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**BROADCASTING**

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# BROADCASTING

and a changing civilisation

by

ERNEST H. ROBINSON

JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD  
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To My Son

KEITH

who by research, discussion and  
in many other ways has helped  
to make the writing of this book  
a very jolly business

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## BROADCASTING

By ROBERT BRIDGES

Science comforting man's animal poverty  
and leisuring his toil, hath humanised manners  
and social temper, and now above her globe-spread  
net

of speeded intercourse hath outrun all magic,  
and disclosing the secrecy of the reticent air  
hath woven a seamless web of invisible strands  
spiriting the dumb inane with the quick matter of  
life:

Now music's prison'd rapture and the drown'd  
voice of truth

mantled in light's velocity, over land and sea  
are omnipresent, speaking aloud to every ear,  
into every heart and home their unhinder'd  
message,

the body and soul of Universal Brotherhood;  
whereby war faln from savagery to fratricide,  
from a trumpeting vainglory to a crying shame,  
stalketh now with blasting curse branded on its  
brow.

From *The Testament of Beauty*  
(Oxford University Press).



## **BROADCASTING**

## CHAPTER I

### HISTORY AND SOME GENERALISATIONS

**B**BROADCASTING has no long history into which the enquiring mind can delve, seeking inspiration for considered judgment and material for constructive criticism. It is a thing definitely of the present and the future, one of the latest gifts of science to a machine-enslaved civilisation which so far has not learned to control for its material and spiritual betterment the vast army of monsters to which it has given the power of movement and of reproduction.

The user need not be interested in the mechanisms through which benefits come to him. They are primarily the concern of the technician and the engineer, but he must be immensely concerned with the effects of the machine. In considering this new art we must, however, pay some little attention to the growth of the machine, because that growth reflects to some extent the national attitude to an instrument which has become enormously powerful in a very few years.

Not even that other new art—flying—grew into a giant of power in so short a time.

Broadcasting is, as everyone knows, a special branch of the art of wireless communication, itself

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so comparatively recent a development that the general public knew nothing of it forty years ago. The first public announcement of the possibility of "space telegraphy" was made at the annual meeting of the British Association in Liverpool in 1896.

Before that time telegraphy, and telephony, had only been possible when wires were used to carry an electric current, and the significance of the announcement made by Sir W. H. Preece that a Mr. Marconi had come from Italy with a magic box was that if this wonder could be developed, as Marconi thought it could, it would free signalling from the trammel of wires. Such an announcement was of immense importance to a country which was then getting ready to celebrate, in the following year, the sixtieth year of the reign of its Queen and which had become very conscious of the vast Empire which owed allegiance to that Queen, an Empire which was even then aware of the necessity for swifter and yet swifter means of communication between its world-scattered units.

The name of Guglielmo Marconi is rightly associated with wireless as its actual "father" for he had the vision to see the possibilities in what had up to then been nothing but laboratory experiments to prove a mathematical theory; but credit is also due to many others who paved the way for Marconi's commercial and constructive genius.

Broadcasting is only possible because in certain

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conditions waves can be radiated through space. The first hint that such waves exist, though they were not then thought of as waves, was in an *Essay on Electricity* published in 1780. The author, Adams, there records that the discharge of a Leyden jar produced minute sparks between pieces of metal completely disconnected from the jar and lying at some little distance from it. Other experimenters, notably Joseph Henry in 1842, and Thomson and Houston in 1877, noticed and recorded similar phenomena.

In 1873 James Clerk Maxwell published his *Electricity and Magnetism*, a profound mathematical work in which he showed that an electrical oscillation produced in a closed circuit would give rise to an electro-magnetic disturbance which would travel through space as a free wave. He said that light was such an electro-magnetic wave, an hypothesis which has since been accepted as fact.

The first wireless signals ever to be sent out and received by man were due to the experiments of David Hughes who was working on microphones in 1879. Some unusual and apparently unexplainable phenomena led him to investigate with microphone and telephone circuits and he discovered that signals could be heard in the telephone whenever an intermittent current was passed through a coil several feet away. He built a small clockwork transmitter, which can now be seen in the Science Museum at South Kensington, and

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found that signals could be received five hundred yards away from his house in Baker Street. He invited the President of the Royal Society, Mr. Spottiswood, and the two honorary secretaries of the Society, Professor Huxley and Mr. Stokes, to witness a demonstration of "aerial electric waves." They refused to accept Hughes's theory of "aerial electric waves" and said that all he was doing could be explained by the well-known facts of induction. David Hughes shall tell in his own words the result of that first demonstration of wireless telegraphy.

"I was so disappointed at being unable to convince them of the truth of these aerial electric waves, that I actually refused to write a Paper on the subject until I was better prepared to demonstrate the existence of these waves; and I continued my experiments for some years, in the hopes of arriving at a perfect scientific demonstration of aerial electric waves, produced by a spark from the extra current in coils, or from frictional electricity or secondary coils. The triumphant demonstration of these waves was reserved to Professor Hertz, who by his masterly researches on the subject in 1887-89 completely demonstrated not only their existence but their identity with ordinary light, in having the power of being reflected, refracted, etc., with nodal points, by means of which the length of the waves could be measured."

It will be noticed that Hughes was interested only in the laboratory side of his discovery and

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the same can be said of Heinrich Hertz, the great German who proved Clerk Maxwell's mathematics to be correct. Oliver Lodge was also interested only in the proof of Clerk Maxwell's hypothesis. In 1888 he had discovered that electric waves proceeded along wires and measured their length, and in 1894 he demonstrated in London and in Oxford a method of signalling by means of Hertzian waves.

Hughes, Hertz and Lodge were pure scientists. When they had proved what they set out to prove the job was done so far as they were concerned; but Lodge did seem to have some vision of the possibilities of these waves or he would not have given a demonstration of signalling. Completely free from jealousy, Lodge was the first to acclaim the immense significance and importance of the announcement made by Sir William Preece on behalf of the youthful Marconi and it was in no small measure due to his authority and influence that the Post Office engineers, headed by Preece, were encouraged to give Marconi every facility for experiment.

Those experiments were swiftly triumphant, confounding the sceptics (amongst whom both Lodge and Preece were later to appear, repenting of their first enthusiasm). In 1898 the East Goodwin lightship was put into communication with the shore by wireless and in the following year signals were exchanged across the Channel. Later in the same year telegraphic communication was

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exchanged between two ships at sea eighty-five miles apart. In 1901 the Hawaiian islands were connected by wireless and at the end of the same year the first signals were heard across the Atlantic. Within a year ship and shore communication up to a distance of two thousand miles was possible and a little later a regular wireless service across the Atlantic was established.

The sceptics were both powerful and insistent. The well-known technical paper, *The Electrician*, discussed in its issue of 20th December, 1901, the now famous "S" signals which had been transmitted from Poldhu in Cornwall and received by Marconi in Newfoundland on 12th December. Amongst other things that paper said was that wireless telegraphy can never be secret, that the signals were too evanescent and uncertain to be useful for commercial purposes and that "Mr. Marconi can never invade the territory of cable and telegraph companies with his wireless telegraphy." Not only telegraphy, but telephony, can now be made secret, and both forms of radio are very serious competitors of the cable.

*The Electrician* returned to the attack on 28th February, 1902. "It has never occurred to us to look upon wireless telegraphy as a probable or even a practically possible competitor with the long-distance submarine cable. Nothing Mr. Marconi has said justifies the faintest expectation that his system can ever be a serious rival to the ocean cable."

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Marconi's answer to this and many other similar attacks was both swift and practical. In March, 1902, at the request of *The Times*, ever ready to seize on new methods of serving its readers, he established a Press news service between Glace Bay, Canada, and Poldhu. By the autumn of that year the Cunard liners *Lucania* and *Campania* were equipped with receiving-gear and were publishing the first wireless News Bulletins, the forerunners of the daily newspapers which are now issued on many great liners. In August 1902 the first International Conference on Wireless Telegraphy assembled in Berlin.

Neither the nature nor the behaviour of these waves which were being so rapidly pressed into the service of mankind was clearly understood for some years after they were being made to span the Atlantic. Just as electricity itself was abundantly used long before men had any conception of its nature, so in wireless, practical use outran theoretical knowledge. Critics who shot at the young inventor with the heaviest artillery they could borrow from physics and mathematics were again and again forced to eat their words. It seemed that the academic scientists had only to declare something impossible and to state their reasons, for Marconi to do it. One of the statements that were made was that masts two hundred miles high would be necessary if the Atlantic was to be bridged by wireless. Marconi himself seems to have had the opinion that a tall aerial would



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be necessary and in many of his early experiments he used balloons to take up the wire.

The reason a very tall aerial was deemed necessary was that it was thought that wireless waves, being very like light, would behave like light and proceed in a straight line from point to point. What Marconi proved was that wireless waves tend to cling to the earth and thus, instead, of being detectable only within visual distance of the transmitting-station, they will travel immense distances. This is particularly true of the long waves—those over a thousand metres between crest and crest—and when they travel over water. The earth absorbs wireless waves far more quickly than does water.

Wireless, both telegraphy and telephony, is now extensively used by the police of the world in the prevention of crime and in bringing criminals to justice. The growth of criminal activity due to post-war social conditions has necessitated the use by the police of every aid science can give in fighting it. It is interesting to remember that the first use of wireless in the apprehension of a criminal was in 1910 and came about more or less by accident. The skipper of the *Montrose* became suspicious of one of his passengers and later identified him almost surely as Crippen the murderer. He wirelessly his news to England, detectives crossed the Atlantic in a faster boat and arrested Crippen before he could land in America.

The public interest in this dramatic illustration

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of the possibilities of wireless was immense. Within two years wireless was to have another big advertisement, this time world-wide. The *Titanic*, a huge new White Star liner on her maiden voyage, struck an iceberg and sank. Solely through the aid of wireless the *Carpathia* was able to rescue seven hundred and three of the passengers and crew, who had taken to the boats. The *Carpathia* was seventy miles away when she heard the "C.Q.D.," the distress call before "S.O.S." was adopted internationally, and reached the scene of the tragedy in four hours. Another vessel was only a few miles away, but she was not keeping a wireless watch, or even more lives might have been saved. The *Titanic* disaster and the large number of lives saved through the medium of wireless was directly responsible for the starting of those many regulations which have resulted in very greatly increasing the safety of life at sea, and for the invention of a multiplicity of devices which have been of immense use in navigation. In these days telephony—broadcasting in fact—is more and more displacing wireless telegraphy in navigational services. Telephony can be understood by anybody, whereas the Morse code is difficult to learn.

Broadcasting emerged from wireless telegraphy as the result of a welter of undirected experiments, many of them made by enthusiastic amateurs with little more than scrappy scientific attainments who had been attracted to the new art by the fascination

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of unrestricted communication over considerable distances. It was, in fact, a gift from the World War period. There had been, previously to 1914, some tentative attempts at the wireless transmission of speech and music, but the proper electrical material was not available. The necessities of warfare, and the enormous sums of money available for the development of anything likely to be useful in the business of killing, led to advances in the art of communication which might otherwise have taken perhaps a quarter of a century. The war gave us the thermionic valve, developed from Fleming's crude form of 1904, and showed many hitherto unexpected methods of using it. The first regular telephony broadcasts for purely entertainment purposes were sent out during the War. They were a private effort of Captain H. de A. Donisthorpe who, with his wife, in 1917 sent out a weekly programme of gramophone records to the wireless training-camps in this country. Captain Donisthorpe was associated with H. J. Round in the early development of the thermionic valve from the crude form in which Fleming had left it.

In 1920 amateurs in the United States were communicating with one another by radio telephony over comparatively long distances and some of them were putting out short musical programmes. Their activities were almost entirely unrestricted and so they were able to develop this side line in general communication in many

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directions impossible in Great Britain and in Europe where War Offices and Postal Authorities exercised a very rigid control and looked on the amateur experimenter as a nuisance, if not as a positive danger.

There was, however, in those early days rather more freedom for the amateur experimenter in the British Isles than on the Continent and by 1921 a number of telephony stations were working and some of these also put out musical programmes of short duration.

The first regular broadcast programmes were sent out in 1921 from a reconstructed garage in Pittsburg, U.S.A., a station which was later to develop into the famous KDKA from which the voice of the United States was first heard in Europe; but experimental speech and music transmissions were being broadcast from the Marconi station at Chelmsford on a wavelength of 2,800 metres for two half-hourly periods each day and were received up to distances of a thousand miles. From this station on 5th June, 1920, the *Daily Mail* concert was given, with Melba as the chief attraction. Soon after, broadcasting stations were started in France and in Holland, and the agitation for similar facilities in this country became sufficiently strong to cause the Post Office authorities to give the matter serious consideration. The Marconi Company was ultimately allowed to send out from Writtle, near Chelmsford, a half-hour programme once a week. Another Marconi

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station, 2LO, later to be famous as "the London station," transmitted experimental programmes in the summer of 1922.

We may here turn aside for a moment to consider individual activities and their reaction on international amity.

The amateurs of the world, though few in number, were mostly young or youngish men solely concerned with the scientific aspect of communication. As their knowledge increased they were able to hold conversations, mostly by means of Morse telegraphy and the International Code, with their fellow-experimenters in other countries. They adapted the International Code to their needs and developed a curious language of their own which was generally understood by their fellow-workers all over the Continent, no matter what their native tongue. True, this language was not very generous in its vocabulary; but it did allow many friendships to be made which were followed up with letters.

In those early days the amateur transmitter had a very real feeling that his hobby was doing good work in the cause of international friendship. When you had something like thirty or forty friends scattered all over the continent of Europe, from Norway in the north, to Italy in the south, and many of them were in countries which were lately your enemies, and you knew that you were only one unit in a large and growing body, there was some justification for the conviction that no

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matter how politicians and diplomats were bungling things you were aiding in the really necessary task of "getting together."

As lately as 1923 we did believe that the War had ended war and that this "getting together" was all that was necessary. It is somewhat significant that in those days German youth was particularly anxious to make friends with British youth and that many young Germans confessed that they had learned the Morse code and had obtained a transmitter's permit solely with that end in view. These young Germans are now regimented in the interests of the German national egotism. The licence fee they have to pay has been reduced to a quarter of its pre-Hitler figure and they are told that every encouragement will be given them provided they consent to be part of the propaganda machine. We none of us saw what was in store for the world and hailed the coming of Broadcasting as something which would make even more quickly for international understanding than was possible through our small efforts.

To burden broadcasting with the blame for the state of international affairs at present is perhaps hardly fair: but one cannot resist the implication that if the new art had been left altogether in private hands it might not have been so readily used for purely national, as opposed to international purposes. The potentialities of the machine, however, caused it to be taken almost

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completely, and at once, from the hands of individuals.

In the United States big commercial interests saw in it a new vehicle for advertising and throughout that vast nation broadcasting was quickly chained and enslaved by the advertisement manager. To a certain extent this was good for freedom of speech, for such time as could be given to the expression of opinions of social and political importance was allotted without any reference to the State which, having no monopoly of communications had no say at all in the matter. Anyone who had interesting things to say could say them. Cranks, educational enthusiasts, as well as Churches and commercial concerns, rushed to take advantage of this new method of publicity. Two months from the start there were six hundred stations working in the U.S.A. and by the end of 1924 there were no less than one thousand four hundred.

Commercial and individual control proved to be very bad indeed from the artistic standpoint and American broadcasting sank to depths of inanity from which it is but slowly emerging now that the number of stations is much reduced and the organisation is mainly in the hands of two great concerns which realise that it is impossible to make "time on the air" of value to advertisers unless the standard of programme is fairly high.

In Great Britain, Mr. F. G. Kellaway, then Postmaster-General, announced in the House of

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Commons on 4th May, 1922, that regular broadcasting would be authorised. The negotiations with the different commercial firms concerned took many months and before they were completed the extreme dangers of the American system, or lack of system, were very evident. The Post Office, which was not only in a position to regulate broadcasting, but was constitutionally required to accept considerable responsibility, adopted the principle of putting the new machine into the hands of a single organisation with "public service" as its motive.

The management of the organisation was to be in the hands of a Board to which the Government would appoint a Chairman and which would draw its other Directors from the manufacturers of wireless apparatus. The money was to come in part from licence fees to be collected by the Post Office and in part from royalties on receiving-sets. This system, which aimed at the exclusion of foreign-made sets and at limiting the efforts of the "home constructor," resulted in failure. The Post Office was already issuing "experimenters' licences" which were not difficult to obtain, and most of those who were then interested could show without much difficulty that they were "experimenters" within the meaning of the word which satisfied the Post Office. Royalties were abolished as from 1st June, 1924, and the present ten-shilling broadcast licence came into force.



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This system works very well indeed and something like it has been adopted in many countries; but in our case the Government is allowed to retain far too great a proportion of the fees. In 1934, for instance, out of a total of nearly £3,400,000 collected from the public, the British Broadcasting Corporation received only just over £1,700,000. The taking of so fat a picking by the Treasury, though it cannot be said to have crippled broadcasting in this country, has severely handicapped its progress. The money is paid by the public for the provision of broadcast programmes and it is unfair that the Government should take anything more from the licence fees than a reasonable amount for the expenses of collection and the cost of such services as have to be rendered for the proper enjoyment of the programmes by the public. The suppression of interference is one of the things for which the public can legitimately be called upon to pay, but the cost of such work is nothing compared with the immense sum that is taken from the fees.

A committee is now sitting (May 1935) "to consider the constitution, control and finance of the Broadcasting Service in this country and advise generally on the conditions under which the service, including broadcasting to the Empire, television broadcasting, and the system of wireless exchanges, should be conducted after 31st December, 1936." On that date the present Charter of the British Broadcasting Corporation expires.

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There is little doubt that the Committee will recommend the granting of a new Charter to the B.B.C. for a term of years and that it will generally endorse the policy of the Corporation. In view of the results obtained it cannot, in fairness, do anything else. There is also little doubt that the B.B.C. will press for more than five shillings out of every ten shillings collected by the Post Office. Taking everything into consideration the B.B.C. should have at least seven shillings and sixpence out of each licence fee.

The commercialism of the United States and the Public Service Corporation of Great Britain were not the only possibilities and different States developed the service in different ways. A writer in *The B.B.C. Year Book* for 1933 pointed out that in the matter of the control exercised by a government on broadcasting "the determining factor has been the general attitude of the governors to the governed." A review of the various methods employed in different countries bears out this statement. In our own case, provided that we will pay up, we can enjoy a quite reasonable amount of freedom. In Germany and in Russia there is very rigid control by the State. In Germany the State has tried to popularise a kind of receiving-apparatus which can be used only for hearing local programmes, because the German Government is anxious that its people shall be fed with one kind of idea only and shall not have the opportunity of listening to anything else. In

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Russia the State is also anxious that the people shall be fed from one fountain of ideas. France has tried to work commercially-owned and Government-owned systems side by side and the results have not been particularly happy. Italy has a system something like our own, but the State dictates in political matters far more than in our own case; whilst the Danes have constituted their broadcasting on almost exactly the lines followed in Britain. Incidentally Denmark and Great Britain are the two European countries with the highest proportion of listeners to population. In Norway the State took control in 1933, the Norsk Rikskringkasting organisation absorbing the four existing commercial companies.

The article "The Relation of Governments to Broadcasting" in *The B.B.C. Year Book 1933*, already quoted, ends on a note which is completely in tune with the purpose of this book:

"Whither, then? In a recent address which attracted considerable notice, the American publicist and broadcaster, William Hard, propounded the intriguing paradox that the effect of 'governmental' broadcasting as practised in Europe is to advance culture but not civics; whilst American 'free' broadcasting is advancing civics but not culture. When allowance is made for the oversharpeness of the generalisation, the proposition as stated would be very difficult to confute. But the facts might equally well be stated in another way, that the freedom of America is failing to rise to a cultural opportunity that the governments of the

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Old World have been socially-minded enough to seize, and that the higher the cultural level of the governed is the less they are likely to be 'doped' by the governors. Still other interpretations could be suggested, but common to all of them is the fact that the standpoint of a government towards broadcasting is fixed by its standpoint towards its people. This is the root of the matter, and the forms of constitution, administration and finance, important as they are, are derivatives. The question 'Whither broadcasting?' therefore can only be answered by posing another question, 'Whither society?' and it is best, here, to leave it at that."

## CHAPTER II

### BROADCASTING IN THE HOME

**I**NTEREST, in the early days of broadcasting, was in all countries confined to those with scientific leanings. The actual programmes received were of little or no moment. In this country the licence which the Postmaster General issued before broadcasting came into being was for experimental purposes and the few thousand who had such licences were experimenters to a man. Apparatus was either home-made or adapted from ex-service material of which there was an abundance on the market.

Most of these experimenters had more than an elementary knowledge of electricity and magnetism, and the vocabulary of the electrician began to spread and to be quite readily understood in the home, particularly amongst schoolboys who quickly developed a very great interest in physics. In this regard it is interesting to note that altogether apart from the effect of a continuous supply of music and speech in the home, the coming of broadcasting has made electricity a familiar and generally understood thing. The electron, that particle of negative electricity which can have much freedom of movement and which is at the

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back of most wireless phenomena, was eagerly discussed by growing thousands. In all probability the large number of books dealing in a semi-popular manner with the more abstruse problems of the physicist would have had nothing like the market they have achieved had it not been that a very large proportion of the public acquired an interest in these things through constructing and manipulating wireless-sets.

The construction of wireless apparatus provided a hobby which was reasonably cheap, appealed to the imagination, required few tools and comparatively little mechanical ability and provided results which gave a thrilling sense of adventure. In the early days women were, generally speaking, either passively or actively antagonistic. At the best they looked on with amused tolerance at the boyish enthusiasms of their men-folk for a hobby which at least had the advantage of keeping them at home.

Though what may be termed the constructional period persisted for some years the programmes began to assert themselves quite early and attract the interest of those who had neither the time, the ability, nor the desire to construct their own receiving-apparatus. On 8th January, 1923, the whole of the opera, "The Magic Flute," was relayed from Covent Garden through the London station 2LO. This was followed on succeeding nights by excerpts from a number of other operas. Now though opera has never been very popular with the mass of the people in this country it was a

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glamorous and magic word associated with a lingering respect for all that "the Season" stood for in Victorian and Edwardian days. Musical people sat up and took notice. There seemed to be a possibility that this new toy might prove to be something more than a toy and the few manufacturers who could produce reliable receiving-apparatus were overwhelmed with orders.

The possibility of receiving news by wireless had previously given a small fillip to the very slowly awaking interest of the general public. The first news bulletin had been sent out by 2LO on 21st December, 1922. The hours, six p.m. and nine p.m., were much the same as those now used and in fact the six p.m. news has run almost continuously from that date. It is somewhat interesting to recall now the hesitant way in which the sending out of news was approached. There was considerable doubt as to whether it would be understood. Mr. Arthur Burrows was the first announcer and he made various experiments in reading, asking listeners which speed best suited them. The news was for some time always repeated at dictation speed in much the same way as the shipping weather-forecasts are still read. Very quickly the announcers found out that an ordinary reading speed was all that was required and that the repetition at dictation speed was not necessary.

Quite early in the history of broadcasting it began to influence home life. The wireless

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enthusiast in the home could in no circumstances be tempted out on Sunday afternoons because on that occasion the Dutch station, PCGG, gave its weekly concert, then the only available broadcast music before a late hour on Sunday.

Here we may take a side-glance at the attitude of the B.B.C. towards Sunday broadcasting. When it was announced that wireless programmes would be sent out throughout the whole seven days of the week ministers of religion immediately protested. The sanctity of the Sabbath would, they said, be destroyed, and the provision of musical entertainment on Sunday would attract the people away from church.

Such an attitude, is, of course, a confession of failure. If religion, as interpreted by the Churches, is a living force with its roots in the hearts of the people, it need fear no counter-attractions. The truth is that priest, parson and minister know that they are fighting a losing battle, that they can no longer interpret a living religion to mankind.

Be that as it may, the tradition of a Sunday devoted to nothing but church, food and sleep still exists in high places and the broadcasting authorities entered into a "gentleman's agreement" with the Churches that there should be no broadcasting during church hours.

Somewhat later the British Broadcasting Company decided to transmit religious services and they have now built up a fine tradition of reverence, actuality and impartiality. Broadcasting has



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been in this country most distinctly on the side of the angels and has done not a little to revive the waning interest in creeds and formalism. It may be that a new kind of religious belief, not based on creeds, will emerge from the B.B.C.'s efforts. This is discussed more fully in Chapter VII.

Returning to the early days, it would be interesting, if it were possible, to trace step by step the changing of appreciation from the electrical and mechanical wonder of the new art to the artistic and intellectual side. This change is perhaps best shown in the growth of the number of receiving-licences issued. When broadcasting had been running approximately one year there were some two hundred thousand licensed receiving-sets in the country. In another year's time this number had been trebled and before the end of 1924 the first million had been passed. In 1925 it almost looked as though saturation point had been reached at about a million and a quarter licences, but the General Strike, and the hunger for news of a people deprived of newspapers, gave a big impetus and early in 1926 two million licences were in force.

Though the home construction of receivers continued to attract the attention of a very considerable number, so much so that a whole series of weekly and monthly papers grew up to fill the need for technical information written in the simplest possible language, those who regarded a receiver purely as a magic box with incompre-

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hensible insides which would provide instruction and entertainment at the touch of a switch, were in the majority. In these days, with over seven million licences in force in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the home constructor is completely swamped. The papers run for his benefit are ceasing to be published, or are completely changing their outlook, and now aim at being bought by those whose major interest is in the programmes.

With the change-over from electrical and mechanical interest to programme interest has come a complete change in the woman's outlook. Women are now, as a general rule, greater users of broadcast-receiving apparatus than are men. Spending more time in the home they have more opportunities for listening and there is a general tendency in all countries to provide during the mornings and afternoons programme material which is supposed to appeal particularly to women.

A curious development of broadcast in the home is that of "hearing without listening." Suspicion attaches rather to women than to men for this habit of switching on "the wireless" directly the programmes start in the morning and conducting the whole of the day's activities to the accompaniment of an only occasionally apprehended background of noise.

This habit is more general than many people suppose. It is in most cases a complete preventative of serious thought or reading. It has, however,

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probably no deteriorating effect because those who so use a wireless set would not think or read seriously in any case and there is of course always the chance that something half-heard may attract the attention and lead to real beneficial listening for a period.

Though women may have started this habit of leaving the receiver working throughout the day a large number of men seem to have adopted the habit and there have appeared in the Press, from time to time, quite serious attempts to defend this practice. There even appear to be extraordinary people who can play bridge to an accompaniment of speech and music from a loudspeaker. Obviously, if they are paying any attention to the game, they cannot be listening and one is tempted to wonder what is the quality of the bridge played in such conditions. No doubt most people have small capacity for concentration and wireless used in this way certainly does not help towards forming habits of concentration. On the other hand, there are a large number who really do listen, who treat their receivers as definite instruments for education or amusement and who only switch on when they are ready and willing to give their whole attention to what is being sent out. Only these can really benefit.

This switching on and leaving the receiver working for hours at a stretch is directly opposed to the almost entirely masculine diversion of ether-searching, or knob-twiddling. The remark-

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able ease with which signals can be brought in from a long distance and the fact that in the early days the sole yard-stick for receiver efficiency was the number of stations that could be brought in, led to an altogether exaggerated respect for quantity as opposed to quality which is even now dying very hard.

Before 1922 there was little to listen to in the way of telephony and most owners of receiving-apparatus were more or less expert readers of the Morse code. Quite obviously, in those days, the more stations that could be brought in the more efficient was the apparatus, and the man who could point to a log filled with details of reception from stations all over the world had quite definitely something of which he could be proud. The space-annihilating wonder of wireless appeals also to the imagination and the sense of adventure, and so it is not to be wondered at that in the early days the general criticism directed against the owner of the receiver was that he never allowed his household to listen to one station for more than about five minutes. As has been pointed out, he was not primarily interested in programmes, but in the performance of his home-constructed apparatus.

The makers of commercial receivers adopted a very similar viewpoint. For many years the number of stations which a receiver would bring in was the best selling-point. Apparatus was constructed for sensitivity rather than for quality and that criticism can be still, with some truth,

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levelled against the commercial manufacturer. Now it is a lamentable truth that in wireless, as in many other things, quality and quantity cannot usually be obtained from the same source, and whilst there is no doubt at all that the quality of reception has immensely improved in the last three or four years, it still leaves much to be desired. That aspect of home listening has, however, been dealt with elsewhere in this book and need not now be dwelt upon. It may be pointed out, however, that the capability of receiving a considerable number of stations took on a new value with the growth of the listening public.

The bias of the B.B.C. against entertainment on Sunday has only been overcome within a comparatively few months and even now the type of entertainment given is not to the taste of a very large number of listeners. To supply a real demand for light programmes on Sunday, which is the one day of the week when the majority can listen, the manufacturers had to turn out receivers sensitive enough to supply programmes from several Continental stations. In recent years certain Continental stations, Luxemburg and Radio Normandie, for instance, have developed sponsored programmes especially to meet this Sunday demand. That the material given is beneath contempt artistically, and that it is interspersed with advertising matter, does not affect the fact that these programmes are very popular among certain sections of the community.

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Any attempt to assess the effects of broadcasting on home life is difficult owing to the immense diversity in mentality, in education, and in outlook in over seven million homes representing, in numbers of possible listeners, something over half the population of these islands. That broadcasting is having a very great effect and will have even greater repercussions on life and thought is obvious. There are very many homes where social engagements throughout the week are fixed with regard to wireless programmes. In such homes broadcasting is regarded seriously and the effect must be greater than in those in which the receiver is merely a noise box. The constant endeavour of the B.B.C. to have its programmes regarded seriously is by no means without result and the number of those who listen definitely is an ever-growing one.

A change in our social habits has followed on this cult of serious listening. The casual evening caller is no longer welcome, for the necessity of entertaining the caller may interfere with listening to a much appreciated and long-looked-for programme.

Mechanised instruments for the production of music in the interests of those who have a love of sweet sounds, but are incapable of personal performance, are no new thing, but early apparatus to produce music completely divorced from the human element—the musical box is a good example—were little more than toys, and bigger

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instruments, the street piano and the steam piano and the steam organ, produced sounds so obviously mechanical in origin, or so lacking in true musical quality, that they had little popularity except with itinerant players and the proprietors of fairs.

The first serious attempts to produce real music by mechanical means, the gramophone and the player piano, gave rise to a storm of protest from professional musicians, which protest was made on grounds which were diametrically opposed. One criticism was that the sounds produced were a travesty of music and were not deserving of the serious attention of music-lovers and the other was that the music was so like the real thing that it would act as a deterrent to the admittedly arduous task of learning to play an instrument, or sing.

Certainly it was true that a very considerable number of those who appreciated music but who had neither the time nor the ability to become personal performers, hailed the player piano and the gramophone with delight; but neither of these things had any marked effect in reducing the number of young people who took music lessons.

Broadcasting has had a very decided effect in this direction. The enormous quantity of music available for the mere flicking of a switch has completely killed that kind of low-efficiency piano-tinkling and ballad-squalling amongst those who had no real love of the art, which at one time was a part of home life. On the other hand there is

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growing up, in a manner that will be discussed in another chapter, a very real appreciation of music amongst many who were but casually interested previously.

A very wise and experienced teacher of music who read these chapters in the first typescript criticises the writer's views on grounds which must, in all fairness, be recorded. She says that a true appreciation of music is rarely associated with the lack of some measure of executive ability. That seems a reasonable statement, since music is a very complex thing and demands considerable education for full appreciation. On the other hand a love of music based wholly or partly on emotional reactions belongs to very many who have never learned to play or sing. Evidently we must differentiate between appreciation based on technical or executive knowledge and that which has its beginnings in a mere love of melody or even of rhythm.

Even more important is this critic's objection to the modern musical box because it removes from thousands the incentive to acquire a faculty for individual expression which, even if it is not sufficiently advanced to give pleasure to others, is yet a pleasure to themselves. In her view, and she is herself a listener to broadcast speech and music, it is a tragedy that so few young people can now sing and play. By neglecting the discipline of learning they are cutting themselves off from a whole world of joy which might be theirs.



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Neither the gramophone nor broadcasting has had, nor can have, any action in preventing really musical people with a gift for performance and expression from learning to sing or play. Standards have of course been raised and this also acts as a deterrent to the merely dilettante amateur. But since both broadcasting and the gramophone depend on the original performance of music, the demand for competent executants must increase rather than decrease. We may say that while the home performance of music has almost completely died out the cult of concert-going, when really good material is offered, is increasing. There is at present a curiosity to see as well as to hear an orchestra or a singer and this curiosity exists in very many cases where it did not exist previously to the coming of broadcasting. .

That music can ever become completely an affair of home listening is improbable. The psychological effect of being in the company of others and having a part in that enthusiasm which is only truly experienced by a mass of individuals must have an appeal so long as human nature is unchanged.

Whether the killing of individual endeavour in musical production amongst those who have no chance of professional employment, or any likelihood of becoming a first-class amateur, is a good or a bad thing is a matter which can be discussed from various angles without any possibility of arriving at a final judgment. All that can be said

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is that the tendency of civilisation is more and more in the direction of specialisation and professionalism both in work and in entertainment. There is always a possibility that the inevitable growth of leisure, as the machine becomes more and more competent to perform every task, will lead to a growth of amateurism in all directions. It is noteworthy that in an age when Jeremiahs tell us that dramatic art was never at a lower ebb in this country and that the living drama is being killed by the mechanised art of the cinema, amateur dramatic societies are flourishing in every village, town and city in the kingdom. There never has been so much enthusiasm for the amateur performance of plays.

It is, of course, easier to become a reasonably proficient actor than it is to become a reasonably proficient player or singer, but the point is that with increasing leisure amateurism in every direction is bound to grow and that the effect of broadcasting can only result in the continuous raising of standards for the amateur.

The influence of broadcasting on pronunciation and speech generally has been very great and this influence is undoubtedly towards a "standard speech." The time when all Britons will speak alike is, however, very far off. Professor Lloyd James in *The Broadcast Word* points out that there are immense barriers to be broken down before any general standard of speech can be expected. Both accent and vowel sounds used by one

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section of the community are definitely offensive to others. Broadly the main division is between Northern and Southern English and there is no doubt that ultimately Southern English will conquer. As Professor Lloyd James says, the young, particularly the educated young, are adventurous in speech as in other matters and are continuously experimenting both with rhythm and with sounds. Before there was broadcasting such new values as were accepted by the educated would spread but slowly. Now they are available almost from the moment of their birth; for the speaking staff of a broadcast-station must always be comparatively young and must always be susceptible to the experiments of the young. The Advisory Committee on Spoken English, of which Professor Lloyd James is the Honorary Secretary, exercises some control over announcers, but since language is a living and fluid thing standards must always be moving. The result is that pronunciations change far more rapidly now than they did in the past.

The enormous growth of listening in all countries providing broadcast programmes can be regarded as a sure sign that as a rule the programmes are attractive to the majority of the people. Despite this, continuous grumbling against the programmes takes place in every country where the individual dares to express an opinion. The Briton is a notorious grumbler, though quite possibly he has less to be dissatisfied with in his general conditions of life than have the majority

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of Europeans. Broadcasting has a definite news value, from the point of view of the Press, seeing that it affects something like half the homes of the country, and the majority in densely populated districts, and so, from time to time, newspapers have made big efforts to prove that the outlook of the B.B.C. is to a large extent divorced from public opinion and public requirements.

In so far as these inquisitions have been carried out by the popular dailies they have only resulted in the obvious discovery that the semi-educated are interested to a large extent in purely low-brow performances. Such results have had but a slight influence on the policy of the B.B.C. which takes its social responsibilities very seriously. Early in 1935, however, *The Observer* indulged itself in a prize competition in which readers were asked to send a brief grumble or a statement of grievances against the B.B.C. *The Observer* caters for an educated and intelligent public and so the result of that competition is of considerable interest.

In its report on the competition *The Observer* records that very few have no grievance against the B.B.C. One gentleman wrote that his grievance was that he hadn't one, and another that "They all too rarely give me a decent excuse to try a foreign station." Yet another reader voiced his grievance that "Such an admirable organisation has to close down at all, even for a few hours during the night."

Grumbles were, however, both varied in

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expression and wide in range and *The Observer* says that after a perusal of the entire correspondence one question may be raised, "Is Broadcasting bad for the temper?"

In my own opinion, based on a wide acquaintance with listeners of all sorts and conditions, the truth is that even now very few of us realise that we don't have to listen and that a switch is equally useful for turning off as for turning on. The B.B.C. puts out programmes of such great variety that no one person can possibly be pleased all the time. One *Observer* reader evidently does use his switch in selective capacity, as his grievance is that "the B.B.C. does not know when I switch off." Quite a number of readers accuse Sir John Reith, and the organisation which he controls, of didacticism, which is in fact the generally expressed opinion to be found amongst the readers of less intelligent papers. Such a criticism is not confined to this country, but is to be found wherever the free expression of opinion is allowed in conjunction with a broadcasting organisation with high social ideals. This point of view is voiced variously. One *Observer* reader says, "Why should we, perforce, be educated when we want to be entertained?" Another echoes this opinion with a slight difference, "The general public does not want to be taught, preached at or improved."

There is no doubt at all that the majority of those who have brought broadcasting into their homes have yet to learn to use it to advantage.

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This knowledge must surely come, but in the meantime broadcasting is so new a thing that to the great body of listeners the mere announcement that an item is to be broadcast gives them no indication as to their possible enjoyment or appreciation. Having bought a receiver, possibly at some personal sacrifice in other directions, they desire to get complete value from it and are therefore resentful when, having switched on and being in a mood to listen, they find nothing available which suits either their mood or their mentality. The development of broadcasting, regarded as a means of entertainment or education, demands intelligent co-operation in the home, a fact which few listeners have yet come to understand.

## CHAPTER III

### THE APPRECIATION OF MUSIC

**I**N the early days of broadcasting considerable comment was made in the Press of this country on the remarkable effect which a facility for hearing an abundance of music was having on the taste of the mass of the population. Critics and publicists quoted with evident amazement that they heard porters humming excerpts from opera, oratorio and concerto, whilst the efforts of the whistling errand boy seemed to have been altogether removed from the latest popular song in favour of the more tuneful passages from classical compositions. That was, of course, at a time when programme hours were comparatively limited and the British Broadcasting Company was far more inclined to give the public what it ought to want than to give even the slightest nod in the supposed direction of popular taste.

The bulk of broadcasting programmes in all countries consists of musical items, and now that listeners are numbered by millions and in fact include a very large percentage of the adult population in all civilised communities, the effect on musical appreciation must be very large indeed. There is, however, now a far greater bulk of

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material offered, and the listener becomes more and more inclined to select items likely to be pleasing rather than, as in the old days, to listen attentively to everything from the very joy and wonder in having music in the home. The growth in appreciation has not proceeded in proportion to the growth of the use of the new medium.

The growth of appreciation for the best in music of all kinds depends on the standard of programme, and this standard of programme is governed first by national outlook and secondly by the ideals of those in charge. The question naturally arises as to how far the programme director is entitled to play the part of schoolmaster. The answer is that the director, whether a person or a committee, is responsible and must give expression to some ideal. To please everyone all the time is impossible and those countries are best served where high ideals are coupled with human sympathy and understanding.

I should like to make a claim on behalf of the B.B.C. that its direction is of this very kind; but probably such a claim would be greeted with derision by the multitude. The average Briton resents emphatically even the appearance of an attempt at dictatorship and one of the most constant grumbles against the B.B.C., whether the Company or the Corporation, has been that it has always sought to impose the standards of a high-brow junta rather than consult the wishes of the majority of its listeners. That it never has been



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true that the B.B.C. has given undue prominence to extremes, particularly to extremes tending towards the left in art, has nothing to do with this feeling, which is simply a reflection of the ordinary British intolerance of restraint. It is an unfair complaint as will presently be seen when we consider the proportion of programme time devoted to the different kinds of music. Fortunately the B.B.C. Directors know well that the listeners in all free countries grumble at the programmes given them and often say that those of other countries are better and more suited to their needs. The remarkable thing is that this kind of opinion is held equally by high-brows and low-brows in all countries.

Possibly the really enormous amount of music of all kinds that is now available has given listeners a kind of psychic indigestion and they have yet to learn how to assimilate the fare provided. At the moment the grumbles of the low-brows seem to have the more weight. In most countries, even those in which the State has complete control, there is a growing tendency towards a lowering rather than a raising of the general standard. It is not perhaps true to say that less works of the better class are now given, but that the general extension of programme hours has been used to include a greater proportion of mediocre items of all sorts.

As an indication of public taste as interpreted by broadcast directors in different countries, it is

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interesting to refer to the returns of the *Unione Internazionale de Radiodiffusion*. In Great Britain, in the last three years, the allocation of time has been fairly regular with slight seasonal variations. Generally speaking about one per cent of programme hours is given to opera and about fifteen per cent to serious music. Nearly forty-five per cent of the time is given to light music and about ten per cent to dance music. It is noteworthy that in the winter of 1934-5 the proportion of serious music fell and that there was a considerable increase in the time given to light music and dance music. In France, in the latter half of 1933, about ten per cent was given to opera, about twenty per cent to serious music, twenty per cent to light music and fifteen per cent to dance music.

Of the sixty per cent of programme time devoted to music in Germany about two per cent is given to opera, something over twenty-five per cent to serious music and the rest to light and dance music. In Holland over seventy-five per cent of programme hours are now given to music, something under one per cent being occupied by opera and just under twenty per cent by serious musical material.

The Scandanavian countries generally devote about half their programme hours to music and the proportion of serious music is rather low in Norway and high in Sweden. On the other hand Norway seems recently to have cut out jazz almost entirely.

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No exact figures are available for the United States, but a recent analysis would seem to suggest that a purely commercial control results in a tremendous proportion of programme time being devoted to jazz, crooning, ballad-singing and variety entertainment. The two big United States circuits give their clients nearly twenty hours of broadcasting each day. Serious music is almost entirely absent from these programmes.

Even in countries where broadcasting is under the most rigid State control, as in Russia and Germany, there is a tendency regarding the music part of the programme, to pay very considerable attention to the supposed desires of the listeners, though in Russia it is tempered by the general consideration that every item should have some definite social meaning. Though the B.B.C. makes no such statement of policy, there is little doubt that it also has, though it keeps it in the background, this idea of social service. The difference, of course, is that the Russian programme direction serves a well-defined ideal whilst that of the Scottish Director-General of the B.B.C. is merely a rather nebulous desire for uplift.

Speaking generally, there will be little doubt in the minds of all thinking people that the function of broadcasting should be in the direction of lifting the appreciation and education of the people in music as well as in every other way. The wise handling of such a policy must be a matter of very considerable difficulty.

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Progress of any kind always results from the enthusiasm of an intelligent minority and if this minority is allowed to use, without restriction, a weapon of such enormous propaganda value as broadcasting it is likely to alienate the majority and in the end do far more harm than good. The wise director of programmes will therefore press slowly on his end of the uplifting lever.

To a purist, for instance, jazz is anathema, and on the other hand quite a large proportion of those who really do appreciate serious music regard the compositions of the moderns as nothing more than a dreadful noise.

The whole question of taste and progress is most difficult to discuss and to deal with. Under the façade of the British Museum is a statue brought from Easter Island, the work presumably of a semi-educated aboriginal seeking to express the human form in stone. That statue, dating without doubt from the early days of civilisation, is exactly the kind of thing which Epstein and Eric Gill are giving us to-day, or so it seems to the ordinary person with the average appreciation of plastic art. Are the moderns in sculpture merely retrogressing towards savagery or is the almost obscene power of this Easter Island god a more just expression of the human soul than the work of the Greeks?

We can ask exactly the same questions about music, remembering that some composers who are popular to-day were regarded as outrageous noise-

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makers when they were first heard. It would seem therefore that the function of those responsible for the broadcasting of music should be selective rather than dictatorial. It is within no one's province to say that the sophisticated savagery of jazz is immoral and should be banned, or that the moderns are wrong-headed and decadent. Jazz in all its forms has many followers and the moderns appeal to another and smaller class.

Music, like every other art, must change its canons with the ever-changing ages and all that broadcasting can do is to give us what appears to be the best in every direction and set its face rigidly against mere commercialism. Nor should it be the function of broadcast direction to pretend to know what the public wants, though of course it must keep its ear to the ground for indications of changing taste. To broadcast the best of every kind is the only thing it can do with any hope of success.

The real nexus of the average Briton's criticism of the B.B.C. is not as it is usually voiced, but is a resentfulness against this very attitude of pretending to know what the listener wants. Such an attitude is always expressed as a certain smug self-complacency and the Briton, who is in the mass both smug and self-complacent, resents with his whole being seeing the mass mirrored in the directors of either his amusements or his government.

The majority in any community cannot have

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definite tastes and clearly expressed desires. It can only have a tendency. Its opinions are largely governed by two minorities, both of which may be conveniently labelled from the slang of the moment. One is "high-brow" and the other is "low-brow." The low-brow element is almost entirely commercial and in this country is exemplified by the "popular" Press. The United States is, fortunately for the world, the only country which has so far developed a definitely low-brow broadcast. The high-brow is the intelligent minority already referred to. It is completely divorced from all questions of commercialism and though on occasions its ideas may either be retrogressive or too far in advance of the majority, its ideas on the whole make for progress.

The reader may here ask how the ideas of an intelligent minority can possibly be retrogressive. It is difficult to find an example from the subject we are now examining, but one from the sphere of economics leaps to the mind. There is in this country, and in most civilised countries, a minority who would have us return to manual labour in every human activity with the idea of doing away with the burden of unemployment. That the absurdity of such ideas is at once apparent to every ordinary thinker does not prevent these people from preaching their doctrine in and out of season and preaching it with a vehemence which shows that their thinking has been along lines completely divorced from actuality.

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In *The Listener* of 20th March, 1935, appeared a letter from Edmund Dulac dealing very exactly with the influence of intelligent minorities and unintelligent minorities on the general taste of the majority. His general idea is not quite the same as mine, but marches closely with it, and is true for any free community. He recognises our old friends the high-brow, the low-brow and the middle-brow, but postulates two definite classes of those in charge of our entertainment and information services. These classes he calls respectively "Grade A" and "Grade C." Grade A is composed of those who like and produce anything that is good, whether high-brow, middle-brow or low-brow. Its characteristics in all classes are efficiency and good taste. It is the intelligent minority. Grade C is composed of those who like and produce anything that is inferior, whether high-brow, middle-brow or low-brow. Its characteristics in all classes are futility and bad taste. It is the unintelligent minority. Between these two floats the great mass of the public. It is only homogeneous in its negative aspects. As a body it is inactive, has no definite tastes except those of the minority which at the moment provides it with a cue, no voice except that of the particular individuals who choose to call themselves its representatives.

"In our economic system a great deal of the catering in enterprises likely to affect culture and taste is in the hands of the Grade C minority. Every now and then, however, by some fortunate

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concourse of circumstances, Grade A takes the lead, Grade C is forced to take a step forward, and there is progress. Those fortunate circumstances usually come out under the stimulus of one man or of a group who manage to prove that changes for the better do not necessarily involve financial loss. Sometimes such circumstances arise of themselves. Never in the history of civilisation were they so spontaneously favourable to the establishment of intelligent compulsion as when broadcasting became a practical reality. The organisers of wireless transmission all the world over had then at their disposal for raising the level of taste and culture the most effective instrument that could be dreamed of. The millions were eager to listen to anything that came out of the magic box. They could have been 'plugged' with nothing but good stuff, which does not necessarily mean a steady stream of Beethoven, Shakespeare, Bergson and Einstein, but which means music, plays and talks, high-brow, middle-brow and low-brow of the Grade A quality. The opportunity was missed. Broadcasting in most countries being a commercial enterprise, the old ideas about 'what the public wants' held good. English broadcasting did not escape; the organisers did not realise the unique character of the occasion, and the task confronting the B.B.C. at this moment is made no lighter by some ten years of regrettable precedents.

"Broadcasting, if it is to play the part in civilisa-



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tion that one expects, should adopt a bolder policy. It still has the power to dispose of the theory that when a thing is low-brow the public invariably prefers the Grade C to the Grade A brand; to explore all possible sources of Grade A stuff and brains in the high-brow, middle-brow and low-brow categories and to use nothing else; and to display in its productions generally more imagination, more originality and more appropriateness. The business of the B.B.C. is mainly to educate and entertain, and it is in practice difficult to draw the line between the two. An ideal way would be to radiate nothing but entertainment pure and simple from one station and nothing but education and educational entertainment from the other."

We must, however, realise that the machine itself is of considerable importance and grows in importance as appreciation grows. Grade A stuff is of little use when the means of hearing it are Grade C. By the machine is meant the actual box of tricks we know as the "receiving-set." The transmitting machine is of course of equal importance, but here the general standards of performance are very greatly in advance of those of the receiver. To the ordinary man who is reaching out towards the best it does not much matter in the first instance what his receiver is like providing it makes a melodious kind of noise, but very quickly his education in appreciation is limited, and may actually be prostituted, by the provision of a low-

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grade receiver. It is within the knowledge of that small minority who, ever since the start of broadcasting, have been struggling for the provision of instruments capable of reproducing speech and music with fidelity, that the majority of the public has already been educated to receive as music something which has no real relation to actual concert-hall performance. The selling agent expresses this when he says "the public likes a mellow tone."

A mellow tone in this instance means reproduction which is devoid of the higher musical frequencies and in which most of the instruments used in an orchestra are unrecognisable as individual entities.

This, of course, is a technical matter, but it is deserving of our best attention because of its effect on musical taste. The mis-direction of the public in this way has already gone so far that some composers are advocating the making of a special class of music for broadcasting in which the limitations of the machines should be given full value. That is to say that because the commercially minded gentlemen who sell us our sets have made up their minds that the public desires a certain (Grade C) standard of performance we are to be deprived of all those glories of timbre which have been evolved by the makers of musical instruments and the composers of musical works through many centuries.

Actually, the trouble is in the enormous number

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of transmitting-stations in existence and in the exaggerated nationalism which has led to the putting up of stations of greater and greater radiating power without any consideration for the effect of such stations on neighbouring countries. The result is that the listener has in general to make one of two choices. Either he can confine his listening to, at the most, three or four local stations and hear any one of these few with very fine quality or, if he wishes to listen to a large number of stations, he must be content with an instrument which will not reproduce many notes an octave above the middle C of the musical scale.

The average broadcast-receiver gives only a travesty of music, but there is an indication that the blessed words "high fidelity" have seized upon the imaginations of sales managers and there is now a possibility that design departments of the big commercial concerns will be given a chance to develop receiving-sets with reasonable reaching-out capabilities, so that the listener is not confined solely to the local stations; and at the same time give us real music instead of the horrid cacophony which is exasperating to the musical ear and which definitely sets back the musical education of the majority.

Despite the sale of receivers that are generally not as good as they might be, despite the tendency of broadcast directors to bow to what seems to be the popular demands of the moment, despite the abominable wailings of jazz—I may voice my own

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opinion even if I will not allow the right of the broadcast-director to ignore completely the popular demand for this class of entertainment—the general appreciation of real music and the general level of taste is, without doubt, being raised throughout Europe.

In the last chapter mention was made of some trenchant criticism of the effect of broadcasting on the home performance of individual music. In regard to the love of music generally and the activities of the amateur of music, let the B.B.C. speak in defence of itself and those other broadcasting organisations which, whatever their activities in other directions, do try to keep high artistic ideals. The quotation is from the section on "Music" in *The B.B.C. Year Book* for 1932.

"It is sometimes alleged that broadcasting is killing amateur musical activities, and that organisations such as choral societies are losing members and passing through difficult times. The best practical answer to misrepresentations of this kind is the fact that a school for conductors organised by a joint committee of the National Federation of Women's Institutes, the National Council of Social Service and the British Federation of Musical Competition Festivals, was held in London in November last. These bodies, which are very closely in touch with life in the country, report that the love of music in rural areas has become so active, and societies, both instrumental and choral, are being formed so rapidly, that the demand for leaders and conductors has far outstripped the supply.

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In one Midland county, where brass bands are the most popular form of music, there are no fewer than fifty bands, and the county authorities started a school which was attended by thirty of the bandmasters. Other counties also started their own schools for would-be conductors of choral societies and orchestras. The London school, presided over by the B.B.C.'s Music Director, Dr. Adrian Boult, proved a great success."

In the three years since that statement was published there has been an even greater growth of amateur musical societies of all sorts. An interesting feature is the revival of interest in chamber music. There is now more chamber music being privately performed in this country than at any time during the last twenty-five years.

Similar reports come from Italy, Norway, Germany and Denmark. In all these countries amateur musical production is being encouraged by broadcasting, particularly in the performance of national types of music. The case for broadcasting in the matter of musical appreciation, when the direction is motivated by high ideals, has been fully made out.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE BROADCAST DRAMA

THE production of plays in a medium at present divorced from the usual help of spectacle has many problems which experiment and the consequent growth of knowledge of the medium have only partially overcome.

Properly handled the human voice can express every emotion and every shade of emotion, but those who started out on the great adventure of making a whole play intelligible to an audience which was, for the first time in the history of the drama, really an audience in that it depended for its enjoyment and understanding solely on the ear, found that the actor, used to the help of facial expression and gesture, could but seldom use the voice to its full advantage. A new school of producers had to be evolved, skilled in the voice and without any of the traditions that have grown up, through the centuries, around the stage proper.

The business of any actor, in whatever medium he is working, is to "get it across," that is to impress the personality of the character represented so clearly that its place in the whole picture is never in doubt. As the makers of the silent film discovered, the eye is, in many ways, a better receiver

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of intelligence than the ear. To present a whole range of human emotions and situations by the aid of gesture, costume, motion and background with the aid of a few printed explanations, was not a very difficult task. The eye is, of course, an older servant than the voice, for sight led early man to food and warned him of danger long before he had learned to express thought in words. Probably the sense of smell in humans was more highly developed than it is now. That has been lost, but the eye has abandoned little or nothing of the lead it gained on the other senses.

The difficulties inherent in the new medium are well explained in *The B.B.C. Year Book* for 1929 in an article on "The Problems of the Producer."

"From the voice over the ether the listener must receive detailed interpretation of character and situation. Since the 'flashing eye,' 'wrathful mien,' and the like, are hidden, the tonal colours must paint the yellows of jealousy, the vermilions of violence, the sombre greys of sadness, and the joyous riot of bright splashes of gaiety. The voice colours must create the atmosphere, in order that the listener may create the necessary mental pictures which provide the boundaries of the action of the play. Henry Ward Beecher said, 'The human voice is like an orchestra, it ranges high up, or is as low as the lion's tone, and at every intermediate point it has some peculiar quality. It has in it the mother's whisper and the father's command. It has warning and alarm. It has sweetness. It glitters, though it is not seen, with all its sparkling

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fancies.' But how many voices, to the wireless play-producer's distress, fall short of this desideratum? The slogan of the producer is '*Be Natural*'; but how many players can appear natural when endeavouring to assume another personality; for that is the actor's part? Few actors are natural on the stage, and, in the theatre, distance and space bring the studied exaggeration to an apparently correct focus; but not so with the microphone. It magnifies these exaggerations, and makes such studied effect resemble anything but normal, sane, human beings trying to express themselves."

This question of naturalness is the crux of the actor's art and no matter what the producer may say it is impossible to be truly natural and, at the same time, "get it across." Naturalness did not matter in the old days. Unsophisticated audiences demanded something full-blooded. Passion had to be torn to rags to please the groundlings. But even in Elizabeth's day naturalness, or rather the appearance of naturalness, was beginning to be demanded, as we learn from the words which Shakespeare put into the mouth of Hamlet in his "advice to the players."

The appearance of naturalness! My own small experience of the microphone leads to the conclusion that even when endeavouring to express one's own personality, as in talks, the mumbling casualness which is natural to most of us in ordinary speech is completely fatal to success. Naturalness must be simulated by methods which are really



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unnatural. The successful speaker before the microphone must be a master of voice production and elocution.

The actor, and actress, in the theatre, pays far too little attention, as a rule, to the proper handling of the voice. In the attempt to achieve naturalness they too often achieve only inaudibility. Even before the very sensitive microphone lack of audibility is a fault which the listener sometimes has to contend with. The actor, obsessed with the idea of naturalness, drops his voice below the level of others acting with him and not the most skilled fingers on the control panel connected with the studio can keep the right balance.

The correct use of the voice is only part of the producer's problem. Leading characters, in fact every character, must stand out from each other, they must be clearly distinguishable by the ear alone. Not only must they be different from the other voices, but they must suit the character. The type of voice, and its suggestion of a certain personality, is very important in the casting of the broadcast drama. In the theatre it is of first importance that the actor shall look the part either naturally or by the use of costume and make-up. A voice cannot be "made-up" except in a limited kind of way. A skilled actor or actress may have, within a limited range, the capability of expressing different characters, but usually it will be found that this kind of change in personality is due more to mien and gesture than to actual voice-type, though the

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change may be helped by a difference in pitch. Impersonators, in which class there are very few who are successful before the microphone, get their effects by exaggeration and the caricature of certain vocal peculiarities of the impersonated. These methods are only possible to a limited degree in broadcast drama. Such vocal peculiarities as a lisp, drawl or slight stutter, or the affectation of the "curate's voice," will occur to the reader at once, as things which can be assumed, and to this extent the voice can be "made-up" to fit the part.

The audience must be educated to the medium as well as the performer. It is conceivable that a newcomer to the loudspeaker may find considerable difficulty in following even a fairly straightforward play. The business of the producer is to make everything perfectly clear; but as he becomes educated he is always likely to assume a similar degree of education in the listener, an assumption which is often distinctly optimistic. Those who go but seldom to the picture theatre often have difficulty in attuning themselves to convenient conventions which are well understood by habitual patrons of the pictures. In the same way certain conventions in the sound drama are coming into use which bother and bewilder the newcomer to this kind of intellectual enjoyment until their meaning and place in the scheme has been learned.

These conventions belong more to the "effects studio" than to the performers. For instance, there is that curious echo or "double voice" effect

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which is used to indicate that the character is dreaming or thinking in another time-plane—analogue to the cinema “flash back.” This is a pure convention and has no parallel in human experience. It is remarkably effective, once it is understood; but it is difficult to “jump to” for the uninitiated. Similarly, the unusual noise-sequence which is sometimes used to express the displacement of the entire action of the play either in space or in time, is not readily comprehended at first. Fortunately most “effects” are quite easy to understand. The noise of a train tells its own story, and the song of birds at once suggests the dawn. Suitable incidental music can play a big part in building up either a sense of spatial or emotional situation, and noises of all sorts can be used with an effect that is usually impossible in the theatre because they are not “noises off” but are completely in the atmosphere.

Though the music-lover is vehement in his deprecation of any attempt to write special music for the microphone, the devotee of the drama is well aware of the necessity for, and is most sympathetic towards, drama developed for the special needs of the medium. There are few plays written for the theatre which are really suitable for the microphone. Amongst those which can always be performed with success are many of the plays of Shakespeare. Depending almost wholly on beautiful word-sequences, vivid imagery and rhythm they are, when spoken by those who know how

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to speak them, often more successful in conveying their full meaning than when they are performed in the theatre. Undoubtedly the art of the theatre in Shakespeare's day was greatly concerned with speech by itself. It took little from scenery and to the scene the audience had to bring imagination which was aided by the words. What scenery, for instance, painted and arranged by the most skilled hands, and aided by everything the modern lighting expert can do, can give the picture of Lorenzo's "How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank. Sit, Jessica." And so on to the exquisite conclusion. And what tawdry puppet of the stage can help us better to see with Macbeth the ghost of Banquo than the horror-stricken cry:

"Avaunt! and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee!

Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold:  
Thou hast no speculation in those eyes  
Which thou dost glare with."

The truth of the matter is that Shakespeare saw and felt everything with his characters and his genius enables us to imagine everything, even the scene, when that matters, without any aid except from the words themselves.

Many listeners with no previous acquaintance with Shakespeare have come to know and love the plays through the medium of the microphone and the loudspeaker. They provide capital popular entertainment because they were written to be

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popular entertainment and though human nature changes to some extent, as well as human manners and customs, the basic emotions must remain the same for a long time. It is reasonable to suppose that Ambition, Fear, Love and Hate will exist for a very long time as outstanding human emotions.

There are certain simple rules for the microphone drama which Shakespeare evidently found essential for the theatre in his day. For instance, a character must not usually come into the scene without being announced in some way. Shakespeare does it. "Whom have we here? Benvolio, as I live!" or something like that. When his characters are not so introduced the deficiency can be remedied by the small and quite legitimate addition of a word or two.

The length of a Shakespeare play is against it for microphone purposes and the chief difficulty of the producer is to reduce a play that would normally take between three or four hours to something over one and a half hours. Though Shakespeare is usually cut, even for stage presentation, so great a reduction seems at first thought impossible. That it is not impossible the B.B.C. has proved again and again.

On the skill of the cutting depends the success of the show. This is as true of any adaptation of a stage play as it is of a Shakespeare play. If it is badly done the play may be impossible to follow unless the listener has a previous knowledge of the plot, a knowledge which the B.B.C. must suppose

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does not obtain amongst its audience. Shakespeare did allow himself a certain amount of irrelevancy. He put in subsidiary characters and comic relief, a great part of which can often be removed without spoiling the main plot in the least. For instance, in an early microphone production of *The Tempest* the whole of the subsidiary plot dealing with the conspiracy of the nobles was cut out with no apparent harm to the play as a whole. There are many plays in which a great deal of matter can be removed without spoiling the main picture. The B.B.C. producers are a little apologetic about cutting, particularly about cutting Shakespeare; but it has to be done. They say that they may be attacked on the ground that the result is not Shakespeare as he wrote. This may be true, but on the whole the methods now adopted are infinitely to be preferred to the presentation of more or less related scenes interlarded with comments and explanations. Such things are not plays, they are a method of elementary education towards the understanding and appreciation of the plays. Even worse than wholesale cutting was the first idea of cutting very little and taking the whole play at a terrific and quite unnatural pace.

As opposed to the elimination of subsidiary plots and comic scenes from plays which are not comedies, there is another method, which has been used with some success in a microphone presentation of *Hamlet*. This method is to shift the emphasis on to a certain aspect of the play.

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Shakespeare lovers protest strongly against this; but as a general entertainment it has given good results in *Macbeth* as well as in *Hamlet*. In such a treatment there is a general elimination of such scenes and incidents as do not have a very direct bearing on the development of the main characters and main plot-theme of the play. The throwing of the main characters into high relief, so to speak, by cutting away a considerable portion of the background, says the B.B.C., can "give both a significant and an extremely interesting aspect of the dramatist's work while complying with the limitations of the medium. The rhythm and balance of the work are altered; but its essence remains."

It is somewhat remarkable—or isn't it?—that the soliloquy, which had come to be regarded as an absurdity in the theatre, has been exploited with considerable success in the broadcast drama and without any feeling that it is absurd. Soliloquy is accepted in Shakespeare, but no modern dramatist, except when writing for the microphone, dares to use it. The reason probably lies in the intimacy of the medium. The character is talking to us alone when he voices a long searching of his soul. We are as ready to become the character and think with him, when the dramatist wills us to do so, as we are to disport ourselves upon the village green with the crowd welcoming the "good old squire" when that is his will.

The soliloquy has been used considerably in the

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writing of psychological and supernatural plays and though these are perhaps meat to the few and poison to the many, they have been a very interesting phase in the development of the radio drama. The soliloquy is now finding its proper place and is used less extensively; but that it is definitely a proper implement to the hand of the microphone dramatist has been established.

Apart from the work of national dramatists the most successful plays in all countries are those crammed with ideas—plays that make the listener talk for an hour or so after the receiver has been switched off. Such plays as *The Path of Glory* (L. du Garde Peach) and *The Breadwinners* (Somerset Maugham) are examples from the B.B.C. *The Path of Glory* is an almost perfect broadcast drama in that it is so simple that anyone can understand it and yet it presents a whole series of new, or apparently new, ideas. Incidentally, though it bears none of the marks of propagandist literature, it is probably the most damning exposure of the folly of war that has ever been written in the English language. It is so damning because it is "so dam' funny."

The B.B.C. is convinced from experience, and most listeners will agree, that the broadcasting of plays from the theatre is not successful. Beyond that they seem willing to engage in any promising experiment either in matter or in method. Certainly there is a feeling in the production department that their explorations in method have been



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so far successful, that they do know something about their art and that the time has come to concentrate on the matter, to give better and better plays, as plays and not as vehicles for the exploitation of the effects studio; but that does not mean that they have arrived at any finality. Each play must present its own problems if it is at all original and the solving of those problems, the conquering of difficulties, adds to knowledge.

If it is true that much is known about the right method, there is certainly no sure knowledge of the right matter. The most surprising discoveries are made from time to time. In the early spring of 1935 an experiment was made with two "Victorian" plays that had once been very popular, but it was obvious that the B.B.C. did not know whether to present them as a joke or as the real stuff. They were *The Lottery Ticket*, dating from 1826, and *The Relief of Lucknow*, dating from 1862. Both these plays had an immense success in their own day and, surprising or not surprising, just as you care to view it, they were a success over the microphone. Certainly, some listeners must have smiled in the wrong place; but they undoubtedly had a "lump in the throat" in the right place. These pieces of rough-hewn dramatic architecture, the decorations splashed on them with a whitewash brush, got home effectively. We may well expect a revival of melodrama from the broadcast-machine after this experiment.

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The only rules seem to be that any emotions portrayed shall be based on common experience. We must understand the motives which activate the minds to which we are listening. If the motives are within common experience, and the words which expose them are so spoken that they "get home," then it does not seem to matter much whether the matter is what is commonly called "crude" or whether it is what is commonly called "refined"—it will provide enjoyment. Something between the two extremes will probably please the greater audience, and it is that mean which the B.B.C., in common with all broadcast-authorities who conceive that they owe a duty to their public, is striving to find. That standards must always tend upwards is certain; but the broadcast drama is so new and appeals to so huge an audience that standards are difficult to find. We have not yet anything much resembling a policy, except the policy of continuous experiment.

One thing seems quite certain and that is that the Theatre has no real rival in broadcast drama. The two arts, though often running parallel, and even touching in places, are quite separate and will tend to separate more and more as the broadcast drama develops. The prophecy of a central studio in the future providing all the plays that are needed through the medium of broadcasting and television received in the home is fantastic. It ignores the most important psychological attraction of gregarious enjoyment and the mass effect

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of emotion. There must always be those who desire to spend their leisure time in a crowd.

That the broadcast drama will help in the general education of humanity is equally certain and to the extent that it may encourage a love of serious drama it will help the Theatre. Those who listen without seeing often want to see, when they can see, the same sort of performance.

Possibly the reader may think that it is now my duty to attempt some kind of peep into the future; but regretfully I must shirk that duty, if it is a duty. Frankly, I cannot see any further into the future than I have already indicated. Nothing is impossible except an exceedingly rapid change in human desires and reactions. The broadcast drama is still too young for anyone to say how it will grow up.

An interesting recent development, allied to the true broadcast play, has been made recently by the B.B.C. The reconstruction of historical events has for some years been popular with Continental broadcasting producers; but the B.B.C. has improved on this idea and has presented important scenes from the past in dramatic form.

A start was made with *Historic Trials*: the trial of Charles I being the first of the series. Every effort is exerted to preserve strict accuracy and nothing even remotely resembling the travesty of history so popular with cinema producers is tolerated. Besides the trials there have been experiments in the presentations of modern history, for

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instance *Twenty Years Ago*, given in 1934 and outlining the events leading up to the outbreak of the Great War, a broadcast which was remarkable for its dispassionate and unbiased marshalling of facts; somewhat of a feat when at the same time the story was given intense dramatic colour and interest. That it was unbiased is certain for it was attacked by pacifists as being "warmongering" and by mistaken patriots as being "pro-German."

These dramatic representations have been used also for events only a few days or a few weeks old. *Crisis in Spain*: a documentary reconstruction of the foundation of the Spanish Republic, was put over when the crisis was still news from the newspaper point of view. The story of the salvaging of the gold from the sunken liner *Egypt* was another fine news story in dramatic form. To the same category belong such outstanding works as the reconstruction of the air race from England to Australia, and the now famous Christmas Day "Empire Exchange," the latter being used with fine effect for the Jubilee Day programme. The "Scrapbook" series which gave actuality to memories of years of important events, twenty-five, fifteen or ten years ago, was another successful experiment of the kind.

We have now taken our consideration of broadcast drama to a position where the dividing-line between drama proper, and news, education and such innocent propaganda as the B.B.C. sees fit to indulge in, is almost indistinguishable. It

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may be that in the future a great deal of what has to be said by a broadcasting-organisation will be cast into dramatic form either to explain or confuse the issues as seems best to the Government. With that thought we can pass on to a consideration of the use of broadcasting in education and the employment of leisure, and later look at the whole question of broadcast propaganda and its use and abuse.

## CHAPTER V

### EDUCATION AND THE USE OF LEISURE

THE most important work which faces broadcasting in this and every other industrial country, is the education of the people in the right use of leisure. To such work broadcasting is peculiarly suited, for in itself it provides for a certain amount of useful occupation of spare time. Also, the B.B.C. and some broadcasting authorities in other countries have the machinery already available. The B.B.C., for instance, has its "discussion groups" and other departments of a really excellent adult educational scheme. It is also in close touch with the schools, where such work should commence. The whole problem is intimately bound up with general education and cannot be separated from it.

Every industrial country is faced, as a fundamental problem, with the necessity for making provision for an ever-growing number of unemployed due to the rapidly increasing efficiency of machinery.

Unemployment can never again be a phenomenon associated with trade boom and depression cycles and we must in fact look to a not very distant future when the majority will be without

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work. Less rapidly but inevitably the so-called "black-coated worker" will be replaced by machinery. The right use of leisure is in fact now, and will become even more, the supreme problem of civilisation.

Leisure without the means of living means nothing except profound misery and righteous discontent. Our present economic system makes no real provision for unemployment, for the system of doles, paid for almost entirely by money borrowed from the banks, is a palliative only and not a cure. The discussion of economics is, however, outside the scope of this book and must be left with the bare statement that the Douglas Social Credit idea seems to be the only one yet put forward which views and provides for this aspect of the situation.

Broadcasting cannot wait for a cure of economic faults. If it has any duty at all to civilisation it should start now to show how leisure can be employed for the benefit of the individual in particular and the community in general. We are told that never before in the history of our country have there been more people employed than there were in the spring of 1935, but at the same time there were two million unemployed. The fact is that our industrial population was never so large as it is at present and has a million more men and half a million more women than were engaged a dozen years ago. Work cannot be found for these people unless there is a market for

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the goods they produce. Markets outside this country, which were once our mainstay, it is now futile to seek. Other countries have learned the trick of using the machine.

The tragedy of the whole situation is that the immense authority of organised religion has backed that which, for want of a better term, may be called the "capitalist system," in the reiteration of the assertion that only work brings with it the right to food and shelter. That such a view is fundamentally wrong, since the coming of the machine, civilisation has now tacitly admitted by such systems of unemployment benefit as that of the British Government. Having been brought up to this idea for countless generations the worker, thrown out of employment, which in itself may have descended to him through many generations, regards himself as useless and purely waste material. He is out of the stream of human activity, in a dead backwater, contributing nothing. This sense of a loss of direction and purpose, a sense of being human scrap—rejected bits of the industrial mechanism—must be combated if the individual has any value above the horribly materialistic view that he is nothing more than a money-making machine in time of peace and cannon fodder in time of war.

The idealist cannot accept such a view. Whether humanity is merely a cosmic accident or whether it is the result of divine intention, the individual man has, by the mere fact of being alive, the right



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to such amenities as have been accumulated by his forefathers. These amenities are, in our present social and economic system, controlled by the State. Until artificial State boundaries are broken down to give place to a world fraternity, the State, by virtue of the fact that it controls the wealth built up by individuals, owes a duty to the individual which is not of necessity reciprocal.

The social and economic duties of the individual are fundamentally a duty to humanity as a whole, but so long as the more or less watertight compartments we know as States exist, there is an implied duty to the State which can only be defined as the need of the moment requires. For the sake of humanity that implied duty should be defined in idealistic and not in materialistic terms. The one important duty of the individual is to make himself a better individual, physically, mentally and morally. This duty only becomes apparent when the individual is benefiting directly from the accumulated wealth and wisdom of his ancestors. His duty here is not towards any entity envisaged as a State but towards posterity, his own and that of other individuals.

It is in this regard that the enormous importance of broadcasting lies, and that the work must be done is tacitly recognised by the British Broadcasting Corporation and by the Russian broadcasting authorities. There is a wide divergence in outlook between these two systems in that whilst the Russians conceive themselves as having a

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definite message for the world, the outlook of the B.B.C. is that of an idealist Calvinist considerably tempered by the heat of attrition with the materialistic.

One of the greatest difficulties with which broadcasting is faced in any attempt to educate us in the proper use of our inevitably growing leisure is that it must overcome a fixed idea that employment for wages is essential to happiness. The attitude of present-day economists to any schemes for the utilisation of leisure was ably set out in a leading article in *The Times* on 11th May, 1935:

"All that is being done in the way of developing minor interests, providing occupations for occupation's sake, even the provision of allotments, is a kind of relief, bearing the same relation to the needs of mind and spirit as financial assistance does to physical needs. It is preventive of starvation but supplies the elements of no more than a meagre living except for a few men of exceptional character and personal resource. The chronically unemployed can be restored to their true estate of manhood only by recovering an established place in the scheme of things. They must be made 'one with their kind' by sharing necessary work and by adding their quota to the stock of life. This cannot be while they are in a state of dependence; they must be raised to the status of producers."

This leading article was of the sympathetic type one expects from our leading national newspaper,

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but it is based on the fundamental error that whole-time work for the whole population in this or any other country can ever more be possible so long as the world remains in a state of peace.

Of course, it is perfectly true that occupation merely for the sake of occupation is a dead thing. Leisure, to be of any value at all to the individual, must be filled with interest. Sympathetically employed broadcasting can direct the individual in the interesting employment of leisure.

The efforts of broadcasting in this direction must first of all take into account very varying mental equipments. We must admit that a large class is now being brought up to regard leisure as something which is only to be employed by visiting football grounds, dog-racing tracks and in gambling, and will be difficult to approach because intellectual occupations for the unintellectual are an impossibility. The attitude of *The Times* to such things as unemployment centres and clubs, as regard their suitability as anything more than a stop-gap, is sound. They can no more cure our present economic chaos than unemployment benefits.

Mankind in the mass has to be led to seek occupation that is completely divorced from material gain and inherent in this is the proposition that work is a good thing only when it leads somewhere. There is the probability that a large majority of people can do some one thing very well and given the means would be willing to do it with

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no reward other than that of achievement. Getting down to the bare facts broadcasting must become a great instructor in hobbies if it is to have any world value beyond that of merely superficial entertainment.

To ask any one man to draw from his brain fully armed for the conflict a whole scheme tending in such a direction is an absurdity. It is more than doubtful whether there is any one man who has in himself the vision and imagination for such a task. It must be approached slowly and its path will doubtless be traced with mistakes and bitter disappointments. The main thing is that broadcasting should see its duty to mankind and tackle the task boldly.

Of the broadcasting systems at present in existence there is none better fitted than that of the British Broadcasting Corporation to lead the way in this task. We can only hope that in 1937, with a renewed Charter, more money and with the confidence given from a knowledge that the whole of its listeners bear it the utmost goodwill, it will come forward with some scheme, not of necessity definitely announced, which has at its back the ideal of leading mankind to the proper employment of that leisure which is now regarded as a sore and a disease, but which is actually the reward of mankind for having harnessed solar energy to the machine and freed itself from much of the work necessary to an ever-advancing scale of living.

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The job will be difficult, very difficult indeed. Against those who attempt it will be massed the whole strength and force of vast commercial interests and on the side of those interests will be the greater part of the Press.

Why? Why should any portion of the community be against that which must be for the good of the community?

Because the Industrial Revolution brought with it a whole school of thought that is selfish, short-sighted and opportunist. Generalisation is dangerous; but to say that generally a commercial concern looks only to immediate profit is sufficiently true to be allowed to stand. Even when commercialism does look ahead it sees nothing but the present state of the world infinitely prolonged. It cannot see profit in any other condition and therefore it ignores any possibility of change, so that when it can ignore change no longer because it has banged its silly, unseeing head against a change accomplished, it resists with every weapon it can command.

In the "golden days" of industrialism workers flocked to factories, attracted by higher wages than could be earned in agricultural avocations. For their housing, mean and horrible towns were erected which they accepted as part of the price to be paid for high wages and the certainty of employment. Things happened gradually and the creation of a whole population of industrial wage-slaves was a comparatively slow process in human

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time-values even though the word "revolution" correctly describes the rapidity of the process considered in the time-values of history. The point is that intolerable conditions of life grew up and were accepted.

The fierce resentment of the "masters" to any attempt to ameliorate the lot of the "workers" is now a part of modern history, history which is still happening. What was needed was a huge body of complaisant slaves for the machine. Education would "give them ideas above their station." It did and, thank God, it still does; even though the mass of the population knows nothing of real education, has only, so far, been given the few crumbs that fall from the rich man's table.

Broadcasting is speeding up education, giving not only crumbs, but whole slices of real food. In this country it has courage, the courage to indulge in ideals. It has resisted, though unfortunately its resistance in this direction shows signs of weakening, the carefully fostered notion that people in the mass are vulgar and can only be approached by vulgar methods.

Now though it is true that no one should take on himself the task of dictating to the people what is to be their mental food, it is equally true that those who are responsible for giving that mental food to at least half the population must see to it that there is no adulteration with inferior material and that the method of presentation appeals to the

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best and not to the worst in the vast audience. That point of view has already been discussed in all its implications in a previous chapter and need not be returned to; but it may be interesting, here, to present the commercial point of view in this business of supplying the mental needs of the mass of people. It is very cleverly crystallised in *Two People*, a delightfully witty novel by A. A. Milne.

The situation is that a well-educated, well-to-do and idealistic young man has written a novel, by accident you may say, and finds himself famous. Ormsby, a millionaire newspaper-proprietor, who has risen from nothing to the control of a large number of papers of various kinds, wants Reginald to write for one of his dailies. Reginald thinks Ormsby's papers vulgar and says so. Ormsby replies:

"Don't think *I'm* vulgar then?"

"You've got character. Nobody with character is vulgar."

"And how many people who can read and write have character? You don't think I sell my papers to a million different people every day? If I sell 'em to ten, I'm lucky. And each one thinks like the ninety-nine thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine others in the herd. They're vulgar people and they want a vulgar paper."

"I wonder."

"Ever listen in?"

"I have sometimes."

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"Concerts and Hallelujars?"

"Cricket results, I'm afraid," smiled Reginald.

"Then perhaps you've heard what they call their News Bulletin?"

"I don't think——"

"You're lucky. I'll tell you what it's like. Now just imagine a million people, two million, three million, all sitting in their little bloody sitting-rooms with their damned ear-'phones on, looking like God knows what, all waiting to be thrilled. And then suddenly a refined gentlemanly voice tells them that owing to the drought in Alabama President Hoover has postponed his visit to Ohio, that the Finnish Prime Minister unveiled a statue to Professor Winkelstein, that there has been an unprecedented fall of snow in Eastern Rhodesia, and that Major-General Foxtrot has passed away peacefully at Southsea at the advanced age of a hundred and one. And who the hell cares? Well, that's refinement. Telling people something with no guts in it. Trouble is, Wellard, life's vulgar. Being born's vulgar, dying's vulgar, and as for living, well three-quarters of it is stomach, and stomachs are dam' vulgar. My God, when you think of what goes on in your stomach."

"Yes, yes, but that isn't what I mean by vulgar. What I mean——"

Mr. Milne does not allow Reginald Wellard to state what he means; but we can all of us put ourselves in his place when faced by the perfectly frank statement of the attitude of a vulgar-minded individual who cares about nothing except selling his papers.



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Don't think that this expression of an opinion is what Mr. Milne thinks. It is what his character Ormsby would think and without doubt it represents the viewpoint of some of the proprietors of our "popular" dailies. It also represents the point of view of many of those engaged in the business of providing entertainment. It has grown up from the "master's" wish that "the people" shall be, and shall live, on a much lower plane than himself and his kind. It is, of course, the old attitude of the baron to the serf without any of the feudal implication that if the serf owed a duty to the baron the baron equally owed a duty to the serf.

That the B.B.C. shall resist every attempt to make it look at its responsibilities from a vulgar point of view is essential. It has allowed its defences to be broken, just a little broken, in the matter of "Variety." Its music-hall entertainments are more vulgar than they used to be. There is not a bit of reason why they should be vulgarised and there is the danger that a lowering of standards in one direction will lead to a similar lowering in others—and so the rot starts.

Luckily the B.B.C. takes its responsibilities in the matter of education very seriously indeed. There seems to be no danger at all of a lowering of standards in this department; but we may ask the Corporation as a whole, and particularly its Director-General, what is the use of a very high standard in one part of its programme if low standards are accepted or even encouraged in

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another? What is the use of lifting appreciation for all that is good and sweet and clean during a portion of the day and putting out material which is slimy, grimy and dirty, which appeals to the vulgar, the really vulgar, mind during another part of the day? The B.B.C. must stick to its high ideals in every part of the programme if it is to play that part in guiding civilisation which is its manifest destiny.

At the time I am writing this chapter (May 1935) the B.B.C. is advertising that it desires applicants for two senior posts which it is about to create in its School Broadcasting department. One is designed to bring the B.B.C. into effective relationship with local education requirements and administration and is in the nature of an inspectorship of the listening end of the School Broadcasting service. The other post is that of an Assistant Programme Director who will have to undertake constructive educational supervision of the development of the programme of broadcasts to schools. This is an assurance of future development along lines that have already been well planned, of building on foundations which are already well marked out and solidly constructed.

That the microphone and loudspeaker will ever replace the teacher in his classroom is unlikely, just as unlikely as that broadcasting can replace the newspaper. Broadcasting probably will bring about great changes in both newspapers and education; but changes come anyhow and the only

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interesting thing is what particular alterations in methods are likely to be due to the new art of general and instantaneous communication.

The power and usefulness of broadcasting to the educationalist became apparent at its birth and we have already seen how in the United States all sorts of cranks and faddists put up, or financed, their own broadcasting-station for the particular purpose of getting their ideas before the people. However individualistic may be one's sympathies, the unrestricted and undirected use of broadcasting must appear as at least undesirable, but the difficulty is that immediately any form of control is exercised that control may get into the hands of those with a bias in favour of an outlook which has a sectional interest.

Now in almost every country the fact that education should be free is accepted, but the real implication of freedom is ignored. The word "free" is interpreted to mean that education shall cost nothing. In other words, that it shall be paid for by those whose incomes are sufficiently big to be taxable for the benefit of all.

Really free education is only possible where there is no bias in favour of any preconceived set of opinions and in so far as every society starts out, directly it becomes a society, by the imposition of a whole set of restrictive rules and taboos, it would seem to be impossible that education can be free in the broadest sense of the word. The most that can be hoped for is that it shall encourage

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the critical rather than the acceptive attitude. The B.B.C. does, to a considerable extent, allow the voicing of ideas of many kinds. It is in fact reasonably free and uses its freedom to foster the critical spirit in adult education. In juvenile education it is still bound to conventions which are inherent in a system which requires willing slaves.

In this country we have at present a curious kind of educational sandwich. The elementary schools, working strictly within the meaning of the word elementary, give their pupils a grounding in reading, writing and arithmetic, some knowledge of history, geography and science, with extensions into manual work as time and convenience allow. At the same time they inculcate a knowledge of the elementary taboos of society, along the lines of respecting other people's property and behaving in a way which will not give offence to others.

On the other side of the sandwich is the Public School with a very rigid series of taboos based on good form and "things no fellow can do," with the result that the critical faculty is almost completely removed by the steam-roller effect of the rule that the acceptance of a code is obligatory.

Between these two are the secondary schools, very largely staffed by hard-headed, tough-brained northerners, critical by nature and often with a very definite gift for teaching. In so far as these schools struggle to model themselves upon the Public Schools they do tend to set up the

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taboo in the path of unrestricted thinking, but the brain stuff which staffs these schools does have an effect.

This cross-section of an educational system, which is in its essentials peculiar to this country, is useful as an introduction to an examination of the influence of broadcasting on the education of both youth and adult. The strength of broadcasting in this regard is in that it can employ the very best brains and can seek out those who have a particular gift for teaching and whose personalities can reach out despite the purely artificial medium of the microphone. There is, of course, always the difficulty that those who know most about a subject are not always those who are best suited to any form of teaching and the limitations become more severe when the microphone is in use. However, the right men and women can be found and are found and as a consequence any state which employs broadcasting freely in its educational system is in a position to put all sorts of subjects before its pupils in a fresh, jolly and stimulating way.

Language difficulties make any opinion on the broadcasting educational methods of other countries difficult to form, but judging from published reports most countries use methods very similar to those of the British Broadcasting Corporation, adapted, of course, to the needs of the peoples. The B.B.C. has gathered round it some of the very best brains in education in this country and its

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curricula and methods seem to be very well adapted indeed to the medium. Round about twenty broadcasts a week are given for schools in England and between thirteen and fifteen for schools in Scotland. The lessons are almost always of a type which could not possibly be given by the normal master or mistress. For instance, in history, lecturers have been employed with very special knowledge of different periods and a form of history which deals with the social side of the people has been developed. In geography, use has been made of lecturers with special and personal knowledge of different parts of the world and here a great deal of what may be termed "economic geography" is explained in a manner which is the very reverse of dry-as-dust. The musical instruction sent out to schools by the B.B.C. has always been of a very high order and has from the first been the most popular item in the schools programme. The B.B.C. is definitely trying to develop the critical as against the acceptive type of mind. For this we have to thank the broad-minded men and women who are the Educational Committee of the Corporation. They look to the future and try to free themselves and education from commercialism.

Some countries make considerable use of dramatic dialogue in their schools broadcast and both history and geography are illuminated, by question and answer in the latter case, and by brief scenes in the former.

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One of the major problems which has to be solved in broadcast juvenile education is the finding of the correct method of attack for different classes of schools and pupils of varying ages. Quite rightly the B.B.C. has devoted most of its attention to the elementary school where both teaching ability and scholarship are likely to be of a less high order than in the secondary schools. I am told that though the B.B.C. lessons may appeal to the younger forms of a secondary school they are much disliked by pupils of the fifth and sixth forms. In this case, of course, the school curriculum has had its effect and the pupils have their ideas of the fitness of things somewhat offended by the intrusion of a loudspeaker into the classroom, and they have also developed a preference for the teaching methods of their own masters.

Prejudices will of course be overcome as the taking of broadcast lessons becomes more general. Pupils who have gone through the school and have formed a regular habit of listening for half an hour, three or four afternoons each week, will come to accept, even when they are in the sixth form, this form of instruction without prejudice and resentment, provided always that the material is suited to their needs.

Adult education has its own special difficulties and the major one, of enticing folk to listen, the B.B.C. and most other broadcasting authorities overcome by eliminating the word "education" and putting the whole business into the "Talks

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Department." In some countries it may be the "Propaganda Department"; but the idea is the same—the adult must be led blindfold to the fountain of knowledge and encouraged to drink by the promise of entertainment.

Instead of "classes" the B.B.C. has invented the already referred to "discussion groups" and it has instituted summer schools for group-leaders, who, presumably, are not intimidated by the word "education." Discussion groups are growing in popularity and may eventually lead to a kind of Broadcast University. The chief fault of this very excellent system, and of the B.B.C. talks in general, is that they are not backed by a specific idea, they are only general education.

Of another difficulty which the B.B.C. has to contend with in any extension of its educational policy, Mr. H. G. Wells speaks with sympathy and understanding in *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind*.

"Within their limitations and on account of certain advantages of presentation the newer media are extraordinarily helpful accessories in the general task of informing and quickening men's minds. In Great Britain the distribution of sound by radio is the monopoly of the British Broadcasting Corporation, and there have been some very lively contests at the headquarters of the organisation between the educationalists and the entertainers. These struggles are very illuminating when the educational value of these new media is under discussion. The B.B.C. has made



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a great feature of talks by the most stimulating thinkers of the world. Keenly appreciated by many hearers, these talks are bitterly denounced by others, who want light music and *facetiae* all the time, and who do not wish to have their guiding ideas loosened or modified insidiously. . . . The war rages with varying fortunes, and the educational light of the B.B.C. flares and wanes. Possibly it may be blown out altogether."

That was written in 1932 and there now seems little fear that the tragedy which Wells contemplated is any longer a danger. The educational policy of the B.B.C. and its Schools Broadcasting and Talks Departments are at last firmly established. But I have referred to the need of a specific idea behind the whole system and by now that specific idea must be manifest to the reader. The whole system of B.B.C. education ought to be informed and illuminated by the knowledge that the world at large is faced with ever-increasing leisure. Only so far as it is directed to the purpose of teaching us all how to use that leisure can it be a living force, a real value. General education has great value. Directed education may save civilisation from the disaster which seems to threaten it.

## CHAPTER VI

### BROADCASTING AND SPORT

**A**N interesting post-war phenomenon is the remarkable growth of interest in sport of all kinds and particularly in professional sport. There was of course before the war a very considerable following for sport spectacles, particularly association football, but it was of small importance compared with the very general interest now evinced by the majority of the population not only in this country but all over the world.

Broadcasting has undoubtedly played a considerable part in this remarkable change in the habits of whole nations, though its function has not been in the direction of leading opinion, but in providing facilities for the instantaneous diffusion of news from the actual scenes of sporting events and thus focusing public interest upon them.

The term "sport" covers a wide diversity of activities, many of a distinct social importance and others which are definitely anti-social. Our own B.B.C., in common with the broadcasting authorities the world over, seem to exercise no discrimination as between sports which are advantageous and those which are harmful to the public and we find equal prominence given to horse

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racing, which is purely an excuse for gambling, at least so far as the great majority are concerned, and lawn tennis, which probably attracts more individual players than any other outdoor recreation.

The great increase in the interest in sport as a spectacle, or as a means of obtaining individual enjoyment through the actual playing of the game, is only another product of the increase of leisure brought about by the use of machinery to replace hand labour. It cannot, therefore, be regarded as a transitory result of post-war restlessness, though in some measure it may have formed a useful outlet and safety valve for such restlessness.

From another aspect we can regard it as a result of the desire for romance and excitement on the part of populations which no longer can find their supreme interest in handicraft. To the majority work is not now the supreme interest of life nor can it be when work is for the majority a purely mechanical repetition of a series of actions or even simply and solely the overlooking of the work of the machine. Also, there must be taken into account the far greater pressure on individuals who are not immediately concerned with machine direction or machine minding, which is due to the greatly increased production of machinery as against handicraft, and to the necessity for a more concentrated application on the part of those who "keep the books" for the sale of the products of the machines.

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Nowhere is professional football followed with such enthusiasm as in industrial districts and in many of these districts which have been hardly hit by depression observers have remarked that there is no falling off in the size of the "gates." Unimaginative political and domestic economists can argue that those who are in receipt of public assistance have no right to spend money in seeing football matches. Strictly, no doubt, they are right, though in making such statements they neglect the fact that man cannot live by bread alone and that colour and excitement are necessary to everyone.

The argument has been advanced that betting and gambling are only an expression of a desire for colour and excitement and this is perhaps to some extent true, though as a rule betting is usually the result of greed and a desire to get something for nothing. In this regard it has also been argued that if every individual in the community had sufficient to live on, either in goods or cash, betting and gambling would largely cease. As its state has yet had the courage to give all its citizens the wherewithal for mere life it is impossible to say what would happen in such a situation.

In the matter of sport, broadcasting has only followed the Press in recording and illuminating all those aspects which are deemed most attractive to the generality. It was a newspaper, considerably before the days of broadcasting, which first saw

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the possibilities in the wireless running commentary. In July 1898, the *Dublin Daily Express* entered into an agreement with Marconi to report by wireless the Kingstown Regatta. Marconi placed himself and his apparatus on board a steam yacht and sent by telegraphy a continuous account of the regatta. These wireless telegraphed messages were picked up at the house of the harbour-master and transmitted to the newspaper in Dublin by telephone.

The running commentary is now very popular throughout the world and a moment-by-moment picture of every great sporting event is broadcast. Events of international interest, Davis Cup finals, for instance, are often commented on by several experts in direct communication with the countries interested, the running commentary being then broadcast. Enthusiasts in England, for instance, have heard accounts of tennis matches played in Paris, and running commentaries of such events as cricket test matches and the tense drama of the final stage of the King's Prize for rifle shooting, are transmitted all over the Empire.

That running commentaries, and also eye-witness's accounts, of sporting events are popular is somewhat remarkable since it might be supposed that, in things which depend on movement, only the eyes can give a satisfactory picture. The task of the commentator is, of course, to create with words pictorial impressions which will convey the scene very clearly to those who know the

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game and even more clearly to those who know the ground on which the game is being played. The listener must bring a good deal to the aid of the commentator and for this reason attempts to relay running commentaries on American baseball games to this country or of association football to America have resulted in failure, the mass of listeners failing to understand either the situations or the atmosphere. Lawn tennis, on the other hand, being played under the same rules everywhere, has a general appeal, and, provided that the commentator is talking a language understood by his listeners, the atmosphere, sense of movement and drama, can be conveyed no matter where the actual game is being played.

In dealing with the proper employment of leisure I said nothing about games and their very real value to bodily and mental health. The omission was deliberate because it seemed that a general statement of the situation was properly bound up with the consideration of broadcasting in its relation to education, and that sport and games were only an important side line.

As mankind progresses it is likely that "sport," that is the commercialised presentation of spectacles, the modern equivalent of the gladiatorial combat, will disappear and the general playing of games by the individual will take its place. Though, at the moment, there is no indication of any slackening of interest in professional sport—rather the reverse—there is a growing and wide-

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spread desire to take part in games. Where facilities are provided, and the National Playing-Fields Association is doing a great work in this direction, they are used fully, and there is a constant demand for more lawn-tennis courts, more cricket and football grounds.

There has been, from time to time in the history of civilisation, an efflorescence of games, that is games actually played by the people; but mostly sport was the concern of the wealthy, the lords and barons; it was an aristocratic amusement closely bound up with the urgent necessities of warfare. Nothing like the present world-wide devotion to athleticism has been seen before and it is well worth while considering how this desire to get out into the open and play about can be encouraged. It has a very important place in the use of leisure.

In the last few paragraphs an attempt has been made, by inference, to draw a distinction between "sport" and games. That such a distinction should be accepted seems necessary to a proper understanding of the place which broadcasting has, and might have, in this department of human activity.

There is no dictionary distinction between the two words. We can be in a sportive mood and indulge in a game, or we can be in a gamesome mood when we go out to our sport. Both words mean something done for the fun of the thing; but they are very mixed in their application. I can, for instance, go out with a sporting-gun and a sporting-dog with the intention of killing game.

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Such things as racing, hunting, boxing, fishing and shooting are always sports, whilst bowls, quoits, darts and marbles are always games. Tennis and fives seem always to be games; but lawn tennis, cricket and association football are games or sports, just as you like. Incidentally, rugby football always seems to be a game.

To make a real distinction is difficult. Let us say that "sport" is that thing which we usually watch and perhaps bet on, whilst both sport and games are things which we do ourselves. This is being somewhat artificial, but there is no word in the language to describe that very artificial thing which we are now agreed to call "sport."

Excessive devotion to "sport" is, I believe, a sign of decadence in a nation whilst a devotion to games and sports is a sign of virility. This may be a faulty generalisation since history can teach us little unless we care to draw an inference from the excessive love of the Romans for the arena in the period immediately preceding the collapse of the empire. In any case it is manifestly better to do vigorous things than to watch them being done, provided that we are bodily fit.

From its very nature broadcasting tends to prevent the playing of games. It is usually an amusement or recreation for indoors and if you want to listen you must be immobile near the loudspeaker. Its emphasis is, therefore, on "sport," on the vivid word-picture of spectacles. This is not of necessity wrong in the present state of human development.



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We have already considered that watching games may have a real moral value in that it is for many hundreds of thousands all that there is in their lives of artistry, colour and romance. J. B. Priestley puts that point of view very clearly in the opening chapters of *The Good Companions* and I believe it is a true view and a true picture.

Because a particular thing is good, or at least allowable, in a particular circumstance, does not mean that it will be good or allowable for all time. There is always the chance that in changing the nature of the thing, or in shifting its incidence we may get rid of the circumstance which gave rise to it or made it desirable for the moment.

Looked at from this point of view it appears that a shifting of the emphasis from "sport" to games would be a good thing for broadcasting to attempt. That broadcasting can lead and direct and educate, insidiously as well as directly, we know. We can also guess that its powers in this direction are hardly yet tested.

There does not seem to be any reason why broadcasting should almost slavishly follow the Press in its treatment of "sport" and games. The B.B.C. is doing so at present both in the matter of running commentaries and eye-witness accounts, which are really "news," and in its sports talks, which resemble the articles in the Press written by experts for the benefit of the amateur.

What seems necessary is a directing purpose, an idea behind the whole presentation of sport and

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games items. In the case of the B.B.C. the business is in the hands of the Outside Broadcast Department and the Talks Department and is looked at from the special point of view of each department. I would like to see a small Sports and Games Department working with the idea of encouraging every sort and kind of individual endeavour and gradually working towards extinction of interest in gladiatorial contests. Neither in cricket nor in football are test matches and leagues good for the game, as a game. The playing-field is the ideal to be aimed at. Until every possible person can play instead of watching, sport and games are tending in the wrong direction.

## CHAPTER VII

### RELIGION AND THE B.B.C.

**I**N confining our consideration of the interaction of Religion and broadcasting almost wholly to the activities in this field of the British Broadcasting Corporation, there is no intention of suggesting that the methods of our British organisation are the only, or even the best possible.

The B.B.C. gives, very consistently, year in and year out, about five per cent of programme-time to religion, either as services or talks on religious subjects. Both Sweden and Denmark devote more time, in proportion, and Switzerland, Poland Italy, Holland and Hungary, though giving less time, are equally consistent. All these countries have a settled policy which is usually that of allowing professed ministers of the national creed reasonable facilities for conducting services and giving talks.

For a statement of the policy of the B.B.C. we can turn to the *Annual* for 1935, which gives the official view.

"How to put religion on the air is one of the most difficult problems the B.B.C. has to face. Obviously if the broadcast programmes are intended to 'hold up the mirror to life,' it is impossible to exclude that

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which claims to hold life's ultimate sanction and solution, as well as the strongest incentive to human thought and endeavour. But where, among all the Churches, with their competing claims and rival tenets, can be found a method or a message that will give moderate satisfaction without immoderate offence? This was the problem originally placed by the B.B.C. before its Religious Advisory Committee, which contains representatives of all the principal Churches in the British Isles; and it says much for the common sense and goodwill of these religious leaders that the policy of the Corporation has, in essentials, changed little from that originally suggested.

"That policy has been and is—in range, 'to tolerate the tolerable'; in method, to be continually mindful of the almost endless variations in the spiritual and intellectual attainment of a wireless audience; and, in message, to stress the fundamental truths of personal and corporate religion. Merely to state these ideals is to expose the difficulty of fulfilling them; in practice they mean that facilities for broadcasting are given to ministers of all important denominations that can be said to be in the main stream of the Christian tradition; that no attempt is made to satisfy the need of every kind of listener in the same broadcast; and that, whilst nothing could be less effective than a religious 'lowest common denominator,' it has been found possible to disseminate a spiritual 'highest common factor' from which the listener can profit and of which no Church need be ashamed."

Such a policy cannot, by any stretching of the imagination, be called a bold one. It is instinct

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with the British idea of compromise and tolerance; but its tolerance is quite strictly defined. Whatever is said or done must be "in the main stream of Christian tradition." This is interpreted to include the Society of Friends (Quakers), whose Church membership, according to the latest statistics, is about thirty thousand, and to exclude the Unitarians, whose Church membership is about forty thousand in the British Isles. It is noteworthy, however, that though Spiritualism is not recognised as a "religion" there was, in 1934, a symposium of opinion on Psychical Research in which Sir Oliver Lodge, Lord Charles Hope, Mr. Gerald Heard and others took part. This series of talks aroused a great deal of interest and gave evidence of a very considerable number of enquiring minds outside all the organised Churches.

When the B.B.C. started religious broadcasting, after it had been in existence about a year, and appointed its Advisory Committee, there were a considerable number of critics who said that the British people as a whole had no use for religion. Whilst it is quite true that the majority of the inhabitants of these islands are not in sympathy with the creeds and tenets of the Established Church, or any other, it may be equally true that there is a very big public who are attracted to religious exercises of a simple kind.

The B.B.C. has vigorously denied that it has tried to invent and impose on the public a new kind of religion, but whatever its intentions it has

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undoubtedly done something like this. Its daily morning services and its Sunday-night Epilogues are definitely new both in conception and in method. They are, in essence, a presentation of a crystallised Christian thought, each day and each week, altogether removed from the customary excrescences of creed, verbiage and circumlocution. They are unique in that they appeal to all sorts and conditions of listeners without distinction of creed. They are beautifully and reverently done and they are anonymous.

Be that as it may, the fact remains that those who listen to the religious part of the programmes are numbered by thousands in an aggregate of millions who listen to programmes generally. It is doubtful whether religion, as expressed by the B.B.C., appeals to as much as two per cent of the body of listeners. This may be big or it may be small when compared with the number who normally attend a place of worship at least once a week. To get at real figures, in this case, seems impossible. *Whitaker's Almanack* (1935) quotes *The Church Self-Government Chronicle: Lent, 1931*, as its authority for the statement that there are 25,800,000 "Anglicans" in England alone. This is a manifest absurdity if it is supposed to represent regular worshippers. In the village in which I live there are approximately a thousand on the electoral roll, and of these, and the children of the families, considerably less than two hundred are regular attendants at any church or chapel.

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The truth is that the religious activities of the B.B.C. appeal chiefly to those who already have some connection with a Church. They are particularly welcome to invalids and aged persons who by their infirmities are cut off from the religious activities to which they have been used all their lives. To this extent they are an essential portion of the programmes and are looked upon as a blessing by many thousands. In addition there is undoubtedly a considerable body who want the Christian religion and listen to the studio services but are repelled by the Churches.

Many thinking men and women feel the need for a philosophy of life; but cannot possibly accept any definite creed. They cannot even accept Christianity as it is stated by the Churches, though the ethics of Jesus appeal to them as a reasonable rule of living. It is in this direction that there is a possibility of the emergence through the efforts of the B.B.C. of that "new kind of religious belief" to which I referred in Chapter II. I imagine that this new kind of religious belief will be essentially Christian and not Pauline.

It seems impossible that any doctrine based on a theory of rewards and punishments can appeal to thinking men and women. Granting the premise that some sort of religion is necessary to mankind we are faced with the conclusion that it must be one that can be accepted by the majority. I ask you to grant the premise deliberately. Not the greatest brain as yet evolved by our ever-growing

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capabilities of thinking can answer "Yes" or "No."

"Myself, when young, did eagerly frequent  
Doctor and Sage and heard great argument  
About it and About; but evermore  
Came out by that same Door wherein I went."

I should like here to quote the whole of the last chapter of Eddington's *The Nature of the Physical World*, but you can read it for yourselves. There is, however, a portion of one paragraph in that chapter which has so direct a bearing on this question of religion in the present world that it must be given.

"We all know that there are regions of the human spirit untrammelled by the world of physics. In the mystic sense of the creation around us, in the expression of art, in the yearning towards God, the soul grows upwards and finds the fulfilment of something implanted in its nature. The sanction for this development is within us, a striving born with our consciousness of an Inner Light proceeding from a power greater than ours. Science can hardly question this sanction, for the pursuit of science springs from a striving which the mind is impelled to follow, a questioning which will not be suppressed. Whether in the intellectual pursuits of science or in the mystical pursuits of the spirit, the light beckons ahead and the purpose surging in our nature responds. Can we not leave it at that? Is it really necessary to bring in the comfortable word 'reality' to be administered like a pat on the back?"



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The "fight between Religion and Science" is an old story. The fundamental difference of opinion is that religion wants to say, "I know everything, Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end;" Science says, "I don't know; but I am trying to find out."

The methods of science are becoming more and more the methods of everyone. The temper of the world to-day is largely agnostic, with behind it the general supposition that anything may be possible, since so many seemingly impossible things in material matters have been accomplished.

In so far as broadcasting is widening men's outlook, broadening their thinking and encouraging critical speculation, it is the enemy of the Churches. In so far as it is leading them to an appreciation of the infinite possibilities of human thought and endeavour it is the friend of real religion.

What remains of the hold of the Churches on humanity is slipping from them, at any rate in intelligent communities. In its struggle to retain that hold the Established Church has split. On one side we have a movement towards the acceptance of "infallibility" as stated by the Church of Rome, and on the other a movement towards throwing over all those tenets which the average man cannot accept.

There is no "war" between Religion and Science. There is a war between Priestcraft and Science and in that war Priestcraft will be beaten

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from its every fort and trench. Religion cannot be static in a kinetic world. It must change to meet the changing needs of mankind. The trouble is that if it changes it must abandon that which seems implicit in its very being. That big changes can be made without self-destruction we know from history. The Reformation led to the abandoning, by a large section of Western humanity, of many things which were considered to be part of the very rock on which Christianity was built. Actually they were only accretions due to priestcraft. There are to-day many other accretions due to priestcraft which can be got rid of; but there are others, which the majority do not believe in, which really are the essential rock on which the Churches are built, though they had no part in the teaching of Jesus.

What, then, is broadcasting doing to Religion? What is it doing to the Churches? What may it do towards putting forward something, some form of religious belief, which all can accept as a guiding principle of life.

These questions have really been answered so far as they can be answered after only a few years of effort and experiment. Other observers may arrive at different conclusions, but my own summing up can be stated very briefly.

Broadcasting has increased, and is increasing, to some small extent, an interest in established branches of the Christian religion. It has certainly made many listeners talk about religion and by

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providing preachers of real merit who have a real conviction that they can express—that is important—it has made a good many listen to sermons who had come to regard the sermon as made up mostly of meaningless nothings or mere platitudes. Also by providing beautiful services it has attracted some who had lost interest in the mediocre vehicles of worship provided in the average church.

It has brought the Churches together to some extent by providing a committee on which the heads of different organisations could meet with the common interest of bringing religion to the people through a new medium. It has shown bigoted people that there is something in creeds and denominations other than their own.

Broadcasting can only bring real religious help to the community in general if it abandons the Churches. It can really help only if it takes a bold attitude and gets rid of the modesty of its stated attitude in its "Services for Broadcasting"—"the humble adaptation of existing forms to the necessary requirements of a new medium." The medium itself requires more consideration. It can bring a message, now, into over seven million homes. In a year or two its possible audience will be extended through over ten million homes in these islands.

What is required is a new leader, someone outside the Churches as we now know them; but possibly having come from one of the Churches. Not a "Bishop of Broadcasting" on the American

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plan. Heaven defend us from that! We have already had an indication that such a leader may arise. Dick Sheppard (The Rev. Canon H. R. L. Sheppard, C.H., D.D.), Pat McCormick (The Rev. W. P. G. McCormick, D.S.O., M.A.), and the Rev. Father C. C. Martindale, S.J., M.A., have a large body of followers, irrespective of creed. There may easily come to the microphone someone with the force, conviction and personality of these men, with more added maybe, who will have a message that will bring not two or three in every hundred of listeners to the loudspeaker, but ten, twenty, forty or eighty, who will lead the whole of the people to a living philosophy of life.

Then and only then will broadcasting be a real force in religion.

## CHAPTER VIII

### PROPAGANDA

THE dictionary meaning of the word Propaganda is, "A systematic effort to spread opinions." Since the War the word has become shaded with an implication that the methods employed are more or less unfair and may even deliberately use untruth. We must, however, remind ourselves that there is nothing inherently wrong in the use of propagandist methods and that in fact they offer the only way of educating the mass of opinion.

There was once a wit who described orthodoxy as his "doxy" and heterodoxy as the other fellow's "doxy," and we find a very considerable number who, while willing to allow propaganda for their own set of ideas, are vehemently opposed to the allowing of any publicity to ideas tending in another direction. In a State in which free speech is allowed within the limitations imposed by decency, propaganda on one side is more or less cancelled by propaganda from the other and the mass of citizens are supposed to form their own opinions. This they do slowly, but may always be led swiftly by a catch-word which seems to mean something intelligible.

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So long as propaganda was confined to news-sheets, journals and pamphlets, it could have little repercussion outside its country of origin. It was, in fact, a purely domestic affair. The coming of broadcasting must change our outlook completely. A few words spoken without proper consideration before a microphone in London may offend half the rest of the civilised world. The nations are, in fact, eavesdropping on one another continuously.

There is an agreement among the nations, particularly among those subscribing to the *Union Internationale de Radiodiffusion*, that nothing shall be said or done in broadcasting that is liable to give offence to other nationals. There is no definition of likely causes of offence, nor is any such definition possible. The interpretation of the agreement must be left to the good sense of those in charge of national broadcasting and that interpretation is coloured by the mind of the State.

In the matter of international propaganda there has never been any objection to the advertising of the country with the main idea of attracting tourist traffic, but such purely advertising propaganda can shade imperceptibly into political propaganda. The Russian international broadcasts sent out in all European languages are a case in point. They are all glorifications of Russia and the Russian point of view. They are, however, very carefully done and it is difficult for anyone with a broad mind to object to them. Any offence they give in this

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country, for instance, is due to a fixed conviction existing in the British mind that Russian ideals are fundamentally wrong. These fixed ideas are the result of intense propaganda conducted some years ago in certain sections of the British Press and conducted in such a way as to justify the worst implications of the word propaganda.

The Russian international broadcasts are admittedly propaganda and in fact do neglect or ignore facts which could be used against the ideals which the Russian State is seeking to impose upon the world. A favourite method with the Russians is to put before the microphone a person born in the country to which the propaganda is at the moment being addressed, that person having the duty of showing how excellent is the condition of the workers in the particular branch of industry in which he or she is engaged. In this country in the popular Press we usually get a point of view opposite to that of the Russians and which again may, and usually does, ignore everything except the point of view which is required to be put. The intelligent reader and listener can only hope that by striking a mean between printed and broadcast opinions he can get somewhere near the real truth.

Germany has recently adopted a very forward note in international propaganda, and uses, as do the Russians, an efficient short-wave station for spreading their ideas throughout the world. There is, however, this difference; the Russians quite

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honestly say that their propaganda is expressly designed to spread Soviet ideas, whereas the Germans somewhat hypocritically announce that their propaganda is for the benefit of German nationals throughout the world. If this is the truth it is difficult to understand why these transmissions are sent out in other languages than German and particularly in English.

The German short-wave programmes, as regards the musical part, are undoubtedly very good indeed and as regard propaganda are remarkably clever. The German announcers adopt a friendly and free-and-easy attitude which is as different as it possibly can be from the rather icy aloofness of the announcers whose voices are heard from our Empire short-wave station. Whether or not overseas listeners in British Dominions like to hear themselves addressed as "Dear Friends," and whether they are impressed by messages addressed to "Sunny Australia" or "Bonny New Zealand," only they can say. The news items are cleverly designed to tickle the ear of both "Capitalist" and "Proletarian." Their object, of course, is the glorification of the Hitler regime and, as with Russia, it is extremely difficult for the broad-minded person to find any particular fault with them, though the average Briton has a deep-rooted opinion that these international broadcasts are not quite playing the game and that they are essentially unfriendly acts in so far as they are directed towards the aggrandisement of one nation as



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opposed to the peace and prosperity of the world.

Here we can again differentiate between Russian and German propagandist methods. Whether we think the Russian right or wrong there is no doubt that he is quite definitely interested in a new world order. The German is interested only in the world predominance of Germany.

These two nations have been chosen for comparison because they are the only ones which engage in really open international propaganda. Germany has in recent months openly defied the "gentleman's agreement" and to protect her own nationals Austria has recently enacted very stringent penal laws laying down heavy punishments for those who invite visitors to their homes to listen to German political propaganda.

To say where news ends and propaganda begins is a matter of the most extreme difficulty. News may, of course, be defined as a bare statement of fact, but a bare statement of fact, true in every particular and with nothing ignored, may be a very fine propagandist weapon. We must, of course, look at the intention behind the broadcast word and not to the actual words themselves.

We might say that the magnificently done Jubilee broadcast of the B.B.C. which was re-broadcast practically speaking throughout the world was the best bit of propaganda work for the British Empire that could possibly have been

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devised. Such a view is an absolutely correct one, but the original intention of the B.B.C. was to enable the whole Empire to join in congratulating its king and emperor on having reigned for twenty-five years. That it did accidentally become propaganda for British ideals was perhaps due to the curiosity of a world, which has largely got rid of kings and thrones, to know how the Briton regarded these old-world things; and to a love of pageantry which presidents and dictators do not as a rule display.

The world on that occasion listened to a true picture of Imperial relations to the Throne except in one important part. The Viceroy of India spoke on behalf of the Indian peoples, but his implications that, whatever the political aspiration of the Indian people, they were intensely loyal to the Throne, undoubtedly omitted very important considerations. That small portion of the whole proceeding on 6th May, 1935, can be considered as propaganda in its worst aspects. It was definitely wrong in intention in that it deliberately ignored substantial facts. India is in very much the same condition politically as is the Irish Free State and the Irish Free State took no part in the Imperial rejoicings.

The mischief of bad propaganda is that it ignores that which should be openly discussed. It may be rightly said that any open reference to political unrest in India would have been out of place on the occasion. The bare statement that

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India greeted the King-Emperor would have been sufficient.

Broadcasting might have become and may yet become a very powerful instrument for world understanding and therefore for world peace. Unfortunately, propaganda of any kind, to be effective, must start with a willingness in at any rate a substantial minority to listen to the ideas set forth.

The B.B.C., when it changed from a company into a corporation in the beginning of 1927, adopted as its motto, "Nation shall speak peace unto nation," and though that motto has now been taken off the official coat of arms of the Corporation and replaced by a single Latin word with no spiritual or moral significance, we are assured that the B.B.C. has not abandoned that first valiantly idealistic motto. Perhaps it has been put into cold storage to await a more favourable opportunity for propaganda work, leading perhaps to the establishment of the United States of Europe or to Mr. H. G. Wells's "World State." No explanation of the removal of that motto has ever been given, but if it was due to the appreciation by the Director-General or the Governors of the Corporation that it stood for an impossible ideal as things are at present, we can only say that the B.B.C. was thinking a year or two in advance of the British Government who only in 1935 arrived at the conclusion that in view of the general arming of Continental nations, particularly of Germany, our

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defences had been allowed to get into a lamentably low state. The Briton is generally credited with considerable hypocrisy, but it is not the kind of hypocrisy which allows of peace talk while arming to the hilt.

Instead of being used for the general dissemination of the ideals of world brotherhood, broadcasting, so far as it has been allowed to serve any ideals at all, has been enslaved to nationalism and nationalism is in itself in present economic conditions directly opposed to peace. The nations of the world have not been able to dissociate the economic upheaval which always follows war from that economic upheaval which is new in world history and which is due to the growing displacement of human labour by the machine.

We have, therefore, governments faced with the problem of providing a livelihood for the whole of its citizens and turning to the age-old proposition that markets are essential to prosperity and that if the markets within the national boundaries are not sufficient to consume the goods produced other markets outside national boundaries must be sought.

Such a proposition leads inevitably and at once to economic, if not to physical, warfare and the latest machine, broadcasting, was brought at once into line as a very powerful weapon in this economic warfare.

There is no doubt that it was a kind of blind instinct of self-preservation, inherent in these ideas

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of the necessity of international markets, which has led to a race in transmitting power. The nations of Europe endeavoured to shout one another down and the listeners, interested more in entertainment than in instruction, did not understand then, and probably do not understand now, why this race for power seemed necessary to those in charge of the various national broadcasting units.

In most cases propaganda, so far as listeners outside the actual nation were concerned, was never open, but was of the purely advertising kind already mentioned. Internally, however, it led to an intensification of purely national feeling and a dread of the advances of other nations which lead to the division of Europe into a number of rigidly compact compartments. There is little doubt at all that without broadcasting the progress of the present intense nationalism would have been slower and to this extent the new art has proved an enemy rather than a friend to humanity.

The political significance of broadcasting was only slowly appreciated by governments. The first real use of the microphone for definitely State concerns and State propaganda was in the British General Strike of May 1926, when, faced with the closing down of all newspapers, the Government of the day took control of the old British Broadcasting Company and issued comprehensive news bulletins at regular intervals throughout the day. These bulletins had an immense effect in keeping the nation steady and sturdily resistant to an attempt

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to impose on the nation government by a sectional interest. Though the news bulletins were propaganda, and nothing else, they had a kind of fairness about them which appealed to the people. There was no sense of heat, no vehement denunciation and when the Government won its fight there was no crowing over the defeated.

There was, of course, a subsequent denunciation of the Government by the Trades Union Council for having used broadcasting to break the strike, but politicians generally admitted that no Government faced with so direct an attack could have done anything else.

Since that time the microphone has been more and more used by governments for purely internal propaganda, but the British Government, having shown the way, made no further attempts at securing any one-sided use of the medium. In fact in this country the three major political parties are allowed the use of the microphone in times of great political activity and very considerable freedom is allowed in the placing of all sorts and kinds of social and economic ideas before the nation. Generally it may be said that any political and economic ideas which do not attack the Throne are allowed to be voiced. In Italy and in Germany, as well as in Russia, nothing is allowed to be broadcast which is not definitely in favour of the Government. In Russia and in Italy, a dictatorship being firmly in the saddle, more attention is given to the social implications of the ideas behind

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the Government, and to education along the lines of these ideas, than to militant propaganda. In Germany on the other hand, the dictatorship being new, propaganda is insistent and noisy. Not even a pretence is made of showing the other side, with the consequence that, the Press being State controlled equally with broadcasting, rumour has become rife and the wildest tales circulate freely with a speed that not even the speed of broadcasting can counteract.

Not even broadcasting can change human nature in a hurry and if the microphone is to be effective in propaganda it must have some appearance of impartiality. To continually strike one note in news and talks, as is done in Germany, shows a defect in understanding and imagination. The present Italian regime came into being when broadcasting was so small a thing as to have no political importance and, having grown up with the regime, is used intelligently by the Fascists, though of course for their own ends. Exactly the same thing can be said of broadcasting in Russia. The use of broadcasting in inculcating national ideas is, of course, propaganda. This important national aspect of the microphone and loudspeaker will be dealt with more fully in the next chapter.

In America, where every cult or sect which could afford the cost of putting up a transmitter had the freedom of the air on its own wavelength, there has recently been a very great change. Two big factors have been at work. One was the

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immense financial power of two big corporations which have gradually bought up between them the majority of the United States transmitters to form the National Broadcasting Corporation and the Columbia Broadcasting system; the other was the growing conviction of the Government that transmitters could not be allowed to come on the air indiscriminately and the emergence of a definite policy in the name of preventing mutual interference severely limited the number of stations allowed. The Government has recently made use of the two big broadcasting chains for political propaganda and President Roosevelt has many times made use of these chains for national broadcasts. The whole business of broadcasting in the United States is moving towards State control, but the Government is faced with the definite antagonism to control financial and commercial interests. It is now admitted, however, that the State has a right to use broadcasting when necessary. There has been some talk of making President Roosevelt Director of American Broadcasting when his term of office as President is over.

In France, with a sturdy individualistic outlook and an ever-shifting political atmosphere, propaganda of the sort seen in two of its neighbours has not grown up nor is it likely so to do. The French system gives much the same quality of freedom in the expression of opinions as does that in this country.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE NATIONAL IDEA

**D**ISREGARDING any prejudices, the three countries which definitely use broadcasting for the inculcation of a national idea prove a very interesting study. In each case the methods used have proved that the microphone is a more potent instrument than the Press for education no matter whether the idea is an improvement in literacy or the glorification of some individual or system of government. The usefulness of broadcasting in this way is in inverse proportion to the general literacy of the population. That is to say that though it can be used for general educational purposes in any country, its effect is greatest in localities where only a small proportion of the people can read. Every nation naturally uses the microphone with a bias in favour of national ideas. This is true of Britain, particularly with regard to the Empire short-wave broadcasting, but in Britain and in most countries the propaganda element is kept discreetly in the background.

In Germany, when the Nazis seized power, the microphone was immediately used for pure propaganda purposes and the entire German broadcasting system was reorganised early in 1934. On

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April 1st of that year the nine broadcasting companies then in existence were dissolved and the entire organisation taken over by a central organisation directly controlled by the Ministry of Propaganda. This sweeping alteration in the German system only became possible when Hitler had dissolved the individual German states in January 1934. Before that date the German Post Office owned fifty-one per cent of the shares of the broadcasting organisations, the remainder being in the hands of the Federal States. Both Post Office and Federal States handed over their shares to the Propaganda Ministry so that the "Ministry for the Enlightenment of the People" not only directs, but is the sole owner of the German broadcasting organisation. The Post Office is, however, still responsible for the collection of licence fees and for installing and operating transmitters and cables and other necessary apparatus. For this service it retains something less than half of the collected fees, the rest being handed over to the Propaganda Ministry.

No body of listeners will stand undiluted propaganda and so a very considerable proportion of the German programmes still follow normal lines, but there is every evening an hour of definite propaganda in praise of Herr Hitler, the Nazi organisation, Nordic ideas and the curious cultural ideals of Herr Rosenberg with their pagan and mediæval implications.

Willingly or unwillingly, the German must

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listen. In every town and village there is a local radio bureau with a supervisor in charge and the supervisor and his uniformed assistants are engaged in a constant inquisition into the listening habits of the people. Those who are found not to be listening to the propaganda, unless they have an excuse which is acceptable, are immediately suspect and liable to be visited with dire penalties.

These local radio bureaux also handle ordinary questions as to reception and to them listeners are encouraged to send reports either in praise or blame of the ordinary parts of the programme. These reports, after analysis, are sent to the Ministry of Propaganda. The local bureaux are also in charge of community reception.

The Nazi Government has made a great feature of listening in factories, restaurants, shops and other public places and when any important propaganda material is being sent out during working hours, not only have the proprietors to allow time for their men to listen, but are charged with the task of seeing that they do listen. One of the many slogans of the Nazi Government is "Every German a Listener" and the idea behind the slogan is that broadcasting shall be a direct link between the Government and the people. With this idea too, the power of most of the transmitters has been increased and the "People's Receiver" has been put on the market by the direct orders of the Government and was designed by a Government official and is manufactured in collaboration

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by the leading makers of broadcast apparatus. News and talks now occupy something like thirty per cent of German programme time.

The Italian Government has recently given a considerable amount of attention to national propaganda and since it was found that the majority of Italian listeners were in the urban districts an organisation known as Radio Rurale was started at the direct instigation of Mussolini with the dual idea of educating illiterates and propagating Fascist ideals in country districts.

As in Germany, a special set has been devised, but these sets, selling at a price equal to about £10, are not for use in the home, but for schools, Fascist groups, church and municipal halls and other places where group listening can be started under proper supervision. The ownership of these sets by an authorised society or individual requires the payment of no licence fee. The Duce's ideal is to have at least one of these receivers in every village, with a properly organised system of group listening to make use of it. In cases where villages are so poor that they cannot afford a set there is a fund from which help can be given them. Inculcation of the Fascist idea is of course at the back of Radio Rurale and the schools' broadcast is mainly concerned with music, drill, and a simple form of drawing which can be carried out from verbal instruction. Adult education is almost entirely agricultural, but there are a certain number of talks addressed particularly to women on such

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subjects as household management and the care of the children. The general propaganda is much of the same kind as the German listener has to hear and is designed to foster the Fascist spirit, devotion to the Duce, and so forth, and deals with national tradition and national glory and particularly exalts physical and military fitness. Directly opposed to the attitude in Germany and Russia, respect for the established religion of Italy plays quite a considerable part in the propagandist attack.

The Italian broadcasting authorities are just as well aware as those in charge of educational broadcasting in this country, that a very great deal of work has to be done apart from the mere arranging for the appearance of suitable speakers before the microphone. Though there is no inquisitorial body at work, and though listening is urged and encouraged in every way without the use of force, the value of personal contact is thoroughly understood and the value of backing up the actual broadcasting with printed matter is appreciated. There is a monthly illustrated journal distributed free to all listening-centres, and a scheme, much on the lines of the B.B.C. educational-pamphlet system, is in contemplation.

The Italians are inherently susceptible to ideas presented in dramatic form and a great deal of pure education and propaganda is put over through this medium. Simple characters appealing to a rural population are created and talk between them presents the required series of ideas. A similar

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medium has been exploited in a more sophisticated way by the B.B.C. The nearest to the Italian method in our experience are the "Conversations in a Train" and the discussions of "Mr. Pewter" and his family.

The success of the experiment from the Fascist point of view has been great. The judicious interweaving of much material of purely educational value as well as a considerable amount of entertainment has tended to mask the main object, which is the building up of a single national idea. Of course, rural communities always tend to be more patriotically inclined than are the inhabitants of towns and cities and the collaboration of the local priests has also helped to popularise the whole scheme. Whilst generally raising the standard of education in Italy the Fascist Government is undoubtedly carrying out its ideas of inculcating a single national idea.

The Russian system, from which both Italy and Germany may be said to have learned the lesson of deliberate national propaganda, has had to deal with a much greater extent of illiteracy than has Italy. Broadcasting in that country, too, has been complicated by the very large number of different and mutually incomprehensible languages which are used in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. The Russian directors of broadcasting have thus had to devise a very extensive scheme of adult education to run parallel with their normal propaganda work.

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Community listening plays an enormous part in the Russian system. It is conducted on very similar lines to those in Italy and it is possible that the Italian Fascists have not been too proud to borrow a good idea from a purely socialist state.

The matter sent out is very carefully arranged to suit both the mentality and what may perhaps be called the "tribal ideas" of the community in the remoter districts. The language used is that of the particular community, for the Russian Government many years ago wisely decided that any attempt at unification of language was an impossibility. They have indeed not attempted any real unification of laws and in a large number of cases the laws and language of the individual republics have remained untouched, save in a few details, since they came into the U.S.S.R.

In these cases propaganda proceeds cautiously though the major ideals of the Soviet are rammed home on every occasion. The cleverness of the system lies in the way these ideas and ideals are adapted to the special community to which they are addressed.

Broadcasting in Russia is backed up by a very vigorous system of publication and since a tremendous amount of literature can be obtained either free or at a very low cost the most backward and illiterate parts of the Union are being encouraged to read.

Reports of the happiness of the Russian people and their reactions to Soviet ideals vary as greatly

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as do the politics and outlook of those making them. We are told on one hand that the Russian peasant is groaning under a despotism worse than anything he experienced in the days of the Czars and on the other that the peasant is marching to freedom with a song on his lips. Wherever between these two extremes the truth lies there is no doubt that the Russian peasantry has proved to be avid for instruction. In whatever other direction compulsion may have been deemed necessary by the Russian Government, broadcasting is to the illiterate of that country a golden door opening on realms which before had been either completely unknown or else but a dream of the unattainable. The most prejudiced observers from countries outside Russia have reported on the gaiety and enthusiasm with which the people in remote parts of this vast country gather for their community listening.

Where there are schools, and schools are now the rule rather than the exception all over rural Russia, the biggest schoolroom is the listening-centre. In agricultural districts, and, except for a few mining communities, these remote spots are almost entirely agricultural, a considerable feature is made of advice on crops, prices in the local and in the world markets, weather reports particularly adapted to the needs of a rural community and, in addition, lectures are given on mothercraft and the care of the household and other matters of a similar kind. These things are put out with due



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regard to the existing prejudices of those addressed. In the matter of education considerable use is made of the blackboard, for guidance in the correct use of which the teacher is provided with a pamphlet sent out in much the same way as is done for the B.B.C. Schools Broadcast in this country.

Propaganda is both direct and covered, that is it may aim either at the inculcation of a sense of national unity by talks about Russia as a State or it may be directly concerned with the ideals of the Russian Union of Republics, in other words, purely political propaganda.

Whilst these three States are experimenting in forms of government which have departed from the purely democratic ideas which had come to be regarded as the ideal before the War, every nation, as has been said, uses the microphone for both political and national propaganda. In this country we have, apart from our Empire contacts, no really definite policy beyond that which allows any message from the Government in power to be assailed by leaders representing the other side.

A scheme which has a considerable likeness to those in operation in both Italy and Russia is now being started in Portugal, but here, apparently, direct propaganda for the glorification of a purely national idea is to be severely, or perhaps entirely, subordinated at present to the needs of an adult education.

Well over half the population of Portugal, over seven years of age, cannot read and even in the

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capital there are thirty-nine per cent of illiterates and this despite the fact that education is supposed to be compulsory. As a matter of fact there are not sufficient schools for the children and at least a hundred thousand under twelve have no means at all of acquiring the simple beginnings of an education.

The lack of schools is illustrated by the necessity of putting one schoolmaster in charge of from ten to fifteen village broadcasting-centres. Provision is being made for a maximum number of forty students at each centre and the special broadcasts will last for about an hour and a half each evening during the winter months. To aid the purely educational matter there are to be musical items, stories and talks on Portuguese history, current literature, etc. It is hoped that next winter a substantial beginning will be made towards establishing forty thousand radio teaching-centres. The schoolmaster superintendent will get the equivalent of £6 English for his work and the overseers half this amount, but both superintendent and overseers will be competing for prizes which will be awarded to the centres which show the most considerable progress amongst those using them. A system of registration is to be put into force and a bribe in the shape of admittance to hear Sunday radio concerts, which will only be available for registered students, is proposed to ensure a good proportion of regular listeners.

The scheme will cost about £150,000 and to

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provide the money every person between the ages of twelve and forty who cannot read is to be required to pay a tax of about 2½d. a month. Those who can read or who have learned to read can obtain a certificate for the sum of about 10d., which will exempt them from the tax though they can still remain as registered students.

## CHAPTER X

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**B**BROADCASTING, by its very nature, is not confinable within the physical or artificial limits of national boundaries. So far as speech is concerned the only boundary it can know is that of language. There are, of course, certain limitations imposed by the choice of wavelength and the power of the transmitter, but generally speaking the broadcaster was faced from the first with the possibility of being overheard in any part of the world.

In the first few years, whilst the new art was growing up, no particular notice was taken internationally of this effect. It was a part of the wonder of broadcasting that nation could overhear nation and as in those days no nationality seemed to be particularly self-conscious when it was using the microphone the dangers as well as the advantages to be obtained from the generalness of broadcasting were not apparent.

From the social point of view the only particular danger to be apprehended is intense propaganda designed for the harm of neighbouring states. This aspect has already been dealt with and the

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reader has formed his own opinion of the amount of harm to be expected.

The first troubles were not of a social, but of an electrical nature. The increase in the number of transmitting-stations led to a considerable amount of mutual interference. It is the nature of a broadcast transmission to spread considerably on each side of the actual wavelength on which the transmission is sent out. The non-technical reader can visualise, for the better understanding of this, a very narrow pencil of light spread out by a lens system into a much broader, but still parallel-sided beam. Such an analogy must not be pursued very far, but it is possible to imagine twenty or thirty or a hundred of such narrow beams of light all stabbing out into the darkness as separate beams without mutual interference, but on application of a lens system to each they overlap so that the effect on an observer at a distance is not that he is viewing a large number of very narrow beams, but a large area completely filled with light.

Now, abandoning that analogy, the non-technical reader has his own experiences and knows very well that it is possible in an unselective receiver to hear two stations at the same time. The problems of interference had to be tackled as early as 1925 in which year the International Broadcasting Union (Unione Internationale de Radiodiffusion) was formed with headquarters at Geneva and with, as Secretary, Mr. Arthur Burrows, who had made a great name for himself as the original Programme

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Director at 2LO and who had endeared himself to thousands of children as "Uncle Arthur." The major problem to be decided was the allocation of wavelengths to prevent interference and a plan which was satisfactory for the moment was inaugurated in 1926. By 1929 the growth in the number of stations and in the power employed necessitated a complete revision of the Geneva plan and the U.I.R. met in Prague and more or less satisfactorily settled matters for the next few years. But national jealousies were beginning to make themselves felt, though they were smoothed over by the general feeling that more was to be gained by union than by dis-union.

The next meeting of the U.I.R. was at Madrid in 1932. Again the situation with regard to interference had become intolerable and the Union decided to hold a meeting at Lucerne in 1933 to make another attempt at "straightening out the ether." At this meeting a plan was evolved which came into being in 1934 and which is still working with considerable success. So much for technical difficulties.

That the majority of nations are perfectly willing to subscribe to a central body broadly governing their use of the broadcast medium, and to settle any difficulties in amity, is evidence that there is some solid common-sense in a world which, so far as politics is concerned, seems more and more inclined to abandon actualities and to run after chimeras born of dreams which should long ago

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have been forgotten in the general interests of mankind.

The Unione Internationale de Radiodiffusion has no power of enforcing any decision it may come to other than that implicit in the good sense and good-will of the subscribing nations; and though these subscribing nations have agreed, and do keep their agreement, with regard to power and wavelength allocation, the Unione has no jurisdiction in matters of taste and in all that the word taste implies. It has made some tentative suggestions in the matter of propaganda, but the carrying out of these suggestions is left to the discretion of the nations themselves and are interpreted according to their own ideas. The difficulties of complete international collaboration in broadcasting are very great, but they can be overcome and there is indeed even now more collaboration and genial interchange in broadcasting than in any other general activity of mankind. The difficulties are well stated by Dr. Ernest Barker in an article on "International Broadcasting, Its Problems and Possibilities," published in the *B.B.C. Annual*, 1935:

"This new system," says Dr. Barker, "has grown, during the last fifteen years, concurrently with a new development of international thought and action, unparalleled in the previous history of the world. New and plastic in itself, without the formed traditions of a long inherited past, broadcasting has come peculiarly under the influence of this new international

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development. The very medium in which it works—the medium of the air, which by its nature seems common to all humanity—accentuates its international character. These new inventions of our day—the aeroplane, the radio, the film—are all escaping, like so many birds, from what seem to be the ancient cages of the nations. Just as the same film can be seen everywhere, so the same broadcast may be heard everywhere—at any rate if the receiver is subtle enough to capture it, and if the listener has ears to hear the language in which it is couched. And yet the bird has not altogether escaped from the cage. The nation is like nature: you may drive it out with a pitch-fork, but it will always return. It is very present with broadcasting, and it clings to it when it flies through the air and seems to rejoice in the ‘blue freedom of the birds.’ Not only is each broadcasting system national: it is also closely connected with the national State. It is linked, more or less closely, with the National Government; and it generally possesses a monopoly which has been given, and is therefore in the last issue also controlled, by that Government.”

Dr. Barker thus postulates two aspects of broadcasting. The national system which is part of the national scheme of culture and the international aspect inherent in the medium. His words are an adequate summing up of the last two chapters dealing with “Propaganda” and “The National Idea.”

We are now concerned solely with the difficulties and possibilities of the international aspect. We cannot, however, touch on international problems



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without recurring to individual nationalities and the colour which must be given to international broadcasting by the acceptance, either by the application of force or by general agreement, of certain standards expressing the national outlook. What the nations have not yet learned, though they must learn it, is that the world, because the new arts of communication have enormously contracted it in terms of time, is now one family and that if the nations of the world are to live together in amity a new system of taboos must arise as binding on nations as are the taboos which make an amicable social life possible within the smaller national boundaries.

Taboos, of course, grow up. Like the British common law they form an unwritten code and probably it will be quite impossible for the U.I.R. or any other body to promulgate a code which would have any general acceptance.

Fortunately, the international aspect of broadcasting itself is a very strident force working in favour of a general understanding, provided always that the governing body in any nation is more alive to its international than to its purely national aspects and that it is willing to use the extra-national influence of its transmitting stations in the interests of good-will.

As has already been said, extra-national activities are bounded by language and, whereas English has the whole of the North American continent as well as Australia, New Zealand and the greater

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part of South Africa in which it is generally understood, Europe has no such common ground for understanding. The B.B.C., working in conjunction with the broadcasting systems in the United States and the broadcasting authorities of the Empire units, has for years past encouraged a free interchange of national ideas and ideals and has also done not a little to make Continental thought and aspects of life understood in this country through the efforts of lecturers and commentators with international sympathies speaking from centres of thought and social activity on the Continent.

With regard to the English-speaking portions of the world, we have had debates between groups of students representing the great universities of this country and the United States and talks between the United States and this country giving national outlooks and national viewpoints. Such activities are of the very greatest importance and it does seem that in this way broadcasting can do an enormous amount of good.

There is, of course, in any country which regards freedom as an ideal, no possibility of assuring that any particular series of broadcasts will be generally heard. The very fact that a switch is provided in a receiver means that it can be turned off as well as turned on, but even if a small proportion of those who can listen, do listen, to international broadcasts, a leaven of understanding must be formed. Here we may note the

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fundamental difference between propaganda and the international exchange of ideas. The propagandist talks at a nation and is generally not willing to listen to any reply. The lecturer, commentator or debator expressing a national point of view for the benefit of other nations is talking to those other nations and should be, and generally is, willing that the nations to which he has been talking shall express their own viewpoints at equal length and that these viewpoints shall have a sympathetic hearing.

We are told that the general feeling of friendship between national representatives at the meetings of the U.I.R. is due to the fact that they have in common a profession with all its difficulties and problems and that as these are much the same all over the world they are sympathetic to each other's point of view and willing to exercise the give-and-take principle to a very considerable degree. Now the problems of humanity are also very similar throughout the world and it does seem that if these problems and difficulties can only be stated as between nation and nation freely, and in the form of debate, complete sympathy and understanding must swiftly follow.

In purely national affairs the B.B.C. has developed the debate to excellent advantage. It allows two or more speakers of opposed views to state their views, point by point, and to endeavour to convince each other. Some such system might, without much difficulty, be applied to the exchange

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of views between Continental nations. It would of course be necessary to employ completely bilingual persons before the microphone because of the difficulty that a person who merely speaks another language fairly fluently is always likely to give a wrong shade of meaning, not of necessity because he uses a wrong word, but because the rhythm of his speech is that of a foreigner and not that of a national. The completely bilingual person is one whose rhythm in a language cannot be distinguished from that of those born in the country.

Given these completely bilingual persons, who are of course not difficult to find, we might have an Englishman talking to the Germans on one night and, the next night, having repeated his talk for the benefit of the English, an English-speaking German could reply with his own point of view. The same procedure could be followed for all nations, and though, if complete freedom of statement is allowed, as it should be allowed, certain points of view would be bound at first to be distasteful to some of those who listen, we should at any rate arrive at an understanding.

A criticism often levelled by intelligent persons against the Press, even in a country such as this where it is supposed to be free, is that the truth is difficult to arrive at. News from foreign countries is either deliberately coloured to suit the viewpoint of those controlling the paper or it may be unintentionally coloured by the national sympathies of the correspondent supplying the news.

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Broadcasting has a chance of presenting national viewpoints as they appear in their country of origin. The success of such an undertaking does not of necessity depend on the form of control over broadcasting exercised in any particular country, though of course complete freedom in which a political minority in any country would be able to express its views just as readily as the majority, is the ideal. In the present state of national affairs and international relationships complete freedom is an impossibility.

Seeing that it is a duty, whether of the individual or of the nation, to set its own house in order first, the B.B.C. might quite reasonably start with inter-Empire debates. There are few Englishmen who understand the point of view of the Irish Free State and it would surely be to our mutual advantage if we could hear the views of representative Irishmen and Englishmen or Scotsmen on these subjects which appear to be matters for strife but which might prove quite susceptible to amicable settlement if they were removed from the turgid atmosphere of politics and brought into the free air of an open debate. Similarly, it is of the very greatest importance that we in this country should understand the aspirations of India.

There are in existence three bodies intimately concerned with international relationships. They are the League of Nations, the Institute of Intellectual Co-operation and the International Broadcasting Union. These three bodies, between them,

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should be able to institute, by common agreement among the nations, some simple means by which national viewpoints can be freely interchanged. The system I have envisaged may not be, and probably is not, a good one, but that something could be done there is no doubt, just as there is no doubt that broadcasting must be used sooner or later—and why not sooner—for the healing of international sores and the spread of international friendliness.

That nations are willing to speak to one another has already been discovered. International exchanges of concert programmes are popular and there is a general desire to hear what other nations are doing in their great moments. In our own recent history we have only to turn to the marriage of the Duke and Duchess of Kent and the Jubilee celebrations, with the knowledge that both these ceremonies and celebrations were broadcast to a large number of countries, and that the Jubilee celebrations were broadcast by the national transmitters of practically the whole world, to realise that the desire is a real and live one.

As a pendant to my own views let me quote a letter which appeared in *The Times* of 4th May, 1935, a day or two before the Jubilee celebrations. It is dated from West Coates Parish Church, Edinburgh, and is signed "D. C. Lusk."

"If Sir Edward Grey on that fateful night when he watched the lights go out all over Europe had been

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able, from his very room, to speak to the listening ears of the millions of Central Europe, would the course of history have been different?

"Doubtless that night would have been too late. But equally beyond doubt, should ordinary diplomacy in a future emergency fail, a Minister of Sir Edward Grey's spirit would find in wireless broadcasting a heaven-sent means of talking calmly to another nation, as man to man.

"Why wait for crises? It is the duty of responsible statesmen to cultivate understanding among other peoples. There is still a method unused. Responsible men in this country should regularly speak to the listener by the fireside in other lands. They should speak as one speaks to a friendly foreigner, to explain ourselves to him, and to encourage him to explain himself to us.

"His Majesty the King will be heard with respect by millions, not of his Empire alone. Audiences are world-wide. Before it is too late let us so use this gift of God that 'nation shall speak peace' direct to listening 'nation.'"

## CHAPTER XI

### TELEVISION AND THE FUTURE

**B**BROADCASTING in the near future will be linked with television, so that seeing and hearing are one whole in all the aspects of home entertainment and education. The experimental phase of television is now passed and, in most countries of the world, active preparations are in hand for an extensive vision programme which eventually will serve every user of broadcast-receiving apparatus.

Progress with television is not likely to be extremely rapid because technical difficulties in transmission at present demand the use of extremely short wavelengths which, so far as we know, are only receivable at comparatively short distances from the transmitter. This means that we are faced with the necessity, if the whole of the country is to be served, of putting up a large number of low-power stations each of which will serve a small area. There is always a possibility that discoveries will be made that will remove the present technical limitations and in such a case progress might be very swift indeed.

The linking of vision with sound in broadcasting brings with it problems of an altogether



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different nature from those which faced the cinema world when sound was added to vision in films. In the case of the films, the coming of sound meant little more than a reversion to the already understood technique of the stage in all matters which demanded a departure from methods used in the silent film. Broadcasting has grown up by the expression of artistic and educational material which is largely independent of vision for fairly complete enjoyment and understanding. Television, therefore, can only have a very limited application to broadcasting as we now understand it. Ask yourself what items in a normal evening's broadcast programme you would enjoy better if you could see as well as hear and you will be surprised to find against how few items you can put an affirmative tick in the vision column.

The reception of television necessitates a dark, or at least a darkened, room and for this reason alone it is neither so useful nor convenient as simple broadcast reception.

Many of those in authority over broadcasting, both here and in other countries, are of opinion that vision is unnecessary to broadcasting and that, to use it properly, separate programmes must be provided which interfere in no way with the normal transmission of sound. With that view I am not completely in accord though there is no doubt that programmes completely separated from normal sound broadcasting will have to be sent out for some time to come. As new receivers, to

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operate on ultra-short wavelengths, will be necessary for the reception of both the sound and vision programmes, there is the likelihood that television may for some years remain completely divorced from the ordinary broadcast transmissions.

In the end the two things are bound to be wedded and a new technique will be evolved in which vision gradually assumes the more important place in some at least of the prominent items.

Television can have no general acceptance in the home until it is capable of giving a picture of reasonable size, that is something over fifteen inches wide. The reception of such pictures will mean the provision of a screen, say twenty inches wide and fifteen inches deep, permanently in position, probably in a room set apart for broadcast enjoyment. One may be tempted to prophesy that in many villa residences the drawing-room will become a viewing-room into which any members of the family who wish to see a particular programme will retire at the appropriate hour.

At present the prophecies made on behalf of television do not offer us very much in the way of intellectual entertainment. We are told that films will be largely used in the initial stages of the development of television and, apart altogether from the news items, which are always likely to be of considerable interest, it is difficult to see how television is to be worked without putting out programmes which are mostly either mediocre or simply banal.

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That television will have a very large audience so soon as it is available is certain. It will attract from its very novelty. Whether or no it will retain the attention of its audience depends solely on its capability of expanding along lines which are not at the moment apparent. It cannot compete with the cinema theatre because not only can the cinema give us larger pictures having better definition than those of television, but there is also the very important fact that the mere act of going out to a performance is a social adventure of some psychological importance. Add to this the lighting, decorations and so forth of the cinema theatre, and the effect of being in company with many others, and we have something which television in the home cannot give us.

Broadcasting was an altogether new art when it arrived and had no competitors along its own lines. For this reason broadcasting cannot be used as an analogy in endeavouring to look at the future of television.

German television makes a great feature of an item which is called "The Mirror of the Day" which is really an elaborate news film in which events which have taken place within the last twenty-four hours are shown with appropriate comments, noises and effects. This item is very popular, but we must remember that both Press and broadcasting are rigidly controlled in Germany by one department and that in communities which are more free there may be very consider-

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able Press opposition to the showing of items of this kind if they are allowed to run for much over half an hour. We must realise that in whatever other directions television advances it must become a very considerable rival to the picture Press. Not only can it show, when desirable, the far-off event as it happens, but it can, by developing this "Mirror of the Day" idea, steal a march on the morning papers by publishing pictures of, and comments on, events the same day as they occur.

That the Press will fight against this development is inevitable and equally inevitable is it that the picture Press must fall in the end in a battle with public opinion, and will ultimately go down before television unless it is sufficiently virile to accommodate itself to new conditions and open up ground into which it cannot be followed up by television.

Though no one who regards liberty as an essential to human progress can view without misgiving the absorption of a considerable portion of the machinery of news communication by a State-controlled or State-influenced corporation, it is at least open to argument that the elimination of the more inane part of the "popular Press" and its replacement by a responsible body would be a good thing, at any rate in this country.

Though I do think that television will have a considerable influence on picture papers I am sure that the Press, as a whole, has nothing to fear from broadcasting. Allow me again to invoke the clear-

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thinking H. G. Wells and quote once more from *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind*.

"In imaginative works about the future, the writers are apt to abolish the newspaper altogether and represent the news and so forth as being distributed entirely by wireless, cinemas and the like ultra-modern devices. But it may be doubted whether such contrivances will ever do more than act as supplements and stimulants to the reading of books and newspapers. For all these other things you must go to an appointed place or listen at an appointed time. You cannot choose your programme or consider your own convenience. But the book or the newspaper, with an almost canine fidelity, follow you meekly everywhere and brighten up when you turn to them, at any hour."

That statement seems to me to be a complete picture of the future of broadcasting in relation to the printing press. There is, of course, the likelihood that the newspaper, as we know it, will cease to exist, and will be replaced by an altogether different kind of printed page; but that will not change the relationship between broadcasting and newspapers and books.

One change in the mechanism of newspaper production which may be brought about by television may be indicated, though it is rather foreign to our subject. It is quite possible that in the near future newspaper pages may be set up in London, or some other central city, and the pages transmitted to other centres by television. The received picture would then be photographed,

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photo-engraved and printed. At present many papers set up and print editions in several parts of the country. By the means indicated such papers as *The Times*, the *Morning Post* and the *Daily Telegraph* would be available in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Paris at the same moment as they were published in London.

The strength of such an organisation as the B.B.C. should lie in its complete detachment from "advertising," from all the influences of commercialism. This does not mean that advertising is, of itself, a bad thing; but it does mean that the advertiser can, and often does, influence the editorial department. The public needs protecting against quack medicines, cheap and badly prepared or adulterated foodstuffs and such things; but what newspaper dare offend those from whom it accepts large sums of money for advertising space? True, responsible papers refuse to take the advertisement of firms they suspect; but there are other papers, usually with larger circulations, who are not so squeamish. Unless a thing is an obvious fraud it can get all the advertising necessary for its sale.

It is here that broadcasting might step in, if you like as an agent of the Government. Suppose for instance there was a weekly half-hour devoted to reports, by Government officials, on the analysis of foodstuffs and that those reports were given in simple language that everyone could understand. The effect would be two-fold. The public would

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refuse to buy the inferior article if it could afford the superior one, and the manufacturers would not dare to adulterate for fear of exposure, which exposure would certainly come, sooner or later. A milkman is not allowed to adulterate his milk. He is fined if he is caught doing so and his fraud on the public is advertised in the local police news. The jam-maker is allowed to adulterate his wares. There are certain "allowed substitutes." The public should be told what they are. Similarly in many other prepared foodstuffs, the public should be told what substitutes and adulterants are allowed and in what proportion they are used.

In any such scheme there might have to be a compulsion on the manufacturer to submit his goods, and no possible action for libel allowed against the government analyst making his broadcast report. Nor should there be any objection to the Press publishing these reports, after they have been broadcast, if they have the courage to do so.

Manufacturers of integrity never object to submitting their goods to test or analysis and in the past some papers have organised testing-stations of their own for the special purpose of reporting on certain types of goods. The recent setting up of special apparatus for testing loudspeakers by *The Wireless World* is a case in point and every sportsman and manufacturer of sporting-guns, rifles and ammunition accepts the word of *The Field* or *Game and Gun*. The only necessity in the setting

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up of such a reporting-station is the acceptance of the integrity of those who test and the willingness of manufacturers to submit their goods. It may be that compulsion will not be necessary. The fact that any goods are not reported upon might be sufficient evidence that the manufacturer was well aware that they would not bear expert examination.

This is but one indication of the direction in which broadcasting may move. At present every broadcasting organisation is bound in some way or other; but many, our own B.B.C. is a conspicuous case, are far more free than the Press. For instance, there was recently a discussion on "Poverty in the midst of Plenty" in which, week by week, believers in several different economic systems were invited to give their views as to the cure of the present economic muddle. Many of these systems are denied publicity in the Press because they attack too many vested interests. The B.B.C. had the courage to let every reasonable system have its half-hour of statement. True, the upholders of "Things as they are" had the last word; but the revolutionists had their half-hours.

The public likes to see virtue triumphant and the villain rolled in the mire, and no amount of plain speaking is ever amiss. There is an almost unlimited field for a "free" broadcasting system in attacking humbug, adulteration, misstatements and the general misleading of the people. The microphone might so easily be used for the immediate good of the public as a whole that it is



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a pity that its potentialities are largely wasted. Why has no government yet thought of setting up a "Ministry of Truth"?

In this necessarily brief review of "Broadcasting and a Changing Civilisation" an attempt has been made to cover every aspect; but much has been left out that might have been said. In many cases, too, the implications of certain defined situations have not been followed up. They could not have been pursued further without encroaching on space required for other germane matters. The author makes no claim for authority other than that of one who has been intimately associated with the new art, as a listener and critic, since the day of its birth. The opinions given are his own, unless expressly quoted as those of others. The facts given have been verified and may be taken as the truth. If any mistakes have been made no excuse can be offered, only an apology.

Broadcasting is a great and potent weapon. Whether it will be used for good or for ill depends on those who use it. It has no power in itself. It is the slave of Power. In our own country, fortunately, its influence is largely for the best. In every country its motto should be, "The greatest good for the greatest number," and there can be no greater number, in the sense of such a motto, than the whole people of the world. Until that motto is in the hearts of every broadcasting director in the world the new art will not be doing work which is its peculiar province and manifest destiny.

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'Here is a complete survey of the causes underlying war, and a suggestion of the way in which others leading to peace may be substituted for them.'

EVERYMAN.

'A brilliant little book.' STAR.

### 6 ✓ **Money** by M. A. ABRAMS

'Mr. Abrams has dealt admirably with all the questions that fall within the scope of his book, and he has made his teaching interesting, and not the deadly dull treatise so many works on economics are apt to be.'

CAMBRIDGE DAILY NEWS.



## ✓7 The Home by NAOMI MITCHISON

'An excellent book on a subject so amorphous. . . . It is a question of ownership. Personal versus economic ownership. Nobody wants to be owned economically . . . everybody, on the other hand, wants to be owned personally, that is in affection, in love, and only fully free individuals can perfectly practise personal ownership. . . . How to bring the world into a frame of mind to make such things possible for everybody is the question. Mrs. Mitchison does not know the answer, naturally, but she has some excellent shots at it.' BOOKMAN.

## ✓8 Art by ERIC GILL

'Mr. Gill has written a good deal on the subject of art during the last few years, and always from the same point of view. His new book hammers away at the same old themes, but that does not mean that it can be neglected. His style is more forceful than ever, and his ideas have gained in clarity and organisation.'

HERBERT READ in the SPECTATOR

## ✓9 Women by WINIFRED HOLTBY

'Winifred Holtby has the knack which is given to few of dispensing information without dullness. . . . WOMEN is not only a book of first-class thought and first-class writing: it is a book that needed to be written, and which appears at an opportune moment—when "the economic slump has reopened the question of women's right to earn."'

CICELY HAMILTON in TIME AND TIDE

## ✓10 The Theatre by THEODORE KOMISARJEVSKY

'The passionate conviction in this distinguished *régiisseur's* writing, backed by intimate knowledge of all the significant experiments in the theatre for the last three decades and wide reading in

earlier history, gives this book a solidity and significance not usually attained by units in publishers' largely extemporised up-to-date series. A well-made Index makes reference to its wealth of compressed facts easy for the student.' PUNCH.

## ✓11 **Communism** by RALPH FOX

The author, who is himself a Communist, here deals with Communism not as an abstract theory, but as "a real movement which destroys the present situation." Capitalism and Socialism are two worlds in conflict. The necessity of the dictatorship of the working class as the transition to Socialism, the continuation of the class struggle after the proletariat has won power and the character of a proletarian dictatorship in Great Britain are among the most important aspects of social revolution discussed in this book.

## 12 **Property** by H. L. BEALES

Property is the basic motive force of society to-day, and so long as society preserves its individualistic structure the retention of property will remain fundamentally the incentive to all effort. But a new assessment of the meaning and function of property in relation to the individual and society is imperative in view of changing social conditions. Mr. Beales, who attempts to supply this new assessment, is a well-known authority on social and economic history and part author in a recent volume, 'Memoirs of the Unemployed.'

## 13 **The Black Races** by J. H. DRIBERG

After analysing the basis of the various African cultures, Mr. Driberg here discusses the possible reactions of the Black Races to modern westernisation. Will they submit to European permeation or have they produced a new civilisation? The subject opens out a field of fascinating speculation based on fact and logical inference. Mr. Driberg was formerly District Commissioner in Uganda and the Sudan, has been a lecturer in anthropology at Cambridge, and is the author of many books on African problems.

## ✓14 **Health** by Dr. EDGAR OBERMER

Dr. Obermer analyses, for the intelligent lay reader, the problem of individual health and discusses the necessity for and the scope of planning for Health. Modern civilisation presents us with many baffling problems but none so universal and insistent as that of the Health of the Individual.

## ✓15 **Literature** by PHILIP HENDERSON

This book is an attempt to survey literature, viewing it as a mirror of social development. At each age the economic and social background of life and institutions have profoundly affected the writings of the time. The author traces his subject from the epics of early agricultural civilisations to the breakdown of capitalism and the newest tendencies in literature, particularly in this country and in Soviet Russia.

## ✓16 **Religion** by Dr. JULIUS HECKER

No subject has been written about so much through the ages and no topic has aroused so much controversy as Religion. Civilisation in all its epochs finds faith, worship, priests, religious organisation and devotion as integral to itself. But the modern world seeks compromises with outworn forms and unscientific ideas and is attempting restatements of religious doctrines. In this book Julius Hecker considers the influence of a changing civilisation on Religion.

## ✓17 **The Town** by DAVID GLASS

This book seeks to analyse the essential elements of the urban domination of our cultural and social life and to examine it in the context of current development and the changes now on the social

horizon. Modern Invention and Industry and their economic and political consequences probably gave the town its present pre-eminence, but urban civilisation is now called upon to meet the problems which urbanisation of life and habits have created.

## 18 Architecture

by ERICH MENDELSON

This important contribution to the series is by one of the foremost architects in the world. Mr. Mendelsohn ranks with Le Corbusier and other famous international figures and his book is therefore bound to be of exceptional interest.

## 19 The Press by A. J. CUMMINGS

This book is an attempt to relate the functions of the Press to the functions of life in the modern world. It is both a serious analysis and a bold speculation on the Press as it is and as it is likely to be. The author also discusses frankly the controversial problem of the freedom of the Press. Mr. Cummings, the political editor of the "News Chronicle," is one of the best-known journalists in England to-day, and his knowledge of the Press of the world is unrivalled.

## 20 Design by NOEL CARRINGTON

'This wholly admirable addition to the Twentieth Century Library should be on every self-respecting bookshelf in the land. Certainly no couple setting up house, no artist, art master, art student, no manufacturer, should be without it. . . . Mr. Carrington, practising what he preaches, has set an example with a book that is itself a model of good design: and which is also extremely well written, well illustrated, well documented and indexed.' NEW ENGLISH WEEKLY.

## 21 **Sex** by KENNETH WALKER

The author, a well-known Harley Street surgeon and specialist, holds the view that, although the twentieth century has witnessed many changes and many advances along the road of science, man himself remains the same. Sex is a primitive urge, and in love and in war civilised man remains fundamentally the same as the savage. This, at least, is the author's contention, and though many readers are bound to disagree violently with certain points, in any case the book will be found to be extremely provocative of thought and discussion.

## 22 **Broadcasting**

by Capt. E. H. ROBINSON

Further details later.

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