions... (Sykes, op.cit., questions 3310-3317).

The Crawford Committee were of open mind in the need for simultaneous broadcasting from London: that is, central programming under central control. The idea, the requirement, was to reach the maximum number of people: all other considerations, efficiency, licence financing, improved technical staff were secondary. Furthermore the Committee considered that the reasons why the Post Office (ie, the State in most direct form) could not run the organisation were not for a requirement of independence. Rather, again it was for administrative convenience. It would be difficult for a Government department

> to administer an organisation for providing daily public entertainment throughout the country, and it would probably be quite impracticable unless the detailed financial control and Parliamentary criticism which is ordinarily applied to the operations of a Department of State were abolished (Crawford, par 22, 1926) (emphases added).

According to my typology I have identified such Committees with the State: but the Conservative Government, following the Report and the General Strike consented to the establishment of the Corporation - by Royal Charter to give it more 'freedom' from Government interference. This was the BBC finally born: a State monopoly dedicated to a national culture, constrained by regulations forbidding controversy. It was an organisation suited very well to the State and the incumbent Government - a single authority to have to deal with. And, without stretching the metaphor too far, it rapidly became a cultural 'church'; an established view of life prevailed. With the 'National' Governments of the 1930s the BBC fitted in: a part of quasi-corporate State.

This situation may be deemed to have continued with the war and its need for a highly centralised information service; and afterwards during the phase of reconstruction. Before looking at the relationship between the Labour Government and broadcasting we need

to examine, briefly, what that Government was, and how it fitted the new consensus arisen since the 1930s.

As we have already seen there are considerable difficulties with such a concept as consensus (see Chapter Two). Broadly though it relates to the parameters of economic, social and political choice a government may operate within if it is to retain its legitimacy. What the election of 1945 proves is that the population decisively rejected the attitudes and actions of the Conservative Party qua Government in the 1930s. They were demanding a social justice, started in the second world war, to be continued.

It has become part of the mythology of British political life that the first Labour Government to have a working majority decisively altered the direction of the State. This is simply not so. State intervention in the economy began in the 1920s (Middlemas, 1979); other parts of the modern State apparatus (for instance, control over broadcasting) began earlier; the first decisive modern welfare legislation can be traced at least to 1906, possibly much further back.

The war had helped in the formation of major State interventions in the economy and in welfare provision. What the Labour Party proposed was little more than what, in embryo at any rate, already existed. A comparison of the Labour and Conservative programmes presented to the electors in 1945 shows that only on nationalisation could a distinction be made. Even here a Conservative Government might well have followed on a number of issues (for example, railways, coal, public utilities).

At the same time people undoubtedly wanted something different from Government. And from the press and other comments of the time, the impression may easily be gained that something drastic was taking place. This 'feeling' may be ascribed to the ideological level at which a battle was taking place: between a planned economy under capitalism and an economy more directed at a 'free' market. Because of the distortion of the war the issue was not clear cut. The Labour Government itself, unused to full Government, but tutored by experience in the Coalition, moved uncertainly.

There is, too, the split between the Labour Government - the

Parliamentary Labour Party - and the national Labour Party. It was to the national Party that the Conservatives looked in attacking the Labour Government (as they still do). If any definite characterisation between the two Government parties may be discerned it is in the apparent cohesiveness of the Conservative Party from leader to rank and file as against the disjunctive relations - particularly in Government - between the PLP and the rest of the Labour Party. When commentators describe the Conservatives as the 'natural' Party of Government they describe this cohesiveness.

The Labour Governments of Attlee attracted considerable opprobrium in the Press (hence, in part, the first Royal Commission on the Press) (and see Nichols, 1950). The re-organisation of the Conservative Party (see Chapter Two) was based around negative propaganda directed at the Government. That Government suffered because it did not have a fully articulated philosophy. It merely inherited a mass of not fully implemented war-time policy and carried on with that - apart, possibly, from nationalisation (Miliband, 1972).

In a very real sense even the Government saw itself as a caretaker government dealing with

> short term policies designed, and rightly designed, for those years in which a Labour Government will have assumed <u>full power</u> in this country (Emmanuel Shinwell, 1944, p.161) (my emphasis).

These were the years of Labour Government which introduced the phrase 'mixed economy': one might perhaps view the coming of ITV as a logical extension of that economic principle into broadcasting - that is to say as the ideological-cultural conjuncture, its enshrinement in the duopoly (to paraphrase Annan) that encompasses British economic life.

There was, of course, no mistaking the vitriolic nature of the Conservative Opposition attack on the Labour Government. It might in part be mistaken for 'mere' politics: in fact the attacks went much deeper. The changes in the Conservative Party reflect an ideological shift away from the central State collectivism towards the market (burning controls). (This in the economic plane.) Yet the construction of a consensus which would re-elect a Conservative Government had to involve the Welfare State - with its implied integral relationship to

the Keynesian revolution this, as Beer says (Beer, 1959, pp.165 et seq), is a crucial ideological shift.

The resolution, as we have seen (see Chapter Two) comes through consumerism, and the extension of the 'property owning democracy': the market becomes personalised, individualised, within a framework of legislation designed to cushion people against both slump and inflation. The problem was still to remove the Labour Government; by concentrating on State interference in daily life the Conservatives were able to capitalise on public dislike of shortage, which the Conservatives were able to blame on planning - of a Labour kind.

But the Labour Government itself helped by not being able to present a continuing programme. In the light of its inability to continue a momentum it is remarkable that both in 1950 and 1951 its share of the vote continued to rise; electoral anomalies ensured the return of increasing numbers of Conservative MPs.

In broadcasting the Labour Governments were attacked more indirectly through their use of Ministerial broadcasts (see p.63). This, said the Conservatives, was disguised Party Political Broadcasting. One aspect of the political attack on the monopoly can be seen as a direct result of Conservative determination to prevent the BBC from becoming a Labour-State instrument.

Not all Conservatives felt this way: but the association of a monopoly broadcasting organisation with the whole issue of 'State' control was too easy to be missed; furthermore people heard the BBC every day, and its public stance could be scrutinised. The BBC's own attitude did not help. Its arrogance - in determining public taste - became to be associated with the arrogance of the State to direct people. There was an uncomfortable parallel to be drawn here with the spread of communism in Europe under Stalinist direction.

What then, was the Labour Government's attitude to broadcasting and the BBC? In order to answer that we have first to turn to the period immediately preceeding the end of the War when a Committee, chaired by Lord Woolton, was set up to review the future scope and organisation of broadcasting. Brendan Bracken, war time Minister

of Information, had suggested such a committee, as had Attlee, an ex-Post Master General and member of the 1935 Ullswater Committee. The Committee began work in May, 1944 (Briggs, Vol. IV, p.33, 1979): Woolton, as Minister of Reconstruction (then, note, not a Conservative) was chairman; also present at the first meeting were Bracken, Attlee, Crookshank, the Post Master-General, Richard Law, Minister of State.

Their immediate decision was that the BBC should continue as the 'chosen' instrument of home broadcasting - but that much greater regional devolution should take place. This was a point to be taken up later by Beveridge and his Committee. Technical control of the BBC was to remain with the Post Office, 'general' control to go to a senior Minister (eventually, Lord President), although this control was to be remote.

In 'Notes' prepared by the Ministry of Information for this Committee there was some discussion about whether competitive services might exist as in Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Crookshank for the Post Office noted that it had been the outbreak of War which had prevented a proper discussion of a Treasury proposal that BBC Television might finance itself through advertisements. Both Crookshank and Bracken were, of course, Conservatives.

Before the Committee could complete its work the Coalition broke up. In the new Labour Government Herbert Morrison, as Lord President, was given responsibility for broadcasting; in the main the draft Report of the war time committee was accepted (see p.204 above for discussion on this) and the Labour Government planned to issue a White Paper in 1946 (White Paper, Cmnd. 6852, 1946) proposing to renew the BBC Charter for 10 years; no debate was planned.

It was Churchill who suggested before the White Paper that renewal should be referred to a Select Committee of the House. His motion to that effect was signed by 200 MPs. On the day of the debate Sir Frederick Ogilvie, director general of the BBC between 1938 and 1942, wrote probably coincidentally to The Times arguing strongly that a monopoly of broadcasting was 'inevitably' a negation of freedom (Ogilvie, 1946). When the White Paper was published - in July, 1946, -

it appears to have conceded some of this upsurge of pressure by renewing the Charter for five years and promising an inquiry.

By 1946, now out of Government, Churchill was in favour of a strongly directed public inquiry into the monopoly: the Labour Government on the other hand appears to have accepted the view that the war had created an artificial situation in which the working of the previous Charter had not been given time to work. The BBC began to collect material for a future inquiry in 1948 at a time when the Government had apparently not decided when such an inquiry might begin.

By 1949 when the Government asked Lord Radcliffe to chair the inquiry television had begun to manifest itself as a power in the land. Radcliffe was asked to chair the proposed inquiry by the Labour Government because he was thought to be eminently neutral. He was replaced by Lord Beveridge because, Radcliffe, between being asked to chair the Committee and its beginning, was appointed as a Lord of Appeal. This change of chairman seems to have had no real basis other than eccentricity by all parties involved: yet Beveridge was a more political animal and his recommendations would be less acceptable to the Conservatives (Stocks, op.cit.).

It is worth noting over the relations between the Labour Government and the BBC that not all was seen by Labour MPs as sweetness and light. In July, 1948, Geoffrey Cooper, Labour MP for Middlesborough West, was asking Morrison in the Commons to make sure

> at least one of our nationalised undertakings is brought into line with the new conception of socialist administration (Cooper, 1948)

whatever precisely that meant. Just as the Conservative Party records show numerous complaints by Party Members over BBC bias against the right, so to do Labour Party documents. In this sense the BBC is right to point to these two sets of evidence as proof that it is 'impartial', if by that it means attacked equally by left and right.

The most general statement of the Labour Government's attitude to the BBC comes with Morrison's speech on the 1946 White Paper. He thought that the BBC was an: 'interesting example of the British national genius for finding workable solutions to the most intractable problems' (Morrison, 1946) (emphasis added). Because of the shortage of wavelengths the requirement had to be to ensure the 'microphone'

is controlled by a body in which the public has confidence. A public corporation was independent of both sectional interests and government.

Morrison personally repudiated commercial finance. On the question of competition he felt wavelength shortages prevented an effective solution. The Government were in favour of a policy of regional devolution. He ended by saying:

> I do not think in this case that a public monopoly is a bad thing. It is a basic service. After all, there are other monopolies that have been established. Gas, electricity and water are local monopolies but they are monopolies. There is a telephone monopoly... It is not necessarily either right or wrong and we think that in this case it is right (Morrison, 1946).

Whatever the Labour Government felt, the Beveridge Committee, which they set up, and which began work in July, 1949, were to spend a considerable effort and much time on this single question. I want now to examine that Committee's work and the aftermath, in which may be heard the dying voice of a stricken Labour Government, whose vacillations over what to do with the Report considerably helped the growing commercial and anti-monopolist lobbies.

2 : The Beveridge Committee and the Labour Government

The Committee, of whom the principal members were Beveridge, Selwyn Lloyd, Mary Stocks, Lady Megan Lloyd George, sat 62 times, had 223 memoranda submitted to it, absorbed nearly 2 million words. Other members of the Committee were Dr Stephen Taylor and Joseph Reeves, both Labour MPs; J Crawford a union official; A L Binns, director of education for Lancashire; W Oakeshott, headmaster of Winchester; the Earl of Elgin, an 'old' Tory; I A R Stedeford from Tube Investments.

The final Report was the most exhaustive effort yet made to comprehend British broadcasting, especially insofar as it dealt most thoroughly with the reasons why there should be a monopoly. Nevertheless, there remains a feeling that although the Committee closely examined the origin of that monopoly they did not pursue the matter too far.

The Report was largely the work of Beveridge alone. An irascible man, who was 'just over the hill', according to a very

senior source I have interviewed,* he resolutely tackled the question of monopoly along the lines of a traditional liberal conscience.

Beveridge, says Mary Stocks (1970, 1973), had a grievance towards the BBC because they had refused him a broadcast during the Wordsworth Centenary on the poet: 'he entered upon his Chairmanship with hard feelings towards the BBC'.

Mary Stocks, who apparently got on well with Beveridge (as a woman she was treated rather more politely than the men), notes that 'most eminent politicians have a grievance against the BBC because none of them have had as much access to viewers or listeners as they regarded due to them' (p.54), and she adds 'Churchill certainly never forgave the BBC for being persuaded by the government to keep him off the air' (in the 1930s). There seems no doubt from a close reading of the report that he failed to resolve the tensions between the advantages of a public service corporation and a need for choice (for a personal view of his philosophy see Beveridge, 1953).

After all the evidence had been heard seven 'fundamental' questions were put:

1. Should the present Charter be renewed in the same form?
2. Should broadcasting in the UK continue under a monopoly?
3. How should the cost of broadcasting be met?
4. How should broadcasting revenue be allocated?
5. Should Parliamentary control be more direct?
6. What safeguards alternative to competition and to Parliamentary control can be suggested?
7. What should be the function and terms of appointment of the Governors?

The Committee were at pains to note that unlike any previous Enquiry they had been overwhelmed by memoranda from the general public and from interest groups.

The seven fundamental questions were not dealt with equally: monopoly dominated the Committee's thoughts.

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*Assistant Secretary to the Committee, Richard Baker (TCS I 6)

> we have felt it incumbent upon us to probe more deeply than our predecessors into this main issue, not only because of its importance but because, in contrast to the evidence given to our predecessors, we found a substantial body of serious opinion challenging monopoly itself
>
> (Beveridge, Cmnd. 8116, 1951).

The Committee identified four lines of attack on the monopoly through the evidence submitted. First, there was a danger of excessive power of mens' thoughts: this view was most strongly put by Sir Robert Watson-Watt and Geoffrey Crowther. Second, there was the question of excessive size of an unwieldiness of bureaucracy: a view suggested by the evidence of the Fabians. Nationalist organisations like the Scottish National Party suggested a third danger: that of centralised control. Finally, Equity and related organisations were worried by there being only one employer.

The Watson-Watt/Crowther evidence (for three public corporations: ABC, BBC, CBC, all financed from licence fee money) was the alternative most investigated by the Committee. The idea was not new, having first been put forward by Crowther in his Economist articles in 1944 (see p.235). The Committee asked the BBC to comment on the proposals: its main point in reply was that finance would be very 'tight' and that any scheme involving a 'bonus' revenue whereby the most popular corporation would cream off a final 25 per cent of revenue was an absolute recipe for Gresham's Law to function.

The practical result, simply taking the Committee's study of the Watson-Watt/Crowther proposals was that while rejecting the need for this overt kind of competition, the Committee did not accept

> the assumption underlying the BBC memorandum that the only alternative to monopoly is degrading competition for listeners, and that in broadcasting a monopoly alone can have high standards and social purpose (Beveridge, Cmnd. 8116, 1951).

The conclusion the majority of the Committee reached was that if the assumption was for public service broadcasting (that is, not commercially financed) then any scheme involving three or four corporations would lead, partly for technical reasons, to a good measure of co-operation between them.

> The practical issue reduces itself to the choice between chartering three or four Broadcasting Corporations on terms requiring them to co-operate and accepting Government vetoes and directions on certain points, and chartering a single Broadcasting Corporation subject to the same vetoes and requiring it to make steady progress towards greater de-centralisation, devolution, and diversity. We have no hesitation in choosing the second of these alternatives (Beveridge, Cmnd. 8116, 1951).

But, the Committee insisted, it was alive to all the dangers of monopoly that had been presented to it: the question was means, not ends. In the final analysis the Committee believed in centralised unified control - a paradox given their demand for devolution. The answer, for the Committee, was to appoint three broadcast commissions for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and to give the English regional controllers more resources and powers; for the public at large a Public Representation Service was to be set up as a kind of broadcasting Ombudsman.

At the same time the BBC was to be chartered indefinitely with only a quinquennial review - rather as with the universities. Yet simultaneously the Committee were able to say that: 'Broadcasting is the most pervasive, and therefore one of the most powerful, of agents for influencing men's thoughts and actions...' The answer as to how should this powerful agent be controlled without undermining its freedom of expression lay with the Governors: they had to be masters in their own house; hence the Beveridge Committee suggestion that the Whitley Document be abandoned. As for quis custodiet ipsos custodes? Parliament, and the publication of 'specified information' in the Annual Report and Accounts, would suffice.

Perhaps the second most important question of the 'seven' was that related to costs. The Committee, with the exception of Selwyn Lloyd, decisively and rapidly dismissed any possibility of sponsoring. Lloyd linked the monopoly question directly with finance (vide infra) Beveridge, Mary Stocks and Lady Lloyd George were prepared to allow an 'experiment' in advertising on the BBC. This proposal was attacked in great detail by all the other members of the committee in another note of dissension.

Television was dealt with separately: it was noted, bluntly,

that it was a costly service.* But it was felt reasonable to allow the BBC to continue to finance it through the licence fee, although separate accounts for radio and television ought to be kept. The BBC was enjoined to make greater administrative distinction between the two services.

Before examining Selwyn Lloyd's Minority Report, I want to look at the issue of commercial broadcasting, which the Committee looked at separately from all other questions - although its Report pointed out they had already rejected any system which would meet the cost of broadcasting wholly or largely from commercial payments.

But, as with monopoly, there was a lot of positive evidence in favour of change - some, not all, wishing to see 'sponsoring' (the most referred to system of commercial finance) confined to television. Although the ban on sponsoring was supported by a number of teachers organisations, the Labour Party, the TUC, the WEA, Churches and even Watson-Watt and Geoffrey Crowther, on the other side were Equity, the Radio Industry's Council (whose evidence was written by Orr-Ewing) several large manufacturers (see p.237) and some MPs.

As the Report says, some of the opposition to sponsoring would be muted or even extinguished if it were realised that a full-blooded US system was not the intention of the pro-commercialists. The Committee looked in some detail at foreign countries but arguably not nearly enough, as well as at the precise arguments for and against commercial broadcasting used in the various memoranda.

Six of the Committee thought no case had been made for departing from the current practice. Three - Beveridge, Lady Lloyd George, Mary Stocks - saw no danger.

> in allowing traders the facility of the ether for making their goods known to the public ... a public broadcasting service might have its controlled and limited advertisement hour, as every newspaper has it's advertising columns (Beveridge, Cmnd. 8116, 1951).

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*Costs in the television service, as I have frequently noted in this study, dominate much of the broadcasters' own debates, as well as exercising authors outside broadcasting. The coming of commercial television, with its promise of 'free' viewing did not, of course end the controversy (see Jacobs, 1958; Pratten, 1970).

The distinction made between advertising and sponsorship, as shown in the note of reservation quoted immediately above led to another note signed by Binns, Crawford, Oakeshott, Reeves, Stedeford and Dr Taylor, extensively setting out the case against 'Sponsored Broadcasting and Radio Advertising' (emphasis added).

The point was, this note said that any advertising was the 'thin edge of the sponsoring wedge' (Beveridge, op.cit., p.213). The case against sponsoring was detailed in no less than sixteen 'theses', each considered in detail. The note is an extraordinarily sustained attack on the whole ethic of advertising: it stands, possibly more than the Beveridge Report as a whole, as a defence of the established system soon to be challenged so directly.

The Committee member who differed in fundamental principle from his colleagues was Selwyn Lloyd MP. His minority report linked breaking the monopoly, commercial finance and television. It constituted the 'third force' in the subsequent debate: and the one destined to win. Briefly it recommended a Commission for British Broadcasting; the BBC to continue the Home Service and Regional variations; one or two companies to run other commercially-financed national radio services; local radio, commercially financed; a British Television Corporation which would allow sponsored programmes; 'in due course' other television services financed in a variety of ways. If these proposals - for commercial financing - were unacceptable, Lloyd wrote that he would support the Fabian or Liberal Research Group ideas. What was necessary was that the monopoly should be broken.

> The evil lies in the system, the control by a monopoly of this great medium of expression. It involves the concentration of great power in the hands of a few men and women, and the tendency to create a uniform pattern of thought and culture. At a time when every other tendency is towards the concentration of power at the centre and a uniform society, this issue in broadcasting is of outstanding importance for the country (Beveridge, Cmnd. 8116, 1951) (emphasis added).

The Beveridge Report was, despite its erudition and length, destined to be largely buried, along with the Labour Government White Paper of July, 1951 (White Paper, Cmnd. 8291, 1951) which followed its publication. Basically the Labour Government declined to accept any

of Beveridge's major proposals as they stood, intending that they should all be discussed with the BBC and the Opposition.

The two debates on the White Paper took place in July, 1951. Briggs notes that there were more critics of the BBC apparent in the Commons; more weight of experience in the Lords. In the latter House, Beveridge was long and bitter about the way his report had been treated both by the BBC and the Government. The White Paper, he said, claimed to be following the main recommendations of his Report:

> My Committee were profoundly impressed by the dangers and disadvantage of monopoly ... The Government, to judge by their White Paper, are not conscious of any dangers at all (Beveridge, 1951).

Woolton, who spoke at length in this debate about the danger of Communist infiltration into the BBC, said he had great difficulty over the question of monopoly: 'I think it was essential to have this monopoly when the Conservative Party created it'. Now, however, (and he stressed that he was speaking personally) he wanted the Post Master-General to licence additional stations which would permit sponsoring.

In the Commons the Debate was opened by Patrick Gordon Walker. There are, he said,

> two great over-riding issues on which the Beveridge Committee are perfectly clear and on which they report that there is a substantial weight of public opinion in favour, and on which the Government agree with the Committee. These are the two great matters, that there should be a monopoly of broadcasting in this country under public control, and that there should be no commercial broadcasts (Gordon Walker, 1951).

Both Lady Megan Lloyd George and Selwyn Lloyd spoke in favour of radio advertisements under strict controls. There were also speeches by Orr-Ewing, and John Rodgers recently of J Walter Thompson, the major US advertising agency. There was by now a growing feeling that Beveridge had certainly not achieved what he set out to do: to close the issue of monopoly for good. It is possible to argue that his very desire to do so related to an understanding of the changes that could easily come - as they did.

The tendency has been to view the Beveridge Report as washed

away on the tide of history, a vindication of the BBC defiled by political pressure. This is nonsense: Beveridge was severe, if not strident, in its attack on the way the BBC's monopoly was getting the better of it. It was the Labour Government - a Government which as we have noted had by 1951 nothing much on its programme - which threw away the Beveridge Report. In so doing, in failing in fact to do anything very much, they misjudged both the feeling in the Conservative Party and the weight of a lot of informed public opinion, as evidenced in the mass of memoranda opposing the monopoly submitted to Beveridge.

V : The Broadcasters' Case

Any account of the debate about broadcasting in the 1940s turns around the actions and attitudes of the BBC: its wartime record alone would have ensured that. Although Briggs describes the 1930s as the 'golden age' of wireless the BBC might prefer to describe its own true golden age as the period between 1945 and 1949 - shorter but sweeter. The time when the Corporation became synonymous with liberty and enlightenment internationally.

For the BBC this international recognition paid dividends which were to sour in the 1960s for at the Copenhagen Conference of 1948, when post-war radio frequencies were allocated, Britain got by far the best European deal - in medium frequencies. This eventually slowed down the move in the UK to VHF and, arguably, undermined the BBC's own position of defence against commercial local radio (see p. 277).

But if international acclaim followed Corporation representatives wherever they travelled abroad immediately after the war, at home the BBC was, as has been shown, under attack from many quarters. A parallel may be drawn between the BBC's impending denouement and the ejection of Winston Churchill as Prime Minister in 1945. Lord Butler (TCS I 8) suggested that the Conservative Party loss of the 1945 General Election demonstrated the public's ability to separate Churchill the war-time leader from Churchill the pre-war exponent of harsh economics.

Similarly, perhaps, with the BBC: the objection was not to its work in the war but to its perceived arrogance in all matters cultural. The culmination of this is probably demonstrated by the introduction of the Third Programme in 1946: the mausoleum to Reithian ethics, although at the time it did not look that way. Here then was the sole broadcasting authority telling the British public that they were to be permanently classified into three cultural levels: high-brow; middle-brow; low-brow. In passing, note, this broadcast model was a copy of the recently introduced secondary school system with its putative three levels of ability.

And although as with the 1944 Education Act ease of movement was the ideal sought, people being what they are saw the whole apparatus as a fixity. The question is: did it matter? Evidence to Beveridge suggests it did. And before that there had been rumblings, the most famous being the ex-director-general, Sir Ian Ogilvie's letter to The Times, in June, 1946, where he said that a monopoly in broadcasting meant 'automatic nationalisation of the infinitely precious things of the mind and spirit.'

This letter touches on the size of the Corporation and its centralism. Evidence to the Beveridge Committee from the regions suggested that the BBC put out 'foreign' literature: 'We are forced to accept this as inevitable as long as ultimate control is vested in the remote and somewhat alien centre - London', said the Welsh Parliamentary Party (Beveridge, 1951, Appendix H, p.428).

The same evidence points out that the middle class bias of the BBC was particularly at variance with the 'essentially working-class' Welsh who had not 'for centuries enjoyed the patronage of a leisured class'. Other politicians of a very different colour felt the same. Grisewood recounts:

> I had a talk with Christopher Hollis, one of the few MPs who were also contributors to the Third Programme. He introduced me to Angus Maude and together they explained that the desire to break the monopoly of the BBC was not just a putsch by commercially minded members... There was... a genuine resentment by Conservatives against the use, and possible further use, of the broadcasting

> monopoly for sectional interests. There was widespread disbelief in the BBC's claim of impartiality and there was a weariness with the BBC's self-righteousness and arrogance. (Grisewood, 1968, p.175)

It was to be to such working-class folk that commercial television appealed and it is ironic that the attacks on the BBC for failing to take account of a true popular culture (rooted in folk tales, dances and verse) should find alliance with those commercial interests who, when not complaining that broadcasting denied them a legitimate means to advertise their wares, pointed out that lack of money (which advertising could provide) prevented the expansion of television.

The BBC's attitude to television development is crucial: if the Corporation had seen the future of its television service differently a large hole would have been knocked in the commercial lobby's arguments. As it was, the stagnation of television development between 1945-49 played a fundamental part in ensuring, for example, that the Beveridge Committee did not devote enough effort to the new medium, thereby enabling its development to be 'lifted', as a topic for discussion, from the BBC's jurisdiction.

More simply, a public corporation in broadcasting is vulnerable at all times. The BBC's decision to develop an arcane minority radio service was a sufficiently large gaffe for its authority to be called into question over television. Other economic and social pressures ensured the television question remained on the public agenda.

From the beginning of a 'service' of television (which can be precisely dated in 1936) there were heavy pressures from audiences and performers simply to hand out entertainment. This point along with the much greater technical costs of transmitting sight with sound had dominated television from the beginning.

It was clear from the early 1930s that money on a scale hitherto not dreamed of would be needed to provide for both development and running costs in television. Gerald Beadle, who eventually became director of television, BBC, recalls asking Gerald Cock in 1934 how much television programming would cost. Cock said multiply sound programmes by ten. Beadle says this was accepted by Carpendale (Controller, Administration) and proved to be reasonably accurate.

Prophetically perhaps, Reith, in evidence to the Selsdon

Committee, set up in 1934 to examine the development of television, said that although he opposed direct advertising he had

> no objection in principle to the sponsor system and we do in fact do something which is near to that, and might do it in the future (Briggs, 1965, p.589).

There was a strong feeling in the BBC at that time that the likely financial problems in developing television would lead to some form of sponsoring. And in fact in the Selsdon Committee Report sponsored programmes, 'for which the Broadcasting authority neither makes nor receives payment were permitted' (Selsdon, 1935, Cmnd. 4793). Whatever feelings the BBC may have, the renewed Charter, Licence and Agreement, of 1937 forbad sponsoring. Yet it was the BBC which raised the issue again in a detailed Report. The Report was for the Television Advisory Committee, a committee set up on the recommendations of the Selsdon Report, and asked to keep a tight rein on television development.

In their report the BBC envisaged a separate television licence to finance developments - or sponsoring. When Lord Selsdon was replaced by Lord Cadnam as head of the TAC, early in 1939, the debate was becoming academic. Although by March, 1939, the BBC finally decided against sponsoring the TAC referred the matter back and continued to support this means of financing television. Meanwhile the Treasury had stopped all potential capital development because of the likelihood of war and the pressing need for armaments. But, left to themselves, the Treasury would have probably insisted on some form of commercial finance for television.

The role of the Treasury in the development of television is ambiguous (see p. 181 for Coase's view). Briggs suggests that the Treasury evidence to Beveridge where it talks of 'flexibility' in the amount of money from the gross licence fee to be actually paid to the BBC gave the Department 'the kind of secret weapon it delighted in having at its disposal' (Briggs, 1979, p.350).

Documents available at the Public Records Office record that the Treasury was very interested in post-war broadcasting and its costs but tantalisingly do not confirm whether the Treasury, as much as the BBC, put a brake on post-war television development. In a final

analysis perhaps the decision by the BBC to introduce a new radio programme could best be said to 'align' with Treasury views on costs.

As has been shown, however (see p.182)capital expenditure by the BBC to build more television transmitters and studios meant increased government expenditure through the provision of land-lines; and this, in the context of post-war austerity meant a re-allocation rather than an expansion.

Although there was no service of television during the war, in 1943 a committee sat - the Hankey Committee - to look at how the pre-war very restricted service might be expanded to provide national coverage. Again, the major difficulty was finance. The Committee concluded that television was principally entertainment - this may have affected attitudes towards sources of revenue.

In the long run the report of this Committee suggested a separate television licence fee; in the short-term, partly because television was identified by the Committee as closer to the cinema than to radio (opposite conclusions to those drawn by the BBC, note), special licences could be granted to cinemas who wanted to use large-scale screens for broadcasting television.

The Committee declined to come to any conclusion about sponsoring, merely noting that in the early days commercial companies would be unlikely to want to spend money for the sake of a small audience.

When the television service was re-started, in June, 1946, it had immediately to fight a commercial battle with the other entertainment interests as the latter became conscious of its potential impact. Disputes between the BBC and theatres, cinemas and sporting groups continued into the early 1950s.

The BBC did not submit a proper plan for national television coverage until 1949. This five-year development involved five new main transmitters and five subsidiary ones and aimed to provide 80 per cent coverage of the UK by 1954. Even at this stage the BBC was unclear about what television was. Sir William Haley, Director-General between 1944 and 1952 thought in 1949 that television could never fill a full day. He considered, in an article for the BBC Quarterly, that it might provide seven to ten hours, the rest of the time being filled

by radio: 'What we have to look for is a marriage of sound and television,' he said (Haley, 1949).

The depth of Haley's misunderstanding of television is not, in fact, in his appreciating that television would not 'kill' sound broadcasting or that it could not handle every issue, any topic.

It was in failing to see that irrespective of what it could do television was bound to try; in trying it would, so to speak, discover itself and the mass audience: 'To ask for every broadcast to be televised is like asking for every book to be illustrated', he said. Yes: and that was a demand that would be made. Note, too, the misunderstanding of the word broadcast, implying that sound is dominant. Thirty years on and broadcast, equally falsely, now means television before all else.

This article was submitted to the Beveridge Committee along with Robert Silvey's enquiry into television viewing and a memorandum on television and the cinema: the 'audience' as a factor in all these discussions remains the 'hidden' variable to be used more by the commercial lobby as a potential rather than an actuality.

The BBC saw the fight as a relatively simple one: the defence of its position as the sole broadcasting authority and programme maker. In its Memorandum to Beveridge on 'Monopoly and Competition in Broadcasting' it is educative, given the hindsight of history, to note its obsessional concentration on the 'microphone', that is, radio, in the defence of the monopoly. It may not be stretching the point too far to suggest that here was a way out for the anti-monopolists. If the BBC itself appeared to care so little in its evidence, and that evidence's wording, for television, then a fight mounted here might be easier to win.

The monopoly versus competition paper submitted in April, 1950, was a reply to what may have taken the BBC by surprise - the vehemence of feeling against the monopoly, in principle, expressed by Beveridge as well as in other submitted evidence. They were almost certainly worried by Beveridge's own predelictions which concerned the monopoly - and television. The paper, which represents the BBC's final view of

its position as the broadcasting monopoly became, in extended and more polemic form, its defence. Again, though, the authors displayed a lack of appreciation of what was coming. Throughout, the metaphor used for broadcasting is 'microphone'.

The case for monopoly could be summarised, the paper thought, as a positive version of what competition would mean (a curious way of putting it unless one recognises the defensiveness of the whole paper). This was that competition meant a lessening of responsibility; a lowering of standards; an elimination of the rights of minorities; a failure to serve educational and cultural purposes; a likelihood of making listeners more passive citizens.

Responsibilities, for instance

> ...for impartiality....for the preservation of standards and the re-establishing on a broader basis of a regard for values, for the use of broadcasting as an educational medium and a means to raise the public taste...

among others, could only be carried out in the absence of necessity to compete. The paper continued,

> competition in broadcasting must in the long-run descend to a fight for the greatest possible number of listeners (sic), it would be the lower forms of mass appetite which would more and more be catered for in programmes.

In short, the BBC argument went, a system of competitive broadcasting would be at the mercy of Gresham's Law - a law whose introduction here was to begin a long association of competition in broadcasting with the 'bad driving out the good'.

The BBC also attacked the contention that broadcasting, like the Press, both needed and would benefit directly from a number of outlets. There was the technical problem of waveband space (incidentally, technical arguments were less prominent in the 'television' monopoly debate than they were in the later radio one). Secondly, even allowing space might be found, there was a problem of time - a physical daily limit on the amount that could be presented. Equally, there was a requirement for a much greater range of material: news, music, drama, documentaries, not having an equivalent in the Press.

Finally, the BBC dealt with the Crowther/Watson-Watt proposals

(see p.215). The ABC, BBC and CBC would not, the evidence suggested, be competition between likes.

> To place a BBC as run at present in competition with a CBC let to the highest bidder whose aim would be to make a profit, would not prove anything except the existence of the Gresham's law in broadcasting in a most disastrous and startling manner.

If the Committee decided there had to be competition the BBC asked that it be arranged as a number of identically constituted, similarly operated, public services, broadcasting both sound and television programmes. As a sting in the tail though the BBC pointed out any system that could be devised would result in a severe manpower shortage for a number of years.

All through its 'rebuttal' the BBC's evidence is sprinkled with uncertainty. On impartiality for example the defence was very weak suggesting only that by increasing the numbers of broadcasting organisations one either allowed each to be

> equally impartial or by the possibility that the sum of their various biasses would roughly cover the political spectrum.

Whereas the second possibility was thought to be self-evident nonsense the former might allow the

> onus of responsibility...(to be)...diluted by the existence of a so-called corrective in the form of the rival organisation. The apprehensions of the public would gradually be lulled and its vigilance weakened.

The minorities 'problem' was dismissed by assuming that competition necessarily meant commercial competition and that therefore air-time would be for sale: how, therefore, could (presumably, again, impoverished) minorities afford to be heard? As far as both range of output and staff relations went the BBC allowed itself the luxury of the last 'danger': complacency.

The Beveridge Committee was presumably aware of the direction the authors were leading them. Yet Briggs reports that the BBC emerged from the Committee proceedings feeling much happier. And as we have seen the product was to suggest the monopoly be maintained although Beveridge concocted both devolution and 'public representation' as safeguards (see p. 216). Following the publication of the Labour Government White Paper in July, 1951, the whole Corporation must have

felt safer than it had since the war.

In between the publication of the Report in January, 1951, and July, when the debates took place on both the Report and the White Paper, a lot of manoeuvring had been going on reports Briggs. The Labour Government itself was in deep trouble following the death in April of Ernest Bevin, which seems to have worked against the Beveridge Report's own conclusions, not least because Herbert Morrison ceased to have responsibility for broadcasting.

It would not be difficult to conclude that because the BBC was unwilling to take cognisance of the political situation - in particular the possibility of a Conservative Government being elected shortly - and to ally itself with the Beveridge Committee in pressing for that Committee's major recommendations, commercial broadcasting of one sort or another was from July, 1951 on, inevitable.

Such a sweeping conclusion would not take account of the climate at the time. Whatever Beveridge might say about what he meant in the tenor of the conclusions, the Press, and public opinion generally, concluded that the BBC was being applauded, not condemned; polite applause rather than a standing ovation (that had to wait the Pilkington Committee which by then had another 'show' for comparison), but applause nevertheless.

The BBC too, was a large, well-disciplined bureaucracy which had in the course of twenty five years faced four such enquiries; although this one was to be the longest and most searching to date, they had had plenty of time to prepare for it. There had been considérable discussion about whether the BBC should have parallel evidence with the GPO. And although this was turned down, and the GPO submitted some points the BBC felt unable to agree to, by and large the two organisations were in agreement.

The BBC was aware too, that the Conservative and Labour Parties largely agreed with its constitution: dissidents there were in both Parties, but not many. The Press, if not overtly backing monopoly was against any commercial broadcasting, as was the cinema industry. And, riding high on the public - and world-wide - accolade of war-time public service, it would have been hard for the BBC to imagine - in

one sense - a serious competitor of any kind in the short-term.

In another sense competition - from Radio Luxembourg - existed already. Discussions about ways of ending European-based English language commercial broadcasting to the UK had been going on within the Government, and with the BBC, for years. By the time of Beveridge Radio Luxembourg had re-established itself but although a thorn in the BBC's side it never threatened the service, or surfaced in the way private radio stations were too in the mid-1960s.

The Radio Luxembourg 'problem' was one that some senior personnel in the BBC could be perceptive in placing within the whole context of British broadcasting. In 1953 between the two Conservative White Papers on broadcasting which heralded commercial television, George Barnes, Director of the Spoken Word, sent a memorandum to the Director-General, Ian Jacobs.

In it he talks about the likely 'competitor' and the change of BBC policy this will undoubtedly entail. Then he turns to discuss radio and the fact that once commercial television has been conceded the principle of commercial finance is conceded also.

> In considering the sound services it is relevant to review what has already taken place on account of the competition offered by Radio Luxembourg. It is not fanciful to say that we already have commercial competition in this country - Radio Luxembourg is the competitor. It takes away from us a fairish audience and - more important - it is not itself without effect upon our programme structure and policy. I believe it is true that the likely effect of Radio Luxembourg played no small part in the decision to establish the Light Programme (Barnes, 1953) (emphases added).

Once the new Conservative Government was installed, and before their first White Paper which was to introduce the idea of competitive television, the BBC began to make strong representations about the Beveridge Committee proposals. As Briggs points out there was for a time the anomalous situation of the GPO officials trying to negotiate with the BBC the previous Government's White Paper while the new Government was planning a quite different future.

Any organisation of the size of the BBC, and it had continued slowly to grow since the war, is able to operate at many levels. The BBC, once it knew the Government's broad intentions, set out to

a) counter them completely with the help of public and elite opinion,
b) accommodate to them by making numerous suggestions to Government
c) prepare for a 'competitor'.

The BBC, through its Governors and the Advisory Committee structure, had access to many channels within the Government and the State. Policy-making in the UK reflects in all but the most extreme cases, this multi-levelled system although the crucial level is undoubtedly national. A Government may decide - or the State may request of Government that it decides - but having done that the advisory and consultative process begins. There are, naturally, many variations on these two themes (where, for instance, an outside body may request). Policy also depends considerably on the support system and its state of repair.

To take this latter point: in 1951 the new Conservative Government was dependent on the loyalty of many young and united Conservative MPs. To this extent Wilson (op.cit.) is right to suggest backbench activities stimulated action. He is wrong to imagine a revolt. The overtly political activity which follows a policy statement is the beginning of the advisory process. The BBC, all too aware of its vulnerability, is able to be involved here because of that vulnerability (it is an interested party) and, much more vitally in the longer-run because it is an expert body. Despite Norman Collins' resignation from the BBC in 1950, the incoming Conservative Government needed more expertise than he or Renwick or Stanley (see Wilson) could possibly have provided, were that Government to have wanted to take advice from such sources.

It is true as well of this early stage that no-one yet knew how competition would work. Briggs, inevitably, is the best available source here too. The BBC consistently thought through the Government's plans with it; publicly they could be consistently identified with the opposition to those plans without ever having to state it. This is important because this is how consensus adjusts to change by being a seamless part of it.

As we have noted the BBC was not alone in opposing any form of commercial broadcasting. Two major oppositional interests were the Press and the Cinema industry. Both had - in their eyes - a lot to

lose. The Newspaper Society, representing provincial newspapers, quoted the recent Royal Commission on the Press to support its case. That Commission Report had suggested that while newspapers were sold to the public for less than they cost to produce, of the possible supplementary sources of income, 'sale of their space to advertisers seems to us to be one of the least harmful' (Beveridge, Appendix H, p.553).

The Newspaper Proprietors Association representing Fleet Street newspapers said they were opposed 'in principle' to any system of 'radio' advertising. It would, they said, be detrimental to the interests of the public, as listeners; unnecessary from the point of view of advertisers; impracticable in operation because of wavelength shortage. There was no evidence of any public demand for sponsored broadcasts.

The evidence presented to the Beveridge Committee was divided more or less in favour of the BBC on the question of its monopoly; on commercial broadcasts heavily pro-BBC. Although cinema interests did not present direct evidence their views were well-known. When the National Television Council was formed in June, 1953, they supported it to the hilt. One company went so far as to lend its press officer (see Briggs, 1979, op.cit., p.906).

The National Television Council, begun when it became obvious the Conservative Government were serious about commercial television as soon as feasible rather than as a vague principle, found first life as a letter to The Times signed by Lady Violet Bonham Carter, Lord Brand, Lord Halifax, Tom O'Brien (Chairman of the TUC) and Lord Waverley. It was the idea of Christopher Mayhew who now says his aim was to split the Conservative Party (see p.183).

Mayhew also says the Council did not believe they could lose which suggests, if true, that they were curiously unaware of the nature of Government. Mayhew feels that the Labour Party made an error in backing the monopoly rather than fighting against commercialism. The 'threat' to the BBC had in any case been under-estimated before the 1951 election.

The NTC was a potentially powerful group attracting a number of elite people as members. The BBC worked through it, handing on letters and memoranda. The NTC met fortnightly in the House of Commons and tried to give itself a 'weighty high-minded' image. As has been noted

its birth gave rise, rapidly, to the pro-commercial Popular Television Association.

The NTC, despite having Mary Stocks and Beveridge himself as members, as well as the two Archbishops, most Vice-Chancellors, men like Julian Huxley and Harold Nicholson, could not have had any concrete effect on the outcome. Just possibly the mere effect of such august company sitting in judgement on the Government may have helped to remove the idea of sponsored broadcasts in favour of 'spot' advertising (but see also, p. 199 for an alternative explanation). A good deal of its energies, however, appear to have been spent in countermanding PTA propaganda. If the latter body was set up for any reason this was probably it.

With hindsight it is possible to see the problems of the broadcaster's case as linked to that of such major oppositional groups like the Press* and the Cinema industry. All were fighting on the same ground as it turned out: at the time no-one seems to have noticed.

Whereas the BBC believed it had to win against those who wanted to end the monopoly, the commercial interests fought against a perceived revenue loss. If there was a 'secret' weapon in the camp of the enemy it was in having the vision - just, as it turned out, that - to link the new medium, television, with both breaking the monopoly and experimenting with a new form of revenue.

Had the BBC been prepared to concede just one other public corporation financed through a new separate licence - one for television viewing was the obvious choice - and had it then tried to fight with the commercial interests, the Government would have found it hard to resist. What the opposition to commercial broadcasting never tried to do was to wrest from the Government side the primary definition that commercialism equalled freedom. Having conceded that one can immediately see how oppositional commercial interests, particularly the Press,

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*Although the Press publicly opposed commercial television by June, 1953, (before the second White Paper) the following newspapers or groups had applied for licences: Daily Mirror; Daily Mail; Daily Express; News of the World; Guardian; News Chronicle; Kemsley Group (Sunday Times); Odhams (Daily Herald).

would have had a hard time getting a coherent view organised that attacked commercial 'freedom' in broadcasting whilst espousing it in their very existence.

VI : The 'Government' Case

1 : Preliminary Matters : agenda setting

The title, 'the Government case' does not merely describe or reflect the decisions made by the first post-war Conservative Government in bringing together various strands of interest to make a new broadcasting policy. It is meant to throw light on the hitherto unexplained fact that it has been the Conservative Party which has dominated the first 50 years of broadcasting policy-making.

It might be argued that there are accidental reasons for this: for example, that the Conservative Party was the governing party for most of this time. Between 1885, when adult manhood suffrage was introduced, and 1979, they had been in power, singly or in coalition for 60 of those 94 years, between 1922 when broadcasting began, and 1979, they had been in power for 38 years, 14 in coalition, out of 57, almost the same ratio.

But such figures disguise more than they reveal. Excluding the coalition and the War as a time of national emergency, the Conservative Party, while ruling over the whole period for about 58 per cent of the time, since 1922 had ruled for about 56 per cent. Yet since 1945 they had ruled for only 17 years out of 34, exactly 50 per cent of the time. Gamble (1974, p.10) has pointed out that the whole question of whether the Conservative Party is a 'ruling' party has to be overlain with real events: the split in the Liberal Party over Home Rule; the decline of the Liberals and the rise of Labour: all provided the Conservative Party with a more or less continual opportunity to present itself as a united and coherent potential government, where it was or no.

What evidence, then, can be presented to suggest that the Conservative Party was a) aware of the need to 'recapture' broadcasting, or to re-define it to its own electoral advantage or b) even if acting as though unaware of this necessity, nevertheless moved in such a way that such a redefinition took place? Finally, most crucially, bearing in mind that no policy on broadcasting could be effected until power

was regained, could it not be the case that the policy or commercial television was a minor and unimportant extension of Conservative Party general economic principals?

2 : The Commercial Lobby

Although it was in the event television which was commercialised through the financing of ITV with advertisement revenue, many of those individuals and groups in favour of allowing the financing of broadcasting in this way originally turned their attention to radio. Plainly, before the war radio was the dominant medium; there were, too, plenty of models: the United States, Radio Luxembourg and Radio Normandy.

It is necessary to distinguish between different kinds of pressure. As has been apparent throughout this case study, the political issue became the maintenance or removal of the BBC's monopoly; the commercial issue was that of using broadcasting to reach very large audiences quickly, in order to make money; the structural issue and this is inevitably the most problematic - is to create a consensus: a matrix of capital, public service, audience preference, established institutions, values, intentions: an endless complex interactive list of people, organisations, institutions, values, and ideologies which appear, from time to time, to cohere.

It has to be borne in mind that at no time since the beginning of broadcasting in the UK has the question of commercial finance ever been settled fully in favour of the pro-public service, anti-advertising lobby. This in a capitalist economy should not be surprising; if anything the formation of the BBC as a Chartered Corporation ought to surprise.

Concern about the imminence of advertising on radio was fairly constant all through the 1920s, although it seems to have died down for a while after that. The coming of television decisively re-opened the question: it never ceased to be asked from that moment and it is with us still. In the most simplistic sense television, the invention, with its technical magnitude, can be blamed. Discussion about television costs have been mentioned already (see p. 217).

While the BBC of the 1930s rejected radio advertising at every turn, listeners were able to tune to the foreign commercial stations,

Radio Normandy and Radio Luxembourg. It is not true to suggest that the British audience had no cultural awareness of broadcast advertising; or that businesses neither knew what was involved or rejected the costs. Both the pre-war continental stations beamed at the UK were financially successful, not least because listeners were appalled by the 'Reithian Sunday' with its dreary diet of good works.

Towards the end of the war a series of articles appeared in the Economist (Crowther, 1944) pleading for 'experiment'. Written by the editor, Geoffrey Crowther, the scheme he outlined - three separate corporations with mixed licence fee and advertising finance - evenutally formed part of the evidence he and Sir Robert Watson-Watt, inventor of radar, gave to the Beveridge Committee (see p.215). While Crowther, in these articles, claimed not to be pleading the advertisers' case he did suggest that the post-war problem might be a 'bombardment' of the UK by advertising-based radio stations located, for example, in the Irish Republic.

One factor helping to maintain the BBC as a monopoly was the low cultural level of US broadcasting, a level which it was held throughout this period, and all through the debates on commercial television, to be directly a result of allowing sponsoring.

Some of this criticism was dangerously misplaced. Beveridge notes in an appendix to his Report that he had been forced to revise some early impressions gained in fact from 'books and documents available in the UK'. The visit to the US by Mary Stocks, Lord Elgin, Joseph Reeves and, crucially as it turned out, Selwyn Lloyd, changed the prevailing view on the Committee that all US broadcasting had to offer was rubbish.

Reeves noted that 'there is a great deal of objectivity and impartiality in the News Service' and that 'in big towns the US listener gets an immense choice of stations'. Mary Stocks also praised the news but added that it was in drama (where the BBC had always excelled) that standards were low. (Although this was a 'golden' age of US television drama, the visitors appear to have concentrated on radio, the bias evident all through the Beveridge Report.) As far as advertising went: 'personally I found it on balance mildly tedious,' said Stocks.

Selwyn Lloyd, in what proved to be an experience of some importance, noted that he found the advertisements 'boring, repetitive,

and rather offensive', that there was too much of it and it came too frequently; but, he added 'On the other hand, I should not think it impossible to devise rules which would make it (advertising) more tolerable'. He, like Reeves, was impressed by the number of small stations and, adding that he had not thought his informal report back was to be published, wanted to stress 'that those concerned with USA broadcasting also felt that they were performing a service to society.' It was a broadcasting system suitable for a free country where the idea of a public monopoly filled people with horror (Beveridge, 1951, op.cit., pp.288-321).

But while the overall climate of opinion - whatever elements of the public or the political parties considered to be faults with the monopoly or, a growing issue, the BBC's 'arrogance' of cultural uniformity - favoured public service broadcasting, there was the chink in the BBC's own armour: its failure to understand the nature of television broadcasting.

While the mandarins in Broadcasting House continued to debate the future of the new medium in terms which suggested it was merely radio with a pictorial commentary, several key executives involved in BBC TV were making their own plans. For example, Ian Orr-Ewing left to join A C Cossor Ltd., a radio and electronics firm; Norman Collins tipped for the first television director, who felt he had been misunderstood and snubbed by the BBC, and who left in a blaze of publicity: both became prime movers for commercial television.

The ostensible reason the contemporary Press gave for Collins' departure was the row over the cancellation by Lord Simon, chairman of the Governors, of a repeat of Val Gielgud's political play, Party Manners. This was entirely wrong although the timing of Collins' announcement ensured he got maximum publicity. The true reason was the continuing argument within the BBC of the 'true' role of television. The appointment of George Barnes to the first Director, Television post ensured in most BBC establishment minds that television remained well in the (sound) system. Barnes had been the first programme head of the Third; he went on to become the Director of the Spoken Word, the quasi-mystical post created to ensure euphony ruled the airwaves.

Collins had already made many enemies at the BBC. When Beveridge visited Alexandra Palace Collins claims he was told the wrong time and was, therefore, late for the meeting.

In 1949, a year before he resigned, Collins had addressed the Radio Industry Council on television development where inter alia he said an 'influence' was holding back the service.

> A state of nervous timidity and apprehension that is strikingly at variance with the national exuberance across the Atlantic.

More than three years after the BBC television service had re-opened it had failed to reach agreement with the film industry, theatres and sports promoters; neither had it any permanent arrangement with Equity, the Variety Artistes Federation or the Musicians' Union.

There were others, in a potentially more subversive position. John Rodgers, for example, who was a member of the BBC's General Advisory Council was also a director of J Walter Thompson, one advertising agency which could definitely be identified with the pro-commercial lobby.*

It would be a mistake, however, to see, as some commentators have (notably Wilson,1961 and Bunce, 1976) any formal connection between J Walter Thompsons, the other US agencies with London offices, and people like Rodgers, once they became MPs. Although of the group who were to be identified most closely with breaking the monopoly Rodgers, in particular, and Orr-Ewing, were directly identifiable with outside commercial interests with a potentially lucrative stake in any commercial broadcasting system, such a connection fails to take into account the nature of either politics in the UK or the overall political system. Even were these two young MPs, in their first parliament, to have exerted enormous direct influence towards commercial broadcasting, they could not have succeeded without an array of other factors which were indeed to prove vital.

The last group of identifiable lobbyists for commercialising broadcasting were various major manufacturing concerns: needless to

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*A Tribune Group note of this time (1953) mentions the following and their (interests': John Rodgers, J Walter Thompson; Ian Orr-Ewing, A C Cossor; A V Harvey, Mullards; Wavell Wakefield, Relay Exchange; Ian Fraser, Aspro.

say companies like Pye with their electronics interests; more important, though in the longer term, consumer manufacturers like Horlicks, Lever Brothers, Unilever and Rowntree Ltd. All of them wanted radio advertising to be permitted. There had been one formal approach by advertising interests - in 1946 - when the Incorporated Institute of Practitioners in Advertising had approached the GPO requesting commercial broadcasting (Beveridge, 1951).

We may thus group the various individuals, organisations and companies in favour of commercial broadcasting for commercial reasons as follows. First there were the ideologists who not only opposed the monopoly of the BBC but felt that increased (commercial) competition would be good for the country and in television for the development of the medium itself. Probably Geoffrey Crowther and Norman Collins can be placed here with the additional point that Collins felt he 'knew' television's true potential. Second, are the electronics and other technical equipment manufacturers: their interest was plain but directed not so obviously against public service broadcasting as towards the maximum expansion of domestic set ownership - which could only really mean television (or VHF radio). Thirdly, there were the consumer manufacturers of food and other goods, many of whom had already tasted the benefits of broadcast advertising via the overseas stations like Radio Luxembourg. Fourthly, the US and other advertising agencies, in particular J Walter Thompson. But most British agencies were extremely cautious and tended, as later with commercial radio, to consider broadcast advertising as small beer.

To list these groups is to draw attention to the highly disorganised 'lobby' if indeed it can be identified so positively. Neither does the characterisation of a pro-lobby suggest for a moment that there was an organised anti-lobby. But for each group isolated here - individuals, technical manufacturers, food and other manufacturers, advertising agencies, political interests - among which can be found pro-commercialists, there was a fairly equal number of anti-commercialists. The Incorporated Society of British Advertisers, for instance, who submitted evidence to the Beveridge Committee suggested there was an equal division of opinion for and against commercial broadcasting amongst its (manufacturing) members, although as only the consumer goods manufacturers might have been interested, the percentage is mis-

leading.

One thing is clear however. Before the 1951 Conservative Government were elected, no clear-cut feeling can be identified among commercial interests. It is therefore unreasonable to conclude anything like a commercial conspiracy to introduce commercial television was ever organised or even contemplated. The question of the introduction of an 'element of competition' therefore appears always to have directed more at the breaking of the BBC's monopoly than at improving, in an immediate sense, manufacturers' opportunities for selling their products.

3 : The Policy Conceived

Two distinct events can be identified around which the policy on commercial television condensed. The first, clearly a prerequisite for the implementation of any policy, was the election to Government of the Conservative Party in October, 1951, with a majority of 17. The majority was to prove important because, as far as the television policy was concerned, it determined the limits of dissent, not by backbenchers, but by the Government itself.

The second event, which preceded the election of a Conservative Government, was the Report of the Beveridge Committee already discussed. As much as anything else this Report forced the Conservative Party to look at its general attitude to broadcasting and the BBC.

On the 22nd February, 1951, Butler wrote to Buchan-Hepburn, the Conservatives' Chief Whip:

> I think it is important for the party to have a line on the future of the BBC. We have none at present. I discussed this with Selwyn Lloyd last weekend. Since then I have seen Ralph Assheton. He would be ready to take the chair at such an enquiry (Butler, 1951) (emphasis added).

This letter was sent a month after the Beveridge Report had been published and went on to suggest that Selwyn Lloyd (who had written the pro-commercialism Minority Report included in Beveridge) and Geoffrey Lloyd (who opposed commercial broadcasting) should be members of the committee. It also recommended Kenneth Pickthorn to represent

the Party's Advisory Committee on Policy, Alex Dunglass (later Lord Home) Duncan Sandys, John Profumo,* Charles Orr-Ewing and John Rodgers as additional members. It ends:

> There is advantage in getting going with this since otherwise the debate will be on top of us and we shall not know what to say (emphasis added).

The committee began work on the 26th February and reported on mid-June a month before the Debates on Beveridge and the Government White Paper subsequently produced (Cmnd 8291). This Conservative Party report is unquestionably important because, for the first time, an official high-ranking Committee of the Party, authorised, according to Briggs, by Churchill, recommended breaking the monopoly of the BBC.

Although there were considerable changes between what this Committee suggested, and what eventually happened, these changes are reflections of the political and governmental process: they do not alter the fact that it was here that the original agreement to change the broadcasting system was decided.

Inter alia the Report said: 'We strongly dislike monopolies and particularly State monopolies ... Of all monopolies, a monopoly of the mind is the most objectionable and dangerous ' (Assheton, 1951).

It went on to recommend that the BBC 'a very popular institution' (emphasis added) should have a secured future and an assured revenue. Several of the Committees were nervous that the BBC's argument against competition - that the bad drove out the good - had some substance; the majority felt that the question of choice was a more important issue.

What they were particularly concerned about was the danger that following the publication of the Beveridge Report, an impression had been given that the question of monopoly had been settled in the BBC's favour. The Committee felt that,

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*Lord Woolton gave Profumo a job as head of the radio and television section at Central Office. This apparently led him to study the BBC and he became 'disturbed' at the difficulty in getting across the Conservative point-of-view (Orr-Ewing private papers).

> We believe that the Conservative Party should make it clear that it does not consider the question to be closed. We regard this as our most important and basic recommendation (emphasis added).

From this premise the Report considered what alternatives might be open. They foresaw three: first, that a national radio network might be taken from the BBC; second that VHF, probably local, broadcasting opens up numerous frequencies which could be in competition; finally, that an alternative television service could be set up. But they foresaw breaking the monopoly completely: in radio as well as television. Eight of the ten members of this Committee subsequently joined the incoming Conservative Government or went to the Lords.

Geoffrey Lloyd was worried ('influenced') by the fact that

> the BBC was set up and subsequently maintained by Conservative Governments and feels it is important if possible to avoid broadcasting policy becoming a controversial Party issue (my emphasis).

But he felt that competition might be experimented with in VHF radio.

Significantly, there is only one, fleeting, reference to financing the competition recommended. In suggesting that a regulatory commission like the US FCC would have to be set up, the Report talks about 'standards and rules for advertising whether in sponsored programmes or otherwise'.

Suggestions like these probably originated with Selwyn Lloyd but might have come from Ian Orr-Ewing. In January, 1951, Orr-Ewing had met with C O Stanley of Pye to discuss the problem of justifying re-allocation of capital from re-armament or manufacturing to domestic broadcast equipment. The argument to emerge from this meeting was that 'the equipment had already been manufactured and it would not therefore be diverting capital resources or manufacturing effort from armaments'. They also talked about establishing a 'private TV network' on the Celtic fringe: Northern Ireland was attractive because it had, in Stormont, a built-in Conservative majority. Other possibilities were the Isle of Wight or the Isle of Man (where the first authorised UK commercial radio station was eventually started in 1965). This discussion took place before Beveridge reported (by 10 days) and while a Labour Government was still in power.

The so-called Assheton Report was circulated in time for the Debate in the Commons, on 19th July, on the Beveridge Report. Opening for the Opposition W S Morrison, according to Briggs not a 'partisan' of commercial broadcasting, pointed out one of the major concerns that had changed the Conservative Party's attitude on the BBC monopoly. Whatever service the Corporation had provided to the nation in the past had now been overshadowed:

> the background of events at home and abroad has made us more and more suspicious of these State concerns, particularly in the realm of thought and culture, and what was harmless and perhaps, indeed, necessary in the early days of the Corporation's development begins nowadays, against the modern background, to take a more of the ordinary aspect of everything being run by State corporations (Morrison, 1951).

Morrison had had to change his speech substantially because of a meeting of backbench MPs he had attended the previous night who had argued vociferously for an end to the BBC monopoly (Goldman, TCS I 10; also Swinton Archives).

The Shadow Committee, again according to Woolton, had been split on the 'Assheton Report' but this meeting of the 1922 Committee, the evening before the Beveridge White Paper Debate had come down strongly in favour of breaking the monopoly and introducing some form of commercial system (Wilson, 1961). Both John Rodgers and Ian Orr-Ewing had attended that meeting: both spoke in the Debate.

Orr-Ewing began by pointing to those who had given evidence to Beveridge who had opposed the monopoly: the Fabian Research Group, the Liberal Research Group, Geoffrey Crowther and Sir Robert Watson-Watt. He also mentioned Sir Frederick Ogilvie's letter to The Times. He continued:

> The point I am trying to make is that we desire to seek a compromise between the public service monopoly at the one extreme and the free and competitive system of the USA at the other extreme (Orr-Ewing, 1951).

Rodgers, who spoke for only a few moments, suggested the monopoly was worse, not better, because the BBC was so good at doing its job. Selwyn Lloyd also spoke in the Debate - to his Minority Report which had specifically advocated the introduction of competition

and sponsoring:

> In my report it is clear that on the whole I come down in favour of the set of alternatives that admit of sponsorship: but if these are not acceptable to the majority of the House, I willingly accept the second set of alternatives in preference to the continuation of the existing set up (Lloyd, 1951).

Orr-Ewing, much later in April, 1952, in a letter to The Observer, also said: 'It is erroneous to say that the only alternative to the British monopoly is the American system; there are many forms of compromise between the two, and I am convinced it is our task to devise one' (emphasis added) (Orr-Ewing, 1952).

Selwyn Lloyd's Minority Report is well-known. His premise was that having come to the conclusion, as the Committee did, that broadcasting was

> the most pervasive, and therefore one of the most powerful of agents for influencing men's thoughts and actions (Beveridge, 1951),

it was illogical not to more properly confront the need for freedom of choice. Lloyd referred to the four evils inherent in monopoly, in particular with reference to the BBC: it was unwieldly in size; it hindered development; it constituted a single employer; it concentrated excessive power. He considered the safeguards proposed by Beveridge to be insufficient and having decided they did not deal sufficiently with the central problem, proposed a Commission for Broadcasting with powers to licence, as well as the BBC, alternative radio and television programmes.

There is some confusion as to how Selwyn Lloyd came to write his Minority Report. Briggs points to his visit to the BBC in June, 1950, and his subsequent trip to the US with Mary Stocks. A J P Taylor (TCS I 7) suggested it was the BBC's removal of the controversial 'In the News' programme that stirred Lloyd to act against the monopoly. But Taylor's allegation that 'In the News' was removed because of Party pressure seems unfounded. A letter from Pierssene, a director of the Central Office, to Sir Lionel Heald, written much later, says an investigation into this specific allegation could find no evidence of either Central Office or Transport House interference. (Pierssene,

date uncertain)

Norman Collins (TCS I 1) says that what shocked Lloyd more than anything was the BBC's arrogance. Lloyd, he says, was a 'rigid' conservative and a strict constitutionalist, determined therefore to seek balance - an idea which returns to the Nineteenth Century conservative philosophy of Coleridge, incidentally. Orr-Ewing (TCS I 3 and 3(2)) claims Lloyd had written his Report even before Beveridge sat, because, he says, Lloyd's place on the Committee was as an anti-monopolist. The latter seems possible, the former is surely unlikely, although another senior civil servant (TCS I 6) of the time believes that this would quite reasonably mean Lloyd had made up his mind generally: Beveridge's attitudes would merely have convinced him further.

But although the specific motives for Lloyd's report may be unclear its impact has rarely been questioned. Yet, while not denying its central importance, it was by no means the only sustained attack either on the major question of monopoly or, less often dwelt on, but soon to assume a greater importance, the question of financing any expansion in broadcasting. There was, it is worth remembering, a second 'minority report' strictly speaking a 'note', in favour of commercial broadcasting - although not <u>control</u> by commercial broadcasters.

This note (see also p.216), signed by Lord Beveridge, Lady Megan Lloyd George, and Mary Stocks, argued that

> broadcasting is a means of communication of great power and pervasiveness and that one of the legitimate normal purposes of communication between human beings is for the suppliers of goods and services to make known to possible buyers things which the latter may want to buy ... Is there any good reason why a public service broadcasting agency should not set aside named specific hours for programmes admitting advertisements? (Beveridge, 1951).

Thus in the one Report, although in the minority, four Committee members had challenged either the continuation of monopoly and the ban on advertisements in broadcast programmes. While it would be nonsense to stress the meaningfulness of these two minority documents, it is significant, I think, that the twin 'problems' which were to be resolved by ITV were first discussed in an official government report -

and positively so. This may be added to the Treasury agitation of the late 1930s to link television to some additional form of financing. (Briggs, 1965)

4 : The policy fought for

> Like many a right wing political party coming back to power after a socialist regime, it (the 1951 Conservative Government) found it difficult to return many nationalised services to private control. The Conservatives ... had been in office when the BBC was first chartered in 1927, but socialisation was not the issue then that it became after the war. A proposal to commercialise the BBC itself would have been laughed out of the House of Commons in 1952, but the creation of an alternate, commercially supported system was another thing. Even though the leaders of the party were either indifferent or hostile to commercial television, therefore, some ideological basis existed for its support in the ranks (Paulu, 1956, p.45) (emphasis added).

What had not necessarily been predictable to a contemporary observer of the time was that the battle over commercial television would be fought intra-party more than inter-party. With a more sophisticated theoretical hindsight we can see that this battle was for the 'soul' of Conservatism; the broadcasting 'weapon', a prize within the gift of the Conservatives since it had begun, now played out an ideological fight at the structural level.

Evidence that as much as anything else the commercial television battle was fought out between two wings of the Conservative Party comes in the way in which the argument tended to divide between the Commons and the Lords. This is not entirely surprising given that the elder statesmen of the Party might be expected to be in the Upper House; the 'young Turks' in the Lower. Another point is of course that dissension in the Lords is more acceptable than in the Commons although in this case the unusual situation was to arise whereby the Government was being outflanked by the enthusiasm of its youngest backbenchers.

The Lords debated the Labour Government's White Paper (Cmnd 8291) on the 27th July. Woolton, who opened the debate for the Opposition, raised the issue of monopoly:

> I raise this issue because I personally am convinced that we are in some danger of hiding our heads in the sand regarding the danger of a Communist infiltration into our public and our educational services - and there is no educational service in which it could be so dangerous as that of the Broadcasting Corporation (Woolton, 1951).

He stressed that he was speaking personally and added that

> within a reasonable distance of time from now some station should be either leased or created that would permit of sponsored programmes.

Most Conservative peers who spoke in the debate were firmly opposed to any form of commercial broadcasting. Lord Halifax, who was chairman of the BBC's General Advisory Council, used the BBC version of Gresham's Law as an argument and was perhaps the most condemnatory of any suggestion of commercialism. Lord Jowitt, Lord Chancellor, reiterated the Labour Government opposed sponsoring: 'against it root and branch'.

The outline of the future struggle was barely hinted at in either of these debates. Most speakers were preparing positions but not in any realisation of what was to come. Following the Lords debate, which Lord Piercy had said to Sir William Haley was a good day for the BBC (Briggs,1979), nothing happened to protect that body, by legislation of a new Charter. There was no time before the recess and then Attlee's call for a General Election. The defence of the BBC, as we have seen (p. 228) began in earnest then. The attack on the monopoly now became condensed into a call for commercial broadcasting.

To follow the exact twists and turns of this issue is hardly necessary here but there are landmarks between the coming to power of the Conservatives and the Television Act, 1954: these are charted by the two White Papers on Broadcasting and by the stages of the Television Bill. Between these public phases lie the intricacies of compromise between the Government and its backbenchers, the commercial interests, the BBC, and others.

Briggs (op.cit., 1979) notes that whereas the Government was to find it difficult to carry out the sweeping changes younger supporters might have wanted because of economic difficulties and that denationalisation was easy enough to sloganise about, but not to dismantle, in broadcasting prospects for quick change were more obvious. Whitelaw (RCS I 28) has said - nearly 25 years later - that in broadcasting the Conservatives were able to 'denationalise' (sic) and Christopher Mayhew (TCS I 11 op.cit.), much evident on the other side in this argument, has

suggested that ending the BBC's monopoly was a hostage against what he described as Conservative fears of 'me-too-ism' in the Government (that is, being indistinguishable from the previous Labour Government). (And see also the Paulu quote above p.245).

What Mayhew hints at is what Briggs, quoting Moran, relates as Churchill's own mood: 'what must be done to hold on to power'. This relates directly to the re-defined public consensus on, for example, the welfare state. From now on the Conservative Party would have to move within some limits set by Attlee's Governments, others by the nation's mood and the demands of the economy itself for interventionism. The State too, separate from 'Government' understood as partisan, one might reasonably surmise, had its own interests in maintaining as much planning as possible.

To begin with no sudden moves on broadcasting were contemplated or planned. The Cabinet was split over the issue with Churchill holding the ring probably on balance against commercial television. (John Rodgers says (TCS I 2 op.cit.) that Churchill used to refer to it as 'Johnny Rodgers twopenny, ha'penny hurdy gurdy'; Briggs says he asked: 'Why do we need this peep show?') Eden, Churchill's heir, was opposed, as was Butler and Crookshank, the Lord Privy Seal. But Woolton, Lord President was strongly in favour as was the Assistant Post Master-General, David Gammans.

Woolton had great influence because of his association with the Party's hour of need, as well as his business and political acumen. He had, as chief publicity officer at Central Office, Mark Chapman-Walker, a strong protagonist of change.

In November, 1951, Earl De La Warr, the new Post Master-General, announced a six month extension of the BBC's charter. At the same time a Committee of Ministers was set up, chaired by Lord Salisbury, to look into the long-term future. Other members included Woolton, Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe, the Home Secretary, and James Stuart, Secretary of State for Scotland.

While this Committee was discussing the terms of what would eventually become the Conservative Government's first White Paper on Broadcasting (Cmnd 8550, May, 1952), the backbench Broadcasting Study

Group set up in 1951 but (see p.195on this) was pressurising the Assistant PMG, Gammans. The Study Group included four members who had been on Assheton's Committee - Profumo, the BSG's first chairman, Pickthorn, Orr-Ewing and Rodgers. Anthony Fell who had previously been with Pye Radio was also a member. This Group apparently first came together in November, 1951.

Again, according to Briggs, it was the unanimity of this Group, its pressure on the committed Gammans and through the 1922 Committee, which kept the temperature high. In February, 1952, it produced a document, The Future of British Broadcasting, asking for commercial alternatives in radio and television. Also in February a meeting of the 1922 Committee voted 80 to 2 in favour of ending the BBC's monopoly. A memorandum from that meeting sent to Churchill, Woolton, and Butler noted that 'if it was decided to prolong the present BBC Charter the Whips think Party loyalty will be greatly strained ' (Grimston, 1952).

At this meeting, on the 21st February, Assheton read out the Report on the future of British Broadcasting. Sixteen members then spoke, all but two in favour, the minutes note. Sir Robert Grimston proposed a resolution accepting the principle of breaking the monopoly which was accepted with the exception of the same two dissentients. The meeting agreed that the following week Lord Salisbury should attend. Woolton also came to that second meeting - on the 28th February - and apparently now set up a number of arguments against breaking the monopoly with a commercial system. Principal among them were considerations of economic problems - lack of resources for anyone to build transmitters etc., and the possibility that it would be impossible to prevent the Communist Party from buying time on any commercial channel.

After this meeting the 1922 Committee appointed a small Sub-Committee, chaired by John Profumo, to represent the views of the 1922 Committee to the Government. It was this Sub-Committee which compromised on confining the breaking of the monopoly to television only.

One important Government change took place before the first White Paper was published in May, 1952: Lord Salisbury who was opposed to breaking the monopoly at a time when national unity was

all (the Korean War was under way) moved to the Commonwealth Relations Office. Woolton replaced him as Minister in charge of broadcasting policy. Chapman-Walker was later to say to Wilson (op.cit., 1961) that without this move the policy would not have got through.

The White Paper was published on 15th May, 1952. The key paragraph said:

> The present Government have come to the conclusion that in the expanding field of television provision should be made to permit some elements of competition when the calls on capital resources at present needed for purposes of greater importance make this possible.

In order to allay fears about abuses, any channels authorised would not be permitted to engage in political or religious broadcasting. Neither was any mention made about the method of financing. Lord De La Warr explained in the two day debate in the Lords following publication that this was because the Government was still seeking alternative means of raising the money.

The Lords debate was on a motion of Lord Reith's introduced originally to preceed the White Paper. Reith's speech was extraordinary by any standard: 'one can imagine the stresses and strains, the pullings and pushings behind the scenes, arguments and counter-arguments, drafts and redrafts ' (Reith, 1952). At this time Reith was close to the BBC and in particular to William Haley. But his efforts to get Churchill to listen to the case for retaining the monopoly were dashed by himself when he wrote a vitriolic attack on the entire Conservative Party in The Observer in June, 1952 (Stuart, 1975, p.480).

Twenty nine peers spoke, 17 against the Government's proposals. Attitudes were hardening not least because of speeches like that of Reith, Reith, of course, knew the Conservative Party was profoundly split, a point brought out too by the Liberal Peer, Lord Samuel who wanted the Government to say, one way or another, whether they favoured any form of sponsoring. The reticence of the White Paper he supposed might reflect

> that they are in favour of it, but do not wish to say so, for they feel some coyness, some diffidence, some shyness, in appearing before the nation at large and saying that in future to some extent, large or small, the nation will get its broadcasting, so far as sight is concerned, paid for on its behalf by commercial interests,

> who will choose the programmes and give the nation what they think is expedient for it to have in order that they shall get value for their money (Samuel, 1952).

Lord Samuel had caught the mood of many Conservatives in the chamber. Lord Halifax, at that time chairman of the BBC General Advisory Committee, also stressed that the White Paper tried to be all things to all men and was 'profoundly sorry that it should be the Party with whom I have associated' that was to introduce sponsoring' (Halifax, 1952).

Younger peers, like Lord Montague of Beaulieu felt that his generation supported sponsoring: it was an expression of the new age, exciting, unstuffy. He was supported by Lord Mancroft who quoted from Ogilvie's letter to The Times (op.cit.).

But the weight of argument was negative. Predictably, the Labour Peer, and ex-Post Master-General, the Earl of Listowel dissociated his Party entirely from the planned change, adding

> Television has not become a rich man's hobby as many people expected it would on account of its cost. On the contrary, hire purchase has made it possible for television sets to be acquired by families in every income group (Listowel, 1952).

But at the heart of the issue was monopoly: it was where the more perceptive saw the battle. Of these, Lord Hailsham, the most passionate defender of the BBC in the Lords, attempted to 'explain away' the BBC's position. The BBC is not a 'monopoly' because it 'sells' nothing. Commercialism destroys the integrity of the editorial function, he said, adding that it was obvious that television was the medium of the future. He asked that if there had to be an experiment in commercial broadcasting, why not let the BBC conduct it?

De La Warr in summing up was concerned to praise both Reith and the BBC and, by implication, to prevent the issue becoming a party-political one. This desire had been reflected by both Lord Jowitt, a former Labour Lord Chancellor, and in part by the Earl of Listowel. After two days Reith withdrew his motion 'tired and very, very disgusted'. It had succeeded in establishing the tone of the subsequent argument.

In the Commons debate which followed on 11th June, the Government,

perhaps nervous of what they had witnessed in the Lords, enforced a three-line Whip and had the Debate opened by the Home Secretary, Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe. Here he was prepared to say that in fact,

> as the Corporation (the BBC) will continue to be the sole broadcasting authority having any claim on the revenue from licences, the competitors in the field of television will have to provide their own equipment from their own financial resources. This means, in short, that they will have to rely on advertisements and sponsored programmes for their income (Maxwell Fyfe, 1952) (my emphasis).

The Labour Party, regretfully, said Morrison, rejected the White Paper, except where it renewed the BBC's Charter. In this and other Opposition speeches the new Toryism was stressed. A.Hobson made the point directly:

> The White Paper is an attempt to reconcile rival forces within the Conservative Party. It is interesting to note that it was not until 1950 and the advent of many new Conservative Members that there was any question of the desirability or otherwide of having sponsored broadcasting (Hobson, 1952).

It must have been with just a hint of despair that Gammans, the Assistant Post Master-General summed up by saying '... in this White Paper we are standing for two vital principles, the principle of breaking a monopoly of the mind and the principle of keeping the BBC out of party politics.' The former 'principle' was to ensure the latter was annulled.

On the Labour Amendment the Commons voted 304 to 276 against; on the substantive motion they voted 297 to 269 with the Liberals who were present supporting the Government. It is noticeable that during the debate Labour speakers were emphasising the status quo, proclaiming themselves in favour of 'tradition' while Conservative MPs demanded change and radical alteration. If any proof were needed that the Conservatives were out to attack the prevailing consensus it is here.

Gammans, winding up, had gone much further than De La Warr in the Lords

> The Government are in earnest, not only over breaking the BBC monopoly but also in permitting sponsored television (Gammans, 1952) (my emphasis).

Sir Ian Fraser, an ex-governor of the BBC, and a Conservative MP, spoke strongly against monopoly adding that the Crawford Committee, on which he had sat, had only agreed to a monopoly because they did not understand the technicalities of broadcasting. Fraser's point of view, notes Briggs (1979) was shared by Coase (1950) with whom Orr-Ewing was in close correspondence.

After this debate there followed a period of fifteen months where little publicly visible happened. And the Government appeared to consider not much could. In a telephone conversation in August, 1952, Ian Orr-Ewing was told by Gammans that the GPO view was that there was no need to hurry because it would be four years before spare capacity was available in the radio industry. The Government meanwhile widened the membership of the Television Advisory Committee to include C O Stanley, chairman and managing director of Pye Ltd., and C Darnley Smith, chairman of a radio company subsidiary of the Rank Organisation. The Commitee was to look at the whole question of television development. Stanley had by this time formed the Associated Broadcasting Development Company with Norman Collins and Sir Robert Renwick.

The Broadcasting Study Group was continuing to press for action; in April, 1953, John Rodgers initiated a debate accusing the Government of holding up progress. In reply Gammans said he hoped the Labour Party would make 'no sponsored television' an election cry for nothing could be more to the advantage of the Conservative Party.

It was not until July, 1953, that De La Warr announced that a further White Paper would be produced in the autumn dealing with how 'competitive television' might be organised. The tentative nature of the statement after such a long delay produced a furious reaction from the Government's backbenchers. Meanwhile the Report of the Television Advisory Committee, which pointed out the frequency limitations, were forcing the Government's hand as to how 'competitive' television would have to be organised. The Government had already tried to persuade the BBC to experiment with sponsoring or to co-produce with the ABDC. There was, Briggs notes, never a chance the BBC Governors would agree.

By this time (summer, 1953) more active moves had been taken to defend the BBC (see p231). As a counter to the National Television

Council, the Popular Television Association was set up in mid-July. Within the Conservative Party other substantial moves had also been made: the setting up of a Radio and Television Committee. Soon after its first meeting the Chief Whip was writing (to the Cabinet?) that the question of how the BBC monopoly should be broken was not important: 'means to this end are regarded as comparatively unimportant so long as this resolve is expressed ' (Buchan-Hepburn, 1953).

The PTA was all image, packed by public relations experts in order to get a speedy decision on commercial television. It was tied closely to Aims of Industry, and to the Conservative Party, although not as closely as Wilson suggests (Wilson, 1961; Briggs, 1979). What does seem to have happened during 1953 is a slow change of constituency Conservative Party feeling in favour of commercial television: of five resolutions on television policy at the Party's autumn annual conference four supported the Government; the fifth wanted a free vote. A resolution was carried supporting the Government's plans.

By this time the biggest compromise had already been agreed inside the Cabinet: this was to eschew 'sponsoring' in favour of spot advertising organised through commercial programme contractors. More than anything this change was to ensure that although the Bill would get through, it would please very few - especially the pro-commercial lobby in the Party who saw each change as a change for the worse, away from the principles of enterprise and freedom back towards State interference.

The second White Paper (Cmnd 9005) a Memorandum on Television Policy, published in November, 1953, introduced the major outlines of what became ITV. A decision had been taken to make the authority responsible for commercial television a public corporation owning and operating the transmitters: it would hire its facilities to the private companies making the programmes and selling advertising time.

The White Paper explained:

> The Government has decided as a basic principle that there should be no 'sponsoring' and that the responsibility for what goes out on the air shall rest upon the operator of the station and not on the advertiser.

Once again the debates were arranged so that the Lords discussed the matter first. This time Churchill appears to have expressed worries about the effect this might have on public opinion for, once again, the debate was ordered under a motion by Lord Reith. Martin Redmayne, a Government Whip, wrote to Churchill on the 17th November that the Government were unlikely to get 'our people's' views for at least a fortnight after publication and that an adverse vote in the House of Lords might affect the debate in the Commons:

> I am advised that there is no way of postponing the debate on Lord Reith's motion in the House except by his permission, he ended (Redmayne, 1953).

In the event, Reith withdrew his motion in favour of one by Lord Halifax. Halifax was ill on the day and Lord Hailsham took his place:

> This debate takes its place in the context of the great debate in our national affairs between the two rival principles upon which goods and services can be supplied - the principle of public service, sometimes called monopoly, and the principle of free enterprise and competition. Hitherto, broadcasting has been out of that controversy (Hailsham, 1953) (emphasis added).

Hailsham considered it to be a disaster that broadcasting had been 'thrown into the cockpit of party politics by the present Government'.

He pointed out that although the Government had issued a Whip for the debate the Opposition had not. The way in which competitive television was being introduced was 'shoddy and disreputable' and ought not to have been done 'without being included in an election manifesto'.

Again he stressed that television had been underestimated as a social force and that because it was so significant it should be developed in everyone's interest. Commercial television would inevitably concentrate on areas of large population and would not bother to cover the countryside. Neither would it cater for minorities, yet that was a vital function because, 'All of us, my Lords, are members of some tiny minority or other: some collect stamps, or skate; others are gardeners, or race pigeons or like to go to football matches' (note the exquisite class distinctions Hailsham introduces) (Hailsham, 1953).

The debate ought to be open, he went on, pointing out that neither the Liberal nor the Labour Party had whipped, possibly because they had

recognised the advantage (splitting the Conservatives) by not bothering. Hailsham, along with many other supporters of the BBC, saw the real matter to be a moral one. Lord Simon, the ex-chairman of the BBC Governors, picked this up too; there was a need to separate monopoly versus competition from public service versus commercialism; the latter was the moral issue, he thought.

It was this pseudo-piety that the pro-commercialists so disliked. Lord Brabazon of Tara, for example, thought that 'When you look at this coalition of The Times, their friends, the Archbishop (Cantuar) and the Labour Party, it cannot be right' (Brabazon, 1953).

The Government case had by now been worked out. The Post Master-General, Earl De La Warr said it was:

1) Alternative television provided by minds other than the BBC.
2) Competition.
3) A public Corporation renting transmitters: 'and as may well happen, if different companies are allowed to operate on one station, then it will be for the public corporation to ensure the proper planning and balance of programmes.
4) No sponsoring.

Lord De La Warr attacked those who opposed the Government, 'anxious groups I will not say of elderly Peers, all colloguing together, propaganding, lobbying ' (De La Warr, 1953). There was pure prejudice he said amongst those whose conversations he had heard condemning television when some had admitted to never watching it. What the Government were attempting was 'liberty without licence'.

This theme was developed by Lord Simonds, the Lord Chancellor. But he went on to outline a deeper reason why this Government and its supporters backed commercial television:

> I understand very well that there may be those in whom the trend and bias of their mind is such that automatically they prefer a monopoly. After all, it is the essence, the heart and the core, of the Socialist creed that there should be, in effect, vast monopolies. If you believe in the nationalisation or socialisation, whatever you like to call it, of all the means of production, distribution and exchange, then it is an easy, logical and consistent step to say that this wonderful new article of television

> shall be the production of the State or a State corporation only ... However that may be, I speak to those to whom socialism makes no appeal, rather the reverse (Simonds, 1953) (emphasis added).

Lord Salisbury, summing up for the Government continued this line of argument accusing Hailsham of delivering a speech which 'made the best exposition of anyone in this debate of the views which are normally associated with noble Lords opposite' (Salisbury, 1953).

In the Commons, which debated the White Paper on the 14th December, the 'junior' Conservatives were much disappointed by the White Paper. The debate did attract some striking statements by Conservative MPs about what it was they were fighting for. Sir Ian Fraser launched an appeal for the consumer:

> We are passing from an age in which goods are allocated to one in which they have to be sold. Unless we sell them, we shall have unemployment ... The war years compelled a frustration of our natural desires, they canalised our desires and needs, and made us spend our money on what was available rather than on what we wanted. But we are moving out of this age of frustration into one where there will be more goods available ... for 10 years people had to spend their money on what was available and they could not choose ... It will be a tremendous advantage to our people to be able to choose and to know about the new and wonderful goods which are available ... There is no medium so admirable, so my salesmen friends tell me, as the TV medium for bringing the seller, with the goods to be sold, into personal contact with the buyer in his house, without even the disadvantage of having to put a foot in the door (Fraser, 1953).

Selwyn Lloyd, by now a junior minister, quoted Reith on the brute force of monopoly and went on to say that 'in that quotation lies the difference between those who hold contrary views upon this matter ... The tendencies in the world today are towards uniformity of thought and deed, and a uniform pattern imposed upon us by a single group of men, however high-minded, is a bad thing ' (Lloyd, 1953).

High-mindedness was not something the Labour Opposition were in a mood to concede to the Conservatives in advocating commercial television. Many raised the question of Conservative MPs' interests in advertising agencies. Herbert Morrison, continuing the attack on advertising per se thought the debate the most important since the war

because it involved the future of the country (sic) and the level of culture. This speech, which becomes logically incoherent in many of its arguments, demonstrates the 'value-commitments' Parsons discusses as crucial to pattern-maintenance. Morrison was one among many, and we have seen, numbers came from the Conservative Party. But that broadcasting does raise fundamental questions of ideology and power in its operations, coding and de-coding, can be seen from these debates.

Morrison was particularly upset that commercial television had not been mentioned in the General Election Campaigns: 'It was not an electoral issue. As a whole broadcasting has hitherto been kept out of party politics (see also p.254) (Morrison, 1953).

He also raised the moral question: 'In this matter which is a great moral issue, a great controversial issue upon which very sincere convictions are held... is it not possible to avoid this sharp party cleavage?' Other Labour speakers dwelt on the break with Conservative Party tradition. Ness Edwards, an ex-Labour Government Post Master-General, said that in allowing commercialism the Government was proposing something 'that all previous Tory tradition was against. The monopoly which is now so offensive was created by a Tory Government ' (Edwards 1953).

But the Government could not turn back. In any case, said Gammans, opening the debate 'television ... will always be primarily a means of entertainment' (so much ado about nothing). Alternatively, and again at the heartlands:

> Governments all over the world are arrogating to themselves the right to decide what their fellow subjects shall read, see believe and even think... The only reason why my Hon. Friends on this side of the House feel strongly on this subject is that they do not want to see this country going the same way (Gammans, 1953).

There remained only the Bill to express, finally, how a Conservative Government would actually introduce commercial television into the UK. The back of Conservative Party opposition had been broken; where it remained it would be destroyed by the rigidities of Party discipline. Its destruction was, as I have argued (see Chapter Two) a process determined by the balance of forces inside the Conservative Party allied to the recognition of ideological necessity. Put another way, the 'old

guard' in the Party might have held out against the new had there been nothing else at stake. But the new had with them the powerful weapon of a national consensus on 'Welfarism', along with a political power requirement that the Conservatives re-align.

VII : The Policy Won

> 'This Bill is pure Tory, doctrinaire, dogmatic idealism' - Herbert Morrison, Committee Stage, Television Bill, 1954.

One of the most telling criticisms levelled at Professor Wilson's book is that it fails to see the policy process through. At the point where a great many of the mechanisms designed to effect compromises come into play, he stops, satisfied that he has proved his case.

As Morrison's statement suggests a Bill may well express 'idealism' though whether 'dogmatic' is a finer point. But the Conservative Government who introduced the Television Bill were not at the end of a process, merely at a corner. Changes were made in the Bill and they reflect nuances of policy making which have importance. The principle may have been tarnished to many of the more vociferous pro-commercial lobbyists, both in and out of the commons, but it had the ring of soundness about it.

Even those who had vigorously backed commercial television could compromise in the knowledge that they had won the major victory by getting the Bill at all. Others noted that their true position had been consistently distorted:

> I have always been opposed to a sponsored television system. I have written letters to The Times on the subject, but unfortunately they have not been published. The leader writers of that newspaper have habitually stated that Conservative back-benchers were out to commercialise the whole of broadcasting ... This is untrue ... This (the Bill) is a compromise between out-and-out commercial television as seen in America, and a State broadcasting system which we, alone among the democracies, have ... (Orr-Ewing, 1954) (emphasis added).

The Bill was published on 4th March, 1954. There was a general feeling it had compromised with everyone already (Briggs, op.cit.). Nevertheless the Labour Party put down 206 amendments, sufficient to force the Government to impose a guillotine. Although most of the

discussion had already been gone through (the Second Reading of the Bill in the Commons was the eighth major Parliamentary occasion since mid-1951 on which the general principles had been discussed) passion still ran high.

The Conservative Party's own briefing notes* went through the main points with care, linking the issues of principle with the clauses of the Bill. The BBC, as a monopoly 'with its pervasive and increasing influence on men's minds', aggravated and magnified the inherent dangers of a single programme provider and employer.

In seeking to introduce a competitor the Government was mindful of costs - 'it must be remembered that television is not the rich man's occasional luxury but the poor man's regular pleasure' - and of having to raise the licence fee. Advertising revenue not only would fill the gap but allow that medium to fulfill a 'positive economic and social purpose'.

To safeguard the integrity of the system a public authority would be enacted to ensure standards and to regulate advertisements. This was in Clause One of the Bill: the duration of the ITA - first named here - was to be 10 years. The second Clause gave the Authority powers to provide television broadcasting services, including transmitters and studios. Programmes, however, would normally only be provided by the contractors.

Clause Three was to ensure the programmes were predominantly British (thereby allaying one of the major lines of criticism about the Americanisation of culture). The ITA might not broadcast its own opinions but could relay <u>all</u> (but not some) of the BBC's Party Political Broadcasts. A Religious Advisory Committee was to be set up.

The next two Clauses dealt with advertising. The complex wording in Clause Four was designed to exclude any possible sponsoring. Clause Five excluded advertising agents or foreign companies from becoming programme contractors. It also attempted to lay down ground rules for the ITA about how it was to secure adequate competition between

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*I am extremely grateful to Lord Orr-Ewing for copies of these invaluable documents which set out the official line of the Conservative Party in 1954.

programme contractors (this has never been fulfilled). The original briefing notes that how such competition was to be arranged on one wavelength was not clear. At the time the Bill was published the GPO had had preliminary talks with 42 prospective contractors: many dropped out when they realised what restrictions would apply.

The sixth Clause gave the Government powers over the ITA similar to those it had over the BBC. The rest of the Bill was concerned with financial questions - and the viability of the Authority which was to cause such a row in the Commons - and the employment of staff.

As the Bill proceeded changes were made either by Government Amendments or Conservative Backbench Amendment. Special provision was made for national Members (equivalent to the BBC Governors) for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and for all Members to have fixed terms of office. The position of the ITA in providing 'sustaining' programmes was clarified basically by limitation: only in exceptional circumstances would the ITA provide programmes.

Amendments were also made in Clause Two to define more clearly the position of programme contractors and to ensure the ITA did not go into business as a seller of wireless equipment. In Clause Three a change was made to ensure that programmes complied with a specified 'Code of Conduct', and to ensure that a 'suitable' proportion of regional matter was broadcast from regional stations. 'Give-away' prize programmes (another American invention newly on the television horizon) were banned.

Although sponsoring had been specifically banned amendment of Clause Four allowed publicity for charities, literary reviews, documentaries and shoppers' guides, and announcements giving gramophone record numbers. Special rates were to be permitted for 'local' advertisements within a contractor's region.

As significant were changes made to qualify the penalties a programme contractor could be made to pay if in breach of contract over programme supply. Originally the maximum - on a third offence - was set at £500. Whilst keeping the penalty the Commons narrowed the definition of a breach of contract. This is one of the few examples where the more aggressive commercial interest was catered for. In the Lords (see p.242)this enthusiasm was to be curbed.

Another 'narrowing' was the Commons' limitations on the powers of the Post Master-General in a new Clause Seven, to request or prohibit the ITA to broadcast.

No amendment of substance was killed by the guillotine in the House of Commons, and no clause to which a non-Government amendment had been tabled was guillotined. Eighty hours were spent in debate in the Commons from beginning to end.

The guillotine, although not used directly against the Opposition, was aimed at limiting the 'wrecking' efforts of the Labour Party. On the first day of the Committee stage the Labour benches had argued for over two hours that the ITA ought to be named the CTA (for commercial), although I would be inclined to argue that his name difference was crucial.

At the same time the Labour Party made its intentions towards the Bill crystal clear. Margaret Herbison for example: 'If we could get the Minister to accept every one of these amendments, the Bill would in reality come to nought. I say it quite openly.'

Morrison by now had, with the rest of the hierarchy of the Labour Party decided on total war

> If this scheme should already be working when we take office, the first thing we should do would be to maintain and enforce the full rigour of the safeguards ... At the same time, however, I must make it clear that the whole of this scheme is highly objectionable... we ... must reserve the right to modify or, indeed, abandon the entire scheme, and this may well include the complete elimination of the proposals for advertising.

The main lines of attack pursued by the Labour Party were: to delay the establishment of the ITA; in contradiction to try to force the ITA to speed up its rate of coverage; to completely eliminate the programme contractors; to allow a future elimination of those contractors by Order; to provide that the ITA, and not the programme contractors, should provide certain classes of programme, for example all news items, children's programmes, religious programmes; to provide a quota system for British films and other recorded matter; to disallow television advertisements on Sundays; to define in the Bill certain classes or methods of advertising not to be used: no drink, gambling, tobacco advertisements. None were successful.

A number of Labour MPs introduced the Royal Family (and the

televising of Royal occasions) as a stick to beat the Government with. The memory most often recalled was the interruption of the Coronation of Elizabeth II on American commercial television by a chimpanzee who was 'interviewed' during the Anointment. This use of the Royal Family as an ideal of the institution is singularly ideological: it was family values which were about to be brutally assaulted in many eyes by commercial television. Mayhew suggested that it was the 'Muggs' incident (the name of the animal in question) which had forced the Government to drop any idea of sponsorship but this from the evidence is not the case.

When the Bill passed to the House of Lords more changes were made. The most substantial lifted the penalties for breach of contract to a maximum of £1500. Others merely tidied up areas of ambiguity: the powerful Conservative lobby against commercial television had been tamed, in classic fashion, by the Whip, now judiciously applied.

The Bill returned to the Commons and became law on 30th July, 1954. Within fifteen months ITV had begun.

Bitterness remained until the end. Lord Jowitt, the ex-Chancellor said: 'we are confronted with a Bill for which, beyond question, there is absolutely no mandate from the people' (Jowitt, 1954). While Beveridge, referring back to his Report where 'we objected to putting financial control of broadcasting into the hands of people who wanted to sell other things...' ended by saying 'they have nowhere, at any time, given any reason for this principle' (Beveridge, 1954).

But for all the huff and puff straws were in the wind concerning the future of commercial television, whoever was in power. The Earl of Listowel, in the same debate informed his fellow peers that the Labour Party would <u>not</u> repeal the Act: they would simply apply its strictures. He proposed, meanwhile, an All-Party Conference on alternative broadcasting systems: the consensus ruled.

VIII : <u>Conclusions : The Aftermath</u>

Twenty five years after the start of ITV there is still controversy surrounding the precise circumstances of what 'really' happened. Many commentators - and here one has to include Professor Wilson - believe what they wanted to believe: that an elegant construction like the BBC

could only have been brought low by evil machination and subversion. I am attempting in this case study to show that this was not the case: the 'elegant' solution in British broadcasting which worked in the days of National Government in the 1930s and early 1940s, or in the 'old' system of the late 1920s could not do for the 1950s. Middlemas, often quoted in this study, considers that the key element in British society between the 1920s and the 1970s is political stability: how much broadcasting may contribute to that in its balancing acts is not to be doubted.

It is one of the stranger aspects of the breaking of the monopoly of the BBC that, for once, the Conservative Party found itself ranged against the Establishment, under violent attack in the Press. In working to redefine the parameters of accepted practice in broadcasting it had to fight its own past. In so doing its workers - notably Peter Goldman at the Research Department - discovered what this study has iterated time and again: that commercial broadcasting never truly went away at all during the days of Reithian splendour, merely lurking at the servants' door waiting to slip in.

Thus in a document prepared to outline the main points in the controversy over what was for a time carefully called 'competitive' television Goldman points out the continuity between Sir Frederick Sykes in 1923 who wanted, in the first Broadcasting Report, that the Government 'should keep its hands free', to Lord Beveridge in 1951 discussing 'dangers of Londonisation, remoteness, self-satisfaction and secretiveness' in the BBC. Beveridge went on to suggest that the ultimate danger was that 'when a sense of mission such as animates the BBC is combined with security of office, it may grow into a sense of Divine Right'. The BBC, then, felt like Charles I just before his head rolled: disbelieving.

Yet as Goldman says, in one sense the BBC was not being attacked: indeed Conservatives of all colours did expressly praise the Corporation to an extent that suggests, overall, they meant what they said. Goldman adds: 'No accusation of bias can be made against the BBC's conduct of its television service' (despite In the News).

Of the charge that the Conservative Party had been returned to office hell-bent on refuting all monopolies, the evidence was equally

unfounded. But the difference with the BBC was that it had a 'monopoly of the mind' and that was the crucial point. And should an argument be advanced that broadcasting was different anyway and ought to have a unique structure current Conservative thinking was, broadly, that broadcasting (within frequency limitations) was no different from the Press: it ought, like the Press, to be opened up as much as possible.

This argument is specious: none the less it is significant that it is advanced at all. Goldman trips up in his defence of freedom here for later in his briefing he tries to answer the charge that the 'small man' would be excluded by saying 'he is already excluded from large scale advertising in the national press: to this could have been added a point about ownership - both of the Press and of commercial television.

This point was not relevant because as we have seen the deeper purpose (is this Wilson's real plot?) was one which even as perceptive an observer as Goldman might have missed: to introduce an economic counter-weight to nationalised industries (not just broadcasting: to provide a model of choice where allocation - as even Orr-Ewing admits - is easier, more efficient). The substitution for planning was entertainment in the sense that planning is limited, unimaginative in the public mind.

Were the Conservatives aware that they were introducing a commercial oligopoly (a quasi-monopoly) to the British public? In essence, yes, and one can safely say it was a cause of some heart-searching. When it became more obvious who the contractors were to be the pain probably grew.

But the ITA were, on appointment, given an impossible task: the final compromise - imposed by the GPO one assumes, acting with the Treasury in limiting ITV to one channel instead of logically giving it the two then remaining for allocation - was to ensure ITV could not properly fulfill the demands of competition.

'I must say', recalled Sir Robert Fraser, first director-general of the Authority,

> that some of our very early discussions of our institutions were of a bizarre kind. We knew we would have a number of central companies, and

> I can remember how we considered the possibility of dividing the days horizontally, as it were, between them... (Fraser, 1970).

The early problems of ITV stemmed from a basic lack of direction in the Government, State, or the Act. But there were shackles. Nobody, admitted Fraser, really knew what to do:

> When we came around to appointing the first companies, they were in the same plight... No one had any experience of television advertising, which was to be our financial life blood... Only three people...(had)... senior broadcasting experience.

It would, for all these reasons, be foolish to see the Television Act, 1954, as a monument to commercialism. Many, many, people involved in the outcome of the policy, talked about a 'British' solution, or 'our' way, or about 'compromise', not a principle but a detail. These discriminations are not accidental nor are they special. There was compromise, there was a constructed solution about ITV.

Whatever ITV did in terms of programme output, structurally - it had, merely by being, brought broadcasting into line with the facts of a mixed economy in a late capitalist society. From 1954 on, Britain's broadcasting was to be mixed, just like its economy; the values it espoused were increasingly to be those of entertainment, of consumer spending; and this, as we would see from an examination of the changes ITV wrought on the BBC, applied as much to public service broadcasting as to a more commercially minded output.

For the Conservative Party commercial television became an expression of the ideology they had now espoused. As a writer in Crossbow had it:

> Because the Conservative Party is so largely identified with the status quo it cannot help but be benefitted, indirectly and almost accidentally, by the insistent presentation to the electorate of stories and programmes which in one way or another make the point: 'Things are going fine', 'There's nothing to complain about' or 'If you have problems, change yourself, not society ' (in Wilson, op.cit.).

In this sense - but more profoundly because we are dealing with the ideological formation - the policy on commercial television

parallels that of a property owning democracy. The ideas too of industrial 'partnership'. The 'new' consensus of 'welfarism' plays a part by once again stressing the ease of solution of problems. Commercial television thus entertains (lulls) people; it expresses consumer values and encourages people to buy; it is, structurally, an example of competition, freedom from control at work, acting on people at large in their every day life.

Chapter Four

Complementary Broadcasting : the commercial radio policy

I : Why it happened

To many observers the extension of a commercial principle of finance to British radio was inevitable after the breaking of the BBC's monopoly in television: once the principle of monopoly has gone, the pressure will build up.

And although I have argued (Chapter Two, p.78) that the establishment of the BBC was idiosyncratic, its existence and its impact on broadcasting audiences, as well as of the political system, have meant that the inevitable does not automatically follow. We have seen the number of factors working together which produced commercial television,in a way that under no circumstances could an immediate extension of commercial finance be envisaged elsewhere.

The wounds which the Conservative Party inflicted upon itself ran deep: there was continuing public disquiet about commercial television which revolved around the early difficulties of ITV. John Gorst (RCS I 11(2)) says that it was the 'brashness' that was so disliked. Whatever standards the Authority had in mind, or set by programme contractors, rapidly fled in the face of potential financial ruin. By 1960, when the crucially important Pilkington Committee sat in what turned out to be judgement, ITV, although it was being watched by the majority of the mass audience, was not popular with the elites, in particular that diffuse but significant cultural elite of which Pilkington members themselves in part consisted.

The Conservative Government did not accept the Pilkington Committee recommendations on ITV which, had they been accepted, would probably have destroyed commercial television. But they could not ignore the tone of the Report. It would have been a brave Cabinet which went ahead after Pilkington and gave the third television channel to ITV. We know from his own account that Bevins was not even very brave (Bevin, 1965).

Commercial financing of broadcasting at the start of the 1960s was seen - even by the Government which had introduced it - more as a necessary evil than an inevitability. Internal Conservative Party

documents (from the Swinton Archives, see Appendix C) suggest this strongly. A Mr Bellairs, writing to Sir Michael Fraser in June, 1962, about the Pilkington Committee Report says that

> I would be in no hurry to allocate a fourth service to anybody. Frankly, I doubt whether sufficient talent is available, and secondly, in the present state of public opinion which is extremely anti-commercialism, it would be a mistake to give another service to commercial interests (emphases added).

Aside from television, which by this time had become the principal broadcast medium, radio was judged relatively unimportant. We shall see that within the BBC there were those who foresaw its development into the 1970s and beyond; by and large though BBC radio was still thought of as a national service. Technical questions had led the BBC to suggest that local radio could only be developed on VHF: the BBC wanted to do this against general public indifference.

Three factors changed the climate of opinion. First, and possibly most important, the youth sub-culture which developed in a public form from around this time: in particular the so-called 'beat generation' associated with the rise of rock groups like the Beatles, Rolling Stones etc., changed the music industry and the pattern of record releases. Suddenly, hundreds of records were being released and those promoting them - the 'pluggers' - were finding the BBC generally hostile or indifferent to their requests for air-time.

The pirate stations may be seen as one response to the pressure the booming record industry faced in exposing its products to the new generation. But while they could 'plug' records in a semi-legal fashion (either paying copyright fees or not: here the large record companies appear to have played against themselves for longer-term profit through increased sales), the pirate stations also found advertisers wanted air-time.

The combination of commercial money and pop music, cobbled together by disc jockeys was an American model: audience figures showed it worked. Politically, it was not attractive however because the established political party of 'freedom', the Conservative Party, could hardly support an increasingly dubious set of operations.

Possibly fortuitously, in this respect, they lost power to a Labour Party, and Government, which, by signing the European Concord

on pirate stations ended the first phase of what we may now see as the 'policy' (thought of in the broadest possible sense).

But the pirate stations had 'discovered' a huge hitherto hidden audience which had to be catered for. Additionally, social pressure was forcing Government (of any colour) to enfranchising parts of this audience. The quid pro quo between BBC and Labour Government was an authorisation of a BBC local radio experiment and Radio 1, the pop music channel.

We can see here how social forces make change inevitable: the Labour Government needed the general support of an unsatisfied teenage audience (certainly for the future); the BBC wanted local radio (both as a logical extension of its service which we can date back to the early 1950s; because also it was technically possible, and the BBC likes to follow the logic of its engineers; possibly, but less likely, as a pre-empt on any commercial system*). The result however helps the commercial radio lobby, now alive to the possibilities because of the pirate stations and Radio Manx - the legal off-shore station. The BBC re-organisation also lent ammunition because it started the process by which 'mixed' programming became 'generic': commercial operators who believed they could only make their money with 'generic' programming could in future cite the BBC as an example.

All of this operated as a grounding: a foundation, hidden as yet, which could be built on. The builders of policy in the UK are political parties and the State. Back in the late 1940s some evidence (see Chapter Three) suggests the State (at least the GPO and the Treasury, again, differentially) were not violently opposed to commercial financing of television. In the 1960s a principal exponent of public service broadcasting in the GPO, and an influential civil servant Denis Lawrence (see p.350) exerted an influence which was wholly negative on commercial financing proposals: the position of the Treasury is not clear.

In general financing of radio is less expensive and the principles can exert more influence. We shall see that the Labour Government wanted local authority financing of the BBC, local stations which would have

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*This is still a matter for dispute: see letter from Frank Gillard, The Times 11th August, 1980.

removed the issue from national level altogether, had it worked.

The emergence of a policy had to come from the Conservative Party again. The real significance of it is its relationship to the re-organisation of the Conservative Party following the leadership tussle of 1963 and the defeats of 1964 and (less important) 1966. The emergence of Edward Heath as leader and what Gamble (op.cit.) has described as the 'new right' determined the parameters of general policy towards 'competition'.

As with television, but in a more complex fashion, 'denationalising' BBC radio, represents shibboleths of variegated commitments, in the most public fashion, to the renewed emphasis the Conservative Party wanted to give to rebuilding capitalism from below.

Local radio represents rather expressively the small business: it operates against the centre - corporatism, 'big' government, the urban centre (at least in theory); it appears to fall in line with the efforts to devolve government; as has been noted, it 'captures' a young audience.

It is highly significant that broadcasting came under the Conservative Party policy group on nationalised industries. The Report of that policy group (in June, 1968) recommended a number of possible candidates for denationalisation (but nowhere mentioned broadcasting). It thought that 'political' denationalisation was wrong: that is, the next Conservative Government ought to set about denationalising systematically, rather than by throwing sops to its supporters or 'in order to teach the Socialists not to nationalise any more'.

But broadcasting - radio - is a public instrument. We might surmise that from this kind of conclusion Paul Bryan would authorise the Urwick Orr report (see p.335); that the 'new right' would seize on extending the commercial principle to radio.

The position of the various commercial lobbies is more difficult to establish. Large companies were involved (ie despite the emphasis on local radio and small businessmen, large capital formations in media and associated industries - newspaper groups, electronics companies - were registering radio companies). In general, local radio 'makes sense' if competition is being stressed (there could be many stations as opposed to only one or two national stations). Ideologically many

of the backbench Conservative MPs involved in the commercial lobby wanted as much competition as possible. The eventual outcome seems not to have been substantially affected by this desire. The IBA, once it comes into the picture (after 1971), wanted to ensure financial viability (which meant limiting the numbers of stations, and to large urban centres); it also had to follow frequency regulations.

The variety and extent of those opposing commercial radio in any form would have seemed an insuperable problem, viewed from the early 1960s: the BBC; the Conservative Government (at that time); the record industry and the associated protection groups; the Musicians Union; numbers of newspapers.

The changes wrought were: in the BBC; if you like it lost the 'moral' argument by changing itself (It also got poorer, thereby inducing the public and the Government to ponder on alternative means of financing); in the Conservative Party: losing two elections, searching for a new consensus, opposing by word and deed the Labour Government; in society: the youth revolution; in fact: the pirate stations by simply existing.

Would commercial radio have come anyway? My argument throughout has been: yes. The question would have been on timing and on organisation. Commercial radio was delayed in the UK by the ideological conflict within the Conservative Party over commercial television, by electoral defeat. But as we shall see that electoral defeat also triggered the very changes which brought commercial radio in.

II : The social context

1 : Introduction

A number of themes need to be explored: first, the idea of change itself and how far this impinged upon broadcasting; second, the emergence of a distinctive youth culture with a legitimised right to a public existence; third, the concept of affluence with its associated theme of consumerism; fourth, the increasing segmentation of the community called the United Kingdom on four dimensional scales: age, family, occupation, geography; fifth, tension between those dimensions - economic, social and political; sixth, technology.

2 : Change in British society in the 1960s

British society in the 1960s was a society catching up with the implications of a mixed economy and the welfare state. From the election of the Labour Government in 1964, in a period when a number of structural economic problems came to the surface, to their dismissal in 1970 when the economy was slowly recovering, the mood - if a complex industrial society can be said to have a single collective feel to it - was one of crisis. There is, of course, the question as to how far this mood was a media creation. At the same time British society was 'opening up': the discoveries this produced included working class culture and the north as a distinctive social setting; broadcasting played no small part in this change.

Writing in 1978 Lord Annan characterises the 1960s thus:

> The 1960s were both deflationary and inflationary - appropriately enough for an era whose policies were to produce exceptionally high rates of inflation and exceptionally large numbers of unemployed. The new vision of the sixties reflected the divisions within our society - the divisions between classes, between the sexes, between generations, between North and South, between the provinces and London. The new vision was inflationary in its view of what could be brought about by political means. It was deflationary in its judgment of those who had the power yet failed to bring about the reforms and improvements in society which, in its view, were easy to accomplish. The new rhetoric of the sixties described politics, indeed the whole of life, interms of stresses and strain, of innovation rather than adjustment, and of exploration rather than explanation. It was simultaneously utopian and sardonic. It was hostile not just to the Establishment or to the government, but to any authority of any kind, anywhere (Annan, 1978).

The Labour Government played a critical role in setting the agenda for attitudes. It had been elected after 13 years of Conservative Government to change British society. The last eighteen months of Conservative Party rule had been characterised by acute scandals - of security and sexual mores - and by an undignified leadership squabble which had led to Lord Home becoming Prime Minister.

The Labour Party, led by Harold Wilson, had promised to modernise Britain. Their election to office eventually proved an acute disappointment to large numbers of, particularly young, supporters. The Labour Government inherited huge trade deficits, a chronically overvalued

currency, and an ailing industrial plant. Nevertheless many of their supporters had expected radical change. In appealing to youth - as indeed tried the Conservative Party - and in promising to modernise, the Labour Party built in 'support' problems once it decided to defend sterling at all costs (see Butler and King, 1964, for a general discussion of the electoral 'mood').

The 1960s began with considerable promise and ended in disillusion, with inflation coming to be an acute problem,with an economy only marginally on the right lines. In the world at large Britain was in marked decline.

Generalised social change has to be presented within this context. When first offered metaphorically by the Labour Party it would be welcomed as a means to further improvement of living standards. But over the period of Labour rule it became something to be abhored because, increasingly, it meant things were getting worse. By the early 1970s the growing nostalgia boom might be related directly to a yearning for a lost quality of life. The impoverishment of British society became associated with change itself.

3 : Youth culture

The period beginning in the 1960s sees the emergence into adolescence of the first children of the welfare state. It begat a host of reports about their future among the most significant of which were the Crowther and the Robbins Reports on education.

A characteristic of this period was not in the 'discovery' of youth culture per se but its marketing; the 1960s saw the start of an intense and sustained commercialisation of adolescence. This became particularly true of the young's taste for fashion and music. It can be accurately documented that there was a change in the proportion of song titles clearly dated to the problems of an adolescent age group, compared with those aimed at an adult market (see Bicat in Bogdanor and Skidelsly, 1970). Further evidence for a shift towards a more youthful 'visibility' might be found in the change in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament to the Committee of One Hundred with its emphasis on direct action.

The explosive rise of the beat groups, particularly on Merseyside,

but then in London and the South East, can also be cited as an example of the growing awareness among young people that in a highly differentiated society they could assert a separate identity: the beat groups may be seen as an affluent equivalent of the older 'gangs' characteristic of urban areas (Frith, 1978; Gillett, 1971).

The recognition of this specific culture is to be found in the growing coverage given, first to pop music and all its manifestations in the media; then to the discovery, prevalent as the decade wears on, of the large numbers of 'problems' associated with youth: drugs, sex, political radicalism. In one sense these culminated in the student troubles of 1968-69, spread over Europe and the United States.

The pirate radio stations which started in 1964 (see p.306) may be cited as evidence that advertising and marketing interests (allied with the record industry and entertainment business) were conscious of the potential commercial exploitation of adolescents with their growing spending power: and a decreasing attachment to parental control. The pirate stations, it is generally admitted, discovered a new audience: when they were legislated out of business there was an enormous pressure on the established social and political institutions to replace them. As we shall see (p.291) BBC Radio One was the specific result of these pressures, in broadcasting.

Political parties, too, recognised the increasing importance of this age group. It was, however, the Labour Party which gave late (over 18) teenagers the vote in 1969. By this time a certain disillusionment with change (and its realisation through the 'idealism' of the young), not least among the young themselves, had led to a retrenchment of traditional values (see in particular Hall et al, 1978).

4 : Affluence

The 1950s could be seen as a decade where short term material prosperity was applied for electoral gain at the considerable expense of long term industrial and infra-structural investment (see Calvocoresssi, 1979). The results began to manifest in the 1960s. But by then the nation had enjoyed a long period of nearly stable prices and a high rate of growth of personal income. This was set against an absolute decline in Britain's trading position; an increasing imports

bill and overseas defence budget. During which this welfare state first generation grew up: their experience was, as the fatally flawed Macmillan slogan outlined, that they had never had it so good. The demands of this generation were those which would led to, first, a revolution in attitudes in the 1960s, second, a bitter disillusion.

5 : The fragmentation of British society

It is possible to see a growing fragmentation in British society since the Second World War, based on four partially linked dimensions, although this should not be taken too far.

First the family. In part it can be seen to be a logical development of the break up of the pre-industrial extended family. With a state pension scheme, and with young people encouraged more and more into higher education or into jobs in cities, with the concomitant freedom and separation from home this implies for both elderly and young, 'family' as a term has come to mean a father, mother and young children. There has been an associated commercial exploitation of, in particular, young affluents, either single or married, and young families, with the emphasis, in both cases, of a need to increase consumption in order to keep up to an abstract 'standard' of living.

As can be seen this segmentation is intimately bound with the second older age: as the 1960s flow into the 1970s age groups within a single family are beginning to be differentiated as a market. Thus, children are seen as a potential market, either to be sold to through their parents or more directly; young adolescents from 10-14 are differentiated from mid-adolescents, 15-18; from young adults 18 and over and so on. The question arises as to whether there is now one or a multiplicity of youth sub-cultures which shift and change according to images generated outside the sub-cultures themselves (see Frith, op.cit.). As has been frequently remarked each effort by young people to create a new form is rapidly pre-empted by a commercially based exploitation. In some cases, the commercial elements in British society have tried (usually unsuccessfully) to pre-create a new pattern and sell it already packaged.

A third segmentation continues to be related to occupation. This is to be expected in an advanced industrial society but it means a

relationship with increased geographic mobility, again aiding the break up of family and local ties. People now expect to move about considerably during their life-time; even when a whole household is geographically stable members of it will accept commuting to and from work.

The fourth dimension of fragmentation is in more general macro-social terms: the growth of nationalism within the United Kingdom. A latent force in British history, never fully eradicated (Nairn, 1978), it has seen a remarkable revival in the 1960s and 1970s. Such nationalism may be viewed against a background of the general loss of hegemony within an English-dominated empire suffered by the 'mother' nation; and against the general economic decline of the United Kingdom. This latter has highlighted the extent to which 'national' economic policies have tended to favour 'English' as opposed to UK interests in the past. The discovery of mineral resources in the Celtic fringe and their exploitation by a London dominated economy, alongside continued high levels of local unemployment, has also contributed to the new nationalism.

6 : Technology

Since the war two major developments have to be considered when examining general social factors and radio policy; these are the development of VHF - or frequency modulated, FM-radio - and the invention of the transistor.

VHF radio encompasses a much larger part of the radio spectrum for relatively high quality levels of sound reproduction, not marred by interference from other stations. In Europe it has been an important development because of the huge numbers of radio stations broadcasting within a confined geography. Unquestionably, in the UK, it led to the possibility of local radio as a technically feasible option (see p.282).

However, since its first use by the BBC for broadcasts in the early 1950s, it has not been commercially exploited by manufacturers in the UK and the numbers of listeners has therefore always remained low compared to those tuning to the medium wave band (amplitude modulated or AM). This has had significant effects on the outcome for radio policy, until the present day.

The invention of the transistor freed radio from the home - and

within it. It meant that radio listening could easily take place anywhere and could become a background to almost any other activity (audible wallpaper). Additionally and crucially transistor radios were cheap and opened the British market to a flood of foreign imports notably from Japan. Families found they could afford more than one radio; teenage listeners as an audience in their own right became an established fact, from the late 1950s and during the early 1960s.

7 : Patterns of media use

All the factors noted above can be seen as part of a changing pattern in British society in the post-war era which led by the early 1960s to a potential for a marked change in media consumption. This was already manifest in the replacement of radio by television as the primary information and entertainment medium. Radio was still important but it had not found a role consistent with its potential use by new audiences differentiated by age or geography. In the early days in the UK radio had been a means to help create a national identity; it could now become a utility devoted to specific, fragmented, audiences. Crucially, too, commercial interests, taking the United States as an example could begin to see that this fragmentation of audience following on from the redefinition of radio after the first impart of television, concomitant with a differentiated use, was worth more in revenue terms than any single unified mass audience.

III : The Idea of Local Radio (i) The BBC

1 : Radio Frequencies: The BBC 'defence' is found

What the BBC decided to do about radio in the late 50s: the goals it set; the rules it operated in terms of planned output; these can be said to have effectively pre-empted many possible options canvassed at the time by those anxious to see the extension of the recently introduced commercial principle in television to radio.

Initially, the principle is important to the BBC because, surveying the future from the end of the 1950s, the last days of what Hugh Greene has called 'the golden age of radio' (Greene, 1969), the BBC thought the requirement in radio was two-fold: first, to maintain the audience

left after the inroads of television; second, and inexorably linked, to prevent a further attack on public service broadcasting.

At the end of the 1950s the BBC was about to be in trouble. A mere decade before its position had appeared to many unassailable. But we have seen (see Chapter Three) how this apparent position of strength was undermined in the introduction of commercial television, not just from without, but from within, in the higher management of the BBC failing to recognise the significance of television.

By 1960 ITV, just four years after it had started in the south, had succeeded in obtaining about two-thirds of the television audience. (BBC figures for Jan-March, 1960 suggest ratio BBC:ITV was 37:63; ITV (TAM) suggest 33:67; quoted by Paulu, 1961). At the same time television had not yet succeeded in penetrating more than sixty per cent of homes with a radio (if we assume a combined TV and Radio Licence implies both a television and a radio set). By 1960 there were 10.5m homes with television; 4.5m with radio only (based on issued licence figures). Thus 30 per cent of homes or so still had a radio only.

The BBC needed a strategy which would a) maintain a reasonable level of national radio listening (assuming at the same time a trend towards 100 per cent television penetration); b) get back in a different pattern those people who had switched to television for their main entertainment and information source; c) retrieve a considerable portion of the television audience lost to ITV; d) prevent a commercial or commercial-political lobby from extending the principle of advertising financed broadcasting to radio. In the context of the United Kingdom, this latter automatically meant fighting on the issue of local or regional radio; partly because this was the ground the BBC chose to fight on from its reorganised radio of the mid-1950s; partly because of frequency shortage. Again, Green (1960, 1963) notes that the Conservative Government second White Paper on Broadcasting (Cmnd 9005, 1953) accepted the BBC as the national instrument of broadcasting but that changed radio use (secondary to television) meant it was now effectively a medium for minorities and as a general background medium.

Principally then, this meant a technical battle over frequencies and their allocations. It suited the BBC immensely to have to fight here because pre-eminently the BBC has always maintained the highest

engineering standards. So much so that the Post Office has often relied on BBC data when issuing statements on broadcast engineering matters (Chataway, RCS I 18). And, because since the very first public broadcasts from the Marconi research laboratories at Writtle, near Chelmsford, in 1922 when engineers sand songs and read stories, the BBC had continued this tradition, opponents of the Corporation have equally been forced to make their case on the technical battleground pre-arranged by BBC engineers. Needless to say the BBC, as chooser of the field for battle and as organiser of the terrain, have generally won.

It is worth looking briefly at the frequency issue because it figures so prominently in the debate. Indeed it has been used publicly from the beginning as perhaps the reason why broadcasting, unlike the press, had to be closely regulated. Although there clearly are practical reasons why it is impossible for anyone to start a radio station, say, on any frequency, and at any power, the truth is no real attempt was ever made to maximise public participation.

In terms of frequencies, however, there was implied from the beginning the idea of, somewhere, a single authority controlling output, power, and the wavelength on which was to be broadcast any programme.

Again, according to Briggs(op.cit, p.97) on 5th April, 1922, the Wireless Sub-Committee of the Imperial Communications Committee considered the broadcasting question. It was here that the GPO official, Brown, outlined what he had learned in the United States.

This sub-committee drafted a plan which suggested that broadcasting should be allowed on a single wavelength; further, that the output power of each station should be limited to 1.5KW.

Briggs notes that by restricting broadcasting to a single wavelength the proposals implied either there should be only one broadcasting agency; or that a limited number of broadcasting stations scattered across the country would have to agree on a system of frequency sharing.

The key point, and one which emerged in discussion in the House of Commons, is in the nature of the controls which could be exercised over whoever was authorised to broadcast. There were powerful and established commercial media lobbies which did not want to see the new medium unfettered, able to broadcast whatever it could technically achieve: newspaper, the entertainment industry and publishing interests.

At the same time the service chiefs and their advisers clearly believed any broadcasting might interfere with their own plans for radio and a wider concern might be drawn out here - that radio could reach the people over the heads of the elected and, behind them, the more general apparatus of the State.

As events turned out the companies principally involved in the manufacture of transmitting, and receiving equipment came together, precisely mirroring the 'co-operation' asked for by the Post Office; this Company became in 1927 the Corporation (see p. 81).

The outcome then, for whatever reasons, after four years of broadcasting, is that the country gets a public body, accountable through its Charter to the highest office of the constitution - the Crown - as the sole authorised broadcasting body. Additional authority to actually transmit comes from the central State - via the licence granted by the Post Master-General. And, the BBC is run by a man who believes in, and has helped to create his own power to effect, a national service.

That the frequency question is not a dispassionate issue to be decided on purely technical grounds may be seen from the markedly different development of radio in the United States and Europe. Despite the undoubted chaos of the early days, the United States did eventually develop a form of national radio - via the networks - while keeping a mass of highly local radio stations with a degree of independence. The same development may be discerned in television. The 'absence' in US broadcasting was a strong federal regulatory body.

But in Europe in the 1920s and 30s political considerations determined that national stations, culturally able to delineate physical borders and easily accessible to central government, should prevail. That Reith helped to determine this in the UK is less a reflection of his direct power to make that decision, more a recognition of the potential - more fully exploited in Germany in the 30s - of a mass medium which could simultaneously report events and carry the message of national unity.

The BBC had been broadcasting 'simultaneously' through all the stations as early as May, 1923. In part this was pressure from Reith and others who wanted the widest coverage possible to justify their

claim to the licence fee (in the 1960s this physical coverage was replaced by audiences as a determinant of 'success'). The engineering staff also wanted to improve the technical quality and to prove that simultaneous national coverage was possible.

Increasingly too, there was a belief that the needs of the countryside could be better served by radio than by any other medium. And, finally, a single high powered transmitter would only use one frequency. The shortage of frequencies, because of the growing numbers of relay stations, was becoming acute.

The first high-power station - 25KW, then the most powerful in the world - was opened in 1925. It was sited at Daventry, close to the epicentre of England. Significantly, it was estimated it could reach 85 per cent of the population. From this point on the BBC ruthlessly moved to centralise broadcasting; by 1945 with the help of wartime conditions it had established a strong national pattern on two services - the Home and the Light. In 1946 when the Third Programme began - as a specifically high-brow service (to complete the tri-partite class structure in broadcasting, at that time simultaneously about to be reflected in education via the 1944 Education Act. See also p. 273 for a discussion of this point in relation to general post-War developments), it also was seen as a national service.

Behind these policies lay the frequencies argument. In 1948 in Copenhagen there took place a meeting to determine the post-war allocation of frequencies across Europe: this kind of planning has been taking place sine 1925. The allocation was biassed in favour of the victors and Britain obtained what her representatives considered to be the best deal. One long wave and thirteen medium wave frequencies were offered: the long wave and two medium wave exclusive to Britain, the rest shared.

Additionally there were two International Common Frequencies (ICFs) for use by all countries on very low power. This allocation plays an important part in the 1960s in the arguments between the commercial radio lobby and the Post Office and the BBC over the question of availability of 'spare' frequencies for additional broadcasting.

2 : The way ahead : VHF broadcasting

In their evidence to the Pilkington Committee in 1960 the Post Office pointed out that interference to radio reception had in part been caused by foreign stations using frequencies not assigned to them under the Copenhagen Plan. 'There are now twice as many stations operating in the medium and long wave bands in Europe as were provided for in the Copenhagen Plan,' the evidence says (Pilkington, 1962, Appendix E, Vol I, p.34).

To attempt to overcome this problem the BBC had already decided in 1953, with Government approval, to start a national network of VHF stations, each with a limited range but relaying the national services. At this time the BBC had also 'regionalised' the Home Service following the completely centralised service offered during the war. But regions in radio were administrative and technical rather than demographic. The West Region, for example, included Brighton, Penzance and Gloucester.

The BBC made further changes in its programming policies in 1956, a move which angered some people enough for them to suggest the new system left no defence for the radio monopoly (Sound Broadcasting Society, 1957).

It was in 1953 as well that Frank Gillard, then Head, West Region, BBC, took two months leave and went to the United States. He was interested to note that television had advanced there much further than it had in Britain where the war had produced a six year gap in the service. The effect this had had on the radio networks had been drastic; more and more radio stations of all sizes were beginning to operate entirely independently, developing distinctive local styles, and existing largely on a diet of records.

Gillard noted that to keep their audiences they had had to develop a sense of community and, in looking at the organisation of the BBC and the condition of British society, he says (RCS I 39) that he saw the possibility of doing something similar here.

What Gillard had in mind was not local independent public service broadcasting. It was the BBC equivalent of what the State had already prescribed for national broadcasting: central licensing and quasi-autonomy, but the model derived from the United States.

Gillard, who plays as crucial a role in the BBC's conception of what local radio ought to be, as Reith did vis à vis national radio broadcasting says that the mid-fifties seemed to be a time when the old ties of church and family, were weakening to the detriment of community life; local radio could help foster the sense of community (see p.272).

It is perhaps significant that Gillard's fief was a large sprawling mainly rural community. The flight from the land begun in the early nineteenth century had continued during the twentieth, again accelerated by the two world wars, (Gillard, now retired, is a farmer in Somerset), but has probably left a sense of loss in the more ephermeral regions of UK cultural identity.

The advent of VHF stations to fill in areas where medium wave could not penetrate, and to offset foreign interference, gave Gillard a chance to experiment with what came to be known as 'area broadcasting'. In the West Region where this was done, three VHF transmitters - sited at Brighton, Penzance and Gloucester - were needed to cover the region. At certain times of the day those transmission areas received their own local news, weather and sport.

Gillard, as instigator of this sub-regional, supra-local, service had been trying to persuade the BBC of the necessity for local broadcasting since his return from the US in 1953. His argument was an extension of the old BBC one: that the Corporation could not claim to provide a comprehensive service unless it were running a local service parallel with the networks.

In principle, according to Gillard, the argument was accepted; the problem, as posed by the GPO this time, was once again wavelengths but now in the context, of the times these proposals first went forward, that the vast majority of the receiving population only had sets capable of picking up MW.

When the BBC approached the GPO in the summer of 1959 and asked to be authorised to introduce local radio on VHF - presumably because by then they considered VHF sales were improving, they were turned down, ostensibly for a different reason. This time the GPO's rejection was based on the knowledge that a new Committee of Inquiry would have to be appointed into broadcasting within 18 months: and, the GPO said, they

did not want to pre-empt that committee's decisions (Pilkington 1962, Appendix E, Vol 1, p.217).

But, and this is a question that becomes more central to the frequency debate of the early 1970s, there is evidence to suggest the BBC were over-optimistic in assuming VHF sets were being bought in great numbers. By 1960 only 20 per cent of listeners were thought to have VHF-capable sets (the figure for the mid 1970s is still only 40 per cent). The problem was that manufacturers did not feel it worthwhile promoting heavily the considerably more expensive sets. An additional problem lay in the need for external aerials for the sets and in the difficulty of tuning.* At the same time, the invention of the transistor meant a move towards cheap portable sets then only capable of adequately relaying MW and LW broadcasts, but easy to tune and requiring only portable aerials.

But while the BBC were formally prevented from introducing local stations they did not stand still. They set up a working party chaired by Richard Marriott, then an assistant director of radio; Paul Findlay (head of news and current affairs administration) was secretary. Findlay undertook a comprehensive demographic study of the UK to find out where there were 'identifiable' communities. He looked, inter alia, at factors like circulation areas of local newspapers, local government structure and patterns of movement within areas (interview with Marriott, RCS I 21).

Meanwhile Gillard lectured to various potentially interested parties: universities, the Association of Municipal Councils, etc. A number of taped demonstrations of possible programme material were given to MPs in the House of Commons. All of this was done bearing in mind the forthcoming Committee of Inquiry. Greene notes that the BBC

> approached Pilkington as a problem of psychological warfare: define one's objectives, rally one's friends, rattle one's enemies, state one's case with the utmost conviction, persuasiveness, clarity (Greene, 1969, p.58, and interview RCS I 31).

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*This was why, according to George Graham, a senior BBC engineer (RCS I 19), the commercial lobby were never interested in VHF. The BBC thought it had 'won' here too, by insisting there were no MF frequencies available and by concentrating all its efforts on VHF development for local radio.

One characteristic of the pre-Pilkington era, or, more accurately, the pre-Hugh Greene era (he arrived as director-general in 1960), in the BBC was its still over-archingly Reithian concept of what it was and where it was going. Although Reith had left the BBC in 1938 and had, as the years passed, grown more and more unhappy about its role, within the Corporation the senior management still retained an air of cultural mission. They were, says Colin Shaw (RCS I 32) like a gang of old men whose discussion of policy would more often than not be preceded by long discourse over where they would subsequently take lunch. Thus, their attitude toward commercial television (introduced in 1955) had been to try to ignore it; similarly with the growing but still small lobby for commercial radio, the general feeling was that it posed no threat: the performance of ITV was, to the BBC management, a further and conclusive proof of this.

3 : The BBC and Pilkington

Thus, in the run-up to what became the Pilkington Committee, the BBC was able to act with the maximum degree of confidence. Yet to the disappointment of the BBC internal local radio lobby the Pilkington Committee, which began its work in 1960, appeared to be at best lukewarm about the whole idea of local radio.

According to Gillard (RCS I 39 op.cit.) the key event in changing their mind was a demonstration to the committee of tapes already used in the dummy (ie closed circuit) local stations the BBC had been running on an experimental basis in various parts of the country. These experiments were the most public part of the BBC's public relations exercise to convince the Government and the public that local radio was necessary.

On 20th September, 1961, at a dinner to mark the first year of the Committee's hearings, Gillard and Hugh Greene played examples of programmes produced in the closed circuit stations.

Because the meeting was informal, says Gillard, he was able to say what he wanted, rather than have to answer questions formally put by the Committee. He says 'this was the watershed' for the BBC in its case for local radio because at that point the Committee had decided to delete the whole question from its agenda.

Evidence that this meeting was successful from the BBC's point of view comes in a letter subsequently written on the 13th October, 1961,

by Hugh Greene to Sir Harry Pilkington, chairman of the Committee.

Noting the meeting of the 20th September, Greene explains:

> I should like you to know that we are embarking on the study of a further development of our tentative plans for local broadcasting which I think may be fruitful and significant (Pilkington, Appendix E, 1962, Vol 1, p.223).

The key question appears to have been the extent to which the BBC could achieve 'national' local coverage; in particular how far they would be able to provide a local service outside of urban areas; Greene's letter suggests the BBC had found a solution to this problem by using the Stockholm Plan (on frequency allocations) to extend VHF transmission to 97.6MH , (on the assumption the Government would free this for broadcasting).

The result of the Pilkington Committee deliberations was that they thought the BBC ought to be authorised to provide a local radio service. The Committee had heard a demonstration of 'local' radio from a commercial company - the Southern Broadcasting Company Ltd - but had concluded, and this was in line with the tenor of the rest of the report, that:

> local commercial sound broadcasting would be subject to the same organic defect as independent television now is (emphasis added) (Pilkington, 1962, p.225).

This 'organic defect', the Report had concluded, was the total incompatibility of influencing values and moral standards (their considered 'purpose' of broadcasting) while providing a service to advertisers.

The Committee were influenced in their decision by two other major considerations. First, that a commercial company would not have the resources of the BBC and could not, therefore, call upon the nationally networked services when local material dried up (as it was considered by the BBC it would do after 4-5 hours local daily output). This would mean that the commercial companies would either have to work out some kind of networking - which would negate the local principle - or they would have to rely on gramophone records.

As the Committee noted, because of the fierce copyright laws operating in the UK, this would have appeared to be impossible.

Second, the local press were opposed to any competition for advertising which would interfere with what was becoming a series of monopolies. A number of local newspaper groups had registered commercial radio companies, a number more could be divided into those doing it as a precaution, and those who saw a possible extension of their activities. The report noted that, overall, two views were advocated by the local press (see Pilkington, 1962, Appendix E: list of companies giving evidence).

The first was that local radio should be financed from advertising revenue and that local newspapers were qualified to provide the service - not least because this would protect their revenue. The second view submitted by a number of newspapers was that if local radio was to be authorised it ought to be the responsibility of the BBC - for a limited time.

As the Report says, the case for giving local radio to the local press as a commercial operation was based on the loss of revenue. But, the Report continues:

> there is ... a major argument against the participation by local newspapers in local sound broadcasting companies. There is often only one newspaper. If it operated a local sound broadcasting station, an undue concentration of power to influence and persuade opinion would result
> (Pilkington Report, 1962, p.228).

'Accordingly' the Report concluded:

> We recommend that one service, and one only, of local sound broadcasting be planned; that frequencies available be so deployed as to enable it to be provided for the largest possible number of distinctive communities
> (Pilkington Report, 1962, p.232).

Government reaction to the proposals was muted; in a White Paper published a month after the publication of the Pilkington Report they concluded:

> The Government agrees that the justification for local sound broadcasting would be the provision of a service genuinely 'local' in character. As yet, however, there has been little evidence of any general public demand for this and the Government would be loath to 'create' extra demand on resources which, for the present, should be concentrated on national requirements. The resources of the BBC are likely to be fully stretched in undertaking the innovations dealt with in Part II (that is, BBC 2, and the introduction of colour TV, principally).

> The Government would, therefore, prefer to take cognisance of public reaction before reaching a decision (White Paper on Broadcasting, 1962, Cmnd 1770).

Despite their best efforts the BBC had failed to convince where it eventually mattered most: at Government level. At this time the Conservative Party had been in office for 11 years: the parliamentary party's broadcasting committee had made no recommendations (and indeed this is not normally a practice of such committees which is why the commercial television report (see p. 240) is so unusual); on local radio, feeling then, if it ran at all, ran in favour of doing nothing.

As far as commercial radio was concerned, excluding the broadcasts of Radio Luxembourg, not much excitement had been generated although companies had been registered from the mid-50s onwards. There is no doubt that following the Pilkington Report, and despite the attitude of the Government, the BBC did not in any way feel threatened by the commercial lobby.

More important, whatever the Government decided, Pilkington had fully endorsed the public service principle and almost totally condemned commercialism in broadcasting. Hugh Greene also suggests (RCS I 31) that the authorisation of BBC2 by the Conservative Government was an indication of a successfully mended bridge between the Conservative Party and BBC, a bridge badly damaged in the eyes of some Conservative politicians because of the BBC's neutrality over Suez (that is, the BBC failed to endorse the Eden Government line on the Egyptian War).

Frank Gillard also recalls a meeting which, he says, took place in the early 60s (probably in fact 1960 just as the Pilkington Committee began its work) between the BBC and two Conservative MPs, both members of the parliamentary broadcasting committee, Sir Harmar Nicholls and Captain L P S Orr. Nicholls was chairman of the National Broadcasting Development Council - the organisation which had taken over from the Popular Television Association which had lobbied for commercial TV; Captain Orr was a member of the NBDC.

At the meeting with the BBC the two MPs agreed that any introduction of commercial radio by the Conservatives would not interfere with any development the BBC planned in local radio; from the BBC side came an agreement not to put up too great a fight against commercial radio. Such meetings as this should not be given too much credence but may have

led in this especial case to a story appearing in The Times that the broadcasting committee mentioned above was recommending local commercial radio.

According to Gillard, the BBC never had any discussions about broadcasting policy in any similar way with the Labour Party. Possibly, from the Labour Party's point of view, this was because Labour politicians felt a closer tie with the BBC. There was in the Labour Party at that time a belief that the attitudes of the BBC in rigidly adhering to an abstract ideal of balance, objectively created a situation where the BBC favoured Labour in comparison with the national and local press.

4 : Labour and Local Radio : the BBC's reward

When the Labour Party came to power in October, 1964, there would have been a number of people, both in the newly formed Government, and in the BBC, who would have looked forward to a period of amicable relations. That this did not happen, and that, by 1970, the BBC relations with Government had never been worse, will be dealt with more fully below (p.343). For the present it is important to note that from 1964 the BBC was, slowly at first, but then more rapidly, in conflict with the Government at large. This perception certainly grew apace within the BBC after the 1966 General Election, and the infamous occasion when Harold Wilson refused a BBC television film crew an interview on the morning of his great victory.

But it is worth noting that at least one BBC manager considers that a more important 'effect' in the relationship between the BBC and government is that of change of government rather than its political colour:

> As one who has now tried to run the BBC under two kinds of government, I can confirm what all my predecessors have said: that the attitudes do change in a very interesting way when parties come into and go out of government ... It has everything to do with the fact that they (broadcasters) are not expressing the opinions of the party in power
> (Curran, 1972, p.7).

When the Labour Government was formed late in 1964 the most immediately pressing issue for the BBC was the question of the pirate radio stations. Unfortunately for the BBC this first real challenge

to its monopoly were compounded by the opening - legally - of Radio Manx, a commercial station for the Isle of Man (see p.304).

More unfortunate still for the BBC was the return to power of a Labour Government with a bare majority. It was a Government that had to feel its way in all areas. By now the Conservatives had been ruling for 13 years; there were few senior Labour politicians who had held anything other than junior posts in the last Labour Government, where they had held them at all.

And for the BBC this struggling Government could hardly have made a worse choice in picking Anthony Wedgwood Benn as Post Master-General, for it is still widely held in the BBC that Benn, who had briefly been a producer in the BBC World Service, held a grudge against the Corporation for failing ro recognise his talents. As one very senior ex-BBC chief puts it: 'Benn is allergic to facts when they do not fit his theories ' (Greene, RCS I 31).

An early Benn plan, from which he was urgently dissuaded by his civil servants, was to dismiss all the BBC Governors and to replace them with nominees picked by himself. More seriously, as the condition of the BBC's finances progressively worsened, Benn came up with the idea of compelling the BBC to accept advertisements, on one or more of its services (Benn, RCS I 40).

The question of BBC finance was to plague the Corporation from the early 1960s onwards. In the 1950s as the television service developed apace, and as millions bought sets (and licences) their income continued to rise. The development of BBC2, and the beginning of investment in colour equipment changed a healthy surplus into a worsening deficit. In between 1962 and 1965 reserves fell by about £8m.

The 'BBC' (that is, mostly higher management) is anxious that an impression that this put them at a considerable disadvantage vis a vis Government, and that this was exploited at the time, should not be inferred (various interviews). Yet Sir Charles Curran, at that time BBC Secretary, admits it forced the BBC to confront issues faster and with greater clarity (RCS I 9).

The question is not, then, whether any direct or overt pressure

was brought to bear by Government; that would have been unnecessary; but that the BBC, knowing it needed increases in the licence fee would have been more willing to co-operate with Government suggestions. This 'explains' their initial approaches over Radio 1, and the general re-organisation of BBC national radio.

Significantly Benn was never pro-commercial broadcasting but he saw revenue possibilities in advertising. One plan, apparently mooted by him, was for him to use his reserve powers as Post Master-General to licence directly local stations, as non-profit-making in the form of trusts, but able to accept advertising. These powers were available to the Post Master-General at the time and are generally used to licence radio 'hams'.

This move, along with the whole question of advertising and the BBC, have to be seen more as an attack on the BBC than as a solution to particular broadcasting problems. Although Benn was certainly serious in his proposals the fact remains that while he was Post Master-General, from 1964 through the General Election of March, 1966, to the summer of 1966 virtually nothing happened. Benn himself explains this by saying there was no body of support at large for his proposals by which I take it to mean 'elite' support: the public hardly knew what the issues were (RCS I 40, op.cit.).

From the BBC's point of view the most significant element to be drawn out of the tangle of statements made by Benn to the House of Commons must have been that the assumption that the BBC was inviolable - or that the hitherto accepted principle that the Corporation's networks would never take advertising - was no longer tenable.

The Benn proposals for an advertising financed radio network had been brought in direct response to the activities of the pirate stations. Although the UK had signed the Council of Europe Concord on illegal offshore broadcasting in January, 1965, they failed to introduce any legislation until after the killing of a station owner by another man, associated with the pirates, in June, 1966. Again, Benn says that action on the pirates was what his departmental officials most wanted, notably Dennis Lawrence and Peter Lillicrap.

By this time the main pirate stations (see p.308) had built up a fairly massive audience among the young. This audience was essentially

a new radio audience (see p.268) and its listening habits had hardly touched the BBC radio audience ratings. When, therefore, the Marine Offences Bill was introduced in July, 1966, it was obvious that some form of replacement radio system would have to be found quickly, for this newly emerged audience.

The discussions about forcing the BBC to start a network service and pay for it through advertising were pre-empted by the BBC who told the Labour Government they could reorganise their network services without using an additional wavelength - with all the associated transmitter installation costs. What they planned was to simply take away the light programme's medium wave frequency and give it to the new all-music service.

In the White Paper on Broadcasting of December, 1966 (Cmnd 3169), this was agreed by the Government. Additionally, as a quid pro quo to the BBC, local radio stations were also agreed in nine locations, to be worked out by the BBC, and for an experimental period of two years, transmitting only on VHF.

Edward Short, who had taken over as Post Master-General from Anthony Benn, in July, 1966, was responsible for the 1966 White Paper.

It dealt in some detail with the BBC's financial problems (see below) and then considered the 'pop' music channel.

On the local radio issue the White Paper said:

> While the Government do not, in principle, rule out advertising as a means of financing broadcasting stations in public ownership, it is in their view of first importance to maintain public service principles in the further development of the broadcasting services; and accordingly, they reject the view that a service of local sound radio should be provided by commercial companies (Cmnd 3169, 1966) (emphases added).

The White Paper pointed out that this service could only be provided on VHF (especially after dark). In practice up to 150 towns and cities could be served. (This was based on BBC evidence to Pilkington which the BBC subsequently amended from an original estimate of 80-90 (Pilkington, 1962, Appendix E, Vol I, p.187).) The amendment was based in part on the closed circuit local experiments between 1960 and 1962). The conclusion was that there needed to be an experiment to be conducted by the BBC 'as a venture in co-operation with local

interests ' (see also: BBC Local Radio in the Public Interest: BBC 1966).

The question of income, which was to prove to be particularly problematic for the BBC over its local radio stations, was tied closely, both to the whole financial deficit the BBC was running at this time, and the feeling that listeners would resent having to pay a portion of the fee for a service they would (as a majority) be unable to hear, possibly for a very long time.

The BBC national 'pop' channel had come into existence at the end of September, 1967, six weeks or so after the Marines Offences Act had become law, and after the overwhelming majority of the pirate stations had closed down.

The new channel meant the BBC had had to reorganise its radio networks into Radio 1 (pop music); Radio 2 (light music and comedy shows); Radio 3 (elite music and drama); and Radio 4 (mainly news and features with some drama and music).

The reorganisation was the beginning of a logic which, by 1970, would finally separate BBC radio from the intellectual and philosophical base from which it had begun broadcasting. This Reithian tradition saw the output in terms of a mixed unifying programme content. By the early 1960s however, as we have seen, the audiences for radio were becoming more specialised, the general mass audience having been taken over by television. Crudely then, the 1967 reorganisation recognised for the first time an audience that had fragmented into four bands: the young; the housewife and male workers; those who sought information; those who sought enlightenment in the old cultural sense (the Reithian rump). Ironically, the BBC knew that 'pop' music 'split' the audience unlike the rest of radio (Curran, RCS I 9).

A fundamental motive to change in the 60s, apart from the slow recognition of audience shifts, was the growing deficit in the BBC budget, set against the increasing demands of the service. A turning point, financially, and for the worst, was the opening of BBC2 in April, 1964. As has been remarked, the deficit was tied to the licence fee: and that continues to be tied to Government and its political moods.

The BBC had asked for a £5 licence fee from April, 1963. Instead they got a fourth pound - at that time going from the licence fee to the Treasury. They then asked for £6 from the 1st April, 1965. After protracted discussions and detailed scrutiny they got £5 from 1st August, 1965.

In the financial year 1964-65 the BBC deficit rose from £3.2m to 7.4m. Their bank overdraft increased from £0.9m to £6.1m.

From this point on, and set against worsening relations between the BBC and Government, the BBC's income was consistently behind its requirements. The licence fee became a means of holding the BBC in line.

The BBC had to wait until 1969 for a £6 licence, by which time, the Corporation estimates, it had lost £10m anticipated income.*

Thus, the BBC found it necessary to constantly review its financial provisions and requirements. In particular the Corporation were concerned with radio, because radio's income from the then still separate radio licence was almost static.

The eventual shape of the final, overall, review that was undertaken became two-fold. First to see what radio services might be needed in the 1970s and to discover whether these could be run within the radio licence fee income - this study excluded local radio because the BBC was looking for additional finance to service that.

Second, a general review was undertaken by the management consultants, McKinsey. The outcome of the two reviews, at least as far as radio was concerned, was a document, published in July, 1969, called Broadcasting in the Seventies.

The main proposals were for a clearer separation of Radios 1 and 2; the merging of the Music Programme and the Third Programme into a single service called Radio 3; a realignment of the new Radio 3 and Radio 4 so that the former would concentrate on music, some drama and

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*I am grateful to the late Sir Charles Curran for this condensed financial analysis. Stonehouse, in granting this final increase, 'sold the BBC down the river', according to Gerald Mansell (RCS I 27) who had chaired a working party on local radio, in 1968.

poetry, and the arts, while Radio 4 became still more of a speech network broadcasting news, current affairs, documentaries and plays; the separation of Radio 4 on VHF from Radio 4 on medium wave so that the former could broadcast educational programmes while the latter transmitted programmes of general interest; the extension of local radio to 40 stations, covering 90 per cent of the English population.

This document was, essentially, a political manifesto. It was produced at a time when the BBC and the Labour Government were still at loggerheads on a number of issues; when a new chairman of the governors, Lord Hill, had been brought in by Harold Wilson, the Prime Minister, to put an end to the BBC's perceived tendency to attack the Government and all its works; and to get rid of Hugh Greene as director-general - in which respect Hill was more or less immediately successful (at least he materially affected Greene's influence over the BBC (Tracey, 1978; Lusty, 1974; Hill, 1974)).

Despite his objective role, re-establishing the power of the governors over the directorate, Hill fought for the BBC: this is clear from Broadcasting in the Seventies, by all accounts largely written by Ian Trethowan, a close friend of Edward Heath's (see p.338) but fully under Hill's direction (Hill, 1969).

In his introduction to the document Hill is anxious to make plain that the plans should be studied as a whole. As they relate here solely to radio it is significant that the BBC was once more asserting its right to comprehensive coverage.

In particular the BBC, in being allowed to carry out the local radio experiment, had merely been putting into effect plans which had been loosely held for a decade. The catch had become finance: despite the efforts of BBC personnel less than half the running costs were being met by the local authorities where local radio stations were being run.

The decision by the Government, late in 1969, to allow the BBC to go ahead with up to 40 stations, and to be allowed to finance them out of licence revenue is difficult to interpret. Certainly the BBC had proved a need for some form of local broadcasting; the crucial element may have been the 1969 Conservative Party conference and its decision once more to back commercial radio and the Government's own awareness that the commercial lobby was growing in strength (see p.337).

The local radio experiment had properly begun in November, 1967, when Radio Leicester opened. This opening was followed by stations at Sheffield, Merseyside, Nottingham, Brighton, Stoke on Trent, Leeds and Durham. The stations were all confined to VHF.

The effort to raise local finance including money from local authorities, envisaged in the December, 1966, White Paper, had begun on 27th January, 1967, when the BBC called a conference of local authorities at Broadcasting House. Greene, who attended the meeting, might have ruefully cast his mind back to the Beveridge Committee Report which, 16 years earlier had recommended some form of local radio. But then the BBC who assumed all along it could only be developed on VHF, had decided that with so few sets in public use a local service would have withered at the roots (Greene, 1961); VHF coverage went national as a result and the kind of local authority support the BBC sought in 1967 got curtailed in the inflationary spiral all were experiencing.

The outcome was that about two dozen local authorities expressed interest in coming in on the experiment. There was no offer from Northern Ireland; tentative offers (only one each) from Scottish and Welsh authorities did not materialise. The BBC independently picked Durham because, they said, they wanted one station in an area which was not just an urban area, which was larger than a single city.

The operating costs of these stations varied, during this period and according to station, from £61,000-£80,000 per annum. Local authority contributions and others (ie industry, local arts associations) amounted to an average of 47 per cent. By 1969 the stations were producing about 4-6 hours a day of their own programmes; the rest of the time they could opt in on any of the BBC's networks, free of charge. Most were choosing Radio 2 (BBC radio research).

After the Labour Government had agreed to allow the BBC to develop 40 local radio stations there was a period when the BBC began to plan a further 12 stations. But in June, 1970, a Conservative Government was elected (see p. 359) and there began a new battle in radio which at one time appeared to threaten the existence of Radio 1 along with all the local radio stations. Once again the issue was turned on the frequency question (see p. 364).

As it happened the BBC won the right to open the next 12 stations authorised by the previous Labour Government; it gave them 20 'local' stations covering 70 per cent of the population of England (Home Office, 1978).

5 : Conclusion : The BBC 'view' of local radio

Philosophically, the most articulate statements on BBC local radio comes from Frank Gillard who, in 1969, in giving evidence on BBC local radio to the Select Committee on Estimates said that he saw local radio:

> Quite simply as an attempt to make local life more interesting - because there is no doubt that in this country it is less interesting than it could be and people are not as interested as they might be in local affairs. This is shown by the small turn-out you get at local government elections. I attribute this, very largely, to the fact that whereas in the national community there are all sorts of mass media hard at work all the time interesting people in what is going on in national and international affairs and having a certain degree of success, in the local community you have only one instrument and that is the local newspaper ... I believe that broadcasting ought to be able to do at the local level a job which corresponds to the job it has tried to do over the years at national level
> (Third Report of Estimates Committee, Session 1968-9, p.95).

Gillard went on to tell the committee that in a local election in Stoke on Trent in 1968 a particular ward turn-out had risen from 29 per cent, at the previous election, to 42 per cent. The local radio staff would like to feel they had had something to do with that increase. An interesting comparison with these figures may be made with Crittenden (1971).

Gillard is not, of course, the BBC but all through the period under discussion here he seems to have had an unusually clear set of ideas about how local radio could have developed in the UK, under BBC tutelage. In one sense, then, he represents the BBC philosophy, as it finally emerged, not least because in the large bureaucracy the BBC is, his was a critical and single-minded vision. History since 1967 and BBC local radio suggests his views have been implemented.

Community, participation, an awareness of issues in the locality:

these were representative shibboleths of the BBC case for local radio. As will be seen they affected the commercial radio lobby debate too.

But the BBC could not fight effectively on these issues: they are common property and the definitions - in radio terms - of which is the more correct implementation of, say, participation radio, are open to be fought over.

We have seen, therefore, that the BBC chose its ground on frequencies: where there could be shown to be a real shortage (given the BBC's original premises about, for instance, protection ratios) and where State support (via defence and emergency services) could be easily obtained.

What undermined this apparently unassailable position was finance, the BBC's growing fight with the Labour Government and its estrangement from the Conservative Party because of the value shifts it increasingly espoused.

IV : The Idea of Local Radio: (ii) Commercial Interests

1 : Legal, semi-legal : rumblings in the air

We have already seen in respect of the breaking of the monopoly in broadcasting (Chapter Three) that although there were commercial interests and although they played a part, in the end they were not decisive.

A similar conclusion has to be reached with the introduction of commercial radio. Nevertheless, the twists and turns of this issue is of importance because (not least due to the availability of the documentary evidence) it demonstrates how a pressure group operates in British political life and how far it can influence events.

Commercial radio - that is, radio paid for via spot advertisement and sponsored programme, and for the purpose of private profit - has been broadcasting to the United Kingdom since the 1930s. The change sought between 1962 - when the Pilkington Committee came down firmly against commercial radio - and 1973 - when the Sound Broadcasting Act authorising local commercial radio became law - is due to a number of often conflicting social, economic and political factors.

What becomes apparent is that as far as the final policy is

concerned two facts are vital. Both demonstrate the power of action - even semi-legal action - over rhetoric and argument.

The first fact which altered the future of radio in the UK was the authorisation, in 1964, of Radio Manx, a commercial station set up by a mixture of private interests and Tynwald, the Isle of Man Parliament, shareholdings, to broadcast to the Isle of Man.

The second fact was that of the 'pirate' radio stations, also commercial, broadcasting from ships, or ex-forces' sea-defence forts, in the Thames estuary, although in the short-term the pirate stations appeared to have held up the acceptance of commercial radio in the established corridors of power.

More difficult to place are the roles of the various commercial lobbies, of which by far the best organised and run was the Local Radio Association, conceived by John Whitney, who at the time the Association was started, in 1964, had been making programmes for Radio Luxembourg. (An interesting article on Radio Luxembourg may be found under Emery, 1966).

The significant point about the beginning of the LRA was that it was formed well after the first pirate radio station - Radio Caroline - had begun, and after the start of the Radio Manx first transmissions in the summer of 1964. Radio Manx had finally received a GPO licence in June, 1964, after an agreement with the GPO dating from March.

Radio Manx Ltd had been formed on the 24th February, 1960. It was the idea of an Island entrepreneur who ran a radio and TV business, T H Colebourn, who was also a member of the Manx Government.

The company was 55 per cent owned by the Manx Government; the most important other interest was Pye, the radio and electronics company who built the station. Pye had a reputation for aggressive marketing of its ideas and it was a previous chairman C O Stanley, who, with Norman Collins and Sir Robert Renwick are credited by Wilson (op.cit.) at least with introducing commercial TV to the UK.

In fact Pye had given written evidence to the Beveridge Committee in 1949 suggesting that the BBC had insufficiently dealt with the development of VHF services.

Inter alia their memorandum said:

> .....we believe that the rapid and healthy growth of VHF Broadcasting can be assured by planning its introduction so as to cater for the strong latent demand for regional civic specialised programmes. This can be accomplished by employing expensive stations of low-power serving local centres of population · (Beveridge, 1949, Cmnd 8117, Appendix H, p.575) (emphasis added).

Their plan precedes the BBC's final local radio document issued prior to the 1966 White Paper by 17 years - and it is substantially the same; Pye also pre-empt the 1966 White Paper in suggesting where finance might be located - ie from local authorities and local firms. They conclude:

> In this connection we consider that much of the objection normally raised to commercial broadcasting disappears when an adequate number of channels for non-commercial broadcasting is available (Appendix H, op.cit.).

At the Royal Show in Cambridge, 1961, Pye had a stand demonstrating what a commercial local radio station might be like; this and a document produced by them (A Plan for local broadcasting in Britain, Pye, 1960)) was the only commercial reply to the BBC's own 10 closed circuit experiments in local radio proceeding while Pilkington sat. By this time C O Stanley's son, J O Stanley, was marketing director of the company.

He recalls that commercial radio was seen as a 'natural' development from the introduction of commercial television (RCS I 13). This is borne out by Norman Collins, one of the architects of commercial television who said (RCS I 3, TCS I 1) that the key to commercial television was the breaking of the BBC's monopoly (see p. 184).

Collins was not the only person, or company, to register a commercial radio company by 1961: there were by then 200 registered names, basically divisible into three interest groups: local businessmen; local and regional newspaper groups; national entertainments and communications industry firms like Pye and Rank.

In 1961 at the Royal Show Pye announced they had a plan for 100 local stations; their interest was in selling VHF radio sets and the much more expensive transmission, recording and broadcasting studio equipment. In their written evidence to Pilkington, which largely

dealt with television line standards, Pye continued to stress the need for local radio; they point out that the details were part of their published plan and continue:

> Since then (the publication of their paper) there have been dramatic developments in the newspaper industry. This makes the establishment of independent radio stations more urgent and important as a counterbalancing channel of communication for news, information and comment (Pilkington, 1962, Appendix E, Vol II, p. 1013)(emphasis added).

The dramatic developments were the closure of The Star and the News Chronicle (Shawcross, 1962). The memorandum suggests local newspapers ought to have a right to hold shares in a local station.

2 : Hedging Bets : the newspapers

In fact, the evidence of the newspaper groups to the Pilkington Committee was mixed. But also among those opposed to commercial radio were: The Arts Council; the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians; Association of Municipal Corporations; County Councils Association; a number of leading Church organisations; NUJ; Independent Group of Conservatives; Communist Party.

Those newspaper groups opposed included: Accrington Observer and Times; Bailey Forman Ltd (Nottingham Newspapers); Hereford Times Ltd; Hertfordshire Newspapers Ltd; Surrey County Herald.

A fairly cogent statement of the position of these newspapers is provided by the memorandum submitted by W R H Coleman, a director of Walter J Cole Ltd., publishers of the Sheerness newspaper who had found no evidence that the public wanted local radio (of any sort). Any stations established to be financed by advertising

> Would directly compete with 'local' newspapers..... Such stations could be established for approximately a fifth of the capital outlay required to operate an average local newspaper, could be operated by a fifth of the staff required, and would therefore be highly competitive as to rates charged (Pilkington, 1962, Appendix E, Vol II, p.1030).

Coleman's memorandum also opposed BBC local radio, particularly attacking the suggestion that there could be any real 'gain' by opening such stations.

The majority of opposition to commercial local radio attacked

either the loss of revenue that would result (and, therefore possible loss of jobs) from competition (invariably seen as adversely weighted against the local press) between radio and newspapers, or it chose to concentrate on the commercial principle. That is, that, as Pilkington concluded in its final report,

> If local sound broadcasting were financed from advertising revenue, those who provide the programmes would have to pursue two objectives which are to a significant extent incompatible (Pilkington, 1962, p.227).

In favour of commercial radio were a number of groups, including newspapers: Bristol and West of England Radio Ltd; Benbow's Newspapers Ltd; East Midlands Allied Press Ltd; Electronic Rentals Association Ltd; Incorporated Society of British Advertisers; Institute of Journalists; Institute of Practitioners in Advertising; Liberal Party Committee; National Broadcasting Development Committee; Scottish National Party.

Representative of those newspaper companies and groups in favour of commercial broadcasting was Home Counties Newspapers Ltd, which had already formed four radio companies. Its memorandum went to some lengths to emphasise why local newspaper companies were best able to organise local radio. Under General Principles: Responsibilities of the Operator: the Promotion of Civic and Community Consciousness the memorandum said:

> While local newspaper editors and their staffs, with their experience, are accustomed to intentional and unintentional slants, and instinctively take steps to check accuracy and restore balance, other organisations less experienced than local newspapers may easily be led astray... (Pilkington, 1962, Appendix E, Vol II, p.1032).

The accent was also placed on the journalist training programme run via the National Council for the Training of Journalists.

In supporting commercial radio, the memorandum suggests that specialist estimates for the setting up and running of a local radio station had been pitched too low (running costs £20-30,000 a year). Home Counties Newspapers Ltd thought £40,000 was more realistic; this could only be recouped from advertising.

Powell points out the philosophical difficulty advocates of

commercial radio entrapped themselves in on the question of audience needs and operator needs:

> The difficulty of their position seems to consist in convincing informed public opinion that commercial radio is respectable, and in simultaneously convincing advertisers that it will enjoy large prosperous audiences and assuring the most financially volatile part of the public, the 'teenage market' that it will be very, very pop (Powell, 1966, p. 3).

Overall, and there are problems in making a conclusive judgement here because not all the written evidence is published, and none of the oral evidence, the climate of opinion was against commercial local radio and not very much in favour of local radio under any guise or control.

3 : Pilkington : The judgement of pragmatism

In the end the Pilkington Committee had to consider two points: the claim that by providing advertising time on radio a service was given; the question of the desirability of extending the BBC's monopoly in sound broadcasting.

On the first question Pilkington concluded:

> A large body of widely representative opinion was opposed to local commercial sound broadcasting. The Independent Group of Conservatives argued from the premise that the test was not whether there existed those who wanted to develop local sound broadcasting, but whether such developments would benefit listeners. It concluded by finding no convincing social or political reasons for believing that sound broadcasting would be improved or give greater satisfaction if it were run on a commercial basis. The TUC considered that commercial sound broadcasting would not satisfy the wider public interest. Those views were echoed in submissions entered by religious and educational bodies...
> (Pilkington Report, 1962, p. 229) (emphasis added).

Here it is worth studying the juxtaposition of right and left political positions within the central consensus, not by opposing the opinions of the two main political parties, but by off-setting 'independent' conservatives with the industrial heartland of the Labour Party.

Pilkington concludes:

> The overwhelming mass of disinterested opinion, as it expressed itself in memoranda submitted to us, was against the provision of a service of local sound broadcasting financed from advertising revenue... we believe that the service to the public would be materially damaged and its purposes frustrated if local sound broadcasting were financed from advertising revenue (Pilkington, op.cit.) (emphasis added).

Moving onto the second question - the monopoly of the BBC - the Committee said:

> It can, we realise, be held as dogma that monopoly is always objectionable. But, even if that view is held, it is not clear that a service of local sound broadcasting provided otherwise than by the BBC will resolve the objection. There could, therefore be between them no competition of a kind relevant to programme content, though there could, of course, be competition for audiences. Unless, therefore, two services of local sound broadcasting were introduced, then no matter whether the BBC provided it or commercial companies provided it, the service would be, in each locality, a monopoly (Pilkington Report, 1962, p.230) (emphasis added).

There is no further discussion about the possibility of two services being provided. As Pilkington had already made an intellectual case against commerce in broadcasting no more effort was made to discuss commercial radio: the BBC, said Pilkington, should be allowed to develop the single local radio service.

4 : Radio Manx : the breakthrough

Given this conclusion by Pilkington the importance of Radio Manx becomes obvious. Although their terms of reference had not extended to the Isle of Man, Pilkington saw fit, in an appendix (p.297) to discuss Radio Manx Ltd. (The Isle of Man Government had submitted written evidence for the Committee.)

The appendix pointed out that in his oral evidence, Mr Colebourn, chairman of Radio Manx Ltd, had said the station would not only serve the Isle of Man. 'Their main object was to set up a commercial sound radio service, which would cover the whole of the British Isles ' (Pilkington, 1962, Appendix A, p. 298). Pilkington record with some alarm that 'the proposed national commercial service would do serious harm to the present services of sound broadcasting in the United Kingdom' (op.cit.).

Radio Manx, which fairly quickly became a commercial success,

under the management of Richard Meyer, a previous manager of Radio Luxembourg, owed much of its advertising revenue to the knowledge among advertising agencies that, from the start as I have suggested, it could be picked up all over the North-West of England. This knowledge was either not common or ignored by some of those in the commercial radio lobby. The theoretical limit of Radio Manx's coverage (the 55,000 population of the Isle of Man) was used by parts of the commercial lobby to 'prove' small stations were viable. In fact Radio Manx had a potential audience of between 1,25 and 2 million.

It also owed its success to an important decision by a Performing Rights Tribunal on 29th May, 1965, which gave the station the right to extend its 'needle' time from 20 to 50 per cent of broadcast hours. Richard Meyer has said (Meyer, 1966) that this extension was vital for the financial success of the station.

The position of the United Kingdom with regard to 'needle' time was by 1964, unique. The control over how many gramophone records could be played in each week of broadcasting output was determined by Phonographic Performance Ltd, an organisation controlled by the large record companies, principally then EMI and Decca. But two other interests are involved overall: the Performing Rights Society, which looks after composers' copyright, and the Musicians Union, which, in principle then opposed any decrease in the output of 'live' music in broadcasting (and still does: see BBC dispute over orchestra closures during 1980).

In 1964 the BBC had a '20 per cent' agreement with the PPL. At the Radio Manx hearing they opposed the application sending both Frank Gillard and Professor Richard Hoggart recently of the Pilkington Report. The Musicians Union sent their general secretary. The evidence filled 39 volumes. The decision set a precedent that overrode PPL's previous absolute control of record playing time, and is undoubtedly important because it encouraged the commercial lobby at large to feel the record company cartels could be broken. Radio Manx is important because it did three things: a) it was a legal UK commercial station; b) it broke the 'needle time' cartel; c) it created two audiences, a real large one, a 'public' small one, to be used by the commercial lobby and advertisings, how they chose.

5 : The set-back : the 'Pirates'

According to Harris (1977) Radio Caroline was first conceived in 1962 by Ronan O'Rahilly, then agent for Georgie Fame. Rahilly was being frustrated in his attempts to get the major record companies to agree to cut a disc of Fame's songs. He approached Radio Luxembourg who reputedly said that even if he brought out his own record label there would be little chance for it to get heard as most of the air time on the station was 'booked' by the big four UK record companies: EMI, Decca, Pye and Phillips.

Rahilly's Radio Caroline was, then, a way to plug records outside of the 'official' system, a system which as we have seen, because of the British copyright laws and the 'needle time' agreements, also included the BBC, as well as incorporating the major record company cartel.

Radio Caroline was not the first pirate radio station. Before it began broadcasting in March, 1964, there had been 11 radio stations or ships mostly off Scandinavia or Holland, all broadcasting 'pop' music and commercials. Almost immediately after Radio Caroline began broadcasting off the Essex coast a second ship arrived: Radio Atlanta. The owner, Allan Crawford, had also been thinking of this project since 1962. In July, 1964, Caroline and Atlanta merged to provide a two-ship service Radio Caroline South/North, the second ship broadcasting from Ramsey Bay off the Isle of Man.

The activities of these first two stations attracted a great deal of attention. Caroline began to receive advertisements in a substantial way from 13th May, 1964. By that time a Gallup Poll had suggested that in its first three weeks Radio Caroline had gained nearly 7 million listeners.

The Conservative Government (see p.327), were largely inactive in the last few months before the General Election. What evidence there was suggested that taking action against the ships, and later in the summer those pirate stations operating from the eastern coastal defence forts, would be electorally unpopular.

Phonographic Performances Ltd., did announce they would take out an injunction against Radio Caroline. The Performing Rights Society apparently offered Radio Caroline membership of the society.

At the same time a number of fringe show business interests, small-town entrepreneurs and some elements close to both criminal activities and extreme right-wing politics were taking advantage of the ambiguous situation to open stations on the coastal defence forts. It does not exaggerate the events of this time (1964-1969) to say that the more respectable operations, and those which invariably managed to raise the considerable capital involved, operated from converted ships, anchored off the coast; those more dubious operations from the fixed forts which were effectively rent free.

The election of October, 1964, had resulted in a Labour Government but one with a small majority of four. This undoubtedly extended the life of the pirate stations. An added point in their favour was the appointment by the Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, of Anthony Wedgwood Benn as Post Master-General. Benn in wanting to make sweeping changes in broadcasting remained deadlocked with his officials and the broadcasting authorities, notably the BBC. (see p. 290).

Soon after the election of the Labour Government, Radio London, also operating from a ship off the east coast, opened. This station, run by Phillip Birch, who had been a senior member of staff of the J Walter Thompson advertising agency in the US as well as the UK, became the most financially successful off-shore station.

According to Birch 'Caroline did it all wrong, they were just plugging records' (RCS I 7). Birch organised Radio London as a full scale commercial venture. Early in 1966 the station agreed with the Performing Rights Society to pay royalties, back-dated, and based on a percentage of advertising revenue. The PPL refused to accept any payments but Birch insists the general attitude of the record industry was favourable.

By July, 1965, the estimated earnings for Radio London were £50,000 net; for Radio Caroline, £60,000. London appeared to be appealing to a teenage audience (confirmed in my interview with Phillip Birch); Caroline was appealing more to housewives.

By June, 1966, there were nine pirate stations; six on ships, three on forts. According to a July, 1966, report in the Guardian their respective capital, operating and revenue values were as shown in Table 2.

Station	Start date	Estimated capital cost	Claimed Annual profit	Audience (n.o.p.)
Ships				
Caroline N and S	April 64	600,000	800,000	6m
London	Dec. 64	500,000	600,000	8m
England	June 66	1.4 m	-	-
Britain	" "	"	-	-
Scotland	Jan. 66	200,000	180,000	2.5m
Forts				
Radio City	Sept. 64	-	-	-
Radio Tower	April 66	-	-	-
Radio 390	Sept. 65	150,000	60,000	1.5m
Radio 270	May 66	200,000	-	-

Table 3 : Pirate Radio Stations : Profits and Losses

In September, 1965, advertisement rates charged for 30 seconds at peak time by the pirates had been: Radio London, £56; Radio Caroline, £90; Radio Scotland, £28; Radio 390, £50; Radio 270, £30. The stations were not, in general, anything like local: they were interested in maximising their audience and only technical problems (for instance, the safe size of radio mast that could be carried on a ship) prevented their increasing their output power.

They were also only concerned with maximising profit in the short run: all the available evidence would have shown the operators that this was a sensible policy. Their use of the commercial radio/free enterprise lobby in the UK was also by and large cynical.

The Labour Government had called an election in March, 1966, and had been returned with a majority of 97. Benn remained Post Master-General until the ministerial re-shuffle of 2nd July, 1966. No concerted action against the pirate stations was taken until after 21st June, 1966, when Reginald Calvert, owner of Radio City was shot dead by Major Oliver Smedley (subsequently acquitted of a manslaughter charge) an ex-shareholder of Radio Atlanta.

The incidents surrounding Calvert's death finally brought home to the public - and the hitherto dithering Labour Government - that 'pirate'

radio stations were more about piracy than programming. Although, as has been noted above, the ship-borne stations were considerably more respectable than the fort-based stations, the extent to which corruption and sometimes quite overt criminal violence were involved was considerable, irrespective of the motives of the owners or the sources of their capital.

On 2nd July, 1966, Benn was replaced as Post Master-General by Edward Short, formerly the Chief Whip. On 27th July Short introduced the Marine Offences (Broadcasting) Bill to outlaw the pirate stations. It became law on 15th August, 1967, and the majority of the pirate stations closed. Prior to the Act, the Post Office had successfully prosecuted Radio 390 (a fort-based station) under the Wireless Telegraphy Act (1949) for illegal broadcasting, on the grounds that the forts constituted part of the UK.

Whatever judgement may be made about their contribution to good broadcasting, there is no doubt that the 'pirate' radio stations affected the debate on and subsequent future of radio broadcasting in the UK. They were able to do this because advertisers seized on their accidental discovery of an apparently huge new teenage market (see p.268); concomitant with this was the use of the teenage record market, linked to the massive 'pop' boom of the sixties ('Beatlemania' had just begun); most important was their effect on the BBC and the State and the relations between these bodies.

Phillip Birch was able to claim that 'practically every big advertiser in the country used London, except Schweppes'. These advertisers included Pye, Crosse & Blackwell, 20th Century Fox, Maxwell House, Levers, Rowntrees, British Rail, the Egg Marketing Borad and the National Coal Board.

The pirate stations, because they existed, confronted the various interest groups, both pro- and antagonist of commercial radio with accomplished fact. But the better financed were anxious to cultivate a 'respectable' image, stressing their will to be 'legalised' and on-shore; as has been noted, this was more rhetoric than expectation.

The operators were assiduous in courting politicians quite possibly to delay, not enhance, any action. Paul Bryan, then shadow spokesman on broadcasting (from 1965) and a key figure in the opposition

party's acceptance of a commercial radio policy, claims to have been much influenced by Phillip Birch. (RCS I 20). In June, 1966, Bryan met Jocelyn Stevens and Ronan O'Rahilly, both then of Radio Caroline. Wilfred Proudfoot, connected with the Scarborough based Radio 270, got a local MP, Sir Donald Kaberry to broadcast in reply to constituents' letters; in September, 1966, Paul Bryan visited the ship (RCS I 12). Ted Allberry, of Radio 390, twice addressed the Conservative Party backbench Broadcasting Committee (chaired, as shadow Post Master-General by Paul Bryan).

6 : The Onshore Lobby (i) : the Local Radio Association

Aside from the extremely public activities of the pirate radio stations, developments in the older commercial lobby - to be found originally in the registration of radio companies following the establishment of commercial television in 1955, and in the various memoranda submitted to the Pilkington Committee - culminated in October, 1964, in a meeting of a number of interested bodies in London. The meeting called by John Gorst led directly to the formation of the Local Radio Association.

Along with the operation of Radio Manx, and the flamboyant activities of the pirates, it is difficult to locate the LRA; in particular how effective it was in lobbying for what the interest groups wanted. Although it is clear that some form of commercial radio may have been introduced by the next Conservative Government, the activities of the LRA are worth considering in detail because they exemplify the pressure group and its relations to policy-making; they also highlight the impotence of such pressure in the face of the State and any ideological concerns (see p.349) a major political party may have.

The meeting which set up the LRA was chaired by John Gorst. Gorst had previously been with Pye, first as a press and public relations manager, later as advertising manager. He left Pye in 1964 to set up his own public relations business (RCS I 11).

John Whitney says the Association was started with his money (RCS I 37); with partner and friend Phillip Waddilove he asked Gorst to form the Association on their behalf to co-ordinate fund-raising. Gorst had been introduced to them by the Boulting Brothers, Roy and

John, of British Lion Films. John Boulting later became chairman of the LRA.

John Whitney was in 1964 chairman of Ross Radio Productions Ltd., a company which was involved in producing programmes for Radio Luxembourg. In May he and Philip Waddilove joined the board of Radio Yorkshire, one of the earliest registered 'commercial' radio companies. These moves may be traced to the beginning success of Radio Caroline and the growing public interest in commercial radio. John Gorst was retained as a PR consultant to Radio Yorkshire.

By September Gorst had suggested to Whitney that Radio Yorshire ought to take the initiative in setting up a professionally organised lobby. In a letter to John Whitney, dated 2nd September, 1964, he says:

> I confirm that I should be happy to advise and assist in the setting up of a Local Broadcasting Association during the three month period running from September until the end of November.

Gorst suggested three reasons why Radio Yorkshire should take this initiative: first, because of the prestige involved;second, in the hope that the pioneers of local broadcasting would be the first to get licences; third, to be at the centre of events and thus know what was going on.

At the first meeting called by Gorst on 21st October, 1964, about two dozen people attended, all representing a registered commercial radio company, with the exception of Roy Boulting from British Lion, and a Mr M W Lloyd from Radio Rentals (Minutes of the 1st Meeting, LRA, 1964).

Gorst, in the chair, suggested the three general questions the meeting had to consider were:

1. Was this the right moment to be taking action over local radio?
2. What, if anything, might the Labour Government do about local broadcasting?
3. Was there a need for the proposed Local Radio Association?

An important factor of the time was the existence of the National Broadcasting Development Committee, one of whose members, a Mr T Hoseason Brown, from the South Western Broadcasting Company, was at

the meeting. Mr Brown said he was sure the NBDC would support the formation of the LRA.

The NBDC was the child of the Popular Television Association which had lobbied strongly for commercial television (see p.253). It had strong direct links with the Conservative Party. Ronald Simms, who had been the secretary of the PTA was also secretary of the NBDC. But, as Gorst pointed out at the first LRA meeting, the new Association could be most valuable if it concentrated on presenting the case for local radio on non-party lines. He imagined the NBDC would continue to promote the more familiar arguments based on the need for competition and free enterprise.

This is euphemism for Conservative Party philosophy and commitment. In 1964 the chairman of the NBDC was Sir Harmar Nicholls, Conservative MP for Peterborough. Among other leading Conservatives directly involved at that time were: Tufton Beamish, MP; Lord Lloyd; Lord Woolton; Lord Grantchester; Sir Robert Grimston, MP; Sir Herbert Butcher, MP; Captain L P S Orr, MP. The Committee stressed 'competitive' rather than 'commercial' radio.

The LRA, then, was committed to 'commercial' concepts rather than the ideologically more 'difficult' one of competition. The agreement of the first meeting was to exchange information between members, mount a non-party press and parliamentary campaign, and a 'campaign to bring home to the new Government the fact that there is already a considerable public demand for local broadcasting.'

There was a general agreement that 'ideally' local radio should be financed by advertising revenue but the question of how it should be organised and controlled was left open. There was agreement that station operators should be allowed to make reasonable, but not excessive profits. A steering committee was set up, with Whitney as chairman, Gorst as secretary, to formalise the Association (Minutes, p. 2-3).

From this start the LRA was careful to be a 'responsible' body. In particular it was anxious to avoid the accusations of wanting to give an opportunity for huge profit-making which had been levelled at the commercial television companies. Second, it tried to make an effort to win over the Labour Government to an advertising based local radio service although it was clear that, merely on its ideological

position, the Labour Government was unlikely to endorse any such scheme. But the distancing which the emphasis on 'non-party' lobbying attempted to achieve meant that the LRA could consistently take a pragmatic view over almost any question relating to local broadcasting. Its professionalism was of honest broker between public and Government; wanting to facilitate a service while being prepared to admit its own interests as marginal: brokerage rather than salesmanship.

The Steering Committee met on 13th November, 1964. John Gorst, John Whitney, Roy and John Boulting, among others, were present. The Committee decided that the primary aim of the Association 'was to persuade the government to permit the introduction of local broadcasting financed by advertising'. They opposed 'any government decision that might allow the BBC to extend its present monopoly of broadcasting.' They did decide that -

> participation of local newspapers should be encouraged wherever possible. The Committee felt that the interests of local newspapers and local broadcasting stations were in the main synonymous, and that as a means of communication and community service they were interdependent (Minutes of the Steering Committee, 1964).

The Committee sent a letter to the Post Master-General, Wedgwood Benn, the contents of which were released to the Press on 21st January, 1965. It marked the start of the LRA's public campaign.

The activities of the Association as formally accepted by a general meeting in February, 1965 were:

> 1. That a campaign should be mounted the purpose of which would be to inform all sections of parliamentary opinion of the advantages to be gained by the introduction of local radio along the lines advocated by the Association.
>
> 2. That important sections of informed opinion, such as trade unionists and educational leaders should be won over to supporting local radio.
>
> 3. That public opinion, on both the local and national levels, particularly the former, should be made more aware of the advantages of local broadcasting, and that this should be done by means of letters to the press, special articles and a series of press conferences in different parts of the country (Minutes of the 2nd Meeting, LRA,1965) (emphasis added).

Looking closely at this statement two points emerge. First, that the Association was concerned with elites and their attitude to local radio; mention is made of two where presumably, the Association thought there might be opposition to its plans. Second, that in describing the need to sway public opinion what the Association meant was not any attempt to gain mass interest but to obtain press coverage which, it is assumed, will sway public opinion merely by its existence, or, rather, that Government will recognise a public interest via the local press and via the effect on individual MPs.

Here, before the formal adoption of a policy in favour of commercial radio by the policy making bodies of the Conservative Party, probably some time in 1966 (see p.330), the emphasis by the Association is on publicity in general and on influencing MPs, possibly Government. Negotiation does not exist because the ground is still being prepared for the existence of something to be negotiated about (this was a time before the Labour Government had made up its mind in any concrete way about any aspect of broadcasting).

When Benn announced late in 1965 that there would be a comprehensive review of the future of broadcasting, the LRA considered that, from the public's point of view, the issue had ceased to be of interest. As a result the LRA set up a policy committee, chaired by John Gorst (Minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting, January, 1966). The committee had open membership and prepared a number of memoranda: on the number of possible stations; on the method of licencing and control; on how long before the first station could operate; the role of the BBC; the role of local authorities, local newspapers, and relay services; the networking and syndication of programmes; how much advertising should be permitted; what factors concerning the Musician's Union, the National Union of Journalists should be taken into consideration; and what the position was regarding copyright and 'needle time'.

By early 1966 the Association's policy committee were examining the methods by which audience research could be conducted, the role of education, and estimated costs and revenues. They were looking into overseas experience of local radio.

Marconi, the major electronics manufacturer, had been commissioned to produce a technical report on the allocation of wavelengths following

the policy committee's brief that a 'local' station should serve a primary area of between 8 - 10 miles and that a community so served should consist of 50,000 or more people. There would on this basis be 285 local radio stations.

This plan, along with all the other issues decided by the policy committee, was discussed and agreed by an extraordinary general meeting called on 20th January, 1966, to agree to the submission of memoranda to the Post Master-General. It was in anticipation of the early publication (thought then to be some time in March or April, 1966) of the White Paper on Broadcasting. In particular there had been considerable speculation in the Press (on which, note, the Association was at this stage apparently relying for its intelligence) that in order to put the pirate stations out of business the Government were about to licence commercial local broadcasting. (This was the subsequently rejected Wedgwood Benn plan to use his powers without reference to Parliament to licence any radio operator (see p.291).)

The technical report by Marconi, finally published in May, 1966, eventually allowed for up to 276 stations. Called A Plan for Local Broacasting in the United Kingdom, it was submitted to the Post Master-General (The Shape of Local Radio (1970), p.2).

Between January and March, 1966, John Gorst talked to a number of organisations: the Automobile Association; news agencies; the Incorporated Society of British Advertisers; national and local newspapers and a number of companies who intended to join the LRA. He had also had discussions with BBC personnel and was hoping to meet Hardie Ratcliffe, general secretary of the Musicians' Union (Minutes of the First Annual General Meeting, February, 1966).

The LRA was surviving financially on additional donations supplied by members (in 1965, £750 out of £1378, more than 50 per cent). At the time of the first AGM (in February, 1966) there were 90 members (35 full, 55 associate). By December, 1966, this had risen to 107 (45 full, 62 associate, twenty of whom were newspaper companies in the Provincial Newspaper Group).

Following the Labour Government's White Paper of December, 1966, membership slumped. By May, 1967, there were only 61 members (29 full, 32 associate). Membership of the Association (to 1973) never

was as high as a 100 again. In 1970 for example it was 80 (53 full, 27 associate); it remained the same for 1971.

In June, 1966, John Gorst had a private and informal discussion with Wedgwood Benn. On 28th November, 1966, John Gorst, John Whitney and John Boulting had a meeting with Edward Short, Benn's successor, It was just before the White Paper was published and even at this late stage there was considerable press speculation that whatever scheme for radio the Government had it would involve some form of advertisement finance.

However, the Musician's Union was implacably opposed to any such plan; the matter was eventually removed from the Cabinet Committee dealing with it (see p.346) and referred directly to Harold Wilson, the Prime Minister.

When the LRA deputation met Short he told them that he could not consider their plan for a few experimental commercial local stations. Gorst said 'his mind was completely closed to any form of commercial involvement in local broadcasting', (Annual Report, 1966) which suggests a short sharp exchange although Short (RCS I 17) says he was 'always talking with the LRA'.

Throughout 1966 the LRA, largely through the activities of its secretary, had met a number of MPs of all parties represented in Parliament. The LRA had also twice met mumbers of the Parliamentary Conservative Party Broadcasting Committee and John Gorst had had a meeting with the Bow Group who were preparing a pamphlet on local broadcasting.

Most important of all John Gorst had seconded the motion, proposed by Eldon Griffiths, MP, at the Annual Conservative Party Conference, in Blackpool, and accepted by the leadership (see p.330) that the Conservative Party should introduce commercial radio when it was next returned to power. Nevertheless, at that time it was obvious that this could be as far away as March, 1971.

Early in 1967, an extraordinary meeting of the LRA was called to discuss the 1966 White Paper (Minutes of Extraordinary General Meeting, 17th January, 1967). This, coming at the end of a year of hectic activity for the Association when, despite the Labour Government's majority had at times augered the onset of commercial (or at

least advertising financed) local broadcasting, marked a turning point for the lobby.

Gorst pointed out to the meeting that

> many people believed there was no hope of the present Government going back on its decision to exclude commercial local radio and that therefore the LRA ought to go into cold storage until there was a change of government.

He disagreed saying that the LRA should act as a voice for commercial local radio. Gorst said that within the Labour Party some backbenchers were far from happy with the involvement of the BBC; some would have approved advertising even though they might have rejected private ownership of local stations - and see RCS I 34 with Hugh Jenkins who makes the same point. (The LRA was to meet the Labour Party Communications Group on 8th February, 1967: the meeting was cancelled because of a state visit by Kosygin.)

In the Conservative Party there were a number of interested people, some in the Central Office research department whose job included providing briefs for Conservative MPs. More generally, Gorst pointed out, the Association had built up a number of useful links and contacts: with local councils (especially the GLC (see p.340); with the press; with chambers of commerce (where, he pointed out, there was an overwhelming prejudice against local broadcasting in general).

Despite his and the Council's efforts the Association was bound to fall into decline from December, 1966, on. The AGM in 1967 lasted for only forty-five minutes. The Association agreed to monitor the BBC's local radio experiments, due to begin in the Autumn of that year, with care and a strident press release declared:

> the backdoor financing of local broadcasting is not going to be easy. The nine experiments are nothing but a figleaf over the Government's naked attempt to mislead the public. None of the impoverished organisations mentioned in the White Paper as potential sources of financial support has any money with which to finance a local station.
>
> The money must come from the rates or the licence, or from taxes. We intend to smoke out any sharp practices or under-the-counter arrangements.
>
> Now that political control (in the May, 1967 elections) of four of the seven (sic) experimental towns has changed hands (in Leicester, Liverpool, Manchester and Nottingham), we hope that Councils will review the nefarious and nebulous schemes entered into by their predecessors.

It is the statement of an organisation which feels remote from the centres of power; defiant but impotent, but accurately assessing its position.

Between the end of 1966 and mid 1969 the Association was in limbo, if not actively declining. In 1969 no AGM was held at all 'due to an oversight caused by the fact that the Association was largely dormant ' (Minutes for joint AGM, 1970). Briefings to MPs continued, as did the occasional press conference and press article. Membership stayed static at 61. Thus the first phase of the LRA's activities may be dated between October, 1964, and January, 1967. What was its own understanding of its role during that time?

7 : Moments of Truth : the Association and the Conservative Party

In an article in Admap, May, 1965, Gorst and Whitney were asked how far the Association was dependent on the 'vagaries of government policies':

> Completely dependent. Let me (sic) expand on that. It is quite possible to take a strictly party political view of the introduction of local broadcasting, and therefore I think it is worthwhile to find out what the view, so far as one knows it, of each political party is.
>
> The Labour Party before the election, said that they were interested in local broadcasting as a means of introducing some sort of 'university of the air'. They also said that they were opposed to private commercial interests. Some members of the party however thought that there might be a place for independent local broadcasting stations; yet others thought it should be in the hands of the BBC. There appeared at that time to be no consensus of opinion within the Labour Party other than one in favour of the 'university of the air'.
>
> The Conservative Party said in their election manifesto that if they were returned to power they would extend broadcasting. From statements made by various individuals in the hierarchy of the Tory Party it would appear as though they are in favour of commercially financed local broadcasting and it is clearer since the election that this is in fact going to be the party line.

The LRA was, the article said campaigning for local broadcasting, and would act, when local broadcasting was introduced, as a trade body representing the views and opinions of the companies within the local

radio industry. Local radio would concentrate 'purely on local matters of interest to the community around the station and leave the "pop" war to the BBC and the pirates'.

The next real moment of importance for the LRA, after the 1966 White Paper, was the speech made by the shadow Post Master-General, Paul Bryan on 3rd March, 1969. Bryan announced that if the Conservative Party were elected they would sanction 100 or more local commercial radio stations.

Again, it is significant that the speech was as much a surprise to the Association as it was to the hierarchy of the Conservative Party (see p.335). At a general meeting of the LRA, held after Bryan's speech on 10th April, 1969, John Boulting, who was now chairman in place of John Whitney, said

> it was possible to detect a little light at the end of a rather long road...The LRA had no preference for parties or politicians - only for those who accepted the Association's views on their merits. (Minutes of General Meeting, April, 1969)

Following Bryan's speech, the Council of the LRA had decided to re-institute the policy committee, partly to look again at the frequency question: ('to study the availability of medium wave frequencies and meet counter-arguments put forward by the BBC, GPO or others hostile to their being used'); but also to 'consider the issues raised by the Tory Party's policy statement.

As it happened Bryan had spoken without Shadow Cabinet authority (see p.334). Had the LRA been privy to any of the discussions within the Conservative Party at the time they would have known this. The clarification John Gorst obtained from the Conservative Central Office was that:

> it is understood that the specification of this rather exact number is regretted; not because it is necessarily wrong, but because it is too precise a commitment (Minutes of General Meeting, April, 1969, Appendix A).

The Paul Bryan speech marks the start of the second phase of the Association's activities ending in October, 1970, with the publication of the 'Shape of Independent Radio' the revised version of the 1966 'Plan for Local Broadcasting in the United Kingdom.' The revised booklet emerged in draft form a series of the new policy committee meetings held between August and November, 1969.

To the preliminary policy committee meeting of the new series one of the member companies, RMA Ltd, submitted an extensive memorandum. It included a suggestion that the LRA needed 'to have a constructive policy in regard to the major issue of the future of all radio in Britain'. It pointed out that the LRA had failed to make enough of 'Broadcasting in the Seventies' by pointing out ways in which the BBC might have improved its finances.

The chief proposal from RMA was that there had to be a change in the copyright law removing restrictions on 'needle time'. As an alternative, and to keep the Musician's Union happy, the BBC and the commercial stations would have to contribute to a fund for the training and welfare of musicians; a similar scheme existed in the United States (Minutes of Policy Committee Meeting, undated, 1969).

A key meeting of the policy committee addressed by Richard Meyer of Radio Manx, was held on the 9th September. Meyer had put forward his fund scheme first in 1966 (Meyer, op.cit.) The policy committee apparently concerned itself more with copyright law and 'needle time' and concluded that, rather than opting for 50 per cent, they would go for unlimited 'needle time' but link it with the RMA idea of a fund as compensation.

Later meetings endorsed previous LRA policy that at least 30 per cent of programmes should be locally originated; music would take up 65 per cent each hour; news 8.5 per cent; speech 16.5 per cent; advertising 10 per cent (the commercial television limit). On advertising, and its effect on the local press, the committee thought as much as 20 per cent drop in gross receipts might be expected; there could be a big effect on cinema advertising. Because the press was thought to be the 'fundamental' news medium it had to be protected; 49 per cent maximum shareholdings in local radio stations were thought to be the way to do this.

In October the committee considered that the BBC ought not to be excluded from local radio but that its other commitments should get priority.

They also noted that 'so far the Labour Party's policy was

unreservedly against commercial local radio. This was regretted as there were aspects of Conservative policy on which the Committee either had reservations or required further amplification; and it was felt that an effective public debate would not take place if the gap between the two parties was so great' (emphasis added) (Minutes of Policy Committee, late 1969).

The committee were opposed to the Independent Television Authority being the controlling authority (which was Conservative Party policy); any authority should, they thought, be divided because otherwise there was an over-concentration of power; because ITA's record with the ITV contractors had not been satisfactory; because radio should be controlled by people who are 'uniquely interested in radio'.

But the committee decided not to formulate an overall policy on radio in part because 'public taste might change unpredictably after independent radio had been introduced'.

The revision of the Association's earlier plan was necessitated for three reasons: first the international CCIR regulations about protection ratios had suggested a 100:1 instead of the United States 20:1 ratio. This meant only about 150 medium wave frequencies could be acoommodated (instead of 276). Second, the Maud Report on local government businesses had just been published; third

> a national advertiser using Manx Radio had recently revealed that their use of the station was justified by the coverage Manx Radio has of the whole of the North West coast of England, which numbers several million

-Manx population was 48,000 (LRA Policy Committee Minutes, 11th November 1969). This latter had immense implications for what any 'local' radio service might, in disguise, introduce (see also p.305).

These proposals formed the basis of the revised version of the LRA 'manifesto'; much of the work of the Association, from December, 1969, and into the new year, went into finalising the 'Shape of Independent Radio'. What happened after the June, 1970, election when a Conservative Government was returned to power is dealt with below (p.363). This constitutes the third and final phase of the Association's activities.

8 : The onshore lobby (ii) : other interests

The Local Radio Association was the most visible and the best organised of the interest group lobby for commercial radio. But there were others. Among the various groups and companies two are relatively important: The Free Radio Association and Commercial Broadcasting Consultants.

The Free Radio Association, begun in February, 1967, while the Marine Offences Bill was passing through parliament, is one of the only organised attempts to rally mass public opinion. What it stood for can be gauged by this petition form issued by the Association in 1967:

> The Free Radio Association is fighting for free speech, free enterprise and free choice. The Government is trying to crush all competition over the air by silencing the commercial stations - thereby preserving the monopoly of the BBC and depriving us of the freedom to listen to the stations of our choice.....it is a declaration that we the undersigned will use our votes to remove this Government from power at the first opportunity, and replace it with a Government which believes in free speech, free enterprise and free choice (emphasis added).

In June, 1967, the FRA reportedly had 259 branches but only 1920 members. Geoffrey Pearl, its general secretary, blamed the press for failing to give the Association sufficient publicity: it was, he said at an FRA rally in Trafalgar Square in May, because the press saw commercial radio as competition for advertising revenue.

Much more significant to the commercial radio lobby were the activities of Hughie Green, the television quiz show compere, and presenter of 'Opportunity Knocks', a television talent show. Green had started a company called Commercial Broadcasting Consultants in 1966 with Tony Cadnam. According to Green's technical manager, Derek Faraday (RCS I 23), Green had been interested in the possibilities for commercial radio for a number of years. He was a regular performer on Radio Luxembourg and Faraday had worked with him on the technical side then.

Green commissioned a Swiss firm, Brown Boveri, at a cost of £35,000, to do an independent technical report on the use of medium wave frequencies for local radio. CBC had asked Standard Telephones but they had refused on the basis that undertaking such work might

impair their relationship with the BBC, to whom they were suppliers.

Faraday says they started from the simple premise that the medium wave band was divided into 121 channels, 9 KHz wide; yet in the 1960s there were already over 3,000 stations operating in Europe on the MF band. Brown Boveri were apprised of this, and also of the use in Austria and elsewhere of highly directional radio aerials.

The point seized upon by CBC was that the GPO and the BBC refused to use the International Common Frequencies under Article 8 of the Copenhagen Convention,1948 (see p.281). The Brown Boveri report submitted with a second plan by Derek Faraday, to the GPO, in February, 1969, was rejected. Faraday had thought there could be up to 250 1kw power stations on MF; Brown Boveri had come up with a plan for 115 using directional aerials. The Post Office engineering staff and their BBC advisers rejected both.

The Brown Boveri report was sent to the BBC and Charles Curran, then the director-general, had discussions with CBC about it; Curran said that the Green proposals for local radio programming were the best he had seen, and that the BBC ought to have adopted them (RCS I 9).

What Hughie Green wanted was to have radio stations based on large urban centres with dozens (if necessary) of satellite stations using the centrally-based station as a programme source when unable to generate local material. The key to this scheme, Green thought, was that large advertisers could be more easily wooed; in addition the really local advertising could be kept for the satellite stations.

With additional national syndication Green considered an enormous number of stations could be financially viable although he later modified this view (see p.360). He was also convinced that there was a wealth of local entertainment talent that could be used to generate programme material; his experiences on 'Opportunity Knocks' had convinced him of this.

CBC maintained a considerable distance from both the LRA and the Conservative Party. One reason was technical; Hughie Green's proposals were put forward with a straightforward view to making money: 'local' radio was tailored to fit that pre-requisite: hence Green's plan had only one station planned for London (the LRA planned up to

12). Second, perhaps following from the first, both 'official commercial' and political interest groups were appalled at the flamboyancy with which Green and CBC went about publicising their plans. There were receptions in the best press conference tradition: much drink served by 'bunny-girl' dressed hostesses. This meant that CBC was seen as potentially dangerous because frivolous (Hodgson: RCS I 1). This was because the lobby, both political and 'official commercial', were aware that to get the policy accepted there had to be a public air of serious purpose and that this involved not making an issue of how much money could be made (which is where the commercial television lobby had in part come unstuck especially with the Pilkington Committee).

Technically CBC seem to have been closest to the technological truth; certainly the GPO found it necessary to make a careful rebuttal of the Brown Boveri reports; but at the time this occurred GPO engineers must have been aware of the Conservative Party commitment on local radio; and as the later history of the policy suggests the engineers were to become locked in a battle to 'prove' they had not been lying about the shortage of wavelengths throughout the 60s.

What Green and Faraday could not have known at the time they submitted their report was that the BBC had 'discovered' a disused Medium Wave defence transmitter network (Curran, 1979). This discovery was to prove a great embarrassment to the BBC because it lent credence to claims made by CBC and others that they had been lying about frequencies when they said no MW coverage was possible (see p.364).Furthermore, the BBC could no longer hold off the commercial lobby's desire for MW coverage by arguing that whatever local radio was introduced only VHF coverage was possible.

9 : <u>The other lobby : those against commercial radio</u>

Ranged against the pro-commercial radio lobbies were a monolithic set of 'protective' organisations: trade associations, trade unions, cartels from media industries. These were in order of importance: The Musician's Union; Phonographic Performance Ltd; the Performing Rights Society; the National Union of Journalists; Mechanical Copyright Protection Society. Equity, the actors' union, equivocated. The

advertising associations supported commercial radio - but not wholeheartedly - as did the manufacturers of radio sets, notably Pye. Most other entertainment media (including record companies, aside from their interests in PPL) either kept quiet or registered radio companies and waited. British Lion Films, well aware of its worsening position in the international film market, was prominent in the pro-camp, through the activities of the Boulting brothers, in the LRA.

Most newspapers, national and local, were cautious but not overtly hostile. Many registered companies or waited.

It would not be true to say, therefore that there was an active anti-lobby. The actions taken by, say, PPL or the MU were only in relation to statements made by Government or Opposition, or by the LRA and associated organisations. Negotiations between 1964, when the pirates began, and June, 1970, where they took place at all, were desultory and exploratory. By and large they dealt solely with possibilities; only where some of the pirate stations were concerned to pay copyright did very much concrete action occur.

For these organisations had nothing to lose by doing nothing. There was, after all, no policy until late 1969; the Conservative Party commitment meant nothing: this can be demonstrated in the activities of the LRA between January, 1966, and April, 1969. Given the fait accompli of the Labour Government's White Paper, even accepting the commitment, via the Conservative Party Annual Conference, 1966, to introducing commercial radio, nothing could happen until a change of government - assuming that in fact happened.

John Gorst says (RCS I 11) of the LRA: 'We were pushing at an open door; there was never a question of whether, only when.' This may have appeared to be true but, as many other lost commitments will witness, it can be a long road between a promise to do something and its implementation.

As the most consistent and coherent body working in favour of local commercial radio during the 60s the LRA,* as has been shown,

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*I would like to record my thanks to Mark Elwes (RCS I 16) for all the assistance he provided in my researches into the Local Radio Association. His advice and loan of all the LRA records were invaluable.

played a small role: primarily it acted as an information exchange for its members and in some form (albeit loosely) as a co-ordinating body for members' policy. There are conflicting opinions on this. Hugh Pierce, who had much to do with the early days of BBC local radio as General Manager says the LRA were a 'powerful pressure group' (RCS I 24); Lord O'Hagan, who researched the passage through Parliament of the Sound Broadcasting Act says 'they did not have as much influence as they think' (RCS I 22). My position is closer to O'Hagan's after looking at all the evidence. In fairness it may be said it kept the issue alive when it might have altogether disappeared from public view. But it changed nothing. That remained within the ambit of Government and of State.

V : Government, The State and The Parties in the 60s and 70s: a) Conservatives

1 : Introduction

Ian Gilmour, in The Body Politic (1969, p.382),says 'The British political system throws a fence up round decision making'. This is true at nearly all levels: that of the political party; that of any Government in power; most of all the State.

The study of policy-making in great detail is difficult if anything other than a superficial exposition is desired. This is particularly true of recent policy where those concerned in its formation are still in public life and where there has been contention.

Problems concerning documentation are only one aspect. There is a philosophic nicety about asking a question: when did such and such a policy germinate? It may well be in the nature of the policy-making process of the political party, or the department of state that a question like this is literally unanswerable. Many people are involved in formulating policy. Is it ever possible to say when a concrete proposal emerges with absolute clarity?

We know that from the mid-1950s and the original breaking of the monopoly in British broadcasting that there existed within the Conservative Part at large, a feeling - to put it no higher than that - that it would be reasonable and logical to extend commercial financing to radio. But the tensions generated by the commercial television

policy; and, perhaps weighing more heavily over time, the generally poor quality of ITV programmes in the first decade, prevented any moves towards a formulation of policy proposals.

The 1960s changed all that. At the very beginning the Pilkington Committee Report loudly condemned the 'organic defeat' of ITV - and by implication, financing of that service. It also found there was little 'demand' for local radio.

The extent of the attack may have worked against the Committee's wishes in the long run: in being so against commercial television a mood may have arisen that no-one could be that bad. At the same time the BBC relaxed - and experimented (thereby annoying many Conservative politicians and viewers; the ITA moved to put part of its house in order.

Then, fortuitously came the youth 'revolution' - or did it just find media expression? - and the pirate radio stations. For the average Briton these were more important than Radio Manx although we have seen the latter had importance for the State (legitimising a commercial principle there).

The key to the discussion which follows is in the adjustment and negotiation which proceeds within a pre-set framework, the ideological justification for which is one form of consensus: because of the residual position of the State and the BBC as a quasi autonomous non governmental organisation (ie a sub-State apparatus) the debate of the 60s about local radio becomes frozen within limits chosen by these organisations, but limits continuously attacked by the Conservative Party in Opposition.

We may crystallise three elements from the lattice of policy commitments, provisional programmes, negotiations and ideological positions: these relate, naturally, to the Conservative Party; the Labour Party; and the debates within the House of Commons.

2 : The Conservative Party in Opposition again

The Conservative Party policy on commercial radio was a logical progression from its policy on and introduction of, commercial television. What had disturbed the Party were accusations that in introducing commercial television the Conservative Government had

allowed a small number of companies to make huge and excessive profits.

Thus their 'policy' insofar as one can be said to exist before the mid-sixties, was one of caution: this is borne out by the Conservative Government reactions to the Pilkington Committee Report. While authorising the start of BBC2, the 1962 White Paper on broadcasting (Cmnd 1770) did not consider there was a '<u>demand</u>' for local radio. This element of the White Paper is the genuine 'voice' of the Conservative Government: the <u>demand</u> argument becomes a crucial element in the justification for the later policy.

Reginald Bevins who was Post Master-General had set up a committee of ministers to consider the main issues Pilkington was examining <u>in advance</u> of the publication of the final Report (Bevins, 1965). For him the two issues were ITV profits and the allocation of the third television channel. Logically, as he points out, it ought to have gone to ITV: thereby creating a healthy competition <u>and</u> probably reducing profits. The Pilkington Committee failed to understand this at all, thereby as it happened,ensuring BBC penury <u>and</u> probably hastening the onset of an inchoate lobby for commercial radio.

The next turning point is the arrival of the pirate stations in 1964. At that time the Conservative Government was crippled: it had survived the Profumo affair; the loss of Harold Macmillan as prime minister; but the Government knew it had to call an election by October.

Inevitably there was a split in the Conservative Party between those who saw the pirates acting outside the law and those who saw them as entrepreneurs. The Post Master-General, Bevins, told the House on 7th April 1964....'I am considering the possibility of new legislation. As the House knows I am relying on British advertisers not to use this or any similar unauthorised station ' (Bevins, 1964).

At least part of the Government, apparently including Bevins, thought the best course of action lay with the Council of Europe then in the process of drawing up a Convention to deal with pirate broadcasting which was spreading throughout Europe.

By May Bevins was suggesting to the Conservative backbench Committee on Broadcasting that one possibility would be to set up a committee consisting of representatives of the BBC, ITA and GPO to

'consider' the pirate stations.

But by May it had become obvious that advertisers were beginning to use the pirate stations in increasing numbers (see p.306): that suggested there was a substantial audience. There was too the geographical accident that led to the majority of opened and planned stations concentrating on the rich market in the South East of England. This area contained the highest concentration of marginal Conservative seats in the country (see Evening Standard: 21st May, 1978) where a five per cent swing or less was needed to unseat the Conservative members.

As Post Master-General, Bevins continued to equivocate. The Conservative Party entered the October, 1964, elections without a clear policy on local broadcasting or commercial broadcasting. (Unconnected with this, they lost the election.)

In losing the 1964 elections the Conservative Party were acutely aware that they were likely to be out of office for at least five years (RCS I 36). This analysis was based on the party's standing in the country after the series of public debates in the 18 month period leading up to the election; that they had been in power for 13 years; and that in the extremely likely event that the new Labour Government, with what was then considered an unworkable majority of four, would call a snap election shortly, to suit themselves.

So, from October, 1964, while expecting, and planning for, a quick election, the Conservative Party were also planning for an election at the end of the 1960s or into the early 1970s. Under Harold Macmillan the Conservative Party had set up a high level steering committee whose aim was solely forthcoming election policy. This steering committee had a completely separate life from Government business. After the Conservatives lost office the committee continued - again with a distinct existence apart from the Shadow Cabinet with its day to day concerns. Membership included the party leader, with four or five other senior Conservatives of substantial rank. Alec Douglas Home, after the defeat of 1964, also undertook a major re-examination of the party's organisation and policies (much as had taken place in the 1940s). And before he became leader Edward Heath set up a number of policy advisory groups. One of these dealt with broadcasting. The re-organisation incidentally meant

the Party was less than ready for the 1966 General Election (Butler and King, 1966).

In addition to the individual policy groups there was a much larger, and representative, advisory committee on policy. It consisted of the chairman and deputy chairman of the party; representatives of the 1922 committee; one or two peers; seven people elected from the executive of the national union; one young Conservative; several co-opted members; and the director of the Conservative Research Department. This Committee saw all the detailed reports plus the draft manifesto.

The Conservative Party entered the March, 1966, General Election still without a clear policy on broadcasting, the election manifesto merely noting that a Conservative Government would 'provide more choice and competition in broadcasting'. The much fuller and critical 'Campaign Guide' was silent altogether on both pirate radio and commercial radio.

It is inherently difficult to determine the precise moment a commitment becomes a policy: it is also questionable whether the moment is crucial, especially where, as in this case, there are a number of conflicting pressures. What can be determined with precision is that the leadership of the party had accepted that there had to be some form of commercial radio by October, 1966, when the Conservative Party Annual Conference, at Blackpool, passed a resolution, backed by the platform in the shape of the Shadow Post Master-General, Paul Bryan, calling for 'a new broadcasting Act establishing legitimate broadcasting stations' (Verbatim Report, p.120).

Just before this Conference we may site the moment of decision, if one exists. At a policy group on nationalised industries meeting (under which broadcasting, significantly, came) of 5th October, 1966, Brendon Sewill referred to the forthcoming Labour Government White Paper on Broadcasting (Cmnd 3169, 1966). The policy group agreed:

> that the Research Department should discuss our policy on sound radio with Mr Paul Bryan, and that the ballotted motion at the Party Conference would provide a suitable opportunity to set out this policy (emphasis added) (Swinton Archive Minutes).

The motion, fortunately the one out of many which had 'won' the

lottery to be debated, was moved by Eldon Griffiths, MP, whose East Anglian constituency was a recipient of much of the output from the pirate stations. The motion made the point of

> ....The British people's evident desire for a wider range and greater variety of broadcasting than at present is available from the BBC and reaffirming the need for greater enterprise, competitiveness and a widening of the area of choice... (Annual Conference, Verbatim Report, 1966).

Griffiths was a member of the Broadcasting Committee and he recalls flying back from Iran to propose the motion. He suggests that this indicates his own feelings at the time that the policy was acceptable to the leadership of the Party (RCS I 25).

It is important to note this does not mean there was a 'policy' in complete outline at this time. Indeed evidence presented below suggests the 'policy' in anything like a final form did not emerge until late 1969. The point here is that such a grounded policy is dysfunctional too soon in advance of an election because it narrows the options. And as a Party in the early stages of opposition can best utilise its energies by generalising the attack on Government, over-detailed policies are dangerous because they provide the Government party with ammunition for counter-attack.

But there is a further point. As Mackenzie suggests British political parties are coalitions: too precise a commitment in opposition can lead to distasteful public rows between elements of the coalition. This was particularly true of the policy commitment on commercial radio.

Here three groups within the Conservative Party can be discerned. First there were the anti-monopolists, whose arguments (at least in public) revolved around the need to provide an alternative channel of information and news to BBC radio. A sub-group here were concerned about centralisation and the need to return to smaller communities. Griffiths, Gorst (of the LRA but a fairly prominent 'outsider' in the Conservative Party), Ian Gilmour were among those in this group (RCS I 29) - note there are both 'right' and 'left' represented here. Second, there were the money makers whose aim was to provide a means of further profit for - in this case ostensibly - small businessmen and advertising agencies. Sir John Rodgers (with advertising connections), Wilfred

Proudfoot (from 1970 an MP; previously he had run Radio 270, a North-East pirate station anchored off Scarborough) and Paul Bryan belonged here.

The third group were opposed because they were unhappy about the commercialism involved; and because they saw an inevitable lowering of the standards set by the BBC. William Deedes is probably the most consistent defender of this position; in one respect however, so is Heath, as an individual 'respecter' of the BBC's older mission.

This typology leaves out the leadership - and Heath as leader. But the leadership position has to be more complex because it deals with a broader set of issues. If we examine this more closely through the position of Edward Heath, the resolution of the conflicts becomes more explicable.

To begin with, Heath, as might be expected, took a traditional (ie first group principles) Conservative line on broadcasting. Bearing in mind his own classical music interests his attitude to the BBC was nevertheless a mixed one: on the one hand he took the patrician line that, for example, Radio 3 ought to be provided for from the licence fee; equally he opposed, and had done in the 50s during the commercial television debate, the BBC's monopoly

> I was one of those who not only wanted but was determined to do all I could to break the monopoly of the BBC. I believed that it was unhealthy...I was interested in breaking the BBC monopoly because I believe that it was unhealthy for the corporation to have a monopoly of this powerful medium (Heath, 1969).

What Heath came up with eventually was a theory of 'complementary' broadcasting: 'in a complementary system, a public service system (ie the BBC) can cater for minorities while, at the same time, the commercial system is providing mass entertainment ' (see below, p.358).

There was little question that the pirate stations had been popular: how popular was the problem. But by existing (and thus creating a new demand among the young, as well as appealing to a young housewife audience, aged 20-30) the pirates had on their demise left an audience gap.

Additionally, the All-Party Speakers Conference had decided by

1967 to lower the voting age to 18. The Conservative Party were able to link a policy on commercial local radio which would in all probability consist largely of 'pop' music with an appeal to the potential new voters - who would first be eligible to vote in the 1969-1971 period. This voter appeal argument never seems to have been directly discussed by the leadership. One interviewee suggests it may be because it was so blindingly obvious (RCS I 1(2)); William Whitelaw, however, (RCS I 28) says the Party hierarchy were aware of young voters- acutely aware.

The 'balance' created then is between principle (anti-monopoly) and free enterprise (profit - but controlled to prevent a re-occurrence of the commercial television problem). To pre-empt the internally organised opposition, demand arguments are used against cost: that is local radio ought not (morally) to be licence financed because it cannot by definition be heard by all those contributing to the cost. (This argument was effectively used against the BBC itself which had always argued its services ought to be for all because all paid for them.) Equally the cost of local stations ought not to come from the rates when a better 'service' could be provided 'free' using local or other advertisers.

The service had to be local (but see p.363) because: a) the demand required it (issues here revolved around the lobby concerned about 'community'); it cut into the pro-BBC lobby who, because of their tradition attitudes towards culture could also identify with this concept; b) lack of frequencies meant only low power stations could be used; c) local stations in large numbers meant that the 'equivalent' of competition could be said to exist, that is, an opportunity for entry was made relatively easy; d) related to cost, local stations are cheap: again market entry is easier.

Externally the commitment policy was 'sold' as an example of a 'young' Party (see A C H Smith, 1975) on the use of 'young' as a metaphor for change) willing to respond to demand while promoting the traditional virtues of free enterprise and competition within a 'free' service. It is also visible:ie the results are obvious to all.

The central elements of this philosophy are apparent from the speeches made at the 1966 Conference.

Inter alia Eldon Griffiths said:

> The pirates have proved one thing beyond all doubt, namely, that large numbers of the British people want and are determined to have a much greater variety of sound broadcasting, than they can get at the present day
> (Annual Conference, Verbatim report p.121).
>
> This is (i) - demand argument .....they have shown that enterprise and competition can create a new and profitable business in our midst.....
>
> (ii) - traditional Conservative virtues
> .....a new Sound Broadcasting Act.... should reaffirm the public service principles of the BBC and preserve the BBC's licensed finances .....
>
> (iii) - traditional wing of the Conservative Party appeased
> ....Thirdly, each station would be required to devote an agreed and substantial proportion of its time to local affairs....
> a wide spread of share ownership would be a condition...
>
> (iv) - promotion of 'small' business interests precludes 'large' or excessive profits.

Paul Bryan, replying for the leadership as Shadow Post Master-General pointed in his speech to the 'fact' that 'local commercial radio is one of the few fields in the world of communications that is open to the small man' (emphasis added).

The commitment to a policy having been decided upon the Party continued to reaffirm its position between the end of 1966 and the beginning of 1969. This, it is worth noting, is the time during which the Local Radio Association also became moribund and it reflects the lack of an issue (although see below, the GLC Bill). From the Labour Government White Paper, issued in December, 1966, until a speech made by Paul Bryan in March, 1969, it is clear that Government action - taken in mid-term when it was unlikely to be moved - precludes much other than ritual debate. This is certainly true of the House of Commons.

On the 3rd March, 1969, Paul Bryan, still Shadow Post Master-General made a speech in which he said that 'the next Conservative Government will set up 100 or more local commercial stations'. He went on to specify in some detail how these stations would be controlled, how a levy on profits might work, and how local newspaper interests could be protected.

The speech had not been cleared by the Shadow Cabinet (of which

Bryan was not a full member). According to one reliable source (RCS I 1) the immediate result of this speech was that Charles Curran, Director-general of the BBC, contacted Heath to query the details of Bryan's speech. Heath was so angered by the nature of this approach, especially Curran's suggestion that the speech be repudiated, that he publicly committed the Conservative Party to a policy on commercial radio: the first time the leadership (strictly speaking) had done so.

Bryan's speech and the confidence with which he was able to say a precise number of stations to be introduced, was due to two factors. First, since the summer, 1968, he had had a research assistant in the Conservative Research Department, Patricia Hodgson, working more or less full-time on the policy: second and most crucial, in February, 1969, he had commissioned the management consultants, Urwick Orr, to look at technical, financial, and operational prospects for local radio. It does seem possible that this study, begun in April, 1969, was in part generated from the Hughie Green technical report (see p.323); certainly it is quoted in the final Urwick Orr report.

There is a question, too, of how the report 'commissioned at great cost' (Paul Bryan, Annual Conference, 1969, Verbatim report, p.82) was financed: the money (estimated to be £5,000) appears to have come from private sources and to have been raised largely via Paul Bryan.

The report, delivered in August, 1969, points out that

> due to political considerations it has not been possible to consult bodies such as BBC, GPO and ITA. These bodies possess most of the filed data required to evaluate new channel proposals.

The report notes that the Conservative Party policy on commercial radio, as the authors understood it to be, was:

> 1. The creation of alternative choice to Radio services provided by the BBC based on private enterprise and geared to local needs.
>
> 2. The financing of these services by means of Radio Advertising without:
> a. increasing the present Radio Licence fees.
> b. the provision of exchequer or public funds.
> c. the generation of excessive profits
>
> 3. The opportunity for local interests to participate in and derive benefit from the service.

There was to be a restriction on advertising time to six minutes per hour averaged over the day, seven minutes in any one hour (cf ITV);

a restriction of certain types of advertisement; a 24 hour operational programme; the existence of an authority along the lines of the ITA to regulate type, content and quality of broadcast material; the new 'IBA' to have the right to select and licence applicants.

The ITA was seen as the logical authority to deal with local radio because it had had experience of commercial television; because using it would involve setting up no extra machinery and because this could mean an early legislative outcome. At this stage it appears that the Conservative Party were prepared to legislate, if necessary, to overcome opposition from the Musician's Union.

The final Report worked on the basis of 100 station but suggested that only the 30 largest would yield over 15 per cent on capital; the 40 smallest would, it thought, earn under five per cent and a few would lose money. The very largest would be likely to earn substantial returns and yields of over 50 per cent (return on capital) were predicted.

Urwick Orr recommended taking away from the BBC some of their medium wave frequencies in order to accommodate all the planned stations; in combination with directional aerials and low power synchronised transmissions they thought that up to 100 stations could be constructed of which 25/35 would have provided a 24 hour service, covering up to 72 per cent of the population. (This was about the achieved coverage of Radio 1 on the MF frequency of 247 metres; ILR has come eventually to be more in competition with Radio 1 than any other BBC service.) The other stations would give only a day-time service reliably.

The report also suggested a form of 'open' networking with associated sub-contractors for specific localities (again, this was part of Hughie Green's plan). This was because of the fears about the reaction of advertisers - especially the most profitable large ones - to local broadcasting. There was too the problem of competition with the BBC which would be able to dominate the small stations: semi-networking would overcome some of these problems.

The main conclusions were local commercial radio was viable provided that:

1. In the short term (five to eight years) enough (probably four) suitable BBC Medium Wave frequencies are made available apart from international and 'provision 8' (of the Copenhagen Agreement, 1948) possibilities.

2. Strong and positive measures are introduced to stimulate the purchase of receivers with VHF capability.

3. Early planning steps are taken to ensure that VHF channels will be available to service the increased VHF audience.

4. A comprehensive MF and VHF frequency allocation plan is drawn up for all UK users before the local commercial radio industry starts operations.

5. The industry is structured in such a way that a controlled proportion of large station profits can be assigned to provide and maintain small station services.

6. Press, entertainment industry and other interests capable of making a positive contribution to the development of the service can be attracted to invest in the industry subject to the foregoing control of profit distribution.

Here, at the point at which the Conservative Party had constructed an 'ideal' policy in the sense of a reconciliation of interests, is a report which, dealing with hard information from a number of sources, destroys the likelihood of the genuinely 'local' stations avowedly required as part of the philosophy of the policy, suggesting instead that big city, or city-regional radio stations are the most viable option.

What the Urwick Orr suggested was, again, not accepted as the policy. But its significance is in the mass of highly detailed technical factual information it collected together (22 Appendices, 28 pages long) which provided a solid statistical base on which the Party could proceed to construct a 'real' 'policy' opposed to the rhetoric of public 'hypothetical' and politicised 'commitments'.

And at the Annual Conference in 1969 Paul Bryan, mentioning the Urwick Orr Report said:

> Our present thinking is that the ITA should be the controlling body, as was suggested (by Urwick Orr). Local participation in these stations is all important. The Newspaper Society, which has a special interest in the effect of local radio on

> local papers, has appointed a sub-committee to advise them. We must ensure that the musicians and actors get a fair deal. We are getting a lot of co-operation from the advertising associations.
>
> By and large, a great deal of work is going on towards a detailed policy (emphasis added).

Bryan pointed out the crucial element missing was the knowledge held by the Post Office, as well as the power, to designate and change frequencies. This the Party would only obtain upon becoming the Government (see p.359).

Well before the next General Election the Conservative Party had prepared their policy. Patricia Hodgson (RCS I 1 and 1(2)) suggests it is rare that any policy gets such attention before an election. This may or may not be so. Broadcasting possesses a set of guiding principles which are defended more vigorously than similar principles operating in other areas because these concern the methods by which the system is legitimated, and although this is true of other institutions, where broadcasting is concerned, the output itself is a constant public re-legitimation. It was clearly felt by some Party officials that in order for a policy to succeed detailed pre-planning was needed.

There was implacable opposition to commercial radio from the senior civil servants in the ministry (see p.350). In part this attitude can be seen to be a response to what had happened in the early days of television but not entirely so. Radio, as a broadcast mass medium is different from television in its immediacy of response to events and its relatively very low cost. In both respects its proliferation involves a greater loss of potential State control.

3 : The Conservative Party and the BBC

Before looking in detail at the attitude of the Labour Party towards local radio, it is necessary to examine briefly how the Conservative Party reacted to the BBC in the 1960s. This is related to how they reacted when re-elected to power in 1970.

Whereas the BBC entered the decade with amicable relations with the Labour Party (although these deteriorated from 1964 on) it was by no means true of their relations with the Conservative Party. Two events coloured attitudes. First, the BBC's position over Suez, when

they allowed opposition points of view to be heard. The die-hard position of the Conservative Party was that the country had been at war during Suez and that the BBC, doing the exact opposite of what it had done during the General Strike, acted treasonably in dividing the country.

Second, the appointment of Hugh Greene as director-general, from January, 1960, opened the way for the BBC to become much more progressive in outlook: to the Conservative Party this meant domination by the left. Their worst fears were realised when Greene authorised 'That Was The Week That Was' to go ahead at a time when the Conservative Party was racked by scandal. The start of BBC2 in 1964 heightened the feeling among Conservatives that Greene was encouraging young and left-wing producers.

With the election of the Labour Government in 1966 Conservative politicians began to see a form of corporatism in the media: the scenario of which was the suppression of the pirate stations; the beginning of Radio One; the extension to the BBC of a two year local broadcasting experiment despite the BBC's growing deficit.

There are two ways of looking at what happened between the Opposition and the BBC between 1966-70; certainly the Labour Government viewed the period as one of BBC antagonism towards them and their policies.

One explanation is the one I shall elaborate upon (see p.347) which is that it was the State working in some form of collaboration with the BBC that the Conservative Party were seeing. The evidence of this, and possible explanations are given below also.

But the effect on the Conservative Party, and on the leadership was to reinforce the feeling that the BBC were exploiting their public service image to extend their monopoly in radio via local broadcasting. What particularly incensed Conservatives was the attempt to do this (as they saw it) on the back of the rates (see p.296); 'Broadcasting in the Seventies' (op.cit.) confirmed their suspicions as with one hand the BBC appeared to be about to axe a number of orchestras (including its unique training orchestra, an act of vandalism to Heath as a keen classical musician); on the other it seemed to suggest it had £5½mn free to develop up to 40 local radio stations. Coming in 1969 when

an election would be required by law within 20 months, the Conservatives saw this document, and the Government's acceptance of its local radio provisions, as a last ditch attempt to pre-empt the, by then publicly declared, Conservative Party policy on commercial radio. At the 1969 Annual Conference Paul Bryan said

> the background of this strange contradiction (the reduction in orchestras and the plan for 40 local stations) is, of course, that the Conservative policy is to introduce local commercial radio, and the Government wants the BBC to get their first (and thereby take the frequencies).

He continued

> Let it be quite clear that the Tory Party will not feel bound, nor will it feel committed, to any broadcasting policy ordained by a Socialist Government. Nothing in the field of broadcasting is sacrosanct; nothing is irreversible (emphasis added).

This statement appears to have always applied more to Conservative Governments. All through their time in Opposition they pushed at the Labour Government on commercial radio. Of the various kite flying exercises (which could be no more given the size of the Labour majority) the most blatant was the Greater London Council Radio Bill.

4 : The GLC Radio Bill

In 1967 the Greater London Council elections - the first 'general' election for the newly established body - were won by the Conservative Party. The outgoing Labour Administration had promised the BBC that they would provide £50,000 against the running costs of a local radio station (as part of the two year BBC experiment); the new Conservative controlled council reversed this decision.

What they had in mind was a series of GLC licenced commercial radio stations. Desmond Plummer, the GLC Chairman remembers (RCS I 30), having been to New York and having listened to the radio stations there thinking why not have 3 or 4 stations in London? Roland Freeman, who was made chairman of the Finance Committee after the Conservative victory, recalls the original idea was dreamed up as an election publicity stunt which Plummer subsequently felt obliged to try and implement (RCS I 5).

Plummer says that the Central Office of the Party were kept

closely informed of what was happening and that Paul Bryan was involved. He says that the GLC expected the Bill to fail (the Labour Government had a majority of 97) but that in presenting it to Parliament it a) flushed out government party arguments against local commercial radio; b) it kept the issue of local commercial radio alive between the ending of pirate broadcasting (roughly, August, 1967) and the next general election (known to be coming between 1969 and 1971).

Leslie Freeman, then chairman of the GLC General Purposes Committee, which dealt with Parliamentary business, says the Bill was cleared by Central Office: 'we were in fact putting forward Conservative Party policy' (RCS I 6).

Freeman views their efforts as part of a fight between central and local government: 'we didn't expect to win the Bill. But it was not a kite flying exercise because the momentum would gather: not flying a kite but putting down the anchor'.

On the frequency question the GLC consulted Commercial Broadcasting Consultants (Hughie Green et al). Green also worked out some of the potential costs with them.

The final decision to go ahead was made in May, 1968; the Bill was placed with Parliament in December, 1968, when the first BBC local stations had been running for just over a year.

The key second reading of the Bill took place on the 7th May,1969. In a statement by the GLC distributed to MPs the GLC pointed out that their Bill was based on the 1964 Television Act; it would enable the GLC Local Radio Authority to have similar powers to the ITA after it had obtained a licence from the Post Master-General. The Bill reserved the right to the Greater London Council to direct that all or part of any excess on the Authority's revenue account be paid to the Council. A surplus would enable the GLC to extend its support to the arts. The paper noted that in the 1966 White Paper on Broadcasting the Government had not ruled out advertising as a means of financing local radio stations in public ownership. The GLC wanted to make the case that the BBC local radio experiment then proceeding was apparently showing that sufficient financial support from the station localities was not forthcoming on the required scale: seven of the eight authorities had said on 26th March, 1969, that if the BBC continued to operate local

stations in their areas after the two years had ended, the financial load they were currently carrying would have to be substantially reduced.

The GLC also cited the Isle of Man as a precedent for the granting of a licence by the Post Master-General. They wanted the stations (then suggesting a minimum of two) to be on MF as, they said, 'the main demand for a local radio service is understood to be during the daytime'.

Opposition to the Bill came from two sources. First, that it was wrong to treat London separately from the rest of the country, in particular by allocating frequencies for several London stations, thereby creating a more general scarcity. Second, that the proposed London stations would cream off such advertising revenue as to put a number of local newspapers out of business.

The Government reply, by the Post Master-General, John Stonehouse, was that in giving the Bill a second reading the House would have accepted the principle of local authority broadcasting and commercial broadcasting. It would also pre-empt a fair evaluation of the BBC local radio experiment. He pointed out as well

> The Bill is also open to grave objections of principle, first, because it involves, for the first time, the devolution of the broadcasting authority.... Second, the authority would be answerable to the GLC, and hitherto all broadcasting authorities have been answerable to Parliament (Stonehouse, 1969).

Stonehouse added that the Bill 'opens the door for a large-scale development of commercial sound broadcasting. (Manchester, Birmingham and Glasgow councils were expressing interest in the GLC Bill) which hitherto this country, apart from the Isle of Man, has turned its back on'.

The second reading was 'negatived' by 134 to 108, a Government majority of 26.

The GLC radio Authority Bill was an interlude, begun as part of an election campaign, in part to attract young voters, but then encouraged by elements of the Conservative Party leadership in order to keep the commercial radio issue alive, and to determine what line

of attack the Labour Party, and the Labour Government might use against commercial radio.

VI : Government, the State and the Parties in the 60s and 70s

b) Labour

There seems to be little doubt that the incoming Labour Government of 1964 thought it would enjoy good relations with the BBC. I have looked at some of the reasons for this and it is clear that, given the broadcasters' own attitudes towards politicians and government (Goldie, 1977; Tracey, 1978) and the contemporary vogue for satire and debunking among broadcasters that the Labour Government were liable to be disappointed.

At the same time the appointment of Wedgwood Benn as Post Master-General increased friction in the reverse direction: the BBC, not unnaturally, saw itself as under mounting attack from the Government.

The two most important 'blocks' put by GPO officials on proposals by Benn were in dealing with the pirate radio stations and in finding a means of reducing the BBC's deficit without raising the licence fee - Benn's desire to persuade the BBC to accept advertising (see p.291).

Crossman relates this in some detail. In his diary for 22nd February, 1965, for instance (Crossman, 1975, p.167) he notes that the licence cannot be increased from £4 to £6 at the moment without upsetting people (the Labour Government had a majority of four). 'He (Benn) is anxious that the BBC should run radio with advertising as a main source of income ' (emphasis added).

On Monday, 24th May, 1965, Benn put a paper to the Cabinet Broadcasting Committee (Crossman described it as 'elaborate') proposing that the Government ought to get a firm commitment from the BBC that any programme expansion should be partly financed by advertising. In return the Government would introduce legislation to ban Radio Caroline (sic) (Crossman, op.cit., p.227)

> I was decisively against him on Radio Caroline because I didn't see any point in losing the votes of young people before the BBC had any real alternative to it (emphasis added).

Crossman continues:

> As for BBC advertising I am for it in principle ... but... if we tried to persuade the Party to commit itself in advance... we should split it wide open (emphasis added).

Crossman's acceptance of advertising for the BBC in principle highlights a continuing dilemma of the Labour Party towards 'commercial' sources of revenue for broadcasting. Hugh Jenkins, as I have already noted, an MP with Equity interests, says that the Labour Party may not know quite what it does think on this issue (RCS I 34); but the feeling in the Party has tended to be against it, again based on abstract principle.

In the case of the BBC in 1966 the issue became serious enough for the BBC to send John Fulton, vice chairman of the Governors directly to see Harold Wilson, with Hugh Greene, in February, to say that any scheme involving advertising was unacceptable.

At this time it appears that the Cabinet Broadcasting Committee were in favour of the Benn proposal for taking away a BBC network frequency and creating a separate network authorised to finance itself through advertising. The meeting between Wilson, Greene and Fulton was fortuitous for the BBC. Under normal circumstances Greene would have taken Lord Normanbrook with him as the latter was chairman of the BBC Governors. But Normanbrook was ill. The BBC's fortune lay in the fact that Fulton had been Wilson's tutor at Oxford. Charles Curran (RCS I 9 op.cit.) at least is convinced this may have helped to change Wilson's mind.

In February, 1966, the idea was put to Cabinet and rejected after Wilson had explained the BBC's position: this meeting was before the March, 1966, election but held at a time when Wilson would have been thinking about when precisely to call the election.

In July, 1966, Benn was replaced as Post Master-General by Edward Short. Almost immediately there was evidence of a change in attitude. Hugh Greene recalls that the BBC had many discussions with Short about the pirate stations (the Marine Offences Bill had been tabled in July, 1966, within three weeks of Short's appointment, and within five weeks of Reginald Calvert being shot (see p.308). In December, 1966, when the long awaited White Paper on Broadcasting was published advertising as a

means of financing any BBC service was firmly ruled out.

Crossman describes the change from Benn to Short as being one of replacing a politician with a bureaucrat. Why, then, did the bureaucrat get things done? In part, the answer is because they were waiting to be implemented by the right minister - one who could work with his civil servants, themselves bureaucrats. The anti-pirate legislation had been prepared following the 1965 signing by the UK of the Council of Europe Convention on pirate stations. Its delay in being presented to the House of Commons was a political decision. Similarly the nature of the relations between Benn and the BBC precluded negotiations which were able to take place when Short was appointed, such that the BBC could make a suitable 'offer' which a Government could gratefully accept - in this case on Radio One as a young people's channel, and a 'replacement' for the pirate radio stations.

One question which remains unanswered is whether the local radio experiment was also a 'gift' by the Government. My suspicion is that it comes, not from Short, but from the relevant department (the GPO): or, put another way, the State. Certainly the BBC were upset at having to search for the running costs from local authorities and beneficiaries, which suggests Government intervention (ie, a political decision not to increase the licence fee to cover any additional costs).

This period naturally brings to the fore the question of how far individuals can shape complete policies (shades of Reith). In broadcasting policy it would seem very little. Benn entered the arena with a number of radical ideas which were blocked - largely by his departmental officials with the assistance of the BBC (and see interviews with Dennis Lawrence, RCS I 26 and 26(2)).

Again, to return to Crossman's account, what happened after Short arrived at the Post Office was, he says, a triumph for the officials:

> Short accepted the old Post Office brief proposing that the BBC should close down the pirate radio stations (sic) and do a Light Programme substitute for them and should also begin some experimental local stations. (Crossman, 1976, p. 71).

But, Crossman, relates, when Short put this to Cabinet in August, 1966, the central problem of BBC finance came up again and Short was

told to report back with concrete proposals. Instead, says Crossman, he turned to Cabinet in mid-October with a paper simply listing the alternatives.

The result was apparently that Wilson called for a vote: the BBC was to get a short-term interim music programme while a longer-term plan was prepared by them for a public corporation with advertising which would sustain the Open University (then also being discussed).

This plan horrified the BBC which called an unprecedented press conference in mid-November where any questions were acceptable; it was given by Hugh Greene and Lord Normanbrook, chairman of the governors. James Margach, political correspondent of the Sunday Times noted after this meeting:

> The fact that a prominent establishment figure like Lord Normanbrook, a former Secretary to the Cabinet and head of the Civil Service, who is usually so punctilious about protocol, should take such a step confirms that the BBC is determined to make a desperate last ditch stand against the Government's plan.

On Thursday, 8th December, 1966, the alternative authority plan was rejected after Short had said the scheme was impracticable. In the White Paper, published the next day, the BBC had 'won'.

What, then appears to be the case is that where an individual (Benn) attempts to operate outside accepted rules, officials prevent action partly by dragging their feet: partly, in this case, by exploiting fears among Cabinet members of what Benn was trying to do (the Post Master-General was not a member of Cabinet); with Short the bureaucracy triumphed because Short believed it to be telling the 'truth' (interview with Short 1977, RCS I 17). This bureaucracy includes part of the BBC, in the sense that its officials work closely with the GPO civil servants.

There is also the probability that in circumstances like these the Prime Minister will make a critical judgement one way or another. Benn could not have influenced any such decision. How many critical decisions on broadcasting take place in this way is a matter for debate.

From 1966 onwards Government policy remained static with respect to radio. The BBC local radio experiments were defended; in November, 1969, it was announced by Stonehouse that he had authorised the

extension of the BBC service by 12 additional stations (to bring them to 20, covering 70 per cent of the UK population).

It is important to distinguish between the Government's attitude to 'commercialism' and broadcasting and the Labour Party's. As has already been pointed out a number of Labour MPs (including Crossman, Crosland, Benn as well as backbenchers, Jenkins, Lyons, etc) were not averse to advertising as long as it was contained within a public service system.

The 'State' (see p.349) operated to prevent this and it managed to 'capture' a number of key Cabinet Members (including Wilson). What becomes difficult to explain is the relationship between the Labour Government and the BBC at a general level, and the actions taken by the Government in the BBC's favour.

The period from 1964-1970 was characterised by a marked deterioration of relations between the Labour Government and the BBC. This probably continued until the nadir was reached, after the Labour Party lost office, in the BBC programme 'Yesterday's Men'. Wilson, according to Hugh Greene (RCS I 31 op.cit.) 'put on a cloak of dignity' as soon as he became Prime Minister in 1964. Crossman suggests that Hugh Greene, upon becoming Director-General became 'stiff and rigid' (Crossman, 1976, op.cit., p.46).

Whatever the case there was a feeling in Government that the BBC was not being fair to policies and decisions; in the BBC the attitude was that the Labour Government were out to destroy them. This latter feeling had its public expression in the appointment of Charles Hill as Chairman of the Governors in July, 1967, upon Lord Normanbrook's death.

The best account (and the most accurate) is in Tracey (op.cit.). Harold Wilson hardly alludes to the uproar caused (Wilson, 1971, p.541). Crossman says it was 'the most characteristic piece of Wilsonian gimmicry that he's yet achieved' (op.cit., p.445). It was, says Crossman, done to pull the BBC into line on political coverage.

But Kenneth Lamb (then BBC Secretary) says (RCS I 35) that Hill was clearly not going to be a push-over for the Government. Lamb goes on to say:

> Conservative Governments expect that the media will tend to be questioning of authority - rather unruly. They are not at heart surprised by that or put out by it. Labour Governments - and Wilson's view - is that somehow or another the Press is weighted against the Labour Party. Therefore the Labour Party depends more on the BBC for a fair presentation of its case. There is a further view that the BBC ought to redress the balance. I think that Wilson thought that Greene would, or might, be willing to go some way down the second road. I think he was wrong to think that. Things got so rough in the late 60s because the journalistic liberalism (Greene had been a journalist) was aimed at the Government rather than the parties (emphasis added).

Hill's appointment can be seen as a calculated counter-attack by Wilson. It very nearly led to Greene's immediate resignation as director-general. When he was persuaded not to resign it meant that the top level of the BBC was tied up with coping with Hill rather than (as Wilson might see it) attacking the Government. As Tracey puts it:

> Greene's was a liberal imagination not shared by Hill. Hill's purpose was to reorient the programming policy back from the vanguard of the social process, into the position where it was keeping pace with orthodoxy whatever it might be (p.181).

Wilson was in effect saying that because the BBC was a public service it was accountable. What remains remarkable is that, according to Lamb, Wilson only directly threatened the BBC once, in 1970: in 1966 he had acted in the BBC's favour; thus, while taking the content of the BBC as hostile, Wilson at least, was concerned to protect its form.

At the same time we may discern here the Labour Party's concern with political adjustment to broadcasting, rather than structural. This might be applied as well to the idea of local authority financing, a somewhat bizarre means to bring tighter control into programming and, thereby ensuring 'balance' - at least to Labour eyes.

The Labour Party, and the Labour Government, were not clear about the details of their policy towards broadcasting, in particular radio. Because they had failed to clarify where they stood on the principle of advertising, the Departmental (and BBC) view prevailed. Meanwhile, as we have seen, the Opposition were girding their loins for another attack on the 'monopoly' in sound broadcasting.

The real problem for the Government during this period was BBC

finance. In rejecting any advertising revenue they were forced into starving the BBC of finances because of the belief that raising the licence fee was unpopular (ie, seen as a Governmental imposition by the public).

Where the Labour Party (and Government) were united with the State was in opposition to a privately financed and advertising-based radio system. This provided a level of public coherence which a first reading of the record would apparently reveal to be lacking.

VII : Government, the State and the Parties in the 60s and 70s: 'Official Discourses'

We have followed the history of the policy through the extra-Parliamentary lobbies and through the constitutional channels of the political parties and through Government. These elements interlock: it would make a nonsense of a study like this to try to completely isolate one element from another.

But to analyse the whole the parts have to be exposed: nowhere is this more difficult than in the structures of the 'State' - itself containing Government but also including many other elements. In my definition of the State I have tried to express its being a structured whole yet necessarily having separate existences inside that whole. In part one definition would describe one of those existences as the actions of the civil servants who maintain the apparatus. I have chosen not to follow Althusser or Miliband here: my State concerns what apparatus exists to plan and to implement the decisions of the Polity - nothing else. But does that mean that ideologies of legitimation and consensus, organised and disseminated by the family, the work setting, the education system and the mass media, principally, are entirely not in any part a concern of the State?

The answer lies in the interlocking nature of a modern society. Hence the State has a regulatory function vis a vis education and the mass media; it also sets rules about the conduct of family life (for example, by making education compulsory). Nevertheless it is still not the State as such which produces ideologies but distinct parts of it: I have argued that one obvious mechanism is the political party. Political parties operate within sets of rules, many connected with negotiation and compromise.

At various times, notably when a political party assumes power, it becomes locked into a bigger system concerned with the exercise of power. The State - and here we will concentrate on departments of State and the civil service - negotiates with the Government on policy, principally in the UK by the citing of precedence - case law. It also may be involved in gathering evidence: the official Committees of Enquiry into broadcasting may be seen as part of this system although they also fall within the power field of Government: both because it is Governments who appoint them and who, within reason, determine their timing.

The language the State uses - and which in many cases spills over into that of these Committees - is that of the legal system (indeed real law may follow, or be demanded, as a result of the Committee's evidence). This 'official discourse' is important because it operates within a condensed code: it is ideology of itself. Burton and Carlen (1979) talk of pre-given objects, tautology and negation as syntactical methods by official discourse. For example

> Official Discourse established the history of both the objects and subjects of that discourse as a natural history. In defining both the object of the discourse and its knowing constitutents primacy is given to the natural evolution of rule-governed practices (p.107).

I want to look in detail, albeit briefly, at two kinds of official discourse related to broadcasting: the Pilkington Committee Report and the debates on broadcasting in Parliament, basically here the House of Commons.

The Pilkington Committee was appointed by September, 1960, after an announcement setting it up had been made to Parliament in July. Its Report was delivered to the Post Master-General, Reginald Bevins, in June, 1962. Since its publication general consent has suggested that the bulk was written by Richard Hoggart, one of the academic members of the Committee. More likely is that the Report was a collaboration between Hoggart and Dennis Lawrence, secretary to the Committee.

Lawrence, a civil servant in the GPO, fiercely wedded to the concept of public service broadcasting says he wrote the first draft

of the Report with its powerful moral argument for public service broadcasting. Lawrence excluded the ITA notion of broadcasting almost completely. He believes that advertising inevitably led to a lowering of standards (RCS I 26).

The Chapter dealing with the philosophy behind the Report is Chapter Three: The Purposes of Broadcasting. The Report was much exercised by concern about the effects of television: but what it says impinges on all broadcasting:

> The choice is not between either 'giving the public what it wants', or 'giving the public what someone thinks is good for it', and nothing else. There is an area of possibility between the two; and it is within this area that the choice lies....This might be called 'giving a lead': but it is not the lead of the autocratic or arrogant. It is the proper exercise of responsibility by public authorities duly constituted as trustees for the public interest (p.18).

The Report argues from this premise that 'giving a lead' will not be what commercial broadcasting can do unless constrained by particular forms of strong central authority. Thus as far as local radio was concerned the Report said:

> The companies' main objective would not naturally coincide with the purposes of broadcasting. In short, local commercial sound broadcasting would be subject to the same organic defect as independent television now is. It would, in our view, be impossible for a public corporation to exercise positive responsibility for the content and character of the service (p.225) (emphasis added).

In recommending that the BBC should provide any service the Report noted that BBC stations would be able to switch from local programmes to any of the three existing networks at will; this was important because it meant a cheap (essentially 'free') source of additional material was instantly available when local material dried up.

But the Report went on to suggest that it was only the BBC that had the range and ambition to provide local services 'for a sufficient part of the day'. It dismissed as specious arguments put forward claiming the immorality of monopoly which the BBC would extend by moving into local radio. The point raised was that in providing local radio only one station per locality was likely to be permitted in any case: thus whoever provided it would be a 'monopoly'.

Why was the Report so against a commercial local service, or at least against experiment in local broadcasting? (the Report dismisses in a couple of sentences a request from the University of Birmingham to set up a local radio station).

One point to be resolved before such a discussion takes place is: to what extent the Committee can be seen as either a part of the State, or operating in its interests? That it is part of an extended State apparatus may be demonstrated by its use of Government civil servants as a Secretariat; by its reliance on Government aid to continue its existence; by the terms of reference in setting it up which include the statement forbidding it to deal directly with the BBC's External Services.

On the question of operating in the State's interests a number of points arise. Perhaps the most important is that since the inception of public broadcasting in the 1920s the method of regulation has been a medium term Charter (or Act) renewed after investigation by Committees of Enquiry. That is, by the nature of the founding of such a committee an 'investigation' is deemed to be taking place. The State may thus appear to be in a relationship of non-intervention in broadcasting while both State and broadcasting authorities know that every decade or so an inquiry will take place with greater or lesser terms of reference. Simply by existing such Committees serve the State insofar as the State wishes to maintain residual powers in this area.

One may however go much further. The question must be asked: in a capitalist society is the interest of the State best served by a commercial, mixed, or public service system of broadcasting? It may well be the case that on purely economic grounds (the selling of goods) commercial broadcasting can be justified.

As we have seen the original State concern over broadcasting was intimately linked to the requirements of the defence services (Briggs op.cit.). This continued to be the case while Pilkington was receiving evidence. And this is important because it is related to the principle method by which the State maintains control over broadcasting in the UK: the allocation of frequencies (Burton's pre-given objects).

In their memoranda to the Committee on this question the GPO says (with respect to VHF frequency allocation)

> In the International Radio Regulations, the VHF band of 87.5 - 100 Mc/s (Broadcasting Band II) is, in Europe generally, allocated exclusively to broadcasting, and provision is also made for certain countries to use frequencies between 100 and 104 Mc/s for the same purpose.....As things are (1960) the BBC have found it necessary to use, with Home Office agreement, a frequency between 95 and 100 Mc/s in the police, fire and civil-defence band (emphasis added).

As the GPO pointed out earlier this agreement by the Home Office (note, not the GPO) had to be given because 'exceptionally in the United Kingdom, only 88 - 95 Mc/s is available for broadcasting' (Pilkington, 1962, Appendix E, p.36).

Concomitant with the allocation of frequencies the Committee were able to see what the BBC could provide in the way of local broadcasting through the local radio experiments the Corporation organised (see p.285). The BBC also existed: its service of radio programmes was thought to be second to none. And, crucially, because public concern was directed at the new medium of television, interest - in the sense of memoranda received - overwhelmingly dealt with television - where local radio was concerned the Committee had to rely on the only radio source - the BBC - and on potential commercial operators; and local newspapers' evidence.

The latter as I have shown tended to favour the BBC because of their fears about advertising; the commercial radio interests were condemned under the same heading that led the Committee to condemn advertising on television: its use as a method of financing meant programme companies were bound to maximise their audience and this, to the committee, meant a lowering of standards (Burton's negation).

Lowering of standards, generally, can become a justification for the Report's conclusion about 'giving a lead': providing a national cultural identity. It seems clear that this is ultimately an interest of the British State system: and that, for whatever reasons, it was the concern of the Committee. Pilkington, then, does not in any ideological sense look forward: it looks back, as far as the original Reithian tradition, then ironically about to be buried by the BBC under its new director-general, Hugh Greene.

The committee structure encourages this facility of review: it does not aid change: certainly not rapid change. We may surmise that the part of the nature of the British State may be explained if we consider it a bureaucracy tempered by competition between elites; both internally and externally (see Keller, 1963).

The Pilkington Committee Report expressed a concern about the effects of a new departure in control: the ITA. The Report, while disguising its true activity behind the rehtoric surrounding the effects of television, is actually about the nature of control of broadcasting organisations. The concern expressed about the ITA revolves around the fear that the programme companies have too much autonomy. Although expressed in terms of autonomy to produce trivia, I submit that the real concern was with the nature of that autonomy.

That this is a primary concern of the State may be noted from the debates about local radio. These debates extended into the BBC where a monolithic and highly centralised organisation had apparently taken a decision to devolve part of its operation into autonomous parts. But for the BBC and the State there was the acknowledgement that the local stations would be tied to the networks for substantial parts of the day; second, that the ethos of the BBC would be sufficiently permeated into the professionals who would run the stations to prevent a lapse into what could be called a non-BBC mode of broadcasting. The BBC's wish to get into local radio may be seen as a desire to expropriate the future of sound Broadcasting to itself and as an expression of immense confidence in the central tenets of BBC broadcasting faith.

Frequencies are important to the maintenance of this cartel-like contract because they have the appearance of concrete fact. For example, in the memorandum quoted above from the GPO to Pilkington a note mentions that in the United States the VHF Band 100 - 108 Mc/s is exclusively allocated to broadcasting. It continues: 'However, so far as the United Kingdom is concerned, such a possibility seems remote' (GPO Memorandum, op.cit., Appendix E, p.36). No attempt is made to explain why this is the case (because defence and other services currently used it). (This is Burton's tautology because it is the GPO and other Departments which can change the rules.)

Why should the State wish public service (ie non-advertising financed) broadcasting to, at least, remain the principle means of broadcasting to the UK? The answer is, again, social control. By using the Licence, the State can control, quite tightly, the development of broadcasting. This is evident from the 1960s although the consistent lagging of the licence fee behind what the BBC needed was a political (ie Labour Government) decision and one which probably led to the early establishment of commercial radio. But this aspect, as has been argued is more to do with the Labour Party's inability to choose a consistent policy on broadcasting, or any policy at all. The State remained opposed to a loosening of what amounts to financial control over what is the State broadcasting system: the BBC. (This is also confirmed by what evidence of Treasury involvement is available.)

The 'pre-set' terms of the commercial/public service/local radio debate from 1962-1970 has been determined by Pilkington: itself the legitimated 'central' outcome of a State and Government decision. The issue would be about frequencies and the debasement of culture through advertisements: We thus have defined a 'scientific' base and an 'ideological' base. One important point to note about the former is that it automatically meant anyone wanting to introduce a commercial system would have to pay money to 'prove' his case thus further restricting interest groups.

Two maverick events cut across this debate: the first - the establishment of Radio Manx hardly disturbs it publicly because of the semi-parliamentary sovereignty issues involved; the second - pirate radio stations - affects it a great deal because it enables a counter-argument-demand and existing freedom of choice - to be used. But the establishment of Radio Manx undermined the State position (ie the civil servants at the GPO);just as the pirate stations introduced a political - ie Governmental - dimension.

In Parliament, irrespective of party, MPs debated within the terms of reference already given. In one sense this may not be surprising because MPs have to rely on published documents of which Pilkington was clearly a most significant example. But the lack of critical awareness exhibited within the debates suggests that the a priori assumptions and their incorporation as conclusions reflects in general a State favoured outcome. To use a term often used in media sociology: the State sets

the agenda for policy discussion more often than not.

In the House of Commons a 'maverick' debate took place on the 13th May, 1965, before the White Paper, 1966, was properly on the agenda and when pirate radio stations were flourishing. The debate was on an opposition motion on broadcasting.

Sir Peter Rawlinson, opening, suggested:

> The broadcasting ships have shown that a demand exists and that an audience waits.....the supreme interest should, of course, be that of the listener.....we believe that the right solution is in low-range local broadcasting stations. These could perform valuable service, not necessarily of poor standard (Rawlinson, 1965) (emphasis added).

This reflects a concern to overcome the 'cultural' argument but reflection is an extraordinary admission of the force of the opposition argument (ie Pilkington). Rawlinson then used the argument that 'the time is now ripe for a change in the fixed pattern which we now have... there should be a wider choice.'

In summing up for the Government Benn said:

> Here is our determination to uphold and entrench the principle of public service....this principle must be reflected....in the allocation of channels....in public accountability without political interference (Benn, 1965) (emphasis added).

He explained that the Government was prepared to consider various methods by which broadcasting could be financed including advertising revenue (see p.343).

On the 3rd March, 1966, a short adjournment debate on broadcasting policy took place. William Deedes, whose position on broadcasting was one of 'cultural integrity' (see p.332) said:

> The (pirate stations) calculated very shrewdly - we had better face this - that they had got both political parties in a cleft stick .... We have not acted because of the persuasive but wholly specious argument that the pirates provide what people want (Deedes, 1966) (emphasis added).

To end this section I want to look at the BBC document, Broadcasting in the Seventies and the two major debates which took place following its publication.

Hill suggested in his foreword to the document that 'whatever else

happens the public service which the BBC provides should be complete, nationally and locally.' Thus the BBC fitted local radio into a monolithic corporation: it was hitherto the missing link. What Hill and the hierarchy of the BBC were anxious to justify was the old Pilkington point about 'giving a lead'.

On local radio the document said, inter alia:

> ...it may prove practicable to provide some medium wave support for the stations... in the long run it seems certain that the radio public will prefer the greater clarity and freedom from interference of VHF (Broadcasting in the Seventies, p.7).

Thus the BBC was beginning to juggle with the medium wave frequency question: we now know (Curran, 1979) that this in part was because they had discovered the disused defence transmitter system which closely matched their chosen local radio sites. By this time they also knew that Conservative Party policy was to introduce as many as 100 stations and that the commercial lobby would press for these to be on medium wave. Ian Trethowan, who reputedly wrote Broadcasting in the Seventies, was a close friend of Heath's (Heath was Godfather to one of Trethowan's children), and would have been well apprised of this Conservative Party position.

To the BBC, however, physical possession of its 13 MW frequencies was vital. Even more so was its knowledge that any information passed by GPO engineering staff to the Post Master-General would be likely to back the BBC engineers. In fact GPO engineers appear to have relied heavily on BBC expertise in refuting the Brown Boveri technical report submitted by Hughie Green's CBC. From the start of the BBC - which was an engineer's station before it was anything else as I have noted - engineering standards have been paramount. Given the high quality BBC engineers always demanded from output channels, commercial radio, which always, inevitably, meant a lowering of standards for reception, stood no technical chance. At times, indeed, it is difficult to know whether, in discussing the maintenance of 'standards' in broadcasting this is not in fact what is meant.

The debate on Broadcasting in the Seventies took place on 22nd July, 1969. In summing up the debate, the Post Master-General, John Stonehouse, said that 'this has been a remarkable debate. It has been marked by an absence of political controversy and by compliments and

congratulations to the BBC on the excellent job it does' (Stonehouse, 1969) (emphasis added).

Paul Bryan's attack from the Opposition was on cost: that without commercial television for example the licence fee would have had to be much higher. He thus attempts to introduce an element not determined by the paramaters set by Pilkington. Yet it was costs which had led the Labour Government, paradoxically, into not raising the licence fee sufficiently: an inflationary measure. But what Bryan was trying to do was to link the two major elements of the 'frozen' debate with the unadmitted third-finance- to expose the BBC's position.

Paraphrased, what he said was: BBC local radio on the evidence of visits I (Bryan) have made is not producing the right kind of programme; this programming would involve a 'community' audience which by definition he means to be a large one; this requirement is not helped by the local stations broadcasting only on VHF; a commercial station which demands a big audience, would fulfill this condition (by demanding a big audience it satisfied the definition of community; unstated is the suggestion that commercial radio would broadcast on MF).

Where the Conservative speakers were able to make their point was in the relationship between the BBC's plans for the cultural enrichment of local communities via local radio, at the expense, as some Conservative MPs saw it, of the national cultural heritage provided by the BBC orchestras and Radio Three.

Here it is worth noting that the heritage attacked by the BBC, as Conservative MPs saw it, relates to that part of the national radio output which had been expressly set up to provide a high-brow (ie elite) audience with its own culture. This particular argument about the BBC's role in enhancing, or at least protecting this heritage, was continued in the other major debate on Broadcasting in 1969, on 3rd December.

This debate was where Heath introduced the 'theory of complementary broadcasting' (see also p. 322); the debate itself was the result of the Labour Government's decision to authorise the next 12 BBC local stations. Its principle interest lies in the fact that it was the last full debate to take place before the General Election and the arrival in government of the Conservative Party.

The question it poses, when the speeches have been stripped of

political rhetoric, is whether the Shadow Cabinet, even at this stage, had fully decided to implement the policy the Conservative Party now had. One account suggests that they had not; that any question of commercial radio had, despite the publicity, a low priority.

One source (Curran, RCS I 9) suggests that in the late drafts of the Conservative Party Election Manifesto there was no mention of the introduction of commercial radio; and that somehow this was slipped in after the Shadow Cabinet had seen what they assumed was to be the final product. If this is the case the point is clear: although mere inclusion in an Election Manifesto does not guarantee a policy will be implemented it does make the likelihood extremely high.

The question is unresolved. If true it would make rasonable some of the theoretical suggestions already made. For the leadership of the Conservative Party would have been aware that in breaking the BBC's monopoly in sound broadcasting they were, finally, putting the whole future of broadcasting in the melting pot (as the Annan Report subsequently amply demonstrates). Such an action would engender enormous opposition under normal circumstances. Fortunately for the Conservative Party, other factors were to ensure the early 1970s were anything but 'normal' (see Hall et al (1978)for one interpretation).

VIII : The Final Legitimation of Duopoly : 1970-1973

1 : The Conservative Government and the debate on the White Paper

The Conservative Party victory in the June, 1970, General Election was not expected (Butler and Pinto-Duschinsky, 1971). With respect to their policy on local radio it left them more with a slogan than a policy: they had committed themselves thus in the 1970 Election Manifesto:

> We believe that people are as entitled to an alternative radio service as to an alternative television service. We will permit local private enterprise radio under the general supervision of an independent broadcasting authority (p.28).

The year leading up to the White Paper (An Alternative Service of Radio Broadcasting (Cmnd 4636)) engaged Christopher Chataway, the Minister for Posts and Telecommunications* appointed by Edward Heath, with a

*The GPO was replaced by this Ministry after it became a public corporation in 1969. The Ministry eventually disappeared altogether when the Labour Government returned in February, 1974.

number of pro- and anti- lobbies anxious to, once again, define the parameters of the debate which would lead to any authorising act.

The precise reasons why Paul Bryan did not get the job for which he had been shadow for five years are not clear. Two possibilities probably linked are likely. First, that his commercial interests in Granada Television made him unsuitable as a minister who would have to introduce commercial radio (Bryan is now (1980) Chairman of the board of Piccadilly Radio). Second, that in some way he had been held responsible for the paragraph in the Manifesto which may not have been authorised by the senior members of the Shadow Cabinet. Equally, it would not have helped his case to be Minister to have made his 1969 speech about 100 commercial stations (see p.334). Nevertheless he was given a government job in the Department of Trade and Industry.

The twin points of contention were: which interests should be allowed into local radio (either defining its content; ie the Musician's Union; or its capital structure; ie local newspapers); and how were frequencies to be found and then allocated (thus defining the future of the BBC's service and more crucially delineating the nature of 'local').

Chataway says (RCS I 18) that the Ministry got much of its engineering information from the BBC; thus the BBC were immediately embroiled in the first issue to arise: how many stations could be theoretically authorised?

More astonishing, he says that he never saw a copy of the one document which could have given him some reasonably independent information - the Urwick Orr Report (see p.335). This lapse was a two-way one; not only did Chataway or his officials not ask to see a copy; the Conservative Party Research Department did not, by his account, send one to him (RCS I 18(2)).

Because of the time and money involved, the frequency argument engaged both the Local Radio Association (who had wanted some 150 stations by this stage) and Commercial Broadcasting Consultants (who by October, 1970, were apparently only advocating 60 main stations).

Two weeks after the General Election Lord Hill, Chairman of the

Governors of the BBC, and Charles Curran, the director-general, called on Christopher Chataway. Hill notes (Hill, 1974) that the only item discussed was commercial radio and that Chataway was wholly in favour of it. Chataway's position at this time seems to have been that local radio ought to have been wholly commercial. By taking the local radio stations, opened or planned, away from the BBC he could fulfill that aim while saving the BBC much needed money (Hill, op.cit., p.161).

This plan became the first axis of the BBC-Government struggle; the second, which came later when the financial implications of the policy were examined in more detail, concerned taking one of the BBC's national networks - Radio 1 - and commercialising it, thereby ensuring a sufficient revenue at one level. This national network plan was closely allied to the Conservative Party commitment to introduce an alternative news and information channel on radio.

But on 10th August, 1970, Chataway confirmed the next 12 BBC local radio stations, first agreed by the previous Labour Government. This, according to Hill (op.cit., p.161) was after Chataway had visited the BBC London Training School of Local Radio.

At this time, however, the BBC was having to revise its estimates on how large a deficit it would have by 1974. In the autumn (28th October) Hill and Curran returned to Chataway to discuss finance. The BBC was predicting a deficit of £48m by March, 1974, and they wanted an additional £1 on the licence fee on top of the increases Chataway had already promised. Chataway's reply was that if this was the case why did not the BBC cut local radio and Radio One. He said a further increase in the licence fee was politically impossible.

Chataway says (RCS I 18 op.cit.) that he favoured a national commercial network (as well as local commercial stations): he thought it wasteful that Radios One and Two joined together for part of the day and that if commercial radio was solely local there would be too great an imbalance between it and the might of the BBC's four national networks and local radio stations. As well as Chataway's own ideas - opoosed by the civil servants in the department who, in general, were fighting a rearguard action on behalf of public service broadcasting - was the new Conservative 'theory' of broadcasting put forward by Heath

in the December, 1969, debate in the Commons.

There he had said:

> In a complementary system, a public service system can cater for minorities while, at the same time, the commercial system is providing mass entertainment (Heath, 1969) (emphasis added).

A week after this October meeting Chataway lunched with BBC governors and senior BBC staff. Here he developed this theme of complementary broadcasting further and was, according to Hill, consierably attacked for it. The BBC 'defence' was that: a) the licence system meant they ought to cater for everyone as everyone was paying for the service; b) that minority programmes cost more and that therefore the Chataway suggestion was negative; c) that local radio (and the specialist teenage-young adult Radio One) was a fundamental part of a philosophically thought-out structure which would be shattered by any interference of this kind.

Hill says that it was recognised within the BBC that an 'attack' was being mounted of fundamental significance. The BBC began to mobilise its publicity machine. On 12th November Charles Curran wrote an article in The Times 'Defending the BBC budget', in which, unusually for the BBC, he publicly identified the political enemy - Chataway - as wanting to reduce the BBC's role: the telling point made was the cost of minority programmes like plays or symphony concerts, against the cheapness of sport, comedy or films (or 'pop' music).

By the end of November Chataway was rumoured to have decided merely to take all the BBC local stations and to sell them to commercial interests. This, had it been true, could have been the result of two pressures: first, the BBC deficit; second the growing awareness that commercial radio might not be as profitable as had first been thought likely. By making commercial radio a local monopoly it could have helped. Equally the stories which appeared in the press at this time could have been 'planted' by the Minister to divert attention from the 'real' issue: Radio One. This view is subscribed to by Hill.

And confirmation comes in a meeting on 21st December, between Hill, Sir Robert Bellinger, Dame Mary Green, Lord Constantine as Governors, Charles Curran, Ian Trethowan and James Redmond, director of

engineering, and Colin Shaw, BBC secretary, for the BBC, with Chataway. At this meeting Chataway said he was not trying to take Radio One away from the BBC but he did want to know if there was a nationally available frequency. This confirms the perhaps astonishing truth that although apparently 'losing' at this stage (before the IBA existed) the BBC and its engineers were still able to manipulate the system.

According to an article in The Times in March, 1971, the BBC had already 'found' another frequency although they did not communicate this to Chataway; this information was announced in January, 1971, by Ian Trethowan.

In January, or February, 1971, however, the Cabinet, which had set up its own broadcasting sub-committee, chaired by William Whitelaw, rejected a plan for a national commercial network - a plan the sub-committee had endorsed. Although Whitelaw was 'neutral' in the sub-committee he came out against the idea in full cabinet, on the grounds, agreed by the Cabinet, that it would unnecessarily alienate the BBC and many others, and that it would take too long to implement. Whitelaw, along with Lord Carrington and Sir Keith Joseph, were in any case opposed to commercial radio on the grounds that it would lower broadcasting standards; Heath's position was that it would increase competition, and ought therefore to be supported.

For the commercial lobby, the election of a Conservative Government had meant a certain knowledge that some form of commercial radio would be authorised. But the activities of the lobby reveal a consistent and growing mis-match between what they wanted and what the Government was likely to give.

The Local Radio Association had a number of meetings with Chataway to press their views. John Gorst, as a newly elected Conservative Party MP, was able to talk with Chataway informally as well. In the Annual Report for 1970, the Association suggest that they had a material influence in persuading the Government not to authorise a national commercial network, to which the Association were totally opposed.

Oppositional groups were more scattered; the Musicians Union and the various copyright organisations were not visibly involved in this phase; as defensive organisations the logical point of their 'attack' was after the publication of the White Paper and the subsequent Bill.

2 : The White Paper, March, 1971

The publication of the White Paper marks the end of BBC involvement, other than in a minor way, with the commercial radio issues. Effectively the BBC had maintained its right to a comprehensive service; it kept its 20 local stations (and was eventually authorised to use medium wave for their transmission, as well as VHF); it kept Radio One.

For the commercial lobby in general the White Paper was a disappointment, authorising only a maximum of 60 stations. But, from a policy point of view and from the structural, value level, the crucial point is that the White Paper envisaged more commercial stations than BBC. For the first time in British broadcasting, the commercial principle was to be the norm. Although 60 stations is what the Hughie Green CBC reports had finally come down in favour of, for the majority of registered companies it meant a defeat. (In March, 1971, when the LRA had 80 members, its own estimates were that there were 419 companies registered for local radio station operation; a number, ie Rank with 27, were owned by a single parent company.)

The White Paper was also a defeat for the engineers at the BBC and the Ministry because it appeared to suggest that they had spent the 1960s lying about the availability of frequencies.

However, in a unique and remarkably written Appendix, engineering 'interests' were able to explain sotto voce how they had been right, and yet so had the pro-commercial radio lobby. Two things had been altered to weight the balance towards more frequencies (or rather a more intensive use of those already allocated by the ITU). First, Article Eight of the Copenhagen Convention had been invoked. This gave the British Government the right to use frequencies already assigned to other countries where a three-month trial did not lead to complaints by the authorised user. The White Paper also envisaged use of the International Common Frequencies. On VHF the Government decided to look into the release of the 97.5-100 MHz band.

The engineers were able to answer any charge against their professional integrity in the second change. This related to 'protection ratios', the power of a signal from the required station relative to those from unwanted ones. The International Radio Consultative Committee (CCIR) recommended protection ratios of 100:1. The Appendix B to the White Paper notes:

> These figures relate to a good standard of service ... Many people will argue that this is a better standard than is really necessary, and indeed at international frequency planning conferences it is not uncommon to accept a protection ratio of about 50:1. A value of 30.1 is considered to be the lowest value that could be accepted in places where the need for new services is pressing (emphasis added).

This lower protection ratio was the limit towards which the addition of 60 more local stations would push the system. But, as has been argued above (see p.278) the BBC in particular had always worked to the highest standards (100:1 protection ratios). The policy, whatever else it did, defeated those standards decisively.

Organisationally, commercial radio stations were to be accountable to the revamped Independent Television Authority, subsequently to be known as the Independent Broadcasting Authority. It was to be responsible for 'transmission of programmes, appointing the companies providing the programmes, supervising programme standards, controlling the amount, incidence and nature of advertising.'

The ITA was given the responsibility because 'factors of cost and speed in getting the new service started argued in favour of giving (them) the task'. There was to be a statutory obligation on the IBA to involve local authorities and other local organisations in a system of advisory committees for local radio.

Income, the White Paper stated categorically, 'will be derived from spot advertisements. No other kinds of advertising such as sponsored programmes will be permitted.' Fears that local radio would not prove profitable had continued to affect the negotiations on both the station sizes and, in the phase surrounding the Bill and its Parliamentary passage, all the interests opposed to commercial radio, excluding the press. But the primary concern of the Government was, as the White Paper said: 'Excessive profits must not be allowed to result from the exploitation of radio frequencies which are a scarce national asset. Equally, the financial arrangements must be such as to attract broadcasters of ability, and to support programmes of quality ...'

The Government had capitulated on the issue of local press involvement. Two factors would have swayed it. First the fact that the overwhelming majority of local newspapers and their parent companies, when they belonged to a chain, tended to be important supporters of the

Conservative Party; Whitelaw was a vociferous advocate in favour of the local press being allowed an 'as of right' entry into local radio.* Second, the buoyancy of the local press could ensure that some of the revenue fears about local radio could be allayed: allied to this was probably a feeling that local papers would aid the radio news services and thereby lessen these costs.

For national news three possibilities were mooted. First, that there be an extension of Independent Television News (This was originally what Chataway favoured). Second, that an IRN be created, organised like ITN (ie independent of any radio station) and collaborating with it. Third, that there should be two competing stations in London, one specialising in news, the other in music. (The last idea may have owed something to the GLC who had told Chataway that they favoured two London commercial stations (see p.342).

The White Paper noted:

> These proposals for establishing an alternative radio service have been arrived at after extensive consultations with broadcasting and newspaper interests, trade associations concerned with advertising, representatives of local authorities, with trade unions and other bodies concerned with programme production and with many other groups and individuals interested in the subject of radio from a technical, commercial or social point of view (Cmnd 4636, p.5).

What never was an issue was that there would be commercial radio of one sort or another. Dennis Lawrence, at that time under-secretary responsible for broadcasting, at the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, says there was an unusual situation in June, 1970, because the civil servants were simply instructed to find out how commercial radio could be introduced: there was no effort at exploring the possibility before finally deciding. (He appears to mean unusual for the GPO - Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications.)

In saying this he is, of course, wrong at large, but it is probably significant that he feels it necessary to remark on this

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*John Gorst (RCS I 11) has shown me a memorandum from Chataway that suggests that Whitelaw had promised the Newspaper Society a 'deal' on local radio, giving them a prescriptive right to buy shares in any station. When John Gorst and Wilfred Proudfoot voted this amendment to the Sound Broadcasting Bill down in Committee (by aligning with the Labour members) pandemonium broke out in the Parliamentary Conservative Party.

aspect at all. One factor about any 'instruction' could be related to the incorporation of a policy commitment in the Election Manifesto for 1970: a 'mistake' of the commercial television protagonists had been that their opponents could berate them for not 'putting the issue before the electors': no mention of commercial television can be found in the 1951 Conservative Party Election Manifesto. Personally he opposed the introduction of any form of commercial radio throughout his extremely long sojourn in the department. In saying there was no choice in the matter he expresses an unusual situation for broadcasting and, once more, highlights the degree to which the policy broke the rules merely by its insistence of a principle external to State ideology.

In fairly obvious ways this is due to the commitment by Heath to expanding the opportunities for competition. By introducing a successful commercial radio system, Heath would be able to demonstrate in the most public way, that capitalism worked; and was fun. There was too a belief in the young; in the need to capture a voting public from 18-30, the same age range that in the 1960s onwards looked like becoming a solid Labour Party phalanx.

But the constraints of power forced the Conservatives into a negotiated settlement prior to publishing a Bill in which the BBC played a significant role, along with Ministry officials, in preventing the Conservative Government from over-commercialising radio.

3 : The Commercial Radio Bill and the Debate in Parliament 1971-1972

From the publication of the White Paper onwards, until the Act became law in April, 1973, a number of the factors external to the legal, ie parliamentary, process, although important, became largely irrelevant to the outcome.

A primary example of this is the activities of the LRA. During the period April, 1971, to April, 1972, when the Committee Stage of the Bill had been completed, the Association engaged in a wide range of activities; it had Chataway to lunch in June, 1971, talked at length with the Musicians Union; tried to get various amendments through during the Committee stage of the Bill via John Gorst.

Gorst resigned as secretary to the Association in December, 1971;

it marks the end of the LRA as it had been originally constituted: this is belatedly formally recognised in a circular from the LRA distributed in May, 1970. By then it was becoming apparent that the views of the two key men involved from the beginning, Gorst and Whitney, were becoming antithetical. It is possible to attribute Gorst's resignation as secretary at a crucial stage in the Bill's passage through parliament as a recognition by him that he and, in a sense, the Association had lost. Their wish for numerous extremely small stations had been rejected. Whitney, on the other hand, considerably more a pragmatist, 'sold out' and eventually took part in the (successful) bid for the London entertainment station franchise. (In 1980 he was managing director of Capital Radio.)

The real battle is already over following the White Paper's publication in March, 1971. The debate on it took place in the Commons on 26th May, 1971. Opening, Chataway said:

> The White Paper proposes <u>something less than a revolution</u> for British Broadcasting ... the proposals contained in the White Paper are a logical, and, perhaps, overdue development of our mixed system of broadcasting... (Chataway, 1971) (emphasis added).

He went on to point out that Wedgwood Benn, in an article in the <u>New Statesman</u> of July, 1970, had said that he favoured taking Radio One and the BBC local stations and forming a new corporation, financed by advertising; this, said Chataway, had been the only contribution by the Labour Party to the debate on the future of radio.

That the opposition had given up much of its previous ground was further revealed in Chataway's speech:

> The Musicians Union has made it clear to me in a recent letter that it has no intention of trying to frustrate the introduction of commercial radio or its effective working ...

Gorst, who spoke in the debate, explains the split between what the Government proposed and the Association's views, as I have said above, a view that some members of the Association were no longer sharing:

> ... the proposal to provide up to 60 local stations will result in our having a sort of macro-regional situation. The average population per station will be between 300,000 and 8 million ... any station serving a

> population of over 150,000 - and in this country it might be a population of over 250,000 - will undoubtedly have more national than local advertising, and from that point of view it will be regional or national in character. It will certainly not be local (Gorst, 1971).

Gorst, and the old Association, were also opposed to the national news organisation - in any form. Gorst's own idea was that in a news bulletin on local radio, local news would lead, followed by national and international.

Brian O'Malley, an MP sponsored by the Musicians Union, denied that the Union had said it was not against commercial radio, and also that the Union had negotiated some form of agreement with Hughie Green's CBC. What the Union were concerned about was the employment of musicians on local stations. He said that if the Bill failed to introduce more specific safeguards the Musicians Union would take 'all possible steps in its power to protect the interests of the musical profession ...' (O'Malley, 1971)

As far as 'needle time' was concerned O'Malley said

> if the starting point is the local radio association's starting point of wanting unlimited needle time, of wanting to use music for 39 minutes in the hour, all off records, that would necessitate a 65 per cent needle time agreement, and my union would fight it.

But he pointed out the prime negotiating body was PPL, representing the record companies.

The Sound Broadcasting Bill was finally published in November, 1971. It was basically a reiteration of the main points in the White Paper. It forbad television contractors to be involved in running radio stations within the area covered by their television transmissions; it allowed a (prior) right of entry by local newspapers. Apart from setting up the IBA and the Advisory Committees and allowing the former to borrow up to £2m for the erection of the first transmitters, the Bill said little: it did not deal with employment of live musicians or attempt to lay down any rules about needle time; these were later negotiated by the IBA (Margolis, RCS I 14).

The Bill's second reading took place on 11th November, 1971; it

was referred to Standing Committee F, whose first sitting took place on 25th November, 1971. The Bill was delayed in Committee for an astonishing three months. The Labour opposition used it to try to delay the major legislation then before the House on joining the European Economic Community.

During the Committee sessions the Labour Group, consisting of Ben Ford, John Golding, William Hamilton, Hugh Jenkins, Brian O'Malley, Ivor Richard, Phillip Whitehead, Gregor Mackensie, were often able to 'detach' both John Gorst and Wilfred Proudfoot (the ex-pirate radio station operator) from the rest of the Conservative Group thereby often splitting the Committee in half, and deadlocking it (and see note above, p.366).

The Bill finally emerged for a third reading in April, 1972, and became law on 12th July, 1972 when the ITA formally became the IBA. The first two stations, in London, became operational in the autumn of 1973.

4 : The Policy Principle

I have not dealt in any great detail with the passage of the Act; in particular I have avoided a close examination of the efforts and counter-efforts, made during the Committee Stage of the Bill, to amend it to the purposes of the various interest groups involved. There are similarities here with the passage of the first Television Act (see p.258). Substantially, the Act derives from the White Paper; it did not provide the principal commercial lobby with what it had campaigned for; it did not satisfy (but it could not, by definition) the Musicians Union and the various protective groups. But as we have seen in Chapter Three, the publication of a Bill is the 'correct' time for all those interest groups with a claim to concern, to begin to negotiate. The Bill signals this response. Whether at the end of the process, the interests are satisfied is less clear: on balance probably they are.

We may see the Sound Broadcasting Act as a victory, on ideological grounds, for the principal of commercial radio; on commercial grounds as an attempt to tread between the Charybdis of excessive profits and the Scylla of financial ruin. To do this the Government - and the IBA -

eventually allowed not local but regional radio in the first stations; the model was that of the commercial television stations.* Further, the political position of the Conservative Party demanded that local newspapers (and, over the possible national commercial channel, national newspapers as well) be protected; this was in part because of their political support. In this it was true to say the Conservative Party had devised a slogan not a policy - despite all the efforts of Paul Bryan.

How far is it possible to say, as many Labour backbenchers alleged, that Bryan forced the policy of the Conservative Party in the first place; in particular, that his '100 stations' speech of March, 1969, meant the Party had no option but to go ahead where before it might have acted more cautiously?

My view is that Bryan's speech, although unwelcome to the leadership of the Conservative Party because of its concrete detail, was neither more nor less than what they intended. All available evidence suggests that the commitment to introduce commercial radio was solid. What Bryan's speech probably did was to speed up the process which an incoming government would normally undertake with its civil servants; in this case possible discussion was replaced by dictation, although as I have shown, there was much to be negotiated after the Government came to power.

The IBA, once formed in the minds of the Government as the authority to look after the new system, and which was covertly in operation with a skeleton radio staff from late 1971, was bound to be cautious in the allocation of the first franchises, not least because of the deteriorating economic position. This is dealt with in more detail below.

The policy emerged as a possibility among commercial operators as soon as commercial television began in 1955, and in one sense from the very start of British broadcasting. It took on more solid form during the Pilkington Committee discussions The pirate radio stations

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*By so doing the IBA may be seen to be trying to tread between its own Scylla of over-large profits from big city stations and a Charybdis of unprofitable small stations. This is effected via the Secondary rentals but we have still to see whether this will work (7 years on).

breathed life into it. Their commercial and listener success ensured a positive Conservative Party response; even more because the Labour Party, throughout the period from 1961-1973, lacked a coherent or in any way thought-out broadcasting policy. From 1966 it is clear a future Conservative Government would have acted, sooner or later, on the introduction of a commercial radio system.

The timing, however, is critical. The Conservative Party had been riven by the introduction of commercial television and the immediate subsequent history of ITV (and its lambasting by Pilkington) ensured that there would be a time lag before any possible extension of commercialism in British broadcasting.

In one sense fortuitously for the supporters of commercial radio the Conservatives lost two General Elections at the time of the pirate radio stations: 'suppression' could be left to a Labour Government, a Government which subsequently fought the BBC, and helped to stifle it through financially starving it.

Retrospectively, this battle between the Labour Government and the BBC can also be seen as providing valuable ammunition to the commercial 'ideologists' who could argue that one organisation in radio was dangerous for freedom. The many outlets of local radio would counter-balance the monolithic BBC, itself in danger of subversion, either from within (Hugh Greene's 'lefties') or without (Wilson's machinations).

Eventually, the positions taken up by these various factions coincided with Heath's determination to create a new policy principle embodied in Selsdon Man and the spirit of competition. In appealing to this principle, and, hopefully at the time, to the new young voter, commercial local radio was an 'easy' option to adopt, despite the undoubted reservations by Party members (including Heath) about a decline in cultural standards. Ultimately, politics prevailed, as did the commercial principle over-riding the BBC's hitherto inviolable right to parity or better in its competition with advertising financed broadcasting.

5 : The IBA and the ILR system

A case study of the local radio policy would not be complete without an examination of its effective implementation; its immediate

result (over a period of 7 years).

It was the Independent Television Authority which was charged, by becoming the Independent Broadcasting Authority, with the task of introducing commercial radio, legally, into British life. It began this function officially on the 12th July, 1972, the day the Sound Broadcasting Act, which had received the Royal Assent on 12th June, officially became law.

The IBA had already been working for this moment. The appointment of the director of radio, John Thompson, had taken place in 1971: Thompson had previously been a member of a small group of advisers to Chataway (RCS I 41).

From mid-June, 1972, the IBA began to issue a series of 'notes' to help anyone interested in bidding for the first five franchises which, it had been already announced by Chataway, would be the two planned London stations, one entertainment, the other news, and stations in Birmingham, Glasgow and Manchester.

In the first two 'notes' issued, on 21st June, 1972, by the IBA the subjects dealt with were 'Technical Arrangements' and 'Composition of Radio Programme Companies'. The Authority had also produced a 'Code of Studio Practice', criticised for its apparent insistence of standards more consistent with BBC methods than 'true' (ie cheap) local radio. This criticism - that the IBA were mistaking local radio practice for the extremely high standards set by the BBC - was to be much voiced by potential contractors in the coming months (Interviews with Neil French-Blake (RCS I 2) and with Anthony Smith (RCS I 4)).

Although the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications had finally agreed that all local radio - BBC and commercial, or, as it now preferred to be known, 'independent' - should be provided on MF as well as VHF frequencies, the IBA technical note says that ' ...the Authority therefore sees the long term future of independent local radio as resting firmly on the basis of its VHF transmissions with medium wave backup being provided to launch the service as a sound financial prospect in the early years ' (IBA Note A, June, 1972, par 5).

It was an overriding concern to ensure adequate finance for the early stations which, critics suggest, led the IBA to overlook a much

more vital aspect: expertise in running a local radio station. In the end only one source was found to provide both: Canadian media organisations who by 1978, had firmly entrenched themselves in the system.

At the IBA there was no real understanding of local radio. Thompson's background was with the national press (he had been Washington correspondent for the Observer). One member of an unsuccessful bidding consortium suggests that the IBA were 'completely unhelpful' (Sissons: RCS I 15); that the IBA is characterised by amateurism and 'tokenism' in the appointment of 'Members' (the equivalent of the BBC Governors).

There can be little doubt that the Members are in an awkward position with considerably less power than BBC Governors over the output from a number of television and radio stations. This powerlessness in what could be described as the 'middle zone' has occasionally led to an over-reaction when controversial programmes have been reviewed.

With local radio - at the time the first stations, in London, came on air - the IBA seem to have made a critical error with respect to the news station. This was the station which was to provide a 'network' service for all the other local stations in the country - much to their annoyance. But in the early days there were no other stations from which IRN (and thus LBC) could gain an income. And late 1973 was a time of critical economic chaos culminating in the three-day week.

The people running LBC at ground level were almost exclusively press journalists with no idea of what made radio news. The station lost an enormous amount of money and was eventually rescued by Selkirk Holdings, a subsidiary of the Canadian company, Selkirk Communications. The IBA by many accounts (interviews) did very little during this period.

Much of the IBA's failure has been seen to stem from a fear of criticism over engineering standards. This may have much to do with IBA engineers fearing criticism from their BBC counterparts and, if true, provides interesting evidence of professional norms overriding organisational pressures.

It is true of course that the IBA was operating in the dark with respect to what was required. It had to balance the need for revenue against Government insistence on certain areas being covered - with a

clear intention to provide 'local' radio to as many people as possible as quickly as possible. Nevertheless although operating as a quasi-State organisation the IBA could have chosen to move more quickly towards smaller stations. Instead it always looked for big money backing based on the highly profitable major suburban centres.

Although the IBA was anxious to specify that, for example, local newspapers with a monopoly or near monopoly in an area where there was to be a local radio station should not expect to have more than a 12.5 per cent stake in that station, they miss the point made by Pahl and Winkler among others between operational and allocative control. For media conglomerates, whether their interests are concentrated in the Press, in television, or other associated areas (books, films, records, electronic equipment etc.), in the end policy is decided by the expertise of those elements on a board who had previous mass media experience, whether or not they had financial control.

The advertisements for bids for the first contracts were placed in September, 1972; closing dates for applications were in November. The selection procedure followed by the IBA consisted of their first studying the circumstances of the contact area; this was carried out in localities outside London by a group of IBA Members and staff in conjunction with the Authority's regional officers. The investigations involved local discussions with applicants.

Next, the Members interviewed those short-listed from the initial discussions. The procedure tended to take about three months (Stoller: RCS I 38 and 38(2)).

Particularly in London where there was considerable interest in bidding for both stations large sums of money were spent on researching bids, and providing a prospectus. Network, the consortium most people assumed would get the London entertainment contract, put in a prospectus of nearly 200 pages costing £35,000 to produce (Smith, RCS I 4 op.cit.). But the stakes, in terms of potential profit, were considered to be very high.

Among those organisations involved in bidding for one or other of the London contracts were: Rediffusion, Robert Stigwood, Watneys, Associated Press, Beaverbrook, Mecca, Morgan-Grampian, Trident Television;

plus a large number of individuals in the entertainment and 'leisure' industries (Interviews with Michael Metcalf (RCS I 8) and George Cloughston (RCS I 33)).

There seems to be little doubt that, given the growing economic uncertainty and the increasingly gloomy predictions made by the advertising industry (gross advertising revenue estimates had steadily dropped to as low as £5m annually) large companies were one way of providing a service which would not necessarily be affected by early losses. To this has to be added the imperatives that these companies were media 'experts' and that the Government was demanding quick results. But it was hardly the 'local' radio the original lobbies had demanded: the centre, once again, was exerting its pull, an example of Middlemas' 'corporate bias' in action.

As a final question, we might address ourselves to three points: why did the IBA flounder so much in the early days of commercial radio? Why has the system, until late 1980, developed to look much like ITV? Can we draw any conclusions about policy from this?

The obvious answer to the first and second questions is revenue: the IBA had to start commercial radio in a period of appalling economic circumstances. Rather than see the first radio stations fail they tended to make them over-large. In this decision they were doubtless 'advised' by potential franchisees.

We also know that the IBA was extremely unhappy at being given the job of looking after ILR and that in choosing John Thompson to run that part of the Authority they had chosen a man who knew little or nothing about his subject. Certainly, early bidders for franchises apparently often felt unsure of what the IBA wanted.

As for policy we might conclude, as with ITV, that having legislated a commercial <u>principle</u> into existence (with its connotations of freedom) Conservative Governments are thereafter anxious <u>not</u> to interfere, even if this means incompetence and chaos. The early years of both ITV and ILR bear this out. Once again, we return to the issues underlying broadcasting policy: that it is more to do with values than with issues surrounding its contents or its financing.

To the underlying question we must finally return.

Chapter Five:
The Determination of Broadcasting Policies:
Notes towards definitions of meaning

I : Introductory remarks

Politics is the art of the possible; broadcasting provides - or seems to provide - new possibilities of power, of influence, of legitimation. Its technology confers the latter in a frame which viewers (or listeners) assimilate to reality.

Politicians, governments, all of the State apparatus, have realised the potency of a technology which enables an individual to speak simultaneously to a whole population. From the beginning, then, the means of organisation and accountability of broadcasting have been of the greatest concern to government and to the whole political system. Political parties face one of many paradoxes over their attitudes to broadcasting. On the one hand a political party would like to gain complete hegemony over broadcasting in order to maintain its views over all others; at the same time such a hegemony suggests an ultimate loss of public credibility.

Because of the limitations on numbers of channels in Britain available for broadcasting, various 'devices' have been developed to maintain boundaries to legitimate discussion; broadcasting (technologically) has lent itself well to some of these, thereby additionally legitimising them.

The most important device has been that of balance, a term which has been taken to mean a strict reflection of the two-party system of government. The concept has spilled over into a number of areas: the Press have been affected by it; it informs much more than simple political discussion in broadcasting; I shall argue it does make a difference to the structures of British broadcasting (as between public service and commercially organised, centre and periphery, professionalism and accountability, integrity (of broadcasting) and access.

Bearing this in mind, how may we account for broadcasting policies, from the pragmatic day-to-day incrementalism of practice between broadcasting and society - particularly the political system - to the major changes concerning finance, organisation and channel allocation?

I have already suggested (p.56) that one way would be to look

at the type of decision-taking. However, there are severe limitations to this approach, the most damning being that such a typology serves only to codify, not explain (see Table 4). What is needed is a theoretical framework into which events can be adequately fitted. I have argued that Talcott Parsons provides it of this framework (see p.101) which then has to be modified, used critically, to be of use in a study of broadcasting policy. The most useful elements of this framework can be brought to bear when a major structural change occurs (see Table 5).

Table 4 : A typology of decision-taking

A.	Government Intervention by Outcome:	Pragmatic Establishment Incremental Technical Nodal
B.	Government Intervention by Input:	Crisis Intervention Reinforcement Legitimation
C.	Control System:	Licence Non-licence Mixed
D.	Ownership: within Private { Free Market / Oligopoly / Monopoly } State	{ Single Media / Multi-Media / Diverse (Media + Other) } operating for, { local / national / international } Mark
E.	Opportunities:	Elite interest Economic motive Political motive Documented evidence Stochastic events Technical innovation Political opportunity

Table 5 : Elements in the formation of a commercial radio policy (see p.267)

Social-Structural	Political	Economic	Social	Technical
Centre-periphery 'tension'		Positively:		
Balance (boundary-maintenance)	Anti-monopoly	Creating demand	Youth,	Wave lengths not obviously available
Legitimation of existing system	Anti-BBC	High rate of return on fixed capital	Housewives, as 'new' audiences	National network ruled out - only one service
	Devolution	'Small' economic ventures facilitated		
	Lowering of voting age	Record industry pressure	Is 'fun'	
'Balance'	Alternative source of political power	Negatively:	'Progress' fulfills a community need	Directional aerials
		Press opposed		Transistors
		Advertising ambivalent		VHF
		New entry into market creates problems		

The decision-taking typology has helped construct what I have called the 'determinants' of broadcasting policies because it draws attention in a structured way to the most likely sets of immediate and underlying issues. The outlined framework of Table 5 adds to this by providing the beginnings of the engagements between various parts of the social system. Here, technical factors become a vital component of input: they provide new information which can be used (or not used) to facilitate change or create inertial pressure against change.

If we take the elements of E in Table 4, innovation is only one of a number of 'opportunities'. We might hypothesise that to reach a 'take off' point into the decision-making environment impled by A, B and C in the typology, more than one opportunity has to combine. In the very early days of British broadcasting innovation (at Writtle) combined with elite interest (especially concern by defence agencies) and stochastic events (growth of home-made sets) to force Government-State attention.

It would not be over stressing to suggest a crisis-intervention led to the early Committees of Sykes and then Crawford. The Reports of these two bodies then feed back via the opportunities and, because they are

involved directly in the political process, are additive to political motive and opportunity.

Again, we might hypothesise that the intensity of pressure to make particular kinds of decision depends on the numbers of opportunity extant at any time. In the 1920s all seven opportunities I have listed were operable. The result is a pragmatic crisis intervention to create a licence fee system of an oligopolistic to monopolistic single media (national) service: this is the BBC (Company). Rapidly a nodal legitimation converts this original scheme into the Corporation.

There is some use in thinking about the decision-taking in broadcasting policy in this way because it assists a codification of the importance (ranking, in one sense) of broadcasting policy. If we move on to the central problem of commercialism examined here we can see that the introduction of commercial television was nodal and legitimating; that of commercial radio however was nodal but reinforcing.*

Although legitimation was involved in introducing ILR, commercial radio added to the crucial change that had already taken place. A reinforcement (and establishment) decision by the Labour Government had already allowed the BBC to go ahead with their local radio. We can therefore begin to distinguish between Conservative and Labour Governments in terms of Outcome and Input of decision-taking.

Conservative Governments have been solely involved in nodal decision-taking, much concerned with all the other four categories; they also are interventionist in determining legitimation and reinforcement of earlier decision-taking (extension of commercialism; establishment of the committee enquiry system).

Labour Governments have been much more involved in pragmatic outcome intervention and in crisis input intervention; where input has involved reinforcement it has been of the existing legitimated system (on a Conservative Government, or Conservative-State axis). The State, nominally, is most exercised in establishment, incremental (less so) and technical outcomes; it tends to reinforce by input.

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*Nevertheless it had to go further (ie a bigger dose of commercialism was involved) because the 1971 White Paper envisaged more commercial stations than BBC (see p. 364).

Having delineated the various types of decision-taking we can begin to grade them: it is clear that nodal legitimating decisions will be pattern-setting and that nodal reinforcing decisions will be pattern-maintaining.* As I have pointed out the use of this typology stops at the position where we wish to move from coding decisions to explanation of them.

Using it we cannot explain why Governments, or individual actors, do what they do when they do. For example, the power of the Prime Minister in broadcasting policy is hard to define. On certain pragmatic issues - for example, the raising of the licence fee - the PM will be directly involved as these affect the Government's standing. On others, technical allocation (which may well have an effect in the long-term) we may surmise the Prime Minister takes no direct part.

But technology creates only possibilities, and the innovation of new technology is itself related to what has gone before, and to the requirements of a society at a given time. Broadcasting, after all, was seen for many years as the flippant element (circuses) in an empire of point to point communication between, for example, shipping and the mainland and, increasingly, for military purposes. Only slowly, and through the acknowledgement of the significance of entertainment and education, did the third element - information - come to assume a political significance in its own right, which has changed broadcasting's history.

It has been a common fault of much discussion of broadcasting that it is separated from its social environment as if it acted outside of the same determinants that rule social life in general. Broadcasting has developed in the way it has because society has changed; the relationships to be scrutinsed are not those between broadcasting and society but between broadcasting, the family, the education system, work, the political system, all within society.

Nevertheless broadcasting (like the family, or work relations) carries normative codes. One question is whether the mechanisms and techniques of broadcasting do not in some way reinforce these values,

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*I do not mean this term in the way that Parsons uses it in his four-function scheme: in fact it is pattern-setting, as I use it here that is closer to Parsons' concept of latency.

differently, possibly more subtlely and more subversively than other institutions. Doubtless psychotherapists would take issue over the relative significance of parent-child relations and child-television 'relations'. What I have argued is not that broadcasting replaces other institutions, nor that it is better (or more subversive) at getting values internalised, but that it probably does reinforce some values (particularly those in the political system) differently.

We might pause to consider why this could be the case. One point, not often made explicit, is the relative indifference people have to politics in the abstract. Such apathy, once considered to be the death-knell of Western democracy is now viewed with more sanguinity as a preventative of political disruption. The system is trusted to get on with the job.

At the same time a good deal of differential knowledge on the political system, held at a distance by many, is provided by the mass media. Broadcasting plays a considerable part, because of its regulation by, and proximity to, the political system, a more 'trusted' source than much of the Press, for instance, though evidence here is patchy.

I have, in passing, discussed the codes in which television, in particular, presents its material and I have suggested that these materially affect the political system where it engages in presentation of its special purposes to the public. Values are involved here, in a double sense: politicians are attempting a particular world-view which they wish the audience to accept. To present this they are forced to encode much of what they wish to say within a 'professional' context. Ironically, 'balance' is one key: people - the audience - may over time have come to associate politics in general with distortion and bias, broadcasting (where not involving politics) as balanced.

It is possible to conceptualise broadcasting policy around the two major political parties' differing approaches to this problem. The Conservative Party, for reasons I shall outline below, concentrates on structural change; the Labour Party on contextural and political change. Neither is ultimately successful but the Conservative Party's determination to inject capitalism into broadcasting expresses a level of values the Labour Party cannot match.

As I have pointed out throughout this study, a vital component

in the history of broadcasting in the UK has been the relationships between the established public broadcast system and commerce: the growing commercialism of British broadcasting needs fully to be explained. To do that here I come to a final set of determinants which I discuss in turn. I have divided them into four main sections, the first three 'public' (visible - although the third is normally less evident); one structural, not normally accessible or amenable to scrutiny. Thus, there are: substantive; effective; stochastic and consensual determinants.

II : The Substantive Determinants

1 : Government and the State

Throughout I have noted the concern of various parts of the Government-State axis to regulate and control broadcasting. The inescapable conclusion is that modern states wish to ensure that ultimately they may sanction output although this is less certain in the case of the United States, and much more obvious in a European context. Broadcasting is therefore tied to defence of the 'extended' state: in the UK the General Strike provides compelling evidence for how broadcasting can be used to control absolute legitimacy in an extreme crisis (even the Church was held illegitimate), the Second World War evidence for the extent to which Government needs broadcasting, and the likely limits to absolute control over an extended period if broadcasting is to retain credibility (the latter being the reason behind State-Government interest in the first place).

Specifically, in the UK early intervention in electronic (or electrical) message transmission came with the 1863 Electric Telegraph Act. Smith (1974) points out that Clause 49 of this Act gives the State ultimate powers of regulation and control. From this point subsequent Acts strengthened the hand of the State, in particular of the Post Office. These early Acts culminated in the 1904 Wireless Telegraphy Act which ensured that henceforth every operation involving wireless telephony would require an official licence.

The 1904 Act was a response to the Berlin Convention of 1903 which looked at international regulation of wireless telephony. I have, note, separated out from the State - Government axis the growing requirements

of international law but these, in Britain, have been held to be determinant in absolutely setting the technical limits to broadcasting. Britain is unusual in sticking religiously to these international agreements and in the post-World War Two period British appreciation that a singularly good 'deal' had been given her by the Copenhagen Convention on wavelength allocation (in 1948) prevented a more sensible debate in the 1950s and 1960s about how wavelengths could accommodate to changing circumstances.

The absolute allocation of these wavelengths lies between several Government departments (I include here the Post Office as for most of the period - until 1969 - it remained a department of state): The Post Office; the Home Office; the various Defence Departments; the Foreign Office (indirectly).

The initial allocations dispensed by international convention are parcelled up by these interested parties. It would not be a strenuous exercise to appreciate that defence has played a considerable part in the development of British broadcasting, directly and indirectly. Defence 'interests' spill over into questions of internal security (and before World War II into the larger issue of Empire communication).

One revelation came in the first World War with the gradual understanding by the military that enormous military benefits accrued to the extended use of wireless communications. This directly effected manufacturers who began to produce enormous quantities of radio sets for point-to-point use, along with the ancillary equipment: valves, condensers, resisters, rheostats etc..

One post-war economic result was a need by these manufacturers to find a new market (this applied to the US as well as Europe). Broadcasting was a solution. At the same time this post-war commercial pressure was manifesting itself in an innovation of use of wireless equipment defence concern was being voiced at the potential dangers of allowing unregulated use of radio equipment particularly the growth of amateur listeners (who, presumably, in the absence of a regular programme, might twiddle the dial to listen in to military communications).

Briggs (1961) suggests this military concern fitted in with Post

Office fears that an 'American chaos' would afflict the UK unless a forceful compromise was imposed. We might surmise, additionally, that the Treasury was anxious lest Government had to pay for a new service. All these factors determined the initial solution in the British Broadcasting Company. Although, therefore, I deal in more detail with the question of technical manufacturers below, it is important to see their institutional position from the start, both as a powerful commercial pressure in their own right, and from the State's viewpoint, a part of the defence industry it has been necessary to keep well funded in peacetime. Radio and television set manufacture (along with the associated developments in electronics, and the provision of capital equipment like transmitters and studios) enables the industry to survive.

In the early 1950s, as I have detailed, there was a genuine clash between the requirements of the domestic market (in providing adequate numbers of television sets) and defence in the re-armament programme. And later still, in the 1960s another, less obvious spin-off, of the relationship between defence and broadcasting, was the use that was made of an old MW defence transmitter network, in providing additional frequencies for local radio (Curran, 1979). The siting of these transmitters has affected where some BBC local radio stations have been sited.

The relationships do not end here: in a national emergency defence takes a priority: the capital investment in studios, landlines and transmitters, along with the knowledge that nearly everyone in the country has close access to radio and television, is itself an underlying element in defence planning.

This interest extends out to domestic security and the Home Office which took direct responsibility for broadcasting in 1974.* The Home Office had long had a close interest because of its allocative control over frequencies assigned to the home emergency services. This has materially affected the development of VHF radio services because these emergency services have until recently retained a much higher proportion of the frequency spectrum than is common elsewhere in the world.

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*On one account because Harold Wilson did not want broadcasting to go to the Department of Trade and Industry - the 'obvious' choice - because Tony Benn was Minister there - (Benn, RCS I 40).

The Foreign Office's interest has lain with the external service of the BBC which gets a direct grant: unusually therefore it affects operative as well as allocative control (this distinction I have drawn here comes from Pahl and Winkler, 1974). In the case of the Treasury evidence of its direct involvement in broadcasting policy throughout is patchy but as I have suggested (p.182)there is little doubt that at critical points (especially post-World War Two) Treasury influence has been significant.

The Government-State axis impinges on broadcasting at all points. These major elements have had allocative impact (and continue to). At the same time, in operative terms, all government departments potentially impinge upon broadcasting output, if only in the sense that they will try to present their version of general government policy for use in information programmes.

Similarly, broadcasting is affected by the Law: that this can have a major impact is illustrated by the Granada Television case (1980) over the use of confidential documents from British Steel; or the BBC's use of film of IRA activities in South Armagh which may have breached the Prevention of Terrorism Act. But these are not determinant in the sense I understand and use it here; they are factors not normally liable to change structures in broadcasting.

Like government and state I have been anxious to draw a distinction between the substantive issue of what parameters to broadcastings' institutions may be set by policy and the daily operation and working out of that policy. By and large I have not considered the intricacies of the latter except where it has become sufficiently important to affect the debate about structural change (for example, Harold Wilson's relations with the BBC, 1964-1971).

Wilson's relations with the BBC lead into the question of individual Ministerial (or official's) power. I have, for example, noted the impact of Wilson, Heath, Benn, Bryan, and Dennis Lawrence at various times during the course of the commercial radio debate in the 1960s (and of others, similarly, over commercial television).

Individuals clearly have impact; again one could surmise that the Prime Minister's relationship to the BBC is always critical (the BBC because it is the national instrument of broadcasting). At the same

time there will be numerous other factors pushing and pulling. Wilson was only able to 'fix' the BBC because the untimely death of Lord Normanbrook allowed him to appoint a new chairman of the BBC Governors.

Dennis Lawrence, implacably opposed to the commercial financing of broadcasting, appears to have been unable to do anything much at all to prevent the early onset of commercial radio (although earlier, through the Pilkington Report he had had a greater impact).

In general we may conclude that even the power of the Prime Minister is circumscribed and restrained (or unleashed) as much by accident as by design. Below him (or her) the real power to affect decisions, as an individual not working in concert with factions or pressure groups, is extremely limited.

The first level of determination, then, is the complex net of structures, roles and institutions which make up the Government-State axis: this allocates before all else. Whether broadcasting structures listen - or are dictated to - is not the point. Here is the base upon which broadcasting policy is founded. Because of the immensity of relationships within the modern State and its residual power, great already in the early 1920s, the Government-State axis acts to materially shape broadcasting despite the growing efforts at independence by broadcasters, and the expanding inputs from political parties and commerce, both potentially sources of countervailing power, additional to broadcasting itself.

2 : The Committees of Enquiry

Before examining these countervailing sources we need to look at the work and impact of the six major Committees of Enquiry into broadcasting; that of the other ad hoc committees (Selsdon and Hankey specifically looking at television; Crawford, at coverage in the 1970s); and the standing Television Advisory Committee. Born from the Government-State axis they are not, by and large, of it, and they have consistently thrown some of the apparently settled issues back into the fray of political, social and economic argument.

The six Committees of Enquiry (Sykes, Crawford, Ullswater, Beveridge, Pilkington and Annan) represent the formal outline of the way in which the Government-State axis represents broadcasting policy

to the public. This is as a matter of great public concern (except in the case of the Sykes Committee), increasingly a matter to do with culture (and standards), social values (and their preservation or destruction), and democracy (and the presentation of political life). The Committees are there to put these matters before interested parties and to receive comment and take evidence. From the start they have generally had something to dispose, something to retain.

Thus, Crawford, Pilkington and Annan all had wavelengths and organisational structures potentially to 'give': in the case of Crawford it was almost a certainty that the gift had already been agreed: the BBC's (as the old Company) attitude in the General Strike ensured what would happen.

A similar negative (or inertial) power ensured that the Pilkington Committee would give the third television channel to the BBC: in this case the performance of commercial television, and the acceptance by the Committtee that there was a measurable (if long-term) 'effect' of television viewing on audiences, prevented any sensible discussion as to why commercial television had a logical right to the third channel.

The Sykes, Ullswater and Beveridge Committees are in slightly different positions: Sykes, as I have suggested, sets a pattern, and neatly compromises between the demands of commerce and the state, centralism and regionalism, advertising and licence fee finance: in the end, and because of the exigencies of the times, state, centralist, licence fee considerations appear to win, while the real tensions are never resolved.

Ullswater expresses the high spot of admiration for the BBC; Beveridge, the low point of indignation. It is often missed by commentators just how critical of the BBC the latter Report is: had all the proposals on devolution been carried out the Corporation would have had a markedly different structure. Both Beveridge and Ullswater agree, however, on the continuance in principle of the BBC, that is public service broadcasting.

Pilkington and Annan have had to deal with commercial broadcasting: both, in different ways, are critical of ITV and ILR, although Annan is able to recognise the element of inevitability which had led to commercial financing. Pilkington came at a critical time for commercial television: after the disastrous beginning and the subsequent search for audiences at any cost by lowering standards; before the system was complete.

Pilkington's attack on ITV made the system change, and tied the (Conservative) Government's hands.

The Annan Committee is different in quality from the other Enquiries because it tries to make functional sense of the present system (and finds the present arrangements wanting). The Committee was given an exceptionally wide brief by a Labour Government anxious to introduce change. What the Committee failed to see was the institutional pressure building up which prevents structural change from happening at all easily, unless backed by powerful social and political will.

An obvious manifestation of this was in the Establishment fight against commercial television, led by the BBC. By the mid-1970s the IBA and the programme contractors in the commercial system were sufficiently dug in to fight alongside the BBC to prevent any break-up of the existing arrangements. The State too did not want change (this may be compared with the Labour Government and the State between 1964-66 when a similar impasse developed).

The Annan Report was widely ridiculed upon publication for being an academic dream: implicitly this meant it had failed to take sufficient account of what already existed, institutionally, and had gone on to blithely assume no-one would have a great stake in the past, the heritage of broadcasting.

Even at the level of culture (as understood in the vernacular) broadcasting rapidly became a part of the cultural heritage (and Reith was determined that it should). Within this narrow frame an understanding has grown up that the BBC expresses a form of middle-class centrist cultural values. To attack the BBC is always to invite (from many quarters) the implicit charge that it is these values that are threatened. Indeed, we have seen how that precise charge was used against those fighting for commercial television (see p. 220).

By the mid-1970s another charge could be laid against Annan from the commercial broadcasting side. This was that the system was 'stable' about the mid-point: public service financed television and radio were matched by commercially financed television and radio. By this time both halves of the system were considered to be expressing a broad church of public service values. What arose was a new part of the

mythology surrounding British broadcasting: where Annan was wrong, said the critics, was in failing to find a new source of revenue, for the British system was posited on separate sources of revenue for each part of the system. This is complete nonsense (if it is stated as an a priori policy). The system has developed unusually in this way because of the impact of the BBC, not because of a stated set of preferences.

The Annan Committee is the most important Committee of Enquiry so far because it demonstrates the exact limits these official Committees have: their real purpose is to legitimise the existing system. Once they step outside of that brief they run up against a battery of powerful interests determined to prevent implementation. (a similar situation has existed in France over Committees investigating broadcasting there which have tended to be violently partisan). A close parallel with Annan is the wartime Hankey Committee Report on television. Here too an effort was made to situate television in the context of its potential and its likely technological development. The result was a virtual burial of the Committee's conclusions. (Additionally, the Hankey Report was hampered by the war-time atmosphere and the extremely limited debate that could take place on it.)

The standing committee which arose from the 1935 Selsdon Committee Report on television development was the Television Advisory Committee. Its terms of reference have been restricted to technical advice. Taken with the mass of technical memoranda submitted by Government-State to each major broadcasting committee enquiry, we may see the way technical limits ensure adherence to the status quo. In a slightly different form this has been amply demonstrated in the radio case study (Chapter Four).

The committee system in broadcasting policy is an offshoot of its use throughout government. The record of the Broadcasting Committees stands highest where they have recommended a continuation rather than a sharp deviation. The committee system itself leads to such outcomes being more probable. But I have included the Committees among the determinants because they are a major formal compenent of the system of policy-making. They do involve all elements of the broadcasting system and their impact does materially alter policy (notably Crawford on setting up the BBC via a Royal Charter; Beveridge, in vacillating over the BBC's monopoly; Pilkington over the third television channel; Annan in failing to recognise institutional constraints and a lack of political will).

Furthermore, the Committees are a source in their own right (and in the submitted evidence) of the profounder matters extant in broadcasting: they are the major debates.

3 : The Political Parties

I have pointed to the increasing significance of broadcasting to politicians and political parties (see p.126) and I have developed the theories of Habermas and Offe in respect of legitimation and the possible crises of late capitalism, and the relationship between political parties and legitimation.

There are empirical factors at work in the relationship between broadcasting policies and the Conservative Party and Labour Party. First, in the early period of broadcasting policy, the Liberal Party was in decline, the Labour Party not yet fully emerged: the Conservative Party (and then the coalition, basically Conservative, of the 1930s) was thus in a physically dominant position for the first (pre-War) phase in broadcasting (the 'stable' phase: Blumler, 1965).

In the UK precedent in law is important: once established and working well the BBC was difficult to attack. Furthermore, any Labour Government would be bound to welcome a medium which had a legal obligation to be balanced and impartial (in marked contrast to the Press).

But we have noted that the Labour Government of 1945, in inheriting and developing a 'Welfare' consensus also inspired fear and an aspect of electoral necessity in the Conservative Party. Fear, because the Conservatives witnessed the growing use of Ministerial broadcasts by the Labour Government as a means of addressing the people directly from the State; necessity, because having helped construct a Welfare consensus, the Conservatives needed to distinguish themselves from Labour. The 'old' party gave a hostage to fortune to the new (Conservatives) when it decided one line of attack could be on monopoly.

I believe that the Conservative Party is closer to the consensus (of necessary as well as contingent values under late capitalism) not least because it can shift its ground to account for change in that consensus. Pace, the left of the Labour Party, Conservatism is concerned more with power: hence its particular interest in broadcasting (the Conservative Central Office were the first users of training

courses in television broadcasting). It is, therefore, crucially bound to the concept of legitimation: broadcasting (until the 1960s) was national: what better way to sell the political party of 'One Nation'? Power also suggests the means of implementation: the Conservative Party correctly identified such implementation in broadcasting with structure not content.

In the late 1960s, again after an electoral defeat, the (again new) Conservative Party could extend commercial broadcasting to help sell the 'Competition Policy', itself an effort to re-legitimate a growing deficit in motivation among the nation's producers; commercial radio also expresses small against large - man against machine, and hence further relegitimation. But whereas in the 1950s the consumerism sold on ITV could mesh with Welfarism, by 1973, when the first commercial radio station opened, the hard radio sell implied a materialist philosophy against any Welfare consensus. Commercial radio was borne on the air redolent with conflict.

At this moment, enters a Labour Party awareness of broadcasting. Are the two events connected? While a consensus exists (Middlemas, I have noted, places it between 1926-1966) broadcasting policy lies in the gift of what I have called the political party of power (after Beer). From 1966, when the Labour Government is in growing tussle with the BBC, a two-party split (with real dimensions) occurs: henceforth broadcasting's crisis is compounded by political uncertainty about its position within the consensus and more crucially its 'selling' of that consensus.

It looks significant but because we are talking about very general issues (of ideology, for example) no concrete statement can justifiably be made. One factor is that although here I have dealt in great detail with political parties and their relationship to broadcasting, the plain fact is that by and large Government (at Cabinet level) is little exercised by broadcasting issues of substance.

I have tried to explain the two great rifts in British broadcasting policy: both follow defeats of Conservative Governments and shifts or fissures in a political consensus: both aid capitalism (ideologically and through advertising commodities): both increase the potential support of Conservative Party doctrine where it deals with 'choice' and 'free enterprise'.

The Labour Party (or Governments) have not changed broadcasting;

they have, where the opportunity has arisen, merely extended it to more of the same, while, latterly, trying to increase direct political control. This latter might be seen as an effort to claw back influence where some inchoate knowledge recognises that the Conservative Party have developed a better, closer, working knowledge of legitimation of this political system, its relationship to their ideologies and consensus, and how these elements create, in a mass electorate democracy, the conditions for gaining and retaining power. This 'understanding' can, ultimately, be located in the mixed capitalist economy and a 'determination in the last instance' for plainly, the Conservative Party supports, and is strongly backed by, the current economic arrangements. The generally conservative consensus followed by broadcasting legitimates this system to the detriment of any other (Glasgow Media Group, 1976; 1980).

I have dealt at length with the Conservative Party and its critically important relationship with broadcasting at every stage of the latter's development; I have attempted to indicate the extent to which policy can be related to internal changes in the Conservative Party.

It is possible to see an inarticulate (or unarticulated) reason for the crushing defeat of the Conservative Party in 1945 as a general identification of that Party with poverty and the unemployment of the 1930s; television is a symbol of consumer opportunity and can be identified with the reborn Conservative Party of the late 1940s, and its rapid commercial development also removes the dangers of a BBC monopoly; in the late 1960s (following another whole-sale defeat) the equivalent damning factor of identification was age, privilege and remoteness: commercial radio is an appeal to the young, to the 'new', and it sells a <u>market</u> philosophy by its location and proliferation.

These are relatively facile statements but they state an integral and vital part of the formation of broadcasting policy. The Labour Party does not innovate in any significant way in this field (until 1978) because until the late 1960s it wants to believe that the BBC is inherently 'neutral'. The centralism of the BBC is also suitable to socialist concepts of planning. Labour Governments have tried to manipulate the system <u>politically</u>, that is, by fine tuning (via appointment). In any case their efforts at structural change have been

functional within the Party (ie Tony Benn and various parts of the left) and entirely opposed by the State. Only in the 1970s, after a period when the Labour Government 'suffered' at the hands of BBC satirists, does the Labour Party begin to move towards a consideration of structural change. (The Annan Committee itself, re-appointed within hours of the Labour victory in February, 1974 (Briggs, TCS I 9), is an expression of this growing realisation that structure may determine function.)

The Labour Party was happy (or happier) with the BBC between 1945-51 because the BBC was familiar (from war-time experiences of Labour Ministers) and monolithic; most of all it was firmly Establishment and Ministers used it frequently to put over the Government Line. (The State did not violently or coherently oppose Labour Government policies of 1945-51.)

By the late 1960s the BBC had moved markedly towards an anti-Establishment line in its more pungent programmes; this itself reflected the growing crisis in the consensus (see Middlemas, chapters 14 and 15). As well, the BBC was faced with competition for audiences and this helped it to decide on more aggressive and competitive programme policies.

Finally, there was television and all the profound changes that that medium has wrought on the political system and the presentation of political parties and politicians. Labour Party politicians may have done worse here because of the extent to which (until June, 1979) the Conservative Party has managed to keep a public unity. The ostensible democracy of the Labour Party is displayed on television as a continuous feud, and encoded like a family soap opera.

How then, has broadcasting policy been characterised for the political parties? I have argued that, apart from its crucial role vis à vis the State in legitimising many of the activities therein, additional and vitally contingent legitimation is provided by broadcasting and its structures to the political system as expressed by the contest between the two main-stream (and generally consensus) parties. This contingent legitimation is critical at a time when an endemic structural crisis threatens the political system at large (Habermas, 1976(a)).

For the Conservative Party the crisis is 'real' in the sense that Conservatism as a philosophy depends on convincing a mass electorate that structural inequality is not incompatible with democracy. My argument has been in large part that by controlling the parameters of broadcasting policy, and by injecting increasing quantities of an ideology of commerce, the Conservative Party has managed to divert consideration of the philosophical contradictions of the Party platform into a bread and circuses debate: how much of each, rather than the necessity of organising society in that particular way. Commercialising broadcasting fills the gap - temporarily - between the demands of consumers and the requirements by the Conservatives for legitimacy, against the odds.

As it happens commercialism fits other aspects of the whole system: it balances (in the consensual sense) public service with profit; left (the BBC) with right (ITV, ILR) in producer terms,* left (or working class) with right (middle class) in audience terms,* it allows private finance to match government subvention; it provides a superficial choice of information. At base it fits into a mixed economy: and it expresses a class-divided society by keeping a more rigid distinction between audiences and source of finance than would be found in mainland Europe (or the USA).

It is possible to see the development of structural change in British broadcasting as strongly linked to Conservative Party efforts to maintain or regain power (not that broadcasting has ever overtly figured in that Party's internal debates as a major determinant of holding or regaining power). Broadcasting was a battleground in the 1950s between the old and the new Toryism, just as in the 1960s it became a symbol of the commitment to a new economic order (fought out bitterly, not least by the new economic proponent, but old cultural elitist, Heath).

The Labour Party, noticing the audience 'effect' of working class (and young) attachment to commercial television and commercial radio, has taken a 'political' attitude, by and large, moving whenever feasible, to strengthen the hand of public service broadcasting, backed

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*This terminology is not to be taken literally but as a conceptual understanding of the ideological 'working out'.

in this regard by the State. Ironically, it was the failure to help the BBC through licence fee increases (itself a 'punishment' and a political control) that has led to the current problems of public service broadcasting in Britain.

The State has tended to back Labour Government broadcasting policy not least because it has often been its author (until the abortive OBA policy (see Broadcasting Cmnd 7294, 1978)). We may surmise that Conservative Government success in pushing through policies on commercial television and radio are linked both to the generally greater understanding the Conservative Party has had in the past of the nature of both the State and power; and the undoubtedly implicit backing of the Treasury, doubtless keen to supplement broadcasting revenue without recourse to the Exchequer. The Treasury, of course, has had its 'reward', albeit small, in the ITV Levy.

The Levy began as a sop to the Pilkington Committee, concerned as they were about excess commercial television contractor profits. Over time it has become a potential Government-State weapon to control the commercial television system. However, the crudity of its effect is such that it cannot easily be considered a useful part of anyone's armament.

Similarly, with the Secondary Rental of the ILR system which is only now beginning to operate. In both cases what one can say is that the Treasury would not be averse to having any kind of financial lever in broadcasting; as in the rest of the State apparatus it likes to have some influence, somewhere.

The Conservative and Labour Parties are substantive determinants of broadcasting policy, countervailing and complementing the State. Their concerns often do not mesh: they are more involved in the issue of legitimation at a contingent (rather than absolute) level with, in fact, their daily credibility; in the case of the Conservative Party a deeper more structural concern, reflected in their organising the structures of British broadcasting, is for political legitimacy in an age of mass electorates, and a tendency towards the interventionist state which has come close to undermining the ideology of the Party.

4 : Broadcasting Institutions

From its invention until the present day the BBC has had a lasting and profound impact on the shape of British broadcasting. Two results stand out: first, that despite its dire financial circumstances governments still balk (July, 1980: statement by William Whitelaw to the House of Commons) at insisting on some commercial finance to help the Corporation. Second, the BBC has determined much of all the programmes standards, which are now on commercial television more clearly oriented towards a similar notion to the BBC's.

Even in nomenclature the BBC's impact may be felt: 'independent' television and local radio means independent of the BBC although the use of the word 'independent' is a good example of 'official discourse' (it may, deliberately, mean what you want it to mean). In the case of the policy introducing the former, the BBC was as instrumental as any in splitting the Conservative Party from top to bottom, and severely denting the unity of the Conservative Government, thereby ensuring many compromises, including the formation of the ITA.

The BBC is a competent institution at working with the system; before the 1950s and the changes in the post-War world it might have been called masterly. Its power lies in its foundation (and the gratitude of the State, that a powerful new medium could have been so helpful in maintaining order, a gratitude that has continued to ensure a good measure of State support), and in its output of the first two decades. To these sources must be added its wartime record and the subsequent international accolade.

Behind the struggles of the early days lies the figure of John Reith 'shipping it green' all through his relationship with the BBC. Reith had a monumental (some would say monstrous) vision of the Corporation, but it was one which fitted into the centralist conceptions of the 1920s and the 'strong' State. What Reith added to this was a moral purpose which cemented the BBC firmly into the nineteenth century value system of paternal democracy and cultural elitism. The BBC's failure to 'see' television for what it was, as much as anything a fatal flaw in the Corporation's post-war strategy, is consistent with this pattern - as was Haley's preference for the Third Programme over television at a turning point in the BBC's history.

But the cement of the old values ensured a compromise over commercial television because it ensured a large measure of Conservative Party support which went way beyond a sentimental attachment to having 'invented' the BBC in 1926. The BBC, by the early 1950s, was a real link with a culture that was shortly to be gone, although it has taken longer in the dying than most would have thought possible.

In the debate over commercial radio the BBC sold the pass by introducing Radio 1 and generic programming but by 1967 its old mission was dead: broadcasting was being democratised in the course of its expansion into more and more channels; and in the continued existence and healthy childhood of a commercial system in television.

The impact of the BBC upon broadcasting policy is demonstrable and public at every turn: the Corporation, at all levels of the organisation, is an expert witness and publicist in its own defence. From its invention it has been a defence witness - and obviously so. It has been responsible for a whole boundary: public service broadcasting, which has moved the debate away from structures and towards output - programming - while never losing sight of the need for a secure source of relatively independent revenue. Another nail in the coffin of British public service broadcasting has been the acceptance by the BBC that from now on commercial local radio will expand faster and to more sites. The bedrock of the BBC's defence in the past has been to innovate and then maintain parity or better with the commercial system.

The BBC has affected policy at a more mundane level through programming and the efforts to push out the frontiers of the acceptable debate - in political discussion as much as elsewhere. The major political blunder here was the original self-imposition of the 14-Day Rule. It took ITV to ensure its removal.

Whereas the BBC's hand may be seen everywhere, easy to recognise in its often monolithic simplicity, the impact of the commercial system is harder to discern. Both the ITA and its successor, the IBA, have changed the shape of British broadcasting, by defining how commercial broadcasting would operate within the Television and the Sound Broadcasting Acts. These initial decisions were important because, as we have seen, what gets started and established sets the subsequent pattern. The regionalism of ITV was not a foregone conclusion and Sir Robert

Fraser, the first director-general of the ITA, has been at pains to point this out (Fraser, 1970).

Similarly, with local commercial radio, an early emphasis on big city stations will affect the future. It has to be noted here that this emphasis (and, in the case of commercial television, the second contractor being established in Birmingham) has to do with broader questions, again largely set by the BBC, about coverage, and the need to get to as many people as possible, as quickly as possible, in order to justify existing in the first place.

Other impacts on policy, from commercial broadcasting, are more nebulous: the question of profits, and the limitations imposed by the Levy (and the Secondary Rental, in the case of ILR) do result in contractor pressure on the IBA. But the commercial system does not have the same penetration into the State-Government axis as the BBC. This can be seen in the way in which the current (1980) Conservative Government has imposed a structure for ITV2 on the existing system against the wishes and advice of, certainly, the five network companies. Commercial broadcasting has never gained the legitimacy that public service broadcasting retains, despite its financial success (or perhaps because of it).

It would be surprising if, once established, broadcasting institutions did not thereafter affect what is, after all, their own future. In Britain, the monolithic nature of the BBC and its entrenchment in a deep-rooted value system has ensured that an unusual degree of power has been vested in a major part of the system to control that system's future.

Nevertheless, that residual power, allied with often powerful vested interests in the State, has not been sufficient to prevent commercialisation; this alone would lead on to a consideration of the structural causes of such change. Before I come to do that two further substantive determinants have to be located: these are the commercial broadcasters and the technical equipment manufacturers.

5 : Commercial broadcasting to Britain

An immediate distinction must be drawn between the changes in government policies which authorised the start of commercial broadcasting

on the mainland of Britain and what I am discussing here: external commercial broadcasting in English to the UK.

I have already suggested that as an issue commercial broadcasting finance never died: although the BBC espoused an ever fiercer commitment to licence fee financing, in the early days of radio, and later of television, a mild form of sponsoring was allowed. It could be argued such sponsoring still continues in the support commercial organisations give to sporting events which are televised.

It would have been surprising had commercial pressures not tried to find means of expression from the early days of broadcasting. In Europe, and in the United States, advertising and sponsorship was proving extremely successful. It was from France that Captain Plugge began in the mid-1920s to broadcast in English to the British mainland. In 1929 Radio Publicity Ltd., was formed to arrange programmes for British firms.

The International Broadcasting Company, founded late in 1930 by Captain Plugge, bought time, first on Radio Normandy, later on Radio Luxembourg. By the late 1930s these stations had substantial British audiences. These peaked on Sundays when the notorious Reithian Sunday on the BBC drove listeners to seek lighter programmes. Large numbers of major British companies advertised or sponsored programmes.

The BBC was well aware of this breach of its monopoly and in various ways tried to exert international pressure to get the services stopped, moves which were unsuccessful. British radio audiences, over a wide part of the UK, thus had ample opportunity to listen to, and like, commercial radio through much of the 1930s.

The Second World War ended both services; after, Radio Normandy was not given permission to continue by the post-war French Government but Radio Luxembourg re-opened and has continued to broadcast to the British mainland. We can fairly say, therefore, that commercial broadcasting has always been available to Britain and this experience must shape, not just perceptions by audiences, but perceptions of researchers.

The complete story of commercial broadcasting, both to and in the UK, has not been told. In part this is a result of the 'agenda-setting' by the BBC. Brigg's massive four-volume history, purportedly of

'broadcasting' in the UK, often looks like an official history of the BBC.

The complete record of the two 1930s commercial stations has not been discussed; subsequently, broadcasting is embroiled in the debate over legalising mainland commercial television. In 1945, however, when Radio Luxembourg had been taken over by the US Army to broadcast to Germany and its future was unclear considerable Cabinet discussion took place about post-war foreign commercial broadcasting to Britain. At that time there was an additional fear that commercial stations, backed by American finance, would set up in Eire, aimed at the British market.

The BBC has always been internally aware of the English equivalent of La Périphèrique: I have cited (p.229) the post-war memoranda suggesting the BBC had always had a 'competitor' (before ITV). By the 1960s Radio Luxembourg was an entrenched (if hardly spoken about) part of British broadcasting. Its old-fashioned format and its reliance on sponsored and much interrupted programmes did not endear it to the new wave of 'pop' music fans who arose in the early 1960s. In any case Radio Luxembourg was within a 'dominant' commercial frame, bounded by the support of the major record companies whose collective playlist prevented much new talent from appearing.

The growing pressure from beneath (from new unknown groups as well as audiences) led to the pirate radio stations appearing all over Europe; although in the end there were many and often conflicting reasons for their being set up, the uninterrupted playing of records, from the new boom, was a major initial factor.

These illegal - or semi-legal - stations (over a dozen were at the peak broadcasting to the UK) were joined in 1964 by a legal commercial radio station on the Isle of Man. Those behind the station avowedly went out to change the law on 'needle-time' and to ensure their music and advertising reached an expanse of the north-west coast of Britain (including holiday resorts like Rhyll and Blackpool). Radio Manx may be cited as another peripheral commercial station - but it had been legalised by the British Post Office.

The 'offshore' commercial radio stations, legal, semi-legal, and beyond the pale, are part of the determination of broadcasting policy. They have set the other parameter: by-passing the national seat of

authority over the regulation of broadcasting they have sought, and maintained, large audiences whose attitude to commercial broadcasting has never been so negative that the BBC, or Government, could count on their support to end (by jamming) external commercial broadcasting. These commercial stations have been a döppelganger in British broadcasting: supported by listeners and commerce, itself able to argue that advertising on radio - or television - is not a bad thing.

In my view, then, we have to add the activities of these stations to Government-State, political parties, the Broadcasting Committees and the British broadcasting institutions as major determinants of policy, in providing a continuous and reasonably successful parallel system to the officially sanctioned one.

6 : Technical equipment manufacturers

In my discussion of the Government-State axis I have mentioned the technical equipment manufacturers. My contention that we can include them among the substantive determinants of broadcasting policy is based on the links these manufacturers have with a number of parts of the State, most especially with the defence departments and internal security departments.

They constitute a part of Britain's 'military-industrial complex' and their survival - and expansion - is of greatest interest to Government. At the same time Government will not encourage expansion of the domestic market at the expense of that part dealing with defence equipment. The best example of this comes at the end of the 1940s when the Labour Government decided to re-arm partly as a response to the European Soviet threat, partly because of the Korean War. The priority given to new defence electronic equipment (radar) meant that domestic television receivers were in short supply (both products need cathode ray tubes).

Similarly, in the 1950s the rapid expansion of commercial television delayed the provision of telephone lines for domestic customers as considerable capital resources had to be put into improving studios, landlines, and relays between transmitters. The technical equipment manufacturers are an intimate part of these issues: for example the Television Advisory Committee was expanded in 1952 to include more members from these manufacturers (and, incidentally, strong supporters of commercial broadcasting).

These companies have since the war supported commercial broadcasting seeing in it a chance to sell much more equipment. Pye Ltd., has been in the forefront of this movement. In evidence to the Beveridge Committee it urged the early establishment of local radio stations based on a VHF system, then just being developed. A decade later the company set up a demonstration local radio station at the Royal Agricultural Show in Cambridge, in rivalry with the BBC local radio 'experiment' then being carried out (all were 'closed-circuit' and not broadcast).

We may surmise that one consideration, in looking at broadcasting policy, is the health and future of these specialist manufacturers, in an industry held to be vital to defence, certainly in the 1950s. These manufacturers I have included as the last of the substantive determinants whose position in broadcasting policy is critical: that is, they set the absolute boundaries of what will be done, and they have a substantial stake in the system.

I am aware that if we take the situation of the existing broadcasting institutions - like individual programme contractors - among shareholders will be, say, newspaper groups. I have not included these among the substantives because I consider that in these circumstances it is not reasonable to see a minority interest within a television company as being of the same dimension as pressure that neswpaper company may bring to bear on issues within broadcasting.

Substantive determinants are in the system; effective determinants lay across the boundary and will be forced to use a more external form of pressure, coercion, persuasion: they have attenuated power rather than institutional power.

III : 'Effective' Determinants

7 : Other Media:

(i) Newspapers: Of the other modern mass media newspapers have had the greatest impact on broadcasting at all levels. From the start of broadcasting on an official basis, in 1922, newspapers took an antagonistic stance, insisting that broadcast news be limited to a time after it was deemed the last daily newspaper was sold. A hidden pressure against commercial finance in these early days would have come

from newspapers.

Such pressure - exerted overtly - was raised in the post-war period over both commercial television and commercial radio. In the former case the concern was at national newspaper level and was directed at the loss of revenue newspapers assumed would follow from the start of ITV. A corollary of this attitude was the way national newspapers got involved in consortia bidding for the first franchises; the close involvement of press groups in ITV has continued to the present day.

Local radio was viewed as a challenge to the monopolies held by numerous weekly chain newspaper groups. It was vigorously opposed by those giving evidence to the Pilkington Committee, although the opposition was not complete, some 'progressive' newspaper groups arguing in favour of BBC local radio. At the same time a number of these groups were registering companies to set up radio stations. The eventual outcome was a compromise forced on a reluctant Conservative Cabinet by William Whitelaw that ILR stations had to offer the newspaper group(s) in their coverage area, the right to buy shares. This offer was taken up by many newspapers.

Newspapers have been a continual and consistent lobby on the edge of broadcasting, which itself has materially affected the content of the Press. In terms of policy the impact has been generally muted but the support local newspapers have tended to give the Conservative Party meant a shift in the local radio policy in their favour. The general result of broadcasting policy shifts has ensured newspaper groups have continued to 'buy in' to the system, exerting, probably, little direct influence but able to cream off profits the Press industry undoubtedly feels would have come its way had commercial broadcasting not existed.

(ii) Cinema: The decline in cinema attendance plotted against the number of television sets in domestic use speaks for itself. The spin-off from this relationship ensured that cinema interests assimilated television and early ITV was dominated by film companies. In the later stages of the lobby for commercial television, the cinema industry was backing the National Television Council, even lending public relations personnel to help it out. Eventually, much like the Press, it rapidly changed animosity for a pragmatic buying into the new system.

Briggs (1979) notes that long before commercial television became

a possibility the attitude of the cinema industry was defensive, Arthur Rank arguing to the post-war Television Advisory Committee that 'the film Industry foresees ... encroachment, partial or total, on the field it has hitherto served' (p.16).

The wartime Hankey Committee, looking into the possible futures of television, had speculated at length about television showing in cinemas but this would not have involved a separate production centre from the BBC, merely a means of spreading the service more quickly. Already, though, most opinion had concluded the future of television was in the home.

When ITV arrived numbers of film personnel joined: in part the commercial system had to recruit from this area because BBC personnel were early on reluctant to risk a secure job for an insecure one. Furthermore, the BBC would have been unlikely to take back 'traitors' who joined the 'competitor'. But the readiness with which film technicians and executives joined commercial television is evidence that the industry had read the writing on the wall.

The direct impact of the cinema and film industry on broadcasting policy has been negligable: cinema has until recently catered for the poorer among the mass audience and it has generally been held to be even more flippant than the worst of entertainment broadcasting. Its real impact lies in the negative sense: any Government introducing commercial television would know that in a dying industry was a potent source of employable technicians who would not strain the existing system. It is a marginal point but in the context of the 1950s, and the fierce arguments of the time, another small element in favour of commercial television.

(iii) Record Industry: The record industry has had a considerable impact on radio policy insofar as it used its residual power as provider of programme material to delay commercial radio. The recod companies have sought to control output and the extent to which any radio station may play ad lib a disc, by use of copyright laws and via various protective societies (Phonographic Protection Ltd.; Mechanical Copyright Protection Society) (see Frith, 1978). In these moves, designed as much as anything to direct broadcasting (and indirectly therefore, the buying public) into plugging what the industry wants to sell, the companies have been supported by authors and musicians (via the Performing Rights Society) and crucially, the unions, mainly the Musicians'

Union, anxious to maintain a high level of live performance.

But the record industry is riddled with contradictions between the need to sell any record (on the basis it might become a 'hit') and the demand to market particular products in order to ensure they are successful (through repetition and 'hype'). Much of this production and marketing takes place in the context of a 'creative' (in the loosest sense) and thus anarchic setting.

In the 1960s the youth 'revolution' cut across the production and marketing routines to find outlets in uncontrolled sources: beat clubs, university 'gigs' and so on. Plugging found a potent new source in pirate radio: the record industry moved with one hand to stifle these stations while with the other kept on providing discs for air-play.

Radio Manx broke the back of the old system by ignoring a needle-time standing agreement with the BBC. The latter, along with the protection societies, lost a law suit with Radio Manx and the path was opened for commercial radio playing discs ad lib (or nearly so).

The record industry's impact on broadcasting policy has been negative, operating through copyright law, but ambiguous at the operative level, caught within a self-imposed contradiction. Nevertheless, commercial radio stations operate a playlist, suited to these companies (and to advertisers who prefer safe monotonous music to the avant garde). In an effort to get back some of its audience from commercial radio BBC Radio 1 has now (July, 1980) dropped its playlist system.

8 : Advertising agencies and miscellaneous interest groups

The accusation, made by various authors, that J Walter Thompson was directly behind the arrival of commercial television in the UK is not borne out, although it was well placed to have influence. In general advertising agencies have been lukewarm towards the extensions of commercial broadcasting, seeing in it much lower revenue possibilities than have proved to be the case (but see Wilson, 1961). Perhaps the final word is that although the bigger American advertising agencies can be said to get a great deal of their profit from television advertising the very potential of this led them to underplay their interests for fear that overly lobbying would rebound against them. Again, this suggests they did not have the influence ascribed them.

This is not easy to account for but may be rooted in cultural prejudice about how to sell to the British. Commercial financing of broadcasting has tended to be associated most in the public mind with the US - Americanisation of British culture is a charge people fly from. The way in which British broadcast advertisements have developed may be a conscious effort to distinguish the hard sell thought of as an American norm with the soft sell, literary, and - unusually - often funny, advertising prevalent in British broadcasting; equally, it may just work better in a European context of non-competitive advertising.

It would be wrong to see any of these groups as monolithic (or even unchanging) in outlook. Events change opinion and certainly as far as commercial television was concerned advertising agencies appear, in some cases, to have realised the potential. But caution has often been the watchword.

For example, in 1946 the Institute of Incorporated Practitioners in Advertising concluded that 'an essential part of the argument for commercial broadcasting (is) that no satisfactory case against it has ever been stated' but the pamphlet in which this appears goes on to state such a case. The overall tone is cautious desire for some form of commercial radio (IIPA, 1946).

Twenty years later the Incorporated Society of British Advertisers concluded there was a case for <u>local</u> radio advertising but only in the context of mixed community programmings (ISBA, 1966).

Other interest groups cover an enormous range: the list of the memoranda supplied to the various broadcasting committees is a testament to this broad social concern with broadcasting. I have included them under this heading because, as with advertising, their impact on policy has by and large been marginal - certainly as far as major change is concerned.

This applies, as we have seen, to the major commercial lobbies who have been disappointed at the extent to which an original full-blooded proposal for commercial financing has got progressively watered down as it makes its way through the system.

Advertising interest is effective only insofar as it constitutes further peripheral pressure, or where it can be directly cited (by using examples of Radio Luxembourg); other interest groups shade away

into an area of no pressure at all.

It could be reasonably argued that all interest groups (and here one would have to include the Churches, and Educational pressure groups) create a climate of one kind or another: I deal in more detail with this below because what I have tried to separate out under these heading is levels of determination: while on the one hand we can isolate substantive elements as a material force, as the list grows more diffuse, away from institutions and their bases of power, we move into the area of values: in broadcasting (and therefore equally at the meta level, in policy dealing with broadcasting) these may be critical, but in a different way.

9 : Media trades unions

Here I have made a distinction between the institutions involved in a collective representation of members rights and the growth of media professionalism with which I deal below.

Since the Second World War trades unions dealing in the media have grown in strength. The principal ones of concern here are the Association of Broadcasting Staffs (the BBC 'house' union); the ACTT (whose broadcasting members largely work in commercial broadcasting); the NUJ; Equity; and the Musicians Union.

Of these only the last named, the Musicians Union, can be identified with a particular lobby in policy terms. Commercial radio was watched by the MU with suspicion on the grounds that if it were to make money it would have to concentrate on records and deny much live performance. This union was thus allied to other protective organisations anxious to limit (if unable to prevent) any commercial radio use of records and pre-recorded music.

But their impact on policy-making was slight; although consulted it was clear from the decision by the Conservative Government on introducing commercial radio, that any solid negotiations could only take place after the policy had been settled. The MU appears from this stage to have concentrated on informal negotiations with potential owners of station franchises and with the IBA rather than lobbying within the Government. When a Labour Government had been in power one 'MU' MP, Brian O'Malley, does seem to have had some influence but as the Labour

Government were committed to the BBC version of local radio this would not have mattered significantly.

Union influence, until 1979, grew alongside Government power but in the media generally has been muted until the mid-1970s. The recognition of the potential broadcast unions have for disrupting schedules seems to have arisen at the time when the BBC first became unable to match commercial broadcasting wages: it was economic, therefore, and not political, although the ACTT has long been a militant, political, union.

The inescapable conclusion is that unions' influence over broadcasting policy has been slight despite the growth of their general influence on broadcasting. This influence, however, is negative economic power, not positive political power.

10 : Media 'professionals'

Broadcasting, in introducing legal requirements of balance and fairness, has lent itself to ideas of professionalism in presentation, particularly of news. The information programmes are represented by broadcasters as 'mirrors' of reality: the professional broadcaster is the man who knows how to angle that mirror in the clearest fashion between subject and audience.

Over time, and especially since the coming of mass television viewing, this viewpoint among the makers of programmes, has had a material affect on broadcast policy. It has to be set fully in context by the incorporation of notions of objectivity among programme makers with those of innovation and creativity and the impact of a mass audience which has a choice between channels.

More than anything else competition between the BBC and ITV altered the face of British television. It was the coming of ITN, which needed to have an immediate audience appeal, that forced BBC TV to look at its news presentation. ITN did ensure, by its mere presence, that the Government hesitated to take over broadcasting during the Suez crisis. The two organisations, BBC and ITV, were together able to abrogate the 14-Day Rule. It was Granada TV, another commercial company, which made a breakthrough in presenting General Elections to television audiences.

Subsequently the BBC took back the initiative in developing

political satire and the 'political' play, two aspects of British broadcasting in the 1960s which affected both Labour and Conservative Party attitudes towards broadcasting institutions, and which led to Tony Benn's famous remark that broadcasting was too important to be left to the broadcasters.

Much earlier, it can be argued, the BBC's sole definition, within narrow middle-class elitist attitudes, led to the post-war dissatisfaction with the Corporation, including, ironically, accusations of 'left-wing' bias, which are accounted for by equating them to paternal and centralist themes.

But the overriding impact of media professionalism has been the growing insistence on independence; on the right to make programmes according to a 'private' code of conduct not permissable of alteration by any other group, especially political groups or pressures. It is this movement which has led to the growing clashes between the political system and broadcasting.

The codes of programme production - and again television is the main 'culprit' - have led to politics being couched in terms alien to politicians, and to a stress on the need for entertainment rather than debate. In policy terms these issues do not often surface as requirements for structural change (although one may instance Hugh Greene's anti-Establishment BBC of the 1960s as having a negative effect on the Conservative Party who might ordinarily have helped to defend it against the Labour Government*), most often the clash between broadcasters and politicians here is manifested in daily movements, what I have dubbed 'incremental' policy.

These result in policy none the less. What happens here though is a more equal battle between broadcasting institutions and political organisations (largely the political parties). At stake is public opinion and the climate of consent - affecting the limits to broadcasting too, note, often expressed in the language of good taste.

Since broadcasting started, the efforts by its employees to become autonomous professionals, with concomitant public status, has

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*For example, a very senior Conservative politician described Greene to the author as 'a crook and a shit'.

resulted in the greatest degree of separation between the Government-State axis and broadcasting. It is a positive continuous struggle to define an institutional position where none before existed and professionalism is the only suit of clothing easily available to broadcasters to protect their nakedness against charges of arbitrary conduct.

To reinforce their claims broadcasters have used various rhetorics: of public service; of an Estate (as with journalism in general); of entertainers (by-passing the issue of responsibility); of the holders of a mirror (you see the truth even if you do not like it).

Their impact on broadcasting policy is substantial - outside the measurable and measured substantive determinants. Broadcasting professionalism, like the institutions it enfolds, has grown topsy-turvy, and despite the efforts of policy to keep it fully under control. But media professionalism cannot be said to be substantive in its determinations; it is not, by and large, concerned with policy, content to develop a creative distance away. Political programme-makers, closer to the apparatus of the State, are more aware, more concerned: they form daily policy by precedent. Even so the advances towards autonomy have come more from structural change than from incrementalism during programme making. At the structural level broadcasters are insufficiently concerned. What we can see is the shading of the interests and impact of the professional broadcaster into the problematic area of innovation and values.

IV : Stochastic Determinants

11 : Innovations and inventions

In this final section dealing with material determinants I want to deal with those factors which may be held to have some impact on broadcasting policy without their being able in any way directly to influence it.

To take invention first, we can see how the development of physics aided the invention of telegraphy and then the telephone; from this developed wireless telegraphy and telephony. Each development here was in step: point to point communication. The innovation was in the

recognition that a demand could exist for a generally broadcast signal: a message aimed at a mass public audience rather than at an elite private one.

The development of radio communications followed the pre-existing social pattern and was assimilated into that. It had direct military potential as well as commercial and the military-commercial axis ensured its early survival. The turning point comes at a point when a market for equipment much in excess of anything the military - or State - can provide is required and recognised.

Thereafter the development of wireless with pictures is foreshadowed, with a similar emphasis on broadcasting. As Houlton (unpublished doctoral thesis) asserts, new media tend to evolve within the parameters set by the next nearest model: television parallels radio (and in the UK for the first twenty years is given to the same institution to develop).

The initial social innovation (the only one) was to direct Government-State attention to the social force implicit within the power to reach an enormous audience simultaneously. Much experimental effort has gone into improving this capacity (culminating in satellite broadcasting across continents). Simultaneously with the explosive growth of all areas of radio communication has grown up efforts to reduce interference, increase the numbers of available channels, reduce the size of broadcasting equipment and improve recording techniques.

Each of these efforts has had an impact on policy by extending the total range of possibilities. For example, the upgrading of broadcasting in the electro-magnetic spectrum has increased the number of channels and led to more broadcasting (or at least a pressure on empty channels to fill them with something). VHF broadcasting for example, a response to problems of interference, aids this expansion.

Reduction in size of broadcasting receiving equipment makes it cheaper (and in the 1960s led to a teenage market for cheap radios for which programmes acceptable to the young had to be provided). Reduction in size of recording and transmitting equipment has led to the penetration of broadcasting into all areas of social life, and to a growing emphasis on 'reality', 'television verité', especially in live

news coverage. Improved recording techniques, especially in video, mean that broadcasting ceases to be transient and can be viewed over and over again, discussed much like printed media.

There are continually changing points of potential impact on policy here, many of them not immediately evident. The most recent developments in cable television are examples of how a Government may find itself unable to make policy because the social implications are unclear. It was not the innovation of cable television in the North American continent that led to soft-pronography being readily available on selected channels; the change in social climate preceded the technology, a part of which was then diverted into this 'service'.

Invention tends to precede innovation in broadcasting but the innovation may well be channelled into existing models of use and towards established models of behaviour.

12 : Foreign broadcasting systems

For British broadcasting the dominant foreign model is US broadcasting, followed in some instances by Dominion models. As I have suggested, for Europe, the 'pure' commercialism inherent in US broadcasting is overwhelmingly negatively received, as an example to abhor, not laud. The very beginning of British broadcasting is crystallised into an insistence on regulation and control by the British State, notably the Post Office, following the visit to the United States by the Post Office official, F J Brown.

From this point on US broadcasting is represented as an alien, a potential 'invader' of public service broadcasting via commerce: as Americans speak English their use of broadcasting has been all too obvious to various British observers although not all were upset by what they heard (see p.235). Television has materially changed the position (as opponents of commercial television feared it would) by bringing products of American television directly onto British screens.

On the other hand, as time has passed increasing quantities of British television programmes have made their way back to the States and have created an awareness among numbers of generally influential (because more middle class and professional) Americans that all television does not have to be poorly made or aim for a lowest common denominator

of taste.

For Europe as a whole we can see that the initial debates about the meaning of commercial broadcasting took one pole as being the American broadcasting system, the other being represented by the BBC. The introduction of commercial television into the UK was of lasting European significance because it smuggled American cultural values into the heartland of public service broadcasting.

More generally, 'commercialism' has consistently established itself in stronger and stronger terms since 1955 throughout Europe, as I have shown, based both on the overt requirements of broadcasting in financing itself, and the covert needs for inputs into the legitimation system.

In the UK, Dominion (Canada, Australia, South Africa) models have occasionally been cited as examples of the benefits of a 'mixed' system between pure public service broadcasting and pure commercial finance. When commercial local radio began, and faltered, Canadian finance rescued it in large measure. Prior to this it had been a Canadian, Roy Thompson, who put in the only bid for the lowland Scottish television franchise which eventually became Scottish Television.

Other foreign models which have surfaced in recent years are the Dutch (with their subscription finance system) and the French and German. None has materially affected policy. As with the culturally close American and Dominion models it is hard to pin down any precise major impact - with two exceptions.

Sponsoring was probably excluded from British commercial television because of the reported experiences of the United States; in particular there were fears about commercial censorship of programmes or covert propaganda. The existence of a 24-hour London-based news station within the commercial radio system may be directly due to the visit paid by Christopher Chataway, Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, to the WINS radio news station in New York, in 1970.

What is clear is the growing inter-dependence of broadcasting across frontiers and the growing recognition that modern technology creates a set of broadcasting possibilities national boundaries - and therefore national regulation and control - restrict.

The early fears of US broadcasting swamping British (or European) broadcasting were not realised. These fears may partly be traced back to what happened in the film industry and also possibly to European (and especially British, because of the common language) concern about post-war US economic imperialism. The resilience of British broadcasting to the assumptions about broadcasting so different at the heart of US broadcasting can be ascribed to the much greater centralism and State involvement in broadcasting evident in the UK.

13 : Social and economic change and the audience

I end this section on stochastic determinants by painting with the broadest brush-strokes. As I point out in my introductory remarks it is often forgotten by commentators on broadcasting that the organisations they seek to explore are a part of society and are as ultimately affected by it as they could ever dare hope they affected social life. Broadcasting has had a short life so far but it has been a witness to substantial social and economic change in British society.

The impact of public opinion on broadcasting policy is as hard to determine as the slow (and not so slow) upheavals in the total society. It has been used as we have seen to develop opposite positions on commercial television: in fact the general public has been content to be fed, supinely, with the fare broadcasters provide and within the structures created by the State. Lippmann's picture is therefore too optimistic. (Lippmann, 1922); developed for 'enlightened' readers of the Press it could never be expected to penetrate the more cynical reality of broadcasting, couched so often as it is in images of entertainment. On the other hand Boorstin (1961), among many pessimistic writers of the 1960s, is too overwhelmed by that rhetoric of entertainment. The audience remains by and large content but important (if only to keep outside any major debate on policy); a residual factor which has determined the extent of broadcasting coverage (a licence fee system demands complete availability) and the rate of that coverage.

The audience is of course not a singular: increasingly, and with the growing sophistication of viewing (and listening), recognition has been accorded that there are many diverse audiences. Growing channel availability has taken this into account. The growth of local radio is attributable to an acknowledgement that the radio audience might be

breaking up, but it is important to note that this came from the centre, from Government-State and the broadcasters (notably, the BBC; the commercial lobby picked up this point later), not the audience.

One example where audience pressure did arise from below is the case of pop music and youth: in part the youth market created was created by the pirate radio stations: when they went the Government put considerable pressure on the BBC to create Radio 1.

This is a good example, though, of a change in society and in the economic system, at this stage (the mid-1960s) creating affluent young people. Society of the 1960s was changing in many ways, ways which the forefront of broadcasting reflected, thereby bringing subsequent opprobrium on itself (and helping to create a counter pressure via Mary Whitehouse and the National Viewers and Listeners Association).

Mary Whitehouse was among the first in the audience to decide that viewers and listeners had rights; since 1964 the movement has grown apace but it is no different in kind from the nascent consumer movement in other areas, although understandably it tends to attract more attention because it is cast within the frame of the mass media.

My point is that much to do with broadcasting at this level is an extension of general social trends but because broadcasting is so public it appears very often to be leading or even creating these trends. Broadcasting was born of a turbulent time in Britain's economic and social history; understandably it was rapidly expropriated by the incumbents of the old hierarchies. Broadcasting as an institution is neither inherently authoritarian nor democratic but we have witnessed since its birth a struggle for the legitimation of, if not authoritarianism, elitism against a wider social trend towards economic, political and social democracy.

Broadcasters, needless to say, take sides in this struggle and have an impact which goes well beyond that of the Press, because of the seeming natural nature of their product, and because of its instantaneity and simultaneity.

But all this technological wizardry (for that, at heart is what it is) can mystify and confuse. The material determinants of broadcasting are visible, as I have shown, but they shade off into the larger economic and social issues of the times. These broad issues

determine in a different way: they shape and pattern; they are not the 'pullings and pushings' of Reith's personal nightmare but the limits outside of which broadcasters, broadcasting, and broadcasting policy will go at its peril.

Why broadcasting does not break these boundaries except in rare acts of creative or political defiance (and why broadcasting policy stays firmly within them) is the final question. To answer what lies beyond the material determinants we have to confront the issues of social values; in the case of British society and broadcasting policy we come, at last, to consensus and legitimation.

V : Consensus in Society : Broadcasting Policy and Legitimation

The 'material' determinants outlined above are in a constant interplay: at critical moments the probability of dominance by the substantive factors is higher than dominance by say stochastic ones. This is not to say that there will not be occasions when the latter exert a greater influence or change events - help to create policy, both macro-structural and micro-incremental.

But besides these elements, which may be discerned in public fashion, there lies a deeper 'meaning' structure which plays a part in the overall formation of policy. I have attempted to identify this hidden level with concepts of consensus; and to see structural change within broadcasting as an interplay between a necessarily shifting but 'absolute' consensus and the legitimation of the 'contingent' part of it: this I have argued is about the requirements of power by various elites which make up the political system.

The definitions I have been using now need to be spelled out before a conclusion can be reached. What follows is a detailed exposition of the two central terms of theoretical praxis, consensus and legitimation, which have run throughout this study, and their location within the changes in broadcasting policy.

Consensus may be divided between agreement on those social values which any society that is not in process of destruction must have; and those which rely on the differential holding of power (and may be found in a class-divided society) values not as absolutes but as prevailing definitions of reality. The former consensus I have defined as

necessary or absolute, the latter as contingent.

My argument here has been that a contingent consensus can be fought over (in this sense it approaches ideas like hegemony): it is that part of a consensus that may or may not exist at any time. In its absence societies still cohere but factionalism and overt class struggle rupture the fabric of social life. Contingent consensus depends on a 'settlement' between socially significant partners but is not static; the relative strength of the bargaining groups will determine how this form of consensus is constructed and how it operates.

Necessary (absolute) consensus is also shifting but it operates at a deeper level of social meaning (ideas about the family, for instance, lie here). There is a relationship between contingent and absolute consensus insofar as the former is permeated by the latter but under conditions of advanced capitalist development (to take the example here) contingent consensus can bear upon absolute consensus.

This is particularly true of broadcasting as it has developed in the UK because broadcasting has dealt in the coinage of social values, in the absolute sense, under the rubric of public service broadcasting. The early emphasis on commitment to social values at the point when the fabric of British society was partially torn has cemented the institutions of broadcasting into both necessary and contingent consensus: at the same time, therefore, changes in contingency (what might otherwise be called the imposed outcome of ideology) act on the absolute consensus, not directly, not immediately, but as, to use the ringing tones of the Pilkington Report, 'that of water dripping on a stone'.

The history of broadcasting in the UK has paralleled the development of a remarkably enduring contingent consensus. Beginning in the first World War it enabled Trades Unions to abandon an industrial struggle couched in the language of class conflict for a negotiated seat in the general State apparatus (within what I have tended to call the State-Government axis). The struggle to form this consensus reached its apotheosis around 1926 and culminated in the General Strike.

The BBC as a public body grew from this conflict and was an expression of its resolution, in the sense that the BBC expressed both absolute and contingent consensus. The critical point is that it integrated a newly formed concept of 'balance' and 'impartiality' at the contingent level with deeper more socially significant expressions

of the nation and social solidarity.

It need not be emphasised that the BBC was not the only instrument of this purpose nor that oppositional, non-consensual, aspects of British society were always prepared to challenge this version of the status quo. As the contingent consensus has changed, however, so the structures of broadcasting have tended to change; a recognition by what I have designated as the political party of power - the Conservative Party - that they needed public help in their efforts to keep this contingent consensus within boundaries set by themselves.

To these definitions of consensus we need now to match another - of legitimation - and of the relationship of this to ideology and to the issue of 'crisis'.

Ideology I am effectively defining as a form of contingent consensus - imposed via the legitimating effect of, for example, broadcasting through the mechanics of power. Legitimation is the mechanism by which this ideology is made acceptable to the public. The concept of legitimation crisis began with an examination of the Government-State axis and the extent to which the demands of the population in a democracy cannot be met by the political system, trapped into continuous over-bidding for public support.

I have suggested here, with Claus Offe, that the critical part of the equation is the modern political party and its need for public (individual) support. Broadcasting can fill part of what Habermas calls the 'motivational' shortfall because it substitutes, inter alia, information for action, thereby seeming to complete the relationship between democracy and the party system. This shortfall has constantly to be satisfied and over time more and more input is needed.

Legitimation comes from two sources. First, it can be supplied from the economy via, for example, a consumer-led boom. Information about this is supplied from advertisements and hence there is a demand (and a growing one) for the commercialisation of broadcasting. Second, it can be supplied from localism: that is, an injection of local political support rather than the overly abstract national symbolic 'ritual' support. This local support is provided by access to broadcasting. Local broadcast media are able to fulfill this role better than national because a) they enable more channels and b) because a

local identity is easier for the public to appreciate and evaluate and it appears to express a 'real' power of community over the 'corporate bias'.

But a 'problem' in British broadcasting is the centralism inherent in the system. The solution has been to give local broadcasting to the existing and overwhelmingly centralist broadcasting organisations, thereby creating a number of the contradictions I have mentioned. Annan's proposal for a Local Broadcasting Authority may be seen in this light: of all the Enquiry's conclusions this one was ridiculed most.

In the abstract sense we may now sum. Consensus may be divided into two (not necessarily equal) parts: necessary (or absolute) and contingent. The former is required by all societies not suffering from anomic conditions; the latter is one form of outcome of ideology, requiring differential access to power to be effective.

Broadcasting expresses (or can express) both levels of consensus (which may interact under certain circumstances); this double level of operation suggests a confusion between absolute and contingent values on the part of the audience, a confusion traded on by the political system as part of its unfulfilled need for legitimation.

The legitimation 'crisis' which modern capitalist interventionist states have as an endemic 'contradiction' between promise and performance lends itself to a form of resolution through the party political battle (the frozen debate). Those political parties more concerned with the obtaining and use of power will find broadcasting an expressive means of continuing that power even when their ideology appears to be against the interests of a furtherance of democracy (by adherence to concepts of permanent hierarchy and economic inequality). Where the political parties of power recognise this use of broadcasting there will be pressure for structural change towards both commercialisation and localism (both motivational inputs potentially resolvative of legitimation crises).

In the case of the UK between 1922 and 1966 we can see how the 'political party of power', the Conservative Party, has used broadcasting as part of its means of staying in power in terms of the legitimacy of its ideology - that is, by retaining its position as the

only alternative to the Labour Party. The remarkable success it has enjoyed may be attributed to this merging of necessary and contingent consensus in such a way that the 'Conservative way of life' has frequently appeared to be the only possible one.

Additionally, the formation of the consensus within this period has more or less coincided with the onset of a legitimation crisis, and may be a means of containing that crisis. The precise location of the legitimation crisis is difficult (and dangerous) to outline. The post-First World War period clearly revealed the fissures in British (and more especially European) society; the General Strike, the Great Crash and the 30s Depression are all candidates.

Equally, is the period of the middle of World War Two and the period immediately following, when, in Britain, an economic crisis prevented the Labour Government from having the freedom of movement it wanted.

Habermas suggests that any legitimation crisis, linked as it must be, to motivation, occurs when the State moves firmly into an interventionist mode. There is doubt about when this took place in the UK but we can certainly claim that the overall period of broadcasting's history coincides with the onset and continuance of a legitimation crisis (see Section VI, below).

Within this frame broadcasting has developed (and had its own crises of legitimacy, notably between public service and commercial alternatives).

There are many cross-currents here which have forced the Conservative Party to shift towards both interventionsm and welfarism. But the Conservative Party, a 'fluid' coalition, has always tended to find a settlement in opposition to the alternative orthodoxy, whatever that might be.

The interventionism that the Conservative Party had to engage in during the 1930s was succeeded by the welfarism of the late 1940s eventually put into practice by a Labour Government. We have seen how the Conservative Party reacted to this. Its own crisis of legitimacy helped to ensure a commercial broadcasting system would be set up; but pressure for commercial finance (and the implications of consumerism)

were always present (afflicting the Labour Government of the 1960s and incidentally helping to prevent a Labour Government from over-turning the commercial broadcasting system).

Middlemas suggests that the consensus broke after 1966 and that since then we have been plunged back into a growing class struggle in which the unions are tending to dominate (but without real purpose). The break in the consensus coincides (it is a coincidence) with the Conservative Party adoption of a policy on local commercial radio.

In the framework of the argument I have developed here I believe it is possible to see that policy as the final working out of the consensus, not as an example of the desire for an introduction of untrammelled capitalism. By 1966 the BBC knew they would start a local radio service and the decision by the Conservative Party to parallel this with commercial local radio fits into the suggestions made here about both consensus and legitimation crisis.

My argument depends on both a separation and an identity between consensus and a legitimation crisis. Certainly, the formation of a consensus will provide a breathing space in the development of a legitimation crisis: at the same time such a development is not a result (or outcome) of such a crisis.

More critical is the question of motivation. In the early stages of its history, British broadcasting was designed to represent the contingent consensus of an old hierarchical society. By the late 1940s this basically paternal system was working for a newer philosophy - but an agreed consensual one. The Conservative Party might have been squeezed out by this; its adaptation included a shift to decentralised, de-controlled economic life: commercial television provided a means to express this in public; more structurally, as I have argued, it is a means for individual motivation through an aggression selling of the new capitalism. A similar movement can be isolated in the late 1960s when capitalism (in the Conservative definition) again had to change its face this time, in principle, towards small-scale decentralised organisation.

The policies that successive governments have devised for broadcasting operate at a meta-level here. They are statements about statements about values. The extent to which those individuals constructing

or proposing them are aware of the value level will depend on the times and circumstances but it is remarkably evident from White Papers and Government-State evidence and pronouncement more generally, on broadcasting, that questions of value and purpose abound.

Broadcasting provides a means by which modern societies can express values. My argument has been that these will tend to be political because it is within the political arena that broadcasting has come to mean so much, precisely because it provides a legitimating input to a system desperate for new levels of justification within the concepts of liberal democracy (or, in authoritarian or communist regimes, concepts relevant to those political systems).

The determinants of broadcasting policy begin at this point; each brings, in any single set of circumstances, an enormous potential range of options which are fought out in the manner the two case studies have attempted to demonstrate. These case studies were chosen because they are examples of major change, when all the guns are out and firing, so to speak.

Policy in broadcasting is not, however, a mere matter of the interplay between these determinants: the backcloth provided by the social, economic and political issues of all the rest of social life have an enormous residual effect, as do values themselves.

The study of broadcasting is vital however because broadcasting permeates social life with values. This is not to deny the continuing importance in socialisation of traditional role-patterns: the family, school, work. Broadcasting is a background to all these (as well as expressing attitudes about them, too), but it provides a generally wider more contentious picture of the entire world, couched in a colourful rhetoric it is hard to counteract. We have noted how the very fabric of the political system is forced to take this rhetoric into account.

Values, the stuff of consensus in the absolute sense, are expressed differently by broadcasting. And in a modern society their changes seem often to be charted without a deeper reference frame. In some respects broadcasting resembles religions: with, for instance, a body of practice, professional 'priest' intermediaries, followers and even 'holy' documents. But disturbingly, at the centre of the daily outpourings of implicit belief, there is no Deity, only a frail and transcient technological box of tricks, an unending source for an unending,

ultimately ephemeral output.

VI : Legitimation and Crises of the State

It has been a consistent argument of this study that broadcasting, and broadcasting policy, must be located in the general framework of a society. As I have tried to show, the political system counts for a great deal in any such location and broadcasting policy reflects this.

The theoretical arguments developed in Chapter Two went much further than simply trying to tie broadcasting policy to notions of consensus and even of legitimation. The contention has been, hitherto unexamined, that there is in developed capitalist societies a tendency towards endemic and possibly permanent 'crisis'. As this issue has been critical to my study, I want to discuss, finally, the possibility of the material base of the legitimation crisis and the theoretical base of it, which here I have attempted to expand to include certain Marxist and Parsonian concepts of ideology and culture.

To reiterate, I have distinguished between two kinds of consensus. My starting point is that on any definition of a 'working' society some kind of consensus operates. The crucial question is at what point a necessary consensus is added to by a contingent consensus, and what this may mean. I have chosen to define contingent consensus as ideological outcome, a securing of particular values apart from but within generally acceptable (non-coercive) values, by power-holders.

The left theorists (including Marx) are correct in seeing consensus and ideology as linked but wrong in suggesting all consensus is ideologically based. The problem is that within an unequal society, where power is held differentially, contingent consensus and absolute consensus may not be easily separated; they interact in any case.

I have chosen to concentrate theoretical attention on the nature of that interaction and its linkage with legitimation. Habermas defines current developed capitalist societies as existing within a framework of 'systematically distorted communications': this might be equated with the interaction between absolute consensus and contingent consensus, and the impossibility of separating them under current social practice.

Legitimation of values (which consensus implies agreement upon), is, for Habermas, the critical moment around which the crisis develops. Modern States, in attempting to intervene to overcome the 'natural'

contradictions of Capitalism, fail to keep pace with the support needed (motivation) from the mass public which the democracy they have erected (itself an attempt to 'cheat' contradiction) requires. Demand for legitimation exceeds performance which would make its provision acceptable. More simply, to use Anthony King's suggestion, government suffers from overload and the public cannot do other than make the situation worse.

In a different context, but, I think, with the same intention, Habermas also desires consensus (my absolute) but one arrived at by a free discussion (that is, leaving out power, inseparable from a contingent consensus). This is currently impossible, especially since any legitimation crisis increases the power of a contingent (power-based, distorted) consensus in a short-term effort to override a legitimacy shortfall.

Governments under these conditions operate either to increase rationality to compensate for any legitimation deficits, or act in a crisis-avoidance fashion to supply legitimacy where rationality is missing. The State and the economic system interact in furthering a crisis by not providing enough rationality or consumable values.

This double shortfall is linked both to a failure of generalised motives and the inability of the 'socio-cultural' system to generate 'action-motivating' meaning. All four systems provide particular crises which, Habermas argues, is ultimately related to the underlying legitimacy deficit. And that, simply, is a function of people not motivating the system. I would suggest that another way of putting this is to say that not understanding the system (because communication is distorted) leads to passivity (information substituting for action).

The broadcast media are in a clear-cut way 'responsible' for part of the shortfall of motivation. They provide an escape from action, a dis-engagement. At the same time, paradoxically, the political system has used broadcasting in an effort to prop up the legitimation being withdrawn elsewhere. As an extension from the central thesis of Claus Offe that political parties are a major means of increasing legitimacy, I have tried to show how political parties of power can use policy to change or confirm the value content implicit in broadcasting output to re-legitimate certain contingent consensual values. With Offe, I concur in seeing these efforts as short-term.

Legitimation provided in this way serves only to highlight the gap between promise and performance. There is a constant requirement for additional inputs. In the context of the commercialisation of British broadcasting this can be demonstrated. Apart from the commercialisation of the BBC (which could happen) there is nowhere else for this value-extension to go.

I am acutely aware here that in suggesting that commercialisation is more than a means of raising money in an inflationary world, I am in danger of creating a mythic quality to broadcasting policy. But, with Habermas and Offe, I believe that in the realm of culture, commercialisation plays a value role: it is a means of legitimating a particular consensus, formed around the principle of the private (individual-bourgeois) way of existence. In one sense, for example, business patronage of fine art returns us to earlier capitalist ideas of the duties of entrepreneurial life.

The crucial question, however, comes not in an abstraction,where many theoretical points may be made, but in empirical fact. Finally, then, is there any evidence for the legitimation crisis?

I have earlier suggested there are grave dangers in seeking to ground an abstract theory as large as this in precise moments of British (or European) history. At the same time it seems reasonable to look at the broad trends in, say, British society since the turn of the century (Habermas locates the origins of decisive interventionism in the last part of the 19th Century).

Throughout I have quoted extensively from Keith Middlemas' monumental work, Politics in Industrial Society, a treatise of a Conservative historian, where he argues much in favour of a legitimation crisis extending from the middle of World War One to the General Strike, and another, potentially, from the end of the 1960s until the present. Not surprisingly Middlemas, while acknowledging Habermas' categories, baulks at the implications that there may be a continuing crisis, preferring to see a potential today, for instance, in the abandonment of the goal of full employment.

My position is based on the same evidence but looks at the less material aspects of it. While Middlemas, I think, seeks a crisis in clashes in the street, my definition (which I believe to be closer to

the spirit of Habermas) concerns the erosion of values and the slower, less obvious decline of the absolute consensus (and the relative rise of the contingent).

Government intervention in a capitalist society (and the rise of the Labour Party itself) is an inextricable link in the value contradiction at the heart of a legitimation crisis, along with the extension of the franchise, and demand for Government aid.

Scientific rationalism, pervading older values, throws into the melting pot all value questions, and suggests (probably falsely) that all questions may be decided equably. The growth of planning leads to a discrepancy between the wishes of individuals and those of majorities. Ironically, an extension of equality may lead to a diminution of liberty. It is here that I would locate the origins of a legitimation crisis, although the larger issues dealt with by Habermas (the collapse of notions of just exchange, for instance) are important too.

The question of the strength of the crisis may, I submit, be related to the state of consensus. The 1930s and the two decades that followed the Second World War were periods differing in consensual continuity but sufficiently coherent to provide little direct evidence for an endemic crisis. The war itself appears to reinforce (in the UK) the generally broad strength of the system in coping with change and stress.

Nevertheless I consider that a crisis is endemic to advanced capitalist societies: throwing into relief issues of equality and freedom. Broadcasting emerges, as an innovation, with the final extension of the franchise and with the enormously increased power of the modern State as a potential bulwark against the centripetal trends. Its activities, and the policies towards it, are in line with the shifts in consensus, and with the problems that may be associated with the rise and fall of a legitimation crisis.

Given this, is it feasible to predict the trends in broadcasting policy in the future; will new technologies reinforce or change what has gone before; is the present economic, social and political state of the nation a reflection of a deepening legitimation crisis, and will this materially change broadcasting?

VII : Into the Future

1 : The Annan Committee Report*

The Annan Committee was originally set up in 1970 by the Labour Government to look into the future of broadcasting in the UK. The election of a Conservative Government committed to introduce commercial radio ensured its immediate demise as the incoming Conservatives had no intention of allowing a delay and then a debate on a plan they had already decided on (at least in principle: see Chapter Four).

But in 1974, when strictly this study ends, a Labour Government returned to power (in February). Within hours of its arrival in the corridors of power Roy Jenkins, as the new Home Secretary, had rung Lord Annan to ask him if he would consider re-convening his panel (Interview with Briggs TCS I 9).

The setting then, for the three years between the Committee beginning work and its Report, is of a Labour Government (and Party) acutely conscious of the broadcasters and all their works and anxious, possibly for the first time, seriously to attempt to change structures - and values. I have suggested reasons for this elsewhere (see p.391), and the links between growing (and continuing) Labour Party and Government concern with broadcasting (and the Press) and the relationship of this to a lack of consensus - or rather a progressive failure at the contingent level. Such a failure leads to increasing overt expression of ideological positions from all sides, a development which has come to characterise broadcasting.

The Annan Committee, as finally constituted, had a broad spread of interests. Among these, Annan himself is an academic, one of several on the Committee, including Professor Hilde Himmelweit, well known for her study of television violence and its impact on children.

Overt political interests were represented by Mrs Charles Morrison (a friend of Edward Heath), Sir Marcus Worsley, Marghanita Laski and Phillip Whitehead, balancing right with left. Tom Jackson** of the

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*In dealing with the Annan Committee and events subsequent to it I am conscious of moving from academia to a more journalistic exposition.

**Jackson, note, represented a 'communications' union.

Post Office Workers Union represented Trades Unions, Peter Goldman,* the consumer. Phillip Whitehead and Dipak Nandy could **clain** professional broadcaster concerns; Dipak Nandy was the sole representative of the immigrant communities.

The creation of this network of interests, more clear-cut than in previous Committees, reflected what the final Report described as the change in public attitude since the Pilkington Committee reported, 15 years previously

> The questions which the public were now asking about broadcasting were vastly different from those which concerned that Committee. They were more critical, more hostile and more political (Annan, 1977; p.8) (emphasis added).

What the Committee discovered was that the assumption that Britain has solved the problem of the political relations of broadcasting to Government, Parliament and the public could not be maintained. From this present study we can add that such a finding is correct, related as it undoubtedly is to the breaking of consensus (in the late 1960s).

The result, the Committee thought, was that a new debate was opening over broadcasting (and linked to increasing academic opinion that the media had significant if difficult to evaluate 'effects' on audiences). The Committee found that among the submissions made to them uppermost in many were

> demands that we should re-examine the whole structure of broadcasting and the political assumptions on which the British system rests (Annan, op.cit., p.16).

Where the Pilkington Committee had begun by examining the purpose of broadcasting (and the issues surrounding values) the Annan Committee looked at the future use of broadcasting, within the context of likely technological changes. Significantly, where Pilkington dove into value questions, Annan submerged itself in consideration of politics and dismissed the substantive issue of values as 'deceptively simple'.

The result of the deliberation of politics and broadcasting led the Annan Committee to four precepts for good broadcasting: flexibility,

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*Goldman had been instrumental in setting the Conservative Party on the road of commercial television (see Chapter Three).

diversity, editorial independence, accountability. From these conceptual categories the Committee moved towards a functional rationalising of what existed and what was to come.

Thus all local radio logically belonged together, not as a political expression of the opposed concepts of financing. A new Local Radio Authority would deal best with the outputs from this expanding sector. Such an innovation would leave the rump of the IBA with what it had (as the ITA) created - a regional commercial television system, to be administered by an authority in its own right, a Regional Television Authority.

The Committee nearly split in two over the BBC, six out of sixteen considering that it ought to be divided into a television and radio service each with a board of Governors.

The Fourth Channel, the Committee said, should go to a new Open Broadcasting Authority which should act merely as a 'publisher' of programmes originated elsewhere. Finance for these could derive from any legal source: through sponsoring, the sale of spot advertising, or block advertising; or from public funds (eg Arts Council or Local Authority money).

There were many more detailed recommendations concerning the organisation and running of the IBA, for example over public hearings before the award of franchises, and the question of the Authority's 'interference' in programme making.

The important change in this Committee, which effectively separates it from all the others (except, partially, Beveridge), is its relative whole-hearted endorsement of commercial finance and, uniquely, its recommendation of an extension of that form of financing to include sponsoring, hitherto the forbidden fruit in the system.

This recommendation, which falsely claimed to recognise a 'principle' that British broadcasting had developed a separate source of revenue for each new broadcasting authority, fits in with the theoretical postulates of this study, insofar as I have argued the pressure for continued commercial finance will continue. There is, too, an element of legitimisation involved: the OBA would have been a market-place for information, paid for in the market-place, and recognising the

sophistication of audiences able to see the wood for the (commercial) trees.

Where the Annan Committee erred was in not recognising that the functional rationality they proposed cut through both bureaucratic and political precedence and, probably more crucially, attacks the foundations of the balanced system of duopoly, expressive of the value structure of the political system. What Annan called the straightjacket of duopoly is in fact the keystone of the relationship between broadcasting and politics. In its removal there probably lies a greater danger for the latter; but the latter has the legislative capacity.

In any case the existing broadcasting authorities were under sufficient attack to unite against the Report. The main riposte was that it was over academic and failed to see political reality outside the idealism of its system-building. Crucially, the Committee was split on many important matters, although they agreed about the OBA. But the political climate of the late 1970s ensured that the debate subsequent to publication of the Report fell along more overtly party political lines than usual (certainly for the Pilkington Report).

It was a Labour Government which received the Report in March, 1977. It took a fateful 17 months before it issued its White Paper, the first political judgement on the Committee's work.

2 : The Fourth Television Channel

From what can be gathered the Home Office, now the Government department in charge of broadcasting policy, did not welcome the substantive parts of the Annan Committee's conclusions and much of the delay between the Report and the White Paper may be attributed to a battle between Labour politicians and civil servants (the State, once again, dragging its feet).

But this was not the only cause for delay. As I have noted the Labour Party was still unsure of what it wanted in broadcasting. It is another piece of evidence concerning the prevailing policy definitions that it was to be a Labour Government which eventually agreed to sponsored television, or television with block advertising, the final extension, in fact, of commercial financing. Nevertheless this proposal met with much

resistance at the time.

Furthermore, there was considerable doubt about whether an Open Broadcasting Authority could work under any circumstance. The Cabinet eventually split and had to vote, narrowly agreeing the OBA should go ahead. Local radio (on which the Government received more submissions than any other subject) also led to much agonising.

The 1978 White Paper (Cmnd 7294) agreed to the OBA, and to a single Complaints Commission; it dismissed ideas of a Local Radio Authority but appeared to accept that commercial radio would expand faster than BBC local radio (and end by being dominant) (pp.16-17).

The major political row over the White Paper was produced by the suggestion that Service Management Boards ought to be set up by the BBC, members of which would be Government appointees. This was immediately seen by the Corporation as Government interference in programme making.

Delays, engendered by arguments like this, and inevitably, more urgent concern over the economy, ensured that no serious effort was made to get a Bill through Parliament to authorise an Open Broadcasting Authority before a General Election was called in June, 1979. Once more, a Labour Government with power to legislate something significant in broadcasting policy was about to hand over to a Conservative Party, already committed in this case to a different broadcasting policy.

Principally, that policy was to give the fourth television channel to the IBA (twenty years too late for a truly competitive commercial system to work). But, as we have seen, broadcasting policy moves very much in tune with social change. The fairly rapid outcome of the change of Government in June, 1979, was a speech by the Home Secretary, William Whitelaw, in September, 1979, to the Royal Television Society in Cambridge, to the effect that the fourth channel would be an OBA under the tutelage of the IBA. Most importantly, there would not be competitive advertising.

Following its own precedent the IBA have interpreted this to mean most of the content of the fourth channel, now scheduled to begin in the autumn of 1982 will be from ITV1 (or made by programme companies therein). Whereas in the 1950s a Conservative Government wanted the

ITA to set up a competitive commercial system (and got a monopoly), now, in wanting a form of access television, it gets an extended monopoly of the old system.

At this point we enter the realms of speculation. The start of what is now to be ITV2 follows closely on the running of the new ITV1 franchises. The pattern of what ITV1 provides may be altered (although probably not much). At the same time the IBA have proposed to allow an experiment in breakfast television which, if successful, may undermine commercial local radio advertising, among other things.

The recession may do this anyway, delaying breakfast television, preventing the start of ITV2 (which will take money away from the Treasury by undercutting the Levy). Advertisers are reputedly unhappy about ITV2 as well. What this outcome does is to finalise the duopoly under the current technologies. It expresses the past, not the future, because the contingent consensus the duopoly expresses is missing.

Other factors also interfere. The BBC's finances, the entrenchment of the existing broadcasting institutions and broadcasters, and the growth of Labour Party interest and concern for a different kind of balance (in individual programmes, rather than institutional values, or organisational structures), suggest change, not stability, will be likely. Most important, the new technologies coming into operation, may radically alter the possible choices.

3 : The new technologies

I have suggested that invention and innovation are among the 'stochastic' determinants; generally, what has gone before will override new invention as such and create an extension of existing arrangements.

But the new technologies involving principally wires and satellites linked to computing systems do provide a break with the past. The innovation of linking a computer via the new high-capacity cable systems to a domestic television receiver already is social rather than technological. In fact, unusually, technological and social possibilities come together.

It has been suggested that in the UK little will change because of the massive investment needed to wire the nation, against the current arrangements of broadcasting. Additionally, it is being suggested that people in general do not need an enhanced information capacity.

Nevertheless past evidence suggests that the existence of a capacity leads to growing pressure to use it (for example, the fourth television channel). Wiring the UK is no great problem as much can be done within the existing telephone system.

Satellite broadcasting, again in doubt at the moment, may come through European rather than British decision-taking and again domestic use may arise from the novelty of direct reception.

From all these technologies (to which must be added domestic video-recording) may come changed patterns of use. As a general point broadcasting may change to specialist services, complementing domestic requirement rather than, as at present, dictating to it. Again, what may eventually result may be a vastly expanded market-place for information. The effect this might have on the political system is impossible to evaluate because it cannot take into account other changes - in the economy, or in social arrangements. These possible changes of media use however, are likely to be long-term, not short-term.

Against them has to be set Government intervention and control. Available evidence here suggests that in the UK there is a long-term trend towards increased broadcasting 'freedom' (commitment to a market-place of ideas), consistent with a need to replace the shortfall in legitimation. The new technologies would appear to aid this requirement and to provide (in the media) an additional and urgent lifeline to modern Government concerned with interventionist democracy (in this respect may be seen the Conservative Government decision on Citizens Band radio).

4 : Hypotheses and a Research Programme

I would like to suggest eight hypotheses of broadcasting policy formation, which may be tested against coming events. They are related to the theoretical questions of legitimation and consensus formation, to the centrality of broadcasting to the political system, and to the

determinants of broadcasting policy suggested in this chapter.

a) Politics will continue to remain problematic for broadcasting; there will be a continuing extension of the definition of the meaning of political in programmes broadcast unless or until a new contingent consensus develops.

b) There will be continuing pressure for the development of the present duopoly despite the current consensual break.

c) There will be pressure to fit new invention in broadcast technologies into the existing system at whatever social cost.

d) Increasing commercialisation of the overall system will take place. Sponsoring will develop, eventually, possibly when ITV2 proves impossible to finance from ITV1 revenue.

e) The BBC will become increasingly aberrant but its values will continue to be transferred to parts of the commercial system. It will remain a primary broadcasting instrument, continue to be significant for the political system and to the State.

f) The Labour Party will become increasingly involved in matters of broadcasting policy, currently a reflection of the lack of consensus, but which any new contingent consensus will not prevent.

g) There will be a growing freedom for participants in broadcasting outside the national broadcast system. This will act as a countervailing force.

h) As part of this, commercial local radio will continue to expand, and faster than BBC local radio.

These hypotheses are presented as a means to aid further investigation of the substantive areas of broadcasting. They do not direct attention at the three areas I consider to be more important in the long-run for a substantial improvement of our knowledge of this area of political sociology.

Of these areas for further research the vital empirical one is investigation into the mechanisms of decision-taking in policy areas. Far too much Government-State secrecy surrounds current decision-taking; the 30- year rule effectively gags <u>all</u> the primary source material under scrutiny in these pages, gags or creates significant

gaps. We need to known a great deal more about the nature of decision-taking; the influence of pressure groups, of individuals. We need to understand the operative mechanisms between, in this case, Government-State and the broadcasting organisations. We need to know much more about the broadcasting organisations, especially the IBA which remains locked in a thrall of unnecessary and possibly dangerous secrecy.

If more information is forthcoming it would enable a better theoretical understanding of legitimation: can we talk about a general crisis, or specific, incremental ones? What is the exact nature of a legitimation crisis and how can its avoidance be sensibly linked to communicative competence, in particular, in the mass media.

Behind this project is another, deeper still. Consensus is often berated, little understood. It needs to be looked at further, empirically and theoretically. We have to know whether, ultimately, consensus stands between modern democratic social life and chaos, how it can be used by powerful interests <u>against</u> the general will, how it divides between absolute values and ideologies.

The study of broadcasting, I have often suggested in these pages, is about values, in the final analysis, values that societies have to know about, have to make explicit, before they can decide upon matters of stability and change. The great paradox is that broadcasting delivers one set of messages vital to social survival, couched in the language of another, generally trivial and often flippant. Broadcasting policy mediates within another mediation, the political system, and access to its meaning is obscured. Nevertheless to begin to understand it is to move sociology a jot further towards enlightenment, towards the pursuit of truth.

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Note on references: Wherever I have cited a speech or a piece of private correspondence in the main text I have referenced here under the Harvard system and it appears below, thus: Morrison W (1951) : Letter to Patrick Buchan-Hepburn. This is followed by an indication of the source (here, Lord Orr-Ewing's private papers - see Appendix C).

I have used a similar system for referencing speeches. Thus: Maxwell-Fyfe, Sir David (1952) : Speech on Cmnd 8550, Conservative Government Broadcasting Policy. In this case there follows the complete Parliamentary reference and the exact date.

This method has not been extended to the interviews carried out for the two case studies. A complete list of these with the appropriate code number is to be found in Appendix B. The simple reason for this is that the speeches and letters etc., referenced as I have indicated above are all available as complete documents. The references I have made to my interview material is not: verbatim records were not taken (see Chapter One) and I have therefore deemed it better to distinguish the sources in this way.

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Appendix A

Question Schedules for the Radio Case Study

This original schedule (1) was written to cover all possible eventualities in the interview sessions and it became a 'base' document on which others (for specific interviewees) were constructed (see the additional two schedules, 2(b) and 2(c)).

The construction of the question sequence relied heavily on Merton, Fiske and Kendall (1956) and it was used as a focus for additional supplementary questions to those appended here. In general the use of structures of questions was an aid; if an interviewee began to develop a particular point, he was allowed so to do, the next questions on the schedule being delayed until he had finished.*

Quite often these asides led naturally to other questions on the schedule, not in sequence; these questions were taken at moments appropriate to the rhythm of the interview. In most interviews most questions were covered in an hour (see Chapter One).

A different procedure was adopted for the television case study where there were far fewer interviews and where the passage of time rendered detailed question-asking irrelevant (or misleading). I therefore asked very general questions, not based on any schedule, but on my knowledge of the person being interviewed. But as I have noted (Chapter One) more reliance here was placed on documents (see Appendix C).

A card index was constructed of all comments made by interviewees, cross-indexed by author of comment and subject.

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*Where interviewees were seen twice, on the second occasion very specific questions were usually asked, relating to single events or meetings which I had, between the interviews, managed to research.

Question sequence for focussed interview on commercial radio.

Schedule 1

There are four blocks of questions: 1. Introduction and immediate background.
2. History as seen by interviewee.
3. Attitudes of interviewee.
4. Perceptions of the future.

Block One: Introduction and background.

1. Can you tell me exactly what you are doing now?
2. Has it any connection with commercial radio?
3. At what point did you become interested in commercial radio?
4. a) How did you first get involved? b) And why?
5. Did you have any previous interests in broadcasting or any other part of the mass media?

Block Two: History

6. Can I take you right back to the beginning - or the potential beginning of commercial radio - the pirate stations. a) Did you personally have anything to do with them? b) What?
7. a) Were the pirate stations significant in the attempts to get commercial radio established? b) How? c) Why? d) In what ways?
8. a) Why do you think the pirate stations began when they did? b) Was it an attempt by commercial interests to overthrow the edicts of the Pilkington Committee?
9. a) Do you think the public really cared about pirate stations? b) If so, in what ways? c) Was the audience almost entirely young?
10. Moving on to commercial radio proper, who were the most significant people during the course of the fight to get it?
11. a) Did any one group play a crucial role? b) Which one?
12. a) How would you describe your role in the fight? b) Who were your main associates?
13. How would you describe the political battle for commercial radio?
14. For instance, was it simply a question of Conservatives being in favour and Labour being against?

15. a) Did the battle within the House of Commons reflect itself outside in the various groups lobbying for CR? b) Where did you stand in all this?
16. a) Apart from the majority of the PLP who else was opposed to commercial radio? b) What kind of impact did they have?
17. a) How would you characterise the role of the Press, both national and local? b) How important was their attitude?
18. a) Was there any kind of campaign on the part of members of the general public? b) If so, what form did it take and c) was it in any way effective at any stage?
19. a) If there was such a campaign, b) when did it start and c) how was it organised?
20. Do you feel it is possible to state what role youth/pop culture had in the commercial radio fight, if any?
21. Overall, did the general public care at all about commercial radio? (It was said at the time that ITV was set up that most of the public were probably opposed to it).
22. a) Do you think that the financial problems the BBC had in the late sixties had an effect on, say, Conservative Party thinking on this topic? b) If so, what, and what were the visible effects?
23. a) When the Conservatives were returned to office in 1970 one of the first things they did was to publish a bill setting out their proposals for commercial radio. b) Why do you think they acted on this issue so quickly while there were many other arguably more important issues for them to deal with?
24. When the bill was published it was heartily attacked for being badly written and unclear. Do you have any comments to make about this?
25. Can I move onto the question of the franchises? a) Do you feel the way they have been handed out has been satisfactory? b) If not, what are your complaints?
26. a) Do you feel the history of commercial radio since it has been legally established bears out the attitude of the pro- or anti-lobby? b) Why?

27. a) How would you describe the role of the IBA? (Is it doing its job? b) If not, why not, and c) how should it be changed?).
28. a) Looking back could things have been done better, more effectively, with less fuss? b) How?

Block Three: Attitudes.

29. Can I now move on to some more general points. What do you think local radio is for?
30. a) How would you compare the BBC's service locally with that of the commercial stations? b) Do you have any evidence for your views?
31. a) Is local radio politically significant? b) In what ways?
32. Looking back over the period since CR has been established, how would you describe the operation? a) Successful or not? b) What evidence/reasons do you have for so thinking?
33. Going right back to the beginning, when the fight to get commercial radio had just started, would you say you had a particular model on which you based your proposals for CR here?
34. On what was this model based?
35. Did you ever consider seriously the proposals that to help the BBC they should be allowed monopoly rights in local radio but that they should have been allowed to take ads for local stations?
36. a) Allowing for differences in the date and the mediums, was the CR fight a re-run of that for ITV? b) If so, in what ways - and c) in what ways were the two issues different?
37. a) More generally, what do you think government policy towards broadcasting is? b) That is, does it change significantly depending on which party is in power - if so, how? c) If not what are the common factors by which you think it is determined?
38. a) What do you think such policy ought to be about? b) What would you do if you could?

39. What do you think of the current arrangements?
40. If you are able to remember what were your reactions to the Pilkington Report, which came out so violently against CR?
41. Moving to the present, what do you think about the proposals made by the McGregor Royal Press Commission that local newspapers should no longer have an automatic right of entry into local CR?
42. How would you describe your politics?
43. Would you say your commitment to CR was ideological - that is your lobbying for/against it was mostly to do with your firm belief in free enterprise/public service broadcasting?
44. Do you see any significance in the term 'independent' radio rather than 'commercial' radio?
45. a) Which stations do you consider to be best - and b) why?

Block Four: The Future.

46. What do you think of Annan's proposals for local radio?
47. a) What do you think will happen to those proposals? b) What would you like to happen and c) why?
48. For instance, are you committed to a nationally networked commercial system? Why/why not?
49. a) More generally, do you think the method by which we organise broadcasting policy - that is by using Committees like the Annan one - is a useful method? b) Why do you think so? c) If it were to be replaced, what could we substitute if anything? d) Is there any need for a stated policy on broadcasting at all? e) If so, why?
50. a) What do you think the role of the Home Office was in broadcasting policy - for instance their insistence that there is a great shortage of suitable frequencies? b) Do you think the PO will play an increasing part in broadcasting policy, particularly as they now appear to be getting into mass media directly with Viewdata? c) What do you think about this?

Q = 92

Questions for interview with Sir Charles Curran: 18.10.77.

Schedule 2[(b)]

1. When did the BBC first become aware of a coherent and organised lobby for commercial radio? What was its immediate response? And subsequent? Was it ever thought likely that commercial radio would come? (by the BBC).
2. What effect did the pirate stations have on the BBC?
3. Did the Pilkington Committee Report make the BBC complacent; did it commit the BBC too publicly, too early, to a second TV channel; and similarly for local radio?
4. (Norman Collins) has said (to the interviewer) that they (the commercial lobby) broke the monopoly of the BBC first in TV because at the time the BBC cared less about TV than radio; the intention was always to break the monopoly in radio however. What comments has CC on this?
5. When the pirates were stopped what kind of pressure was directed at the BBC by the Labour Government to reorganise? Did the BBC resist? How? Why?
6. What was the financial position of the BBC at that time?
7. Did the BBC begin local radio when it saw that the commercial radio lobby was gaining strength? ie was it another hasty decision?
8. Why was the BBC so opposed to commercial radio - or was it?
9. Was there ever any truth in the rumour that the BBC would take ads on Radio One to help its finances - or was this a political ploy? What was government reaction to this rumour?
10. Was the BBC ever threatened by the Labour Government - other than by the appointment of Lord Hill as Chairman of the Governors? How was it threatened? Why was Lord Hill appointed?
11. What immediate effects did it have?
12. Has the Labour Party always been hostile to what it might have thought were the establishment and middle class attitudes of the BBC?
13. Were the Conservative Party worried by what they thought were left-wing tendencies in the BBC in the mid to late sixties? What pressures did they bring, if any, on the BBC during that time?

13(a) It has been said that Broadcasting in the Seventies was a political manifesto by the BBC. Comments? (apres McKinsey): was it the battle cry over ILR?

14. Did any member of the Conservative Party talk to the BBC about commercial radio? Who? What did they say?

15. Who were the key people in getting local radio established commercially?

16. What comments has CC on the accusation that the BBC lied about the shortage of wavelengths?

17. As far as the BBC's local stations were concerned what attitude does CC take on the point made by many people that the licence fee is for national coverage and this use of it - for local stations - was an abuse?

18. What does CC think about the suggestion made now that what we have ended up with is BBC local radio and regional commercial radio?

19. Did the Conservative party espouse commercial radio because they thought it would bring the young vote?

20. Or was their public (ie at shadow cabinet level) espousal due to the attitude of the BBC - ie the Heath stubbornness story as told to me.

21. Does CC put any credence on the point frequently made that what the Conservative Party cared about was choice of media and that there was a gap as far as radio was concerned? If that is the case why did they not go for national commercial radio, as some of the lobby wanted?

22. What does CC think of the way the franchises were handed out?

23. What relationship obtains between the BBC and the IBA?

24. Did the IBA 'mistake' commercial radio for TV?

25. Why have local radio at all? What is it for?

26. How does the BBC's service compare with commercial stations? Evidence for views?

27. Is local radio politically significant? In what ways?

28. Was the fight for commercial radio a re-run of that for commercial TV? In what ways?

Questions - CC...3

29. What does CC think government policy towards the mass media is? Does it change in any way when different parties are in power? How? If not, what are the common factors by which it is determined?
30. What does CC think such policy ought to be about?
31. What does CC think of current policy - especially with reference to Annan?
32. Does CC see any significance in the term 'independent' radio rather than 'commercial' radio?
33. Which commercial stations does CC think are the best? Why? Which BBC stations and why?
34. Specifically, what does CC think of Annan's proposals for local radio?
35. What does he think will happen to those proposals? What would he like to happen to them?
36. What does CC think of the method by which we organise broadcasting policy - publicly at any rate?
37. On a day to day basis how is the minutiae of policy determined between the BBC and government? Does this body of practice add up to more than the sum of its parts?
38. Is there a need for any stated policy on broadcasting? Why?
39. What does CC think the role of the Post Office is in the creation and determination of broadcasting policy? Should it have any role at all? What?
40. Should there be a minister of information? Why not?

Question sequence for interview with Colin Shaw on ILR.

Schedule 2[(c)]

1. How did the BBC view the pirate radio stations?
2. How much effort (via approaches to the Government) did it put into getting rid of them?
3. Was Radio One quid pro quo for the legislation banning the pirate stations?
4. Why do you think the pirate radio stations began when they did?
5. Who were the most significant people involved in the lobby for commercial radio (in the 1960s)?
6. How much contact did they have with the BBC?
7. What were relations with the Government like in the late 1960s (at the BBC)?
8. How much daily contact was there, for instance, between the Labour (Chief) Whips and the BBC and similarly with Conservative Party?
9. Who was responsible on the BBC side?
10. How suspicious of the BBC was Wilson? - Hill's appointment?
11. Who were the main pro- BBC MPs both Conservative and Labour?
12. How much did the BBC have to work in the House of Commons to protect itself in this period?
13. How, principally, was this done?
14. Did the BBC ever take Tony Benn's proposals for ad-financed Radio One seriously? If so how was it fought?
15. Apart from the majority of the PLP who else was opposed to commercial radio (assuming the BBC was as well)?
16. Was any attempt made by these various groups to co-ordinate a counter-attack?
17. Is it possible to say how far an awakened awareness of youth and youth culture was responsible for commercial readio?
18. Did the financial problems the BBC faced throughout the late sixties have an effect on a) Conservative Party b) Labour Party thinking on the future of radio?

19. Did the Conservative Party approach the BBC and discuss its proposals for commercial radio before the 1970 election a) officially b) unofficially. If so who did they talk to?
20. How much knowledge did you have of the Brown Boveri Report prepared for Hughie Green? (the BBC copy).
21. Did the BBC at a senior level meet with Hughie Green?
22. What do you think local radio is for?
23. Do you, with hindsight, think it wise that the BBC got involved with local radio? Why?
24. Is local radio politically significant? How?
25. Did the BBC ever have a model on which it based its local radio stations? (ie the Canadian)
26. Did you ever consider that the BBC might have taken advertising on its radio channels to eke out the licence?
27. What do you think government policy towards the broadcasting organisations is? Ought to be?

Appendix B : Index of People Interviewed for Radio and Television Case Studies

RCS Interview List

Code No.	Name	Approx Date(s) Interview	Background	Documents Supplied
1	Patricia Hodgson	July 1977; January 1978	Paul Bryan's Research Assistant	*
2	Neil Ffrench-Blake	July 1977	Programme Director, Radio 210	
3	Norman Collins	August 1977	Chairman, ATV; early BBC TV man	
4	Anthony Smith	August 1977; Sept. 1979	Broadcaster/writer on broadcasting	*
5	Roland Freeman	August 1977	Greater London Councillor	
6	Leslie Freeman	September 1977	" " "	
7	Phillip Birch	October 1977	ex-'pirate': MD Piccadilly Radio	
8	Michael Metcalf	October 1977	Lintas Advertising	
9	Sir Charles Curran	October 1977; October 1978	ex-Director-General, BBC	*
10	Phillip Whitehead MP	October 1977; August 1980	Labour; broadcaster; Annan Committee Member	
11	John Gorst MP	October 1977; September 1978	Founder of LRA	*
12	Wilfred Proudfoot	October 1977: telephone	ex-'pirate' station owner	
13	J.O. Stanley	October 1977	ex-Pye Ltd	
14	Gerald Margolis	November 1977	IBA	
15	Michael Sissons	November 1977	bidder in City Sounds consortium	
16	Mark Elwes	November 1977	Secretary, LRA (to 1978)	*
17	Lord Glenemara (Ted Short)	November 1977	Labour: ex- PMG (1966-68)	
18	Christopher Chataway	December 1977; Sept. 1978	Conservative: ex Min P.Tel	
19	George Graham	December 1977	BBC Engineering Information	

Code No.	Name	Approx Date(s) Interview	Background	Documents Supplied
20	Sir Paul Bryan MP	December 1977	Conservative: shadow PMC 1966-70	
21	Richard Marriott	January 1978	BBC Local Radio Working Party	
22	Lord O'Hagan	January 1978	Conservative: studied Local Radio Bill	
23	Derek Faraday	January 1978	Commercial Broadcasting Consultants	
24	Hugh Pierce	January 1978	BBC Local Radio Working Party	*
25	Eldon Griffiths MP	February 1978	Conservative: proposed Commercial Radio	
26	Dennis Lawrence	February 1978; Dec. 1978	Senior PO civil servant	
27	Gerald Mansell	February 1978	BBC ex-Head, World Service	
28	William Whitelaw MP	February 1978	Conservative: Cabinet Senior	
29	Sir Ian Gilmour MP	March 1978	Conservative 'theorist'	
30	Sir Desmond Plummer	March 1978	Greater London Council, Leader	
31	Sir Hugh Greene	March 1978	ex-Director-General, BBC	
32	Colin Shaw	March 1978	ex-BBC Secretary; IBA TV Chief	
33	George Cloughston	April 1978	London Broadcasting Company	
34	Hugh Jenkins MP	April 1978	Labour: Equity interest	
35	Kenneth Lamb	April 1978	BBC	
36	Lord Fraser of Kilmorack	April 1978; October 1978	Conservative Party Senior 'civil servant'	
37	John Whitney	May 1978	MD, Capital Radio	
38	Tony Stoller	February 1978; May 1978	IBA, Radio Division	
39	Frank Gillard	June 1978	ex-BBC, Head West Region	
40	Tony Benn MP	October 1978	Labour; ex PMG (1964-66)	
41	John Thompson	May 1978	Head Radio Division, IBA	

Code No.	Name	Approx Date(s) Interview	Background	Documents Supplied
42	Christopher Patten	May 1978	Conservative Party Research Dept.	

Television Interview List

Code No.	Name	Approx Date's) Interview	Background	Documents Supplied
1	Norman Collins	April 1979	Chairman ATV; ex-BBC	
2	Sir John Rodgers MP	April 1979	Advocate of commercial television	
3	Lord Orr-Ewing	April 1979; Sept. 1979	" " "	*
4	Howard Thomas	July 1979	Chairman, Thames TV	
5	Lord Clitheroe	June 1979	ex-chairman, Conservative Party	
6	Richard Baker	August 1979	ex-senior civil servant GPO	
7	Alan Taylor	Telephone, April 1979	Historian; Broadcaster	
8	Lord Butler	September 1979	Conservative; ex-deputy PM	
9	Lord Briggs	November 1979	Historian of broadcasting	
10	Peter Goldman	November 1979	ex-Conservative Research Department	
11	Christopher Mayhew	June 1979	ex-Labour; founded NTC	
12	Joseph Weltman	April 1979	IBA	
13	Paul Adorian	Telephone, May 1979	ex-chairman, Rediffusion	*

Contacts were made with, and help received from, the following people and organisations (for both case studies):

*Sir Harold Wilson MP
*Edward Heath MP
*Lord Carrington
*Lord Hill
Hughie Green
*William Deedes
*Dr Janet Morgan
*Professor Richard Hoggart
*Lord Aylestone
Jean Goose
Philip Solomon
Keith Skues
Conservative Party Central Office
Conservative Party Research Department
*Sir William Haley
*Lord Carr
*Lord Home
*John Profumo
*Lord Hailsham
Bernard Sendall
Pye Telecommunications
Marconi
Phonographic Performance Ltd
Performing Rights Society
Musicians Union
BBC Archives; BBC Library
IBA Library
University of Newcastle Library
The Labour Party Library
TIE Communications (Local Radio Services Ltd); David Stirling, and his secretary, Rachel Millington
Public Records Office
London School of Economic Library
London Library

*Acknowledgements to letters only

Appendix C

A Short Note on Written Sources

Mention has been made at various points in this study of archive material and private collections of documents. I feel it is appropriate to explain a little further what the most important of these were and how they were used.

The BBC Archive at Caversham, near Reading, is extensive, open (to all intents and purposes) and well-catalogued. The problem here is in the extent of the material available and the degree to which a researcher follows up references. The Byzantine nature of much BBC organisation makes this task rather more difficult.

The IBA refused me access to any 'archive' material, no doubt considering that the 24 years since filing began is too short a time and that current controversy would be mixed with the earliest. I did however use the library at the Authority's headquarters, chaotic though it is, and found some valuable press-cuttings there. The BBC Library, by contrast is excellently organised, but difficult (and now costly) to get into; once there the range of material (largely books and pamphlets on broadcasting) is staggering.

I feel it is worth mentioning here the use I put the London Library to, for the Library must be unique in having a complete set of Hansard (both Houses) which members may borrow ad lib and for an indefinite period: this facility has been one of the most useful to me and to the study.

The research departments of the two main political parties are important sources for a range of material dealing with contemporary issues: the political parties generate a great deal of ephemera and this is susceptible to close analysis. The main problem was cataloguing and the haphazard way in which documents are organised.

In a similar state was the immensely valuable set of documents deposited in the University of Newcastle - a collection I have dubbed the 'Swinton Archive' after the Conservative Party College from whence they came.

An extremely disorganised series of documents: committee minutes, reports, letter books, cuttings, they have yielded some surprises. One

attraction of this collection is that they continue until the early 1970s and, because they have never been sorted out, contain documents not normally to be found because of their confidentiality.

I was greatly helped by having access to the private papers of Lord Orr-Ewing, which are extensive, dealing in great detail with the debate surrounding the coming of commercial television. Lord Orr-Ewing was gracious enough to allow me free access to all these papers. A similar freedom to explore was granted by Colonel David Stirling of TIE, under whose roof are to be found a valuable collection of press cuttings mainly between 1961-1973 on commercial radio. In with these cuttings are many documents dealing with Local Radio Services Ltd., an early kite-flying company in the commercial radio lobby.

These documents tie in neatly with those of the Local Radio Association whose secretary, Mark Elwes, gave me free access to all that association's records: an immense help as they had been carefully ordered throughout.

All these sources have been vital to this study, both in filling out the interview material and in helping to establish the main theoretical themes. Their validity (and that of the interview material) has been discussed in Chapter One.