

**BBC Radio 4's *Analysis*, 1970 – 1983: a selective history  
and case study of BBC current affairs radio**

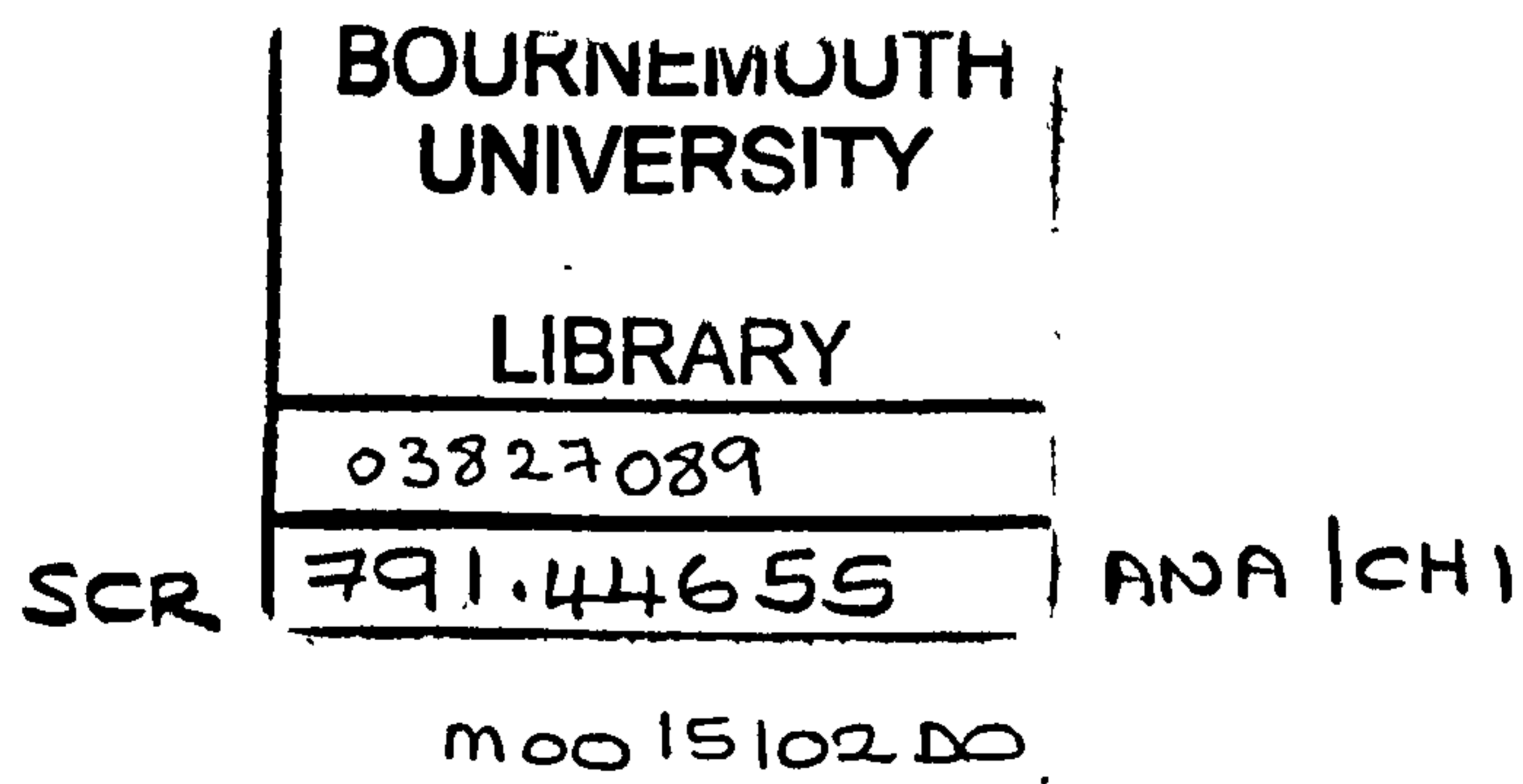
**Hugh Chignell**

**A thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Bournemouth  
University for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy.**

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Hugh Chignell

BBC Radio 4's *Analysis*, 1970 – 1983: A selective history and case study of BBC current affairs radio

## Abstract

The 'historical turn' in British Media Studies has yielded new histories of television but little work on the history of post-television radio. This thesis hopes to contribute to that neglected area. The research, based on radio and written archives and interviews with former BBC staff, examines the BBC Radio 4 current affairs programme, *Analysis* between the years 1970 and 1983. It addresses a number of questions about the programme, including the precise reasons for its creation, how it evolved, and how it covered a range of current affairs topics. In addition, this history of current affairs radio provides useful, new insights into the rise of professionalism in the BBC, the existence of informal networks, impartiality and bias, the tension between elitism and populism and the specificity of current affairs.

The thesis includes a full discussion of the history of current affairs radio from 1927 to 1960. In this section the relationship of the literary elite to the BBC in the 1930s is addressed and the evolution of the 'topical talk' and the post-war 'talks magazine' are described. The precise origins of *Analysis* in the late 1960s are explained with reference to the tension between the more journalistic and populist 1960s news sequences and the elitist and anti-journalistic talks tradition from which *Analysis* emerged following the publication of *Broadcasting in the Seventies*. The role of individual presenters of *Analysis* is examined and the evolution of the form of 'broadcast talk' employed on the programme. There is a chapter on *Analysis* in Africa and a concluding chapter which evaluates the relationship between *Analysis* and the emerging political ideology of Thatcherism.

By focussing on one programme over a period of time, and following the careers of named individuals who worked in BBC radio, it is possible to reveal conflicting broadcasting values and ideals of professionalism and current affairs and to trace these back to their antecedents in the pre-war BBC.

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**AUTHOR’S DECLARATION**

**Name of Candidate:** Hugh Chignell

**Award for which work is submitted:** Doctor of Philosophy

**1. Statement of any advanced studies undertaken in connection with the programme of research**

The AHRB funded ‘*Analysis* archive project’ phases 1 and 2 contributed directly to this research. All use of this research data (including the database ‘*Analysis online*’) is fully referenced in the text and also listed in the ‘*List of Sources*’. The work of the joint researcher for Phase 2, Gareth Thomas, is fully acknowledged and referenced. Use of this research is also discussed in the Methodology chapter.

**2. Concurrent registration for two or more academic awards**

I declare that while registered as a candidate for the university’s research award, I have not been a registered candidate or enrolled student for an award of any other academic or professional institution.

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## 1.

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the radio programme, *Analysis*, which is the main focus of the inquiry. It explains the reasons why not only this programme, but also radio history itself, are worthy of detailed research. There is also a justification for limiting the main inquiry to the period 1970 – 1983. This is followed by a brief discussion of the political context of the early years of *Analysis* and then by a statement of the research aims. The nature of broadcasting history itself is introduced here and the Introduction ends with a chapter-by-chapter thesis summary.

The first edition of BBC Radio 4's *Analysis* was broadcast on Radio 4 at 9 p.m. on Thursday 10 April 1970. 'The War for Jenkins Ear' (on the subject of the forthcoming budget) was a forty-five minute programme presented by Ian McIntyre and produced by his friend and colleague, George Fischer. Over the ensuing decades, *Analysis* examined, discussed and debated a wide range of mainly political issues concerning Britain and the wider world. It brought to the microphone an impressive array of contributors; every serving prime minister and most senior cabinet ministers, heads of state, senior academics from Britain and abroad, top industrialists and so on. *Analysis* was a single subject, weekly current affairs programme dealing with mainstream political issues, both national and international. The programme is referred to in this thesis in the past tense as this research stops at 1983: *Analysis*, however, continues to be broadcast and continues to espouse many of the original programme aims. In the period 1970 – 1983, each edition had a presenter and one or more expert contributors. Although there were some variations in programme format, most consisted of pre-recorded interview extracts tied together by the scripted words of the presenter. A useful way of thinking of an edition of *Analysis* is as an 'essay' (a term used by presenters and producers of the time) authored by the presenter and illustrated by the comments of contributors. *Analysis* was perceived by BBC managers as the 'flagship' current affairs radio programme in much the same way that *Panorama*<sup>1</sup> was the flagship television equivalent.<sup>2</sup>

The main body of this thesis is concerned with *Analysis* from its first broadcast in 1970 to the end of 1983. This examination of one programme is prefaced by a selective history of BBC current affairs radio which considers the broadcasting context and heritage as it influenced the form, content and production of the series. There are a number of reasons for choosing *Analysis* as the subject of a doctoral thesis. This was the 'flag ship' radio current affairs programme of the BBC. *Analysis*, as the following chapters will show, not only dealt with the central political issues of the day but did so using contributions from the political and academic elites and others. It therefore provides historians with an important record of contemporary debates as expressed by key participants and thinkers. The programme reflected firmly held, but now unfashionable, ideas about the nature of current affairs and broadcasting. *Analysis* from 1970 – 1983 evolved from one broadcasting tradition (that of the radio 'talk') to a more journalistic approach, as seen in the rise of the 'news sequence'. *Analysis*, therefore, provides media historians with a case study of changing broadcasting values and approaches as they existed in BBC radio at the time. Another reason for studying *Analysis* is to fill a gap in radio scholarship. As is discussed below, radio is a neglected area in Media and Cultural Studies and the history of radio in the post-television era<sup>3</sup> is poorly served. Researching and writing about *Analysis* is work in a largely uncharted area. The example of *Analysis* also bears on a number of theoretical questions about the BBC. Themes of bias, professionalism and elitism are discussed in Chapter 3. Finally, as explained in Chapter 2, a fairly complete archive of tapes and transcripts was available to the author which made the research possible. Given the extreme difficulty of gaining access to broadcasting archives this has created an unusual opportunity and adds an originality to the research.

Although there is a substantial account of the history of current affairs radio in Chapters 4 and 5, the main focus of inquiry of this thesis, as described in the title, is *Analysis* from 1970 to 1983. 1970 marks the beginning of the series and needs no further explanation but the year 1983 does. The 1970s and early 1980s was undoubtedly the heyday of *Analysis*. A more wide-ranging history of the programme throughout the last century would need to chart its demise as other current affairs series (especially *Today* and *File on Four*) forced it to narrow its remit, especially

after the early 1980s. In addition, 1983 marked the first full year of Channel 4, another provider of serious news and comment. 1983 was also the end of Margaret Thatcher's first period of office and the relationship between her policies and the programme are an important part of the argument here. The thesis looks at the period when *Analysis* could claim to be the 'flag ship' radio current affairs strand and featured not only the most distinguished presenters (most notable Ian McIntyre and Mary Goldring<sup>4</sup>) but also prime ministers and other members of the establishment on a fairly regular basis. The period 1970-1983 reveals *Analysis* at its height, presented by some of the giants<sup>5</sup> of current affairs, covering a revolution in political ideas and largely untroubled by competition.

A case could be made for saying that archived radio programmes are of marginal interest and not worthy of systematic research. Dolan, for example, suggests there is a danger of fetishizing archives in radio research at the expense of theory.<sup>6</sup> Her claim that written archives tell us as much about old radio as the audio record is not contested here as the following Methodology chapter will explain. This thesis, however, is based on the belief that old factual programming is almost always of great interest to researchers - not only broadcasting historians but also historians of politics, culture and society. In the case of current affairs radio, the attempts to reflect and explain at the time what we now see as historical events are particularly revealing. Arguably the most valuable current affairs programmes are those which, unlike radio talks<sup>7</sup> (and the scripted contributions to programmes), were unscripted and contain spontaneous talk and discussion. Scripted talks are often not dissimilar to newspaper columns (and indeed were often also published in *The Listener* or collections in book form).<sup>8</sup> The unscripted element, however can provide us with views not available in the press and unheard (or unseen) since the original broadcast. As will be shown in this thesis, *Analysis* is of particular importance not only as radio but as a record of the views and arguments of decision makers and other influential people at a specific moment in British history. With the exception of the words of the scripted speech of the presenter, all of the words heard on *Analysis* were unscripted and most of them spoken by opinion leaders of the day.

## The Political Context

It is useful to look briefly here at the domestic political context in 1970 as the main focus of *Analysis* was on mainstream (Westminster based) politics. The 1970s was an eventful decade in both domestic and international politics. The decade began with the last few months of the Labour Government under Harold Wilson. The general election of June 1970 was won by the Conservative Party and Edward Heath became prime minister for four years. This was followed by five years of Labour rule under Harold Wilson and Jim Callaghan and then, in 1979, after a period of industrial conflict known as the 'winter of discontent', the election of Britain's first woman prime minister, Margaret Thatcher.

The ideology of the Conservative Party up to the election of the government under Edward Heath in 1970 can be referred to as 'One Nation Conservatism', 'The Middle Way' or 'Butskellism'.<sup>9</sup> Part of this ideology, indeed at the very heart of it, was a commitment to the analysis of the economy contained in the work of John Maynard Keynes, who was interpreted as supporting a mixed economy of privately and publicly owned industry and the use of state intervention to guarantee near full employment. Throughout the 1950s, Conservative thinking was corporatist in character, there was much talk of partnerships between the powerful corporate bodies; the state, the employers and the trade unions. During the 1960s, however, a distinct neo-liberal wing emerged within the Conservative Party finally maturing at the beginning of the 1980s as that combination of ideas and policies known as 'Thatcherism'.

The main spokesman for the counter-revolutionary tendency in the Conservative Party in the 1960s and early 1970s was Enoch Powell. He held many of the central ideas which came to be known as Thatcherism;<sup>10</sup> including the need for monetary control, a limited role for the state, a belief in the privatisation of nationalised industries as well as some of the strongly nationalistic and traditionalist values of Margaret Thatcher.<sup>11</sup> As Young put it, '...a good many of Powell's preoccupations, which then seemed to be those of an almost lone fanatic, were to float into the mainstream of the Thatcher age.'<sup>12</sup> Further evidence of the burgeoning, if still marginalised, neo-liberal wing of the Conservative Party was provided by the publication of the Black Papers on education by, among others, Caroline Cox, Max

Beloff and Kingsley Amis.<sup>13</sup> These publications contained a polemical critique of the left-liberal consensus on education policy. As Cockett explains, this was part of a new 'anti-collectivist radicalism' which was clearly visible by 1970.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, some of the new thinking had had a modest influence on the party leader, Edward Heath. In June 1970, the Conservatives, with this new right-wing agenda, won the general election and began an anti-corporatist programme by dismantling the interventionist Industrial Reorganisation Corporation and the Prices and Incomes Board.<sup>15</sup> The term 'lame duck' industries entered the vocabulary and these unsuccessful enterprises were to be allowed to fail without government intervention.

What happened to the Heath government and in particular how policy reversals stimulated the rise of radical, new thinking in the Conservative Party and how *Analysis* responded to these changes is the subject of Chapter 8.

### **Research aims**

From the outset, this research has had a principal aim and a series of subsidiary research questions which have guided data collection and the structure of the thesis. The aim is to provide an historical account of the genesis, specificity and evolution of BBC Radio 4's *Analysis* from 1970 to 1983 with reference to the programme's coverage of selected major national and international current affairs issues. From this aim springs a number of questions. What coverage of current affairs existed prior to *Analysis* and how did this heritage influence the programme? Why, specifically, was the programme created when it was? Who created *Analysis* and what brought them together? What version of current affairs did *Analysis* represent? How did the programme develop in terms of form and use of broadcast talk? How did *Analysis* cover major national and international issues?

It is hoped that the attempt to answer these questions will be a contribution to knowledge about broadcasting which will help to fill gaps in existing scholarship. There is a paucity of research in Media and Cultural studies and a neglect of radio history, especially in the period after the arrival of television. Much has been made of the marginalisation of radio in Media and Cultural studies.<sup>16</sup> Although pre-television radio has received attention<sup>17</sup> the shadow of historical neglect seems to

fall over radio, as Hilmes has observed, in the post-television<sup>18</sup> era. The 1930s is widely seen as radio's 'golden age' and has been the subject of some of the most important recent research<sup>19</sup> but later radio output has been less well served. It is hoped that this research will go some way to redress that imbalance by concentrating on radio in the television age.

There are similarities and differences between this radio history and the work of Briggs<sup>20</sup> and Scannell and Cardiff.<sup>21</sup> It would not be an unreasonable generalisation to claim that Briggs's history (referred to extensively in this thesis)<sup>22</sup> is largely a chronological narrative which explores cause and effect relations. To take an example, in his account of the controversial policy document, *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, Briggs takes the reader through the sequence of events from working party to publication, public reaction, the response of the BBC and finally a conclusion which leaves the last words to Lord Hill, Chairman of the Governors.<sup>23</sup> Scannell and Cardiff on the other hand are much more thematic in approach. Their book is divided into parts (for example 'Broadcasting and Politics'; 'Broadcasting and its Audiences') which are not in themselves chronologically ordered. Both histories, however, contain detailed accounts of the contributions of named individuals to the BBC, an entirely justified personalisation given the nature of the organisation.

This thesis is about *Analysis*, but also about the broader field of the history of current affairs radio. Radio History is part of Broadcasting History which can either be located in the discipline of History itself (as in the work of the historian, Asa Briggs<sup>24</sup>) or is perhaps a sub-field of Media Studies (Scannell and Cardiff;<sup>25</sup> Hilmes<sup>26</sup>). Where examples of Broadcasting History do emanate from the newer discipline they refer, as this work does, to some of the theoretical concerns of Media and Cultural studies. It could also be argued that examples of Broadcasting History with closer links to Media and Cultural studies tend to pay more attention to examples of programme output (or 'the text') than more mainstream historical accounts. Scannell and Cardiff, for example, describe and discuss named BBC radio programmes from the 1930s in some detail. Despite the almost complete absence of recorded programmes, their discussion of radio talks is based on critical

examination of programmes like *Men Talking*.<sup>27</sup> Briggs, on the other hand, tends to focus more on the institution of the BBC. Jacobs cites Buscombe's critical review of Briggs's fourth volume with its emphasis on internal memoranda at the expense of 'the actual content of the programmes themselves.' Jacobs goes on to say, 'For Buscombe, writing in 1980, the 'complete' history of broadcasting remains to be written, and it would be one where the programmes and the programme-makers are privileged.'<sup>28</sup> Buscombe's espousal of 'complete' history is surely naïve but this thesis does take his textual concern one step further by focussing on *one* radio programme.

The thesis here contains some of the elements of these slightly differing approaches to the writing of history. The account of the history of current affairs radio from the 1930s to the birth of *Analysis* and its first 13 years is, like Briggs,<sup>29</sup> chronological. In this study there is an emphasis on causal links between events as they contributed to the evolution of current affairs radio: from topical talks in the 1930s to the talks magazine in the 1950s and on to the single subject *Analysis* in the 1970s. As in the work of Briggs and Scannell and Cardiff, the importance of key individuals (who had such a significant impact on current affairs and therefore on *Analysis*) is explored. The relationship, however, between this history and theoretical concepts and themes is more pronounced here than in earlier work. In the discussion of professionalism, for example, there is an excursion into the sociology of professions which undoubtedly sheds light on developments in the 1950s and 1960s.

Histories of broadcasting generally give priority to descriptive detail, causal relationships, chronological developments and an explanatory framework which places the actions of individuals in a wider social, cultural and institutional context.<sup>30</sup> It is the objective here to adhere to these priorities and to present a case study<sup>31</sup> of *Analysis* from 1970 – 1983 placed within the broader historical context of the history of current affairs radio on the BBC from 1928. In this thesis priority is given to the views of broadcasters themselves, as expressed in interviews, in internal documents written at the time or in published reminiscences of careers in the BBC. This is not to say that structuralist and more theoretically explicit accounts of broadcasting history are invalid. Clearly there is a direct link between this account and writing, for example, on the ideological nature of the media or the role of the media in the

formation of the public sphere. This thesis, however, aims to be a ‘bottom up’ account in which there is a particular sensitivity to the values, aspirations and rationalisations of the individuals involved in making *Analysis* (in particular). This reflects the priorities and choices of the author rather than being a statement about how history should be done. The omission, for example, of the concept of the ‘public sphere’ is not because it has no place in a history of BBC current affairs radio but rather that for *this* thesis it would not sit comfortably in an account where critical discussion of empirical events and the views of the main actors at the time is the priority. The most influential histories of broadcasting used for this research (by Briggs,<sup>32</sup> Scannell and Cardiff<sup>33</sup> and Nicholas<sup>34</sup>) all eschew explicit theory of this kind in favour of the priorities already mentioned and their example is followed here. That having been said, future work on the public sphere in Britain in the 1970s could profitably draw on the account provided in this thesis.

There are some moments in the chapters which follow where it has been necessary to stand back and reflect on the precise meaning of terms such as professionalism and bias. Where this occurs there is an emphasis on the way these terms were understood at the time rather than trying to impose alien theory. As discussed more fully in Chapter 3 the concept of bias is understood as far as possible using the ideas within the BBC (especially from the 1950s to the 1980s) about ‘impartiality’ – a distinctive internal concept which was widely debated throughout this period. It is acknowledged that BBC staff often had sophisticated views of the issues concerning bias and these are acknowledged and reported here. Similarly the discussion of professionalism relies partly on what the term meant to BBC staff and in particular the curiously specific articulation of it which is referred to in this thesis as ‘calibre’. This sensitivity to the views and rationalisations of BBC staff is not of course an excuse for an uncritical acceptance of those views, far from it (as Chapter 8 on *Analysis* and Thatcherism will show) but, as in some of the most successful writing on the history of the BBC, seeing events through the eyes of participants can be particularly rewarding.

An obvious omission in this account of current affairs radio is the audience. The detailed attention to production and the programme themselves was achieved at the cost of excluding the listener from the research. This would not be the first example

of Broadcasting History to omit the audience. Both Lindley<sup>35</sup> and Paul Donovan,<sup>36</sup> make only passing comments about audiences and the same is true for Briggs.<sup>37</sup> Anything claiming to be the definitive history of *Analysis*, however, would certainly have to include audience research.

Perhaps the most original feature of this research is the simple fact that *Analysis* has never been written about before. This is despite of its considerable prominence as a current affairs series with an eminent cast of contributors and presented by the leading current affairs broadcasters of the day. In addition, it has great significance for an understanding of ideas of impartiality and professionalism in the BBC. It also adds to our understanding of the nature and evolution of current affairs and the influence of informal networks on programme output.

### **Thesis structure**

Following this chapter is a Methodology (Chapter 2) and an introduction to some conceptual themes (Chapter 3) and then five chapters which constitute the body of the thesis. Chapter 4, 'A selective history of current affairs radio, 1927 – 1960' provides the necessary background to understand the talks tradition from which *Analysis* emerged including the influential 1950s current affairs magazine, *At Home and Abroad*. It also attempts to develop some understanding of cultural elitism as it impacted on the early BBC and looks at the ambivalent relationship at the time between the BBC and those in positions of power and influence. It is 'selective' in the sense that only those examples and issues of relevance to *Analysis* have been chosen. Chapter 5, 'The birth of *Analysis*: 1960-1970' describes the years prior to the creation of the programme and the twin developments in the BBC which contributed to its birth: the rise of professionalism and the expansion of journalistic current affairs which so irked the creators of *Analysis* and contributed to its creation. Chapter 6, '*Analysis*, 1970 – 1983' is the most descriptive chapter and examines the evolution of the programme in terms of format, use of language, topic agendas, selection of contributors and, in particular, the contribution of the two main presenters, Ian McIntyre and Mary Goldring. Chapter 7, '*Analysis* in Africa' is a case study of the way the programme dealt with one international issue over a period of time. Chapter 8, '*Analysis* and the rise of Thatcherism' considers the way the BBC's flag-ship current affairs programme covered the political revolution which

culminated in the election of the first Thatcher government in 1979. It includes an account of the rise of neo-liberalism (and related philosophies) in the Conservative Party and examines in some detail selected editions of *Analysis* from the mid-1970s. Finally, the Conclusion assesses how this research has contributed to our understanding of a neglected area and to what extent it challenges existing scholarship. It will also state the theoretical implications of the research, especially as they relate to professionalism and impartiality in BBC radio's political coverage.

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<sup>1</sup> The weekly BBC television current affairs series first broadcast in 1953.

<sup>2</sup> A term widely used by the programme's semi-official historian see Richard Lindley, *Panorama: Fifty Years of Pride and Paranoia* (London: Politico's, 2002), 36.

<sup>3</sup> The term 'post-television' refers here to the period since television became the dominant broadcasting medium.

<sup>4</sup> The names of individuals who worked for the BBC appear throughout the thesis. For brief explanations of who they are see the Glossary.

<sup>5</sup> A term used by Lindley to refer to the most eminent current affairs broadcasters on *Panorama* (Lindley, *Panorama*).

<sup>6</sup> Josephine Dolan, "The voice that cannot be heard: radio/broadcasting and 'the archive' " in *The Radio Journal* (Bristol: Intellect) Volume 1 Number 1, 2003, 65.

<sup>7</sup> Radio Talks were a staple of the BBC radio schedule till the 1960s. They were scripted and presented by contributors who were not BBC staff. See Chapter 4 for fuller discussion of the Talk.

<sup>8</sup> David May, *Good Talk: An Anthology from BBC Radio* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1968); *Good Talk 2* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1969).

<sup>9</sup> Shirley Robin Letwin, *An Anatomy of Thatcherism* (London: Fontana, 1992), 69. The term 'Butskellism' refers to the consensual nature of British politics in the post-war period, R.A. Butler was a senior Conservative and Hugh Gaitskell, leader of the Labour Party.

<sup>10</sup> A theme developed in Maurice Cowling, 'The Sources of the New Right', *Encounter*, November 1989, 7.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Ritchie (ed) *Enoch Powell: A Nation or no Nation? Six Years in British Politics* (London: Batsford, 1978); Roy Lewis, *Enoch Powell: Principle in Politics* (London: Cassell, 1979).

<sup>12</sup> Hugo Young, *One of Us* (London: Macmillan, 1991), 60.

<sup>13</sup> Cowling, 7.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Cockett, *Thinking the Unthinkable: Think-tanks and the economic counter-revolution 1931-1983* (London: Harper Collins, 1994), 177.

<sup>15</sup> Hugo Young, *One of Us* (London: MacMillan, 1991), 74.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Lewis, "Introduction to British Radio Studies" in *Journal of Radio Studies*, Vol 7, No.1, 2000.

<sup>17</sup> For example, Paddy Scannell and David Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting, Volume 1 1922-1939*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991).

<sup>18</sup> Michele Hilmes, 'Rethinking Radio,' in *Radio Reader: Essays in the cultural history of radio*. (New York: Routledge, 2002).

<sup>19</sup> For example, Kate Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio and the Public Sphere, 1923-1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); Sean Street, *Crossing the Ether: Public Service Radio and Commercial Competition in Britain* (Poole: Bournemouth University, 2003) unpublished thesis.

<sup>20</sup> Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press). Volume I, *The Birth of Broadcasting*, 1961; Volume II, *The Golden Age of Wireless*, 1965; Volume III, *The War of Words*, 1970; Volume IV, *Sound and Vision*, 1979; Volume V, *Competition, 1955-1974*, 1995.

<sup>21</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, 1991.

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- <sup>22</sup> The historical detail provided by Briggs has been invaluable and in particular his accounts of Talks Department in the 1930s and post-war and his lengthy discussion of the *Broadcasting In The Seventies*' crisis (see above).
- <sup>23</sup> Briggs, *Vol V*, 719 – 810.
- <sup>24</sup> Briggs *Vol I – V*.
- <sup>25</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*.
- <sup>26</sup> Hilmes, 'Rethinking Radio.'
- <sup>27</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, 153 – 178.
- <sup>28</sup> Jason Jacobs, *The Intimate Screen: Early British Television Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 9.
- <sup>29</sup> For example, Briggs, *Vol V*.
- <sup>30</sup> Exemplified by the work of Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*.
- <sup>31</sup> See John Corner's advocacy of this approach described in Chapter 2.
- <sup>32</sup> Briggs, *Vol I -V*
- <sup>33</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*.
- <sup>34</sup> Sian Nicholas, *The Echo of War: Home Front Propaganda and the Wartime BBC, 1939-45*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996.
- <sup>35</sup> Lindley, *Panorama*.
- <sup>36</sup> Paul Donovan, *All our Todays: Forty Years of Radio 4's 'Today' Programme* (London: Arrow Books, 1998).
- <sup>37</sup> For example, Briggs, *Vol. V*.

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## 2. METHODOLOGY

The aim of this chapter is to articulate the research methodology employed and to reflect on the broader issue of how to do broadcasting history. The unique problems of this field of study have been discussed by different writers who have tended to focus on what Halloran calls the 'complexity of the subject.'<sup>1</sup> Corner refers both to the 'multi-faceted object of study'<sup>2</sup> and the 'multifarious nature of television'<sup>3</sup> in his commentary on television history. A similar theme is found in Dahl's discussion of more general 'media history.'<sup>4</sup>

Corner usefully lists five aspects of television which might be found in a television history (and the same would apply to radio history). These are worth repeating as they have influenced the approach used here: the institutional context (which in this case is the BBC); the professional work of individuals; study of the text in terms of representation and form; the cultural and political context and finally television as technology. This research into the history of radio looks at all five aspects<sup>5</sup> but gives greater prominence to the radio texts themselves and less to the institution of the BBC. As the narrative and explanatory writing moves here from text to wider context and from the institution of the BBC to the specific practices, values and networks of individuals it is given coherence by being primarily concerned with one programme, BBC Radio 4's *Analysis*. As Corner says: 'One important way of getting across both the elements of historical change and of historical context, producing a more comprehensive yet dynamic sense of past conjunctures, is the 'case study'.<sup>6</sup> As discussed in the Introduction the decision to focus on one current affairs series was partly due to the availability of programme tapes but it is hoped that the result of this radically selective approach has produced a depth of empirical detail combined with much broader historical context.

There are very different perceptions in works of published and unpublished broadcasting history of the need to discuss and justify the methodological approach.

Briggs<sup>7</sup> and Nicholas<sup>8</sup> for example are happy to list their sources briefly and present them as unproblematic. They are both heavily reliant on the BBC Written Archive at Caversham, a source which surely needs some critical reflection but that is not to be found in their work. There are many other examples of broadcasting history with little in the way of an explicit methodology. The American radio historian, Susan Douglas is rather terse in her account of her research into the history of radio listening in the USA.<sup>9</sup> Her three main sources were the press (including industry journals), interviews with radio practitioners and other industry figures and some highly selective listening. A recent British television history, Richard Lindley's examination of the BBC current affairs series, *Panorama*<sup>10</sup> was written by a former reporter and presenter and so he was able to use his own memories in addition to the BBC files, BBC oral histories<sup>11</sup> and extensive use of press reviews. He does not consider any of these sources as problematic.

The research presented here is more methodologically self-conscious than the examples cited. There are two reasons for this more explicit approach. Firstly, there are interesting and important problems associated with the use of different research methods in broadcasting history. These deserve some consideration in order to justify the conclusions reached and in order to sound notes of caution. For example the official and selective nature of the written archives and the validity of interviews with former producers. Secondly, as broadcasting history is still in its early stages there is surely some justification for attempting to articulate an appropriate methodology. The recent improvements in access to broadcasting archives<sup>12</sup> has added to the need for discussion about the range of sources and methods in broadcasting history and it is hoped that this statement will contribute something towards that end. In particular, the ability to transfer archived reel-to-reel audio tape to digital formats has raised the prospect of huge programme collections becoming available. How these should be approached in academic research is becoming an increasingly pressing question.

A review of existing broadcasting histories reveals the way that the precise subject of the research influences the use of methods and the existence and accessibility of programme and archive material. Jacobs, for example, studied the aesthetics and style of television drama from 1936 – 1955.<sup>13</sup> There are virtually no recorded

examples of television drama from this period. As a result his main source of information was the BBC written archive where he found detailed programme information including studio plans, camera scripts, schedules and other information which enabled him to attempt to reconstruct the style and aesthetic of early television drama. This contrasts with Catherine Johnson's study of the representation of the 'fantastic' in television drama from the late 1950s.<sup>14</sup> Unlike Jacobs, Johnson had access to recorded programmes and these are the main source of research based on detailed textual analysis. She notes that her decision not to use interviews or observation is because she is not directly concerned with the process of production.<sup>15</sup> A doctoral student of Briggs, Sian Nicholas made extensive use of the BBC Written Archive. She was particularly interested in issues of audience and reception and used the BBC's Listener Research reports as well as the Mass Observation archive.<sup>16</sup> From these examples it would appear that in this field of research the subject and the availability of sources will to an extent determine the research methods chosen. In the case of this research into current affairs radio the full range of programme archives, some written archive material and interviews with presenters and producers were all used.

A wide range of sources is also found in Paul Donovan's history of the *Today* programme.<sup>17</sup> Donovan, however, is a journalist and radio reviewer who acknowledges that his is an 'authorised' (but not 'official')<sup>18</sup> history of the eminent current affairs programme. He paid for unrestricted access to written and sound archives and also interviewed twenty senior staff. The draft of his book was checked for accuracy by the editor of *Today* at the time. Similarly Richard Lindley's account of the first fifty years of *Panorama* was authorised in the sense that he had privileged access to the BBC Written Archive post-1979.<sup>19</sup> Lindley also used interviews with former staff, many of whom were known to him personally. Lindley and Donovan's accounts of current affairs programmes are clearly very important for this research. They both chose to write about individual BBC current affairs series drawing on a variety of sources. There are both similarities and differences between this research and theirs. The research here is an academic treatise and so is influenced by the limited body of academic literature. Theoretical and methodological themes are inevitably more prominent here. At the same time all three discussions tend to gravitate towards individuals and their contribution to programme making. Because

*Today*, *Panorama* and *Analysis* were all presenter-led current affairs programmes each of the accounts pay particular attention to the respective presenters. It is also true that individual members of BBC production staff were in each case hugely influential in the creation and fashioning of these series: Grace Wyndham Goldie in the case of *Panorama*, Stephen Bonarjee and Janet Quigley for *Today* and George Fischer in the case of *Analysis*.

Many of the major accounts of the BBC's history are to a degree authorised. Briggs's history would not have been possible without easy access to the BBC's written archives. Donovan and Lindley's access to files, programmes and people was necessary to chart the development of *Today* and *Panorama* but while Donovan's admiration and affection for the radio series is very evident, Lindley concludes on a much more critical note in his comments on the decision to move *Panorama* in the schedule:

To hide a programme away, sending *Panorama* to skulk out late on a Saturday night, suggests that the BBC, while afraid to kill it off, is prepared to let *Panorama* just wither away.<sup>20</sup>

The degree to which authorisation affects the critical edge of historical accounts of the corporation is a difficult question and beyond the scope of this methodological statement but it is worthy of some further comment. This study of *Analysis* was only made possible by the donation to Bournemouth University of all the Listening Copies of past programmes held in the *Analysis* office at Broadcasting House together with transcripts, a donation necessitated by their move to new offices outside central London. The Editor of *Analysis* at the time (and at the time of writing but not in the research period, 1970 – 1983), Nicola Meyrick, made this donation and has continued to support the research.<sup>21</sup> BBC Written Archive staff have advised on possible sources of information and some existing as well as former members of BBC staff have been interviewed and, so far as it possible to tell, spoken freely about the BBC and *Analysis*. This thesis is an attempt at an objective and critical history and it hoped that the access provided did not compromise academic rigour.

Turning now to the detail of the research methods used in this study these reflect an attempt to understand the totality of this specific example of radio production.

Halloran provides a useful checklist: “Intentions, aims, purposes, policies, organisational frameworks, modes of operation, professional values, funding, general circumscriptions, external pressures and ideological considerations all need to be taken into account.”<sup>22</sup> To answer so many different research questions in an area where there is almost no available literature requires a methodological pluralism which has been employed here. Having said that, this is an archive-based project and audio and written archives form the empirical foundation of this inquiry. In this section I will discuss the different sources of information available and how these were researched.

### Sources of Information

The academic literature is discussed at different points throughout the thesis but it should be acknowledged here that the discussion of the pre-1970 era in particular draws heavily on academic literature. In addition, memoirs written by former BBC staff including R.S.Lambert,<sup>23</sup> D.G.Bridson,<sup>24</sup> Ian Trethowan,<sup>25</sup> Robin Day,<sup>26</sup> and Gerald Priestland, are widely used.<sup>27</sup> These sources are all filtered accounts of careers in which an understandable desire to self justify is common. Robin Day’s reminiscences of his brief career as a BBC Radio Talks producer gives the strong impression that he alone conceived of the *Today* programme. In Bridson’s book it is sometimes hard to penetrate the sense of nostalgia for the past and dissatisfaction with the present (and outright despair for the future heralded by *Broadcasting in the Seventies*). Gerald Priestland’s biography contains an actual reference to *Analysis* (almost unique in similar biographies) and one which refers directly to the infamous interview with Margaret Thatcher.<sup>28</sup> Priestland acknowledges the failure of the interview but sadly this is all too brief amidst the string of anecdotes which are typical of BBC biographies.

In the period 1970 – 1983 which this thesis covers, there were 376 editions of *Analysis*. The archive of Listening Copies used for this research contains 188 programmes for that period. The same archive has all of the transcripts from 1970 – 1990. A strategy was adopted for selecting programmes for study and this was facilitated by the creation of *Analysis Online*, a database which includes detailed information about each edition of *Analysis* from 1970 – 1990.<sup>29</sup> The database made it possible to search by the name of key presenters, to search for different subjects of

programmes, to search for contributors and in different years. This thesis refers directly to 34 editions which have been selected to illustrate the main arguments of the thesis. This selection began with a 'random'<sup>30</sup> sample of sixty editions from 1970 – 1990: three editions chosen from each year, each one taken from the beginning of the three broadcasting episodes in Spring, summer and autumn. One major advantage of starting with a random approach is to incorporate 'deviant' examples in the research, in other words to pay attention to the diversity of editions and not only those which happen to support the thesis.

Each programme was reviewed and the structured reviews included comments on programme context, content (a brief summary), format (for example 'studio discussion' or 'interview'), names of participants, the nature of the discussion, points of reference (assumed knowledge on the part of the listener), language (for example use of irony, rhetoric and vocabulary) followed by a longer general critical comment.<sup>31</sup> The reviews were carried out by the author and his co-researcher, Gareth Thomas. Where reviews by the co-researcher are used this is clearly indicated in the reference. Details of selected programmes and reviews available on 'Analysis Online' are in appendix C together with an example of a review. In subsequent research if an edition had been reviewed it was more likely to be used as evidence. Similarly, if an edition had been discussed at the Radio Weekly Programme Review Board it was also given priority. Other criteria were also used in the selection of programmes for research. As the main presenters of *Analysis* between 1970 and 1983, editions by Ian McIntyre and Mary Goldring feature prominently here. The separate considerations of coverage of Africa and of the rise of Thatcherism is partly based on appropriate editions relevant to those themes; in the latter case some of the editions presented by John Vaizey and Lauren Martin are discussed.

There is a danger in this selective approach to archives that only those editions which support the thesis are examined. Some examples, however, which appear to deviate from the norm are discussed and in particular Ian McIntyre's strongly anti-apartheid 'Against the Stream'<sup>32</sup> and Mary Goldring's condemnation of unemployment in 'The Lost Generation'.<sup>33</sup> It could also be argued that the presenter, Gerald

Priestland, was politically very atypical of *Analysis* presenters and his work on the programme does feature here.

*Analysis* is a programme which can be studied by either listening to tape recordings or reading transcripts but the latter has been the main technique used here. Use of ‘actuality’<sup>34</sup> is almost nonexistent in the period in question so apart from accent, intonation and the very rare raising of voices there was not a great deal to be gained from the tapes themselves. Much of this research, therefore, is based on the reading of transcripts which in addition to the words spoken include names of contributors, the presenter and the producer.

Official and semi-official publications are another indirectly useful source. Asa Briggs made extensive use of the *BBC Handbooks*, the annual official BBC publication (from 1928 – 1987).<sup>35</sup> There can be no doubt that they provide a useful starting point for the researcher and the pre-war editions are particularly helpful. For the purposes of this research the Handbooks are a little too brief on the subject of current affairs radio to be very important. However, they reflect the views of the governors and Board of Management of the BBC and as such do give an important legitimacy to the opinion that *Analysis* was a ‘flagship’ programme with a distinctive ‘leisurely’ style. *Radio Times* is another useful source and the brief programme descriptions for *Analysis* published each week appear on *Analysis Online* and were a useful research tool. *Radio Times* also carried some important articles, especially Anthony Whitby’s statement of 12<sup>th</sup> March 1970 in which he outlined the nature of the new series as ‘tough’ and likely to get a ‘low audience figure’.

For broadcasting historians, the BBC’s Written Archive at Caversham has been one of the main sources of empirical evidence about the corporation as it has been for this research. Asa Briggs’ history of broadcasting uses few other sources. Equally, Scannell and Cardiff’s history is heavily reliant on the minutes and memoranda which are the main constituents of the archive.<sup>36</sup> To read the often very detailed memoranda sent between senior BBC staff and the equally detailed minutes of the more important meetings is almost essential for the broadcasting historian. They provide important if limited accounts of the views and values of BBC staff as they were expressed at the time.

In his review of the fourth volume of Briggs five volume history, Buscombe questions the reliance on the written archive:

...[Briggs assumes that] what the BBC does is largely to be discovered through an examination of internal records. By far the greater part of Briggs's story is told through the evidence of BBC memoranda, published policy statements, letters, speeches and so on.<sup>37</sup>

For Buscombe this has produced a top-down institutional history which lacks acknowledgement of micro and informal activity. Jacobs, however, sensibly points out that it is not necessarily a question of 'either or'. Institutionally focussed histories are needed as well as 'the more local specific analysis of particular genres and their production practices.'<sup>38</sup>

It is not surprising that broadcasting historians have been so reliant on the BBC's Written Archive, but that is not to say that written archives are without problems, of which selectivity is one of the most serious. In the case of this research there is a wealth of material at the written archive on current affairs radio in the 1950s and the discussion of the 1950s in Chapter 4 is almost exclusively based on those sources. There are, for example, detailed and highly informative memoranda from John Green (Chief Assistant Talks Radio) to Mary Somerville (Controller Talks Radio) which reveal a lot about the perceived problems of 'topical talks' at the time. Similarly there are a number of memoranda written by Stephen Bonarjee, the Talks Producer who led both *At Home and Abroad* and *Today*. But in the case of *Analysis* the record is woefully inadequate. Programme Files<sup>39</sup> number less than ten and minutes of meetings to discuss *Analysis* are very brief. The minutes of the Radio Weekly Radio Programme Review Boards, however, are extremely useful and provide real insight into prevailing opinions about what constitutes good radio. At times the discussion explores issues which are central to this research and also deserve wider consideration. The minutes of the Programme Review Board for 15th December 1971 for example (see Appendix A) record a disagreement between senior radio staff about political bias and the role of presenters. The exchange reveals very different views about the role of presenters in editorialising, the varying status of presenters, the difference in the status of 'newsmen' and current affairs broadcasters and questions of bias. Programme Review Boards quite frequently

discussed editions of *Analysis*, emphasising its importance. The combination of praise (for example for programmes seen as expertly presented or dealing with an important issue well) and criticism (for an unsuccessful interview or a programme which it was felt did not contribute to the debate on an issue) helps to interpret the ‘broadcasting values’ of BBC staff at the time.

In addition to the BBC Written Archive the Centre for Policy Studies papers and the Richard Cockett papers<sup>40</sup> held at the LSE library were examined as part of research into the emergence of Thatcherism

Finally, face-to-face interviews were carried out with the following producers and presenter;

Greville Havenhand	Producer and Series Editor, <i>Analysis</i> .
Roland Challis	Producer <i>Analysis</i>
Tom Read	Producer <i>Analysis</i>
Michael Green	Producer <i>Analysis</i> (and Controller Radio 4)
Fraser Steele	Producer <i>Analysis</i>
George Fischer	Producer <i>Analysis</i> (and Head of Talks and Documentaries Radio)
Ian McIntyre	Presenter <i>Analysis</i> (and Controller Radio 4 and Radio 3)
Nicola Meyrick	Producer and Series Editor <i>Analysis</i> .
(See Glossary for further information)	

In addition, the author of *Thatcher's People* (1991) and former member of the Conservative Research Department, John Ranelagh was interviewed. The original transcript of David Hendy's<sup>41</sup> interview with Gerard Mansell (Chief of the Home Service, Controller Radio 4, Director of Programmes Radio and Deputy Director General) is cited here.

The selection of interview subjects was dictated by a number of different criteria. Fischer and McIntyre were central to the creation and development of *Analysis*. Other presenters from the 1970s were not available: Gerald Priestland, Robin Day

and John Vaizey have all died and Mary Goldring declined requests to be interviewed. Greville Havenhand, Roland Challis, Tom Read and Michael Green were all at some point during 1970 and 1983 working full-time on *Analysis*. Each one produced a significant number of editions of the programme. A complete history of the programme (similar to Lindley's account of *Panorama*<sup>42</sup>) would benefit from interviewing the remaining few producers and presenters from this era who were not interviewed but it is not considered likely by this researcher that they would provide significantly different evidence from their former colleagues. Steele and Meyrick were chosen to provide some recent perspectives on the programme and to help orient the researcher (a BBC outsider) to the subject.

The interviews were 'unstructured,' that is to say there was no list of questions but rather a series of prompts to encourage the interviewee (see Appendix D). The approach was to encourage reminiscences of the subject's career in the BBC and then memories of *Analysis* including their contribution, notable colleagues and programmes and perceptions of its nature and influence. The interviews were conducted with a colleague in most cases who was encouraged to follow up on answers as they felt appropriate. This technique helped maintain the momentum of interviews which sometimes lasted two hours. All the interviews<sup>43</sup> were recorded on audio tape and transcribed.

Interviews with former BBC staff are attractive to the broadcasting historian as they breathe life into the historical material. For this research, given the lack of written archives or published writing on the series, it was essential to ask former staff simple questions about the production process, for example, what the roles of presenter and producer were and how decisions were made about the choice of subjects and contributors. It was also useful to find out how individuals were recruited and where they came from in the BBC. This introductory stage of the interviews produced consistent responses and this suggests that these accounts are accurate. Similarly, questions about how *Analysis* was perceived and even its strengths and weaknesses produced consistent responses. Most interviewees thought that *Analysis* was a 'flagship' programme and that it was cerebral and aimed at informed listeners some of whom would have been opinion formers and decision makers. As already explained, the definition of 'current affairs' used in this research is derived from the

view held at the time by *Analysis* staff. As an insight into the workings of the *Analysis* office and the more important individuals who staffed the programme, the interviews were a unique and essential source of information. This technique is referred to as 'the biographical interpretive method' by Breckner and Rupp.<sup>44</sup> They comment on some of the difficulties inherent in this approach:

... different people tell different stories about the same reality – that is, events and circumstances they have shared – and their stories are modified within their narratives when recalling them in different thematic or time contexts.<sup>45</sup>

So different BBC staff will have different memories of their working lives and these will be influenced by their subsequent careers, "varied accounts should not be seen as unreliable but reflecting the selective nature of story telling and seen through the lens of subsequent experience."<sup>46</sup> It follows from this that where different interviewees agreed with each other or were supported by archive evidence this was significant. The general antipathy towards journalists and radio journalism, for example, was expressed dramatically by Ian McIntyre in his interview and this view was reflected in the interviews with George Fischer and Michael Green. Similarly, Tony Whitby's comments about the likelihood of a small audience for *Analysis* in the *Radio Times* were supported by Greville Havenhand's comments on his lack of interest in audience statistics; the official view was supported by the views of a producer working on the programme.

## Summary and Conclusion

This research has followed Corner's recommendation to use a case study while at the same time covering many of the aspects of radio which he suggests could be addressed in broadcasting history. Listening to parts of the archive and reading selected transcripts was the first step and was followed by interviews, written archive research and review of available literature and memoirs. What has emerged from this exercise inevitably reflects the individual choices and interpretations of the author but this chapter has attempted to make explicit how those choices and interpretations were made. A final methodological observation is that, unlike the many accounts of the BBC written by former BBC staff,<sup>47</sup> this was written by a BBC 'outsider' who had not even entered a BBC building prior to the research. It is of course hoped that what might be lost in the authority and intimate knowledge of an

‘insider’ account is compensated for by the greater disinterestedness of this outsider’s view. That having been said, there can be few researchers who devote years to the study of the BBC who do not develop a degree of affection and admiration for the often exceptional people who worked there.

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<sup>1</sup> James Halloran, ‘Mass Communication Research: Asking the Right Questions’ in Anders Hansen, Simon Cottle, Ralph Negrine and Chris Newbold, *Mass Communication Research Methods* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 18.

<sup>2</sup> John Corner, ‘Finding data, reading patterns, telling stories: issues in the historiography of television’, *Media, Culture and Society* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), Vol. 25, 273.

<sup>3</sup> Corner, 275.

<sup>4</sup> Hans Fredrik Dahl, ‘The pursuit of media history’, *Media, Culture and Society* (London: Sage Publications, 1994), Vol. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Given that this research began in 1998 and Corner’s article was only published in 2003 there is a surprising but happy connection between this research and his list. In particular his emphasis on professional culture and political context are both prominent features of this thesis.

<sup>6</sup> Corner, 278.

<sup>7</sup> For example, Briggs, *Vol V*.

<sup>8</sup> Sian Nicholas, *The Echo of War: Home Front Propaganda and the Wartime BBC, 1939-45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996).

<sup>9</sup> Douglas, 1999.

<sup>10</sup> Lindley, 2002.

<sup>11</sup> The BBC conducts ‘oral history’ interviews with selected senior BBC staff on retirement. These are not generally available to outside researchers.

<sup>12</sup> Bournemouth University has archive projects on BBC Radio 4’s *Analysis*, the Independent Local Radio Program Sharing Archive and the IRN/LBC archive among others.

<sup>13</sup> Jacobs, 2000.

<sup>14</sup> Catherine Johnson, *Histories of Telefantasy: The Representation of the Fantastic and the Aesthetics of Television* (University of Warwick, unpublished PhD thesis, 2002).

<sup>15</sup> Johnson, 26.

<sup>16</sup> Sian Nicholas, *The Echo of War: Home Front Propaganda and the Wartime BBC, 1939-45*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996).

<sup>17</sup> Paul Donovan, *All our Todays: Forty Years of the Today Programme* (London: Arrow Books, 1998).

<sup>18</sup> Donovan, ix.

<sup>19</sup> At the time of writing files in the BBC WAC after 1979 are closed.

<sup>20</sup> Lindley, 380.

<sup>21</sup> For example by agreeing to be interviewed and by speaking at a conference on current affairs held at Bournemouth University in 2003.

<sup>22</sup> Halloran, 19.

<sup>23</sup> R.S.Lambert, *Ariel and His Quality* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1940).

<sup>24</sup> D.G. Bridson, *Prospero and Ariel* (London: Gollancz, 1972).

<sup>25</sup> Ian Trethowan, *Split Screen* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1984).

<sup>26</sup> Robin Day, *Grand Inquisitor* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989).

<sup>27</sup> Gerald Priestland, *Something Understood* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1986).

<sup>28</sup> Priestland, 249.

<sup>29</sup> For a detailed account of the construction and fields of the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB) funded *Analysis Online* see Chignell, Holland and McCain, ‘The Use of Online Databases in

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a University Broadcasting Archive: Case Studies in the Construction of Databases for BBC Radio 4's *Analysis* and ITV's *This Week*," in *Digital Evidence: Selected Papers from DRH200, Digital Resources for the Humanities Conference* (London: King's College, 2001). See also <http://analysis.bournemouth.ac.uk/analysisonline>

<sup>30</sup> Strictly speaking this is a 'quasi-random' sample and is what Moser and Kalton call a 'systematic sampling from lists'. (See Hansen, 241).

<sup>31</sup> Of the 60 editions, 20 were reviewed by the author and 40 by Gareth Thomas (Bournemouth Media School) working as a researcher funded by an Arts and Humanities Research Board grant.

<sup>32</sup> *Analysis*, 4 June 1971.

<sup>33</sup> *Analysis*, 2 February, 1983.

<sup>34</sup> A term to describe untreated sounds of the world outside the studio.

<sup>35</sup> See my own brief guide to this resource, Hugh Chignell, *BBC Handbooks, Accounts and Annual Reports(1927-2002)*, (Wakefield: Microform Academic Publishers, 2003).

<sup>36</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*.

<sup>37</sup> Ed Buscombe in Jason Jacobs, 8.

<sup>38</sup> Jacobs, 8.

<sup>39</sup> The better programme files in the archive include for one programme the relevant correspondence and memoranda, although radio files are never as detailed as those for television which often include shooting scripts and other technical information.

<sup>40</sup> Cockett donated his research notes for his book on right wing think tanks(*Thinking the Unthinkable*) to the LSE library.

<sup>41</sup> The author of the forthcoming history of Radio 4 (Oxford University Press).

<sup>42</sup> Lindley, *Panorama*.

<sup>43</sup> Except the interview with Nicola Meyrick.

<sup>44</sup> Roswitha Breckner and Susanne Rupp "Discovering biographies in changing social worlds: the biographical interpretive method," in *Biography and Social Exclusion in Europe*. Edited by M.Rustin and T. Wengraf Bristol: Policy Press, 2002, 289.

<sup>45</sup> Breckner and Rupp, 291.

<sup>46</sup> Breckner and Rupp, 291.

<sup>47</sup> For example, Lindley, *Panorama*; Wyndham Goldie, *Facing the Nation*.

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### 3.

## THEMES IN BBC HISTORY

The aim of this chapter is to review some of the conceptual themes to be found in histories of the BBC and in some relevant Sociology and Media Studies. Those themes are bias, professionalism and elitism. This is not a conventional 'literature review' of the sort to be found in Media and Cultural Studies theses which would not be appropriate for a history of radio. On the other hand so persistent are references to these themes in the literature that an early discussion of them is useful.

The academic literature on media bias is extensive and is a priority, for example, in American Mass Communications research<sup>1</sup> going as far back as the propaganda theory of Walter Lippmann.<sup>2</sup> More strident accusations of bias in the form of 'ideology' are to be found in British Media Studies and most notably in the work of the Glasgow University Media Group. In addition, discussions of 'impartiality' in the BBC are to be found throughout the writing of former members of staff. These accounts tend to deal with the practicalities of broadcasting and may be rather defensive in tone but mention of bias by Richard Lindley<sup>3</sup> and Grace Wyndham Goldie<sup>4</sup> is particularly interesting as these writers deal with the period in question (and in particular the 1960s and 1970s).

Relevant literature on professionalism includes sociological accounts of the rise of the professions in the era of modernity, broadcasting histories and memoirs. Both Elliott<sup>5</sup> and Larson<sup>6</sup> provide useful discussions of changes to the meaning of the word 'professional'. Burns, also a sociologist, studied the BBC itself in the 1960s and early 1970s and his work deals explicitly and in some detail with the rise of professionalism as does Briggs.<sup>7</sup> Once again the rather more candid comments about professionalism by Goldie and Lindley provide considerable insight into the specificity of that term as it was used at the time.

Some of the most interesting contributions to twentieth century British cultural history have focussed on the cultural elite. Work by Rose,<sup>8</sup> and Carey,<sup>9</sup> for example, vividly

describe the gulf between elite and popular culture and the social chasm between the cultural elite and the masses. This literature raises quite fundamental questions about the relationship between the Reithian BBC and the intelligentsia in the 1930s and also the extent to which cultural elitism influenced BBC radio output after the war.

## Bias

A review of the existing academic literature on the question of bias would be a monumental task. Whether or not media representations of politics are in some senses 'true' or objective can only be adequately addressed by examining the ideological nature of the media. A schematic account of theories of ideology from Marx to contemporary theorists would not be justified in an historical account of this kind. To do any kind of justice to the literature on bias and the wider, structural concept of ideology would detract from the historical case study and the chronological historical account of current affairs radio. Bias is, however, a central issue in this thesis and it will be necessary to devote space to an articulation of what bias and impartiality mean before assessing the case that *Analysis* was politically biased. The approach taken here is to make passing reference to some relatively recent writing on this subject (see immediately below) but also to provide a much fuller account of ideas about 'impartiality' (the term used in the BBC) as they existed at the time. As discussed in Chapter 1 rather than superimposing theoretical frameworks on this history, the ideas and conceptualisations of BBC staff themselves are introduced and this allows for an understanding of the issues and problems which is sensitive to the views of producers themselves. The question of bias was discussed and written about in the BBC from Reith onwards. It was a daily concern of producers and presenters of current affairs radio and any judgements of bias which follow (in particular in the penultimate chapter) fully acknowledge those arguments and rationalisations. Before, however, considering the different views of impartiality which existed in the BBC as they influenced the makers of *Analysis* some of the theoretical accounts of bias are worth reviewing.

McQuail provides a useful four-part typology of bias which includes 'partisan', 'propagandist', 'unwitting' and 'ideological' forms.<sup>10</sup> He defines ideological bias as something hidden and unintended. It can only be revealed by a close textual analysis and interpretation of words and judgements made by the presenter. This empirical

approach to ideology can be found in the work of the Glasgow University Media Group (GUMG)<sup>11</sup> who claim that the media is systematically biased in favour of powerful interest groups. In a series of studies examining trade unions, the economy and war, detailed content analysis was used to show how the techniques of news production (including the use of language and visual images) served the interests of the powerful. In their first two studies evidence is provided of repeated bias against industrial workers and their trade unions. In addition, the central role of unreasonable wage demands as a cause of inflation is emphasised and militant and irresponsible trade unionists contrasted with reasonable, rational employers. The work of the GUMG has been criticised, with some justification, for being too heavily influenced by the assumptions of the researchers themselves.<sup>12</sup> It also suffers from a lack of attention to the aims, values and attitudes of production staff.

Turning to the discussion of impartiality within the corporation itself this can be traced back to the early years of the BBC (originally the British Broadcasting Company), leading up to the establishment of the Corporation in January 1927, when the reporting of news was severely restricted at the behest of the Newspaper Proprietors Association.<sup>13</sup> Reuters supplied a half hour news bulletin and this could only be broadcast after 7pm. The main restriction which perturbed the BBC's first Director General, John Reith, was the government imposed ban on broadcasting anything 'controversial'. Scannell and Cardiff describe the persistence of Reith in his efforts to have the ban lifted.<sup>14</sup> His argument, even as far back as 1923, was to introduce balance: 'If on any controversial matter the opposing views were stated with equal emphasis and lucidity, then at least there can be no charge of bias.'<sup>15</sup> After some energetic lobbying from Reith the ban was eventually lifted in 1928 and the BBC's commitment to 'balance' or 'impartiality' became one of the core values of the corporation and this remains the case today, as Starkey reminds us:

The idea that impartiality is possible and a quality to be striven for runs throughout not only the BBC's own literature, but also the welter of technicist manuals which attempt to set the parameters within which journalists and broadcasters operate.<sup>16</sup>

Writing as a post-war current affairs producer, Wyndham Goldie commented on the obvious difficulties of maintaining impartiality, for example on the television current

affairs series, *Panorama*. Her young 'professional' producers were of course 'happy' and 'proud' to state their allegiance to the Reithian values of balance, but the problem of 'unconscious bias' remained.<sup>17</sup> In the choice of subjects and contributors, and in the shooting and editing of film, personal choices had to be made. Her solution was to try to employ a balance of what she called 'temperaments.'<sup>18</sup>

Lindley, an experienced BBC journalist, provides a useful BBC 'insiders' view of impartiality: 'Were those early *Panorama* pioneers right to tell us directly and clearly what they thought was the truth of the matter? Yes, for that is the essence of current affairs television...' <sup>19</sup> For Lindley, a very small group of presenters ('giants' in his words) had a right to be partial, to express their views, not only because that is what good current affairs is but also because of their personal qualities, because of their 'calibre'. Repeatedly, Lindley praises the outstanding qualities of the giants of early current affairs broadcasting in exactly the same terms as those used to commend the early *Analysis* presenters at the Radio Weekly Programme Review Boards. Robert Kee (who also presented *Analysis*) was 'highly intelligent and cultivated', <sup>20</sup> Jim Mossman was 'not just extraordinarily bright, but vastly experienced' or in the words of a colleague 'effortlessly brilliant'. Wyatt, Chataway, Kee, Mossman and Morgan 'were real giants'. <sup>21</sup> This useful equation of calibre with a licence to express personal opinions will be fully examined in the case of *Analysis* in the 1970s.

It is interesting to note that Lindley sees the right of great broadcasters to 'tell the truth', irrespective of the BBC's commitment to impartiality as the 'essence of current affairs'. This distinction is considered by Tracey who claims that there are two definitions of impartiality; for journalists (like Lindley) to be impartial is to search for the truth whereas for the institution (the BBC) impartiality refers to the need for an apparent balance in the cause of 'self-preservation.'<sup>22</sup> Tracey notes that these views of impartiality can conflict but tend not to where there is a consensus about the subject matter.

The views of Wyndham Goldie and Lindley about impartiality are broadly in line with those held by the Director General of the BBC in the 1970s (and so in the period of this research), Charles Curran. <sup>23</sup> Curran refers to the letter written by a former Chairman of the BBC, Lord Normanbrook in which he gave an undertaking to

ministers that the BBC would continue to treat “controversial subjects with due impartiality.”<sup>24</sup> Curran articulates particularly well the position of the BBC and the obvious difficulty it found itself in. The BBC had a duty to represent a wide range of points of view in a way which made the audience feel involved, and this had to be done in a balanced or impartial manner.<sup>25</sup> This range and balance is not achieved in any one programme:

I argue a general position, in the light of experience, that it is possible for a body like the BBC, engaged in a journalism about public affairs, to present a view of the world – or rather a series of views – which, in their totality, will be regarded by most people for most of the time, as reasonably balanced.<sup>26</sup>

Curran’s rather resigned pragmatism is a useful summary of the official position. There is clearly a big gap between the official BBC view of bias and that developed in critical academic writing. The report of the Committee on the Future of Broadcasting under Lord Annan also perceived some complacency in the official BBC position.<sup>27</sup> Current Affairs was more heavily criticised by Annan than other areas of broadcasting and the issues of impartiality fully discussed.<sup>28</sup> This extract is particularly telling:

We do not believe that there is in the programmes a *distinct and consistent* bias to either the left or the right of the political spectrum. In a few cases the personal political views of production staff seem to influence programme output. But the trouble seems to be more fundamental and to lie at the root of the way programmes are presented.<sup>29</sup>

Annan saw the role of the presenter as central to the problem of bias and the evidence presented below will focus on individual presenters and their representation of issues. Annan, however, saw professionalism and the need for further training as the *solution*. It could, however, be asked whether professionalism, equated with excellence or ‘calibre’, could be the *cause* of bias because it gave licence to individual presenters to use a current affairs programme as a soapbox.

The argument presented in this thesis will show the existence of bias using textual analysis and other quantitative evidence but will also take the views of programme makers and managers more seriously than, for example, the GUMG. There clearly are similarities at the level of *evidence* between their work from the 1970s and the findings presented here. *Analysis*, however, was not a news programme but a current affairs series and therefore licensed to express opinion. Much centres in the

discussion of impartiality which follows on the role of the presenter in current affairs. If it is the role of the presenter to anchor programmes and 'referee' competing opinions then, even if they have less responsibility to report objective facts, they still need to guarantee a certain amount of balance in the editions they present. Whether or not unintentional or ideological bias existed is considered as is the ongoing discussion within the BBC about impartiality.

The concept of bias is central to this thesis which includes a detailed explanation of the 'partial' coverage of the rise of Thatcherism in the 1970s by *Analysis*. It is acknowledged here that bias has been an important theme in Media Studies as well as an issue for debate and discussion within the BBC and by politicians and others who have been critical of the corporation. Although this is a subject where conclusions are difficult to reach, some statements can be made here which indicate the line of argument to follow. From the extensive 'agenda setting' research carried out in the USA from the 1960s<sup>30</sup> to the work of the Glasgow University Media Group from the 1970s the proposition that news can be the objective reporting of facts untainted by the choices, values and language of journalists has been convincingly challenged. Within the BBC, however, the goal of impartiality was accepted and defended, apparently uncritically, at least up to the early 1980s. A particular useful explanation of this is provided in Georgina Born's recent work on the BBC under the Director Generals, John Birt and Greg Dyke:

Whatever their status, the doctrines of objectivity and impartiality continue to operate as performative functions or 'strategic rituals' that bind the professional culture [of the BBC], providing ethical moorings and augmenting its credibility.<sup>31</sup>

The suggestion that the adherence to values of impartiality are 'ritualistic' and driven by the need for both credibility and internal solidarity is supported by the evidence which follows. The claims made repeatedly by BBC staff at the time and in interviews for this research supported the 'doctrines of objectivity and impartiality.' Born goes on to reveal a more sophisticated and relativist view of impartiality which emerged in the 1990s, for example on the current affairs programme, *Newsnight*<sup>32</sup>. Such relativism did not exist in the 1970s and it will be important in this thesis to judge the actions and coverage of *Analysis* at that time by the standards of the day.

## Professionalism

The sociology of professions is firmly rooted in the writing of two of the founders of the discipline, Durkheim and Weber. For Durkheim, the rise of professions was associated with the development of 'organic solidarity' at a time of industrialisation and the increasing division of labour.<sup>33</sup> For Weber, professionalisation coincided with the increasing bureaucratisation of society: in increasingly complex organisations, functions become more diverse and the ideology of professionalism is a form of bureaucratic control.<sup>34</sup> More recent accounts of professionalism and its historical growth are influenced by these two positions and contain important insights into a process which was particularly significant in the BBC at the time of the creation of *Analysis*.

The professional ideal which emerged in the nineteenth century reflected values of public service, liberal education and 'gentlemanly' qualities in opposition to industrial and commercial values.<sup>35</sup> The nineteenth century saw the rise of the medical and legal professions in Britain, often recruited from the public schools and Oxford and Cambridge Universities. According to Elliott, the professional ideal had three parts; public service, knowledge and autonomy in professional practice.<sup>36</sup> In this traditional, Victorian ideal, the professional title was clearly not an acknowledgement of any particular training, or even expert knowledge, but rather a "claim to social standing and recognition."<sup>37</sup> A similar point is made by Larson who also equates liberal, high status, education and traditional notions of professionalism.<sup>38</sup> The education of professionals "symbolised their claims on social status."<sup>39</sup> These observations are of critical importance in the case of BBC current affairs radio in the 1960s and 1970s. The view that a producer or presenter was a 'professional' had little to do with ideas of training, qualifications or specialist knowledge and a great deal to do with the traditional ideal in which high status education and belief in autonomy of practice and in public service were paramount. Larson proceeds to discuss the 'organisational professional' who holds a discrete role in a large bureaucratic organisation (city planner, hospital administrator) rather than a traditional non-bureaucratic role (doctor, lawyer).<sup>40</sup> She distinguishes between two 'categories of organisational professional.'<sup>41</sup> The first is generated by the needs of the organisation "to justify

technobureaucratic power.” The second is a feature of public service organisations: “The claim of expertise... represents a possibility of acquiring countervailing power vis-à-vis the bureaucratic hierarchy of the organisations within which they are contained.”<sup>42</sup> Again, this discussion bears directly on the case of *Analysis*. The BBC is clearly a good example of a bureaucracy and one in which both categories of professional could be found. Any detailed discussion of professionalism in the BBC will need to distinguish between different notions of organisational professional as suggested by Larson: professionalism as a means of control or as a statement of independence and autonomy.

The literature on professionalism in the BBC is mainly concerned with television but does contain some useful insights. There are differences in BBC radio and television in this area but the case of the television professional is instructive and little if anything has been written specifically about this theme in relation to radio. The early BBC is not normally associated with professionalism. On the contrary pre-war television, to take one example, was described by John Grierson as mere ‘amateur theatricals.’<sup>43</sup> Caughie refers to the celebration of disaster in early television, the ‘try-outs’, the ‘wizard prang’ (sic) and ‘an extension of church hall dramatics’.<sup>44</sup>

Briggs comments on the increasing emphasis on ‘professionalism’ in broadcasting circles during the 1950s.<sup>45</sup> He argues that the exchange of staff between the BBC and the new ITV<sup>46</sup> enhanced this process. The creation of competition in British television in the 1950s led to a huge expansion in staff. In the BBC, for example, there were around 880 people working exclusively in television in 1956, but by 1964 this had increased to 9,640.<sup>47</sup> As Turnock describes, broadcasting in the late 1950s was characterised not only by increased numbers but by the inevitable growth of career mobility and new bureaucratic hierarchies.<sup>48</sup> These developments were accompanied by the growth of staff training. There was a Head of Staff Training as early as 1949 and according to Briggs there was ‘an extremely active Staff Training and Appointments Department, dealing with staff at all levels’<sup>49</sup> in the 1950s. The recent histories of television in the 1950s and 1960s stress the installation of professionalism in British television in place of the earlier amateurism and link this (unsurprisingly) to organisational growth, training, competition, and American influence.<sup>50</sup> In the chapter on ‘The Birth of *Analysis*’ the specific case of the rise of

the professional radio current affairs broadcaster is examined. The need for skilled presenters, able to 'referee' the plurality of voices coming to the microphone added further impetus to the 'professionalisation' of current affairs radio, at least insofar as that was defined by expertise.

Probably the most thorough discussion of the rise of the broadcasting professional is provided by Burns.<sup>51</sup> He argues on the basis of interview research conducted in 1963 and 1973 that even by the earlier date the word 'professional' had achieved an extraordinarily wide currency. It had an 'almost talismanic quality.'<sup>52</sup> Drawing on American sociological writing he contrasts the meaning of the word when used to describe a doctor or lawyer and when it is applied in the BBC. In the former case it is their professional qualifications which earns them their status whereas in the case of broadcasting, 'professional' means possessing qualities of dedication, commitment and excellence *as defined by fellow professionals*.<sup>53</sup> A similar point is made by Elliott who suggests that advancement in media organisations tends not to be based on universalistic criteria (such as qualifications) but instead, "personal, particularistic criteria apply."<sup>54</sup> This suggests that the Weekly Programme Reviews Boards, at which radio professionals discussed broadcast output, are likely to be a useful means of research in this area. As Burns describes, professionalism is seen in media organisations as an attribute bestowed by peers and derived from "... the regard of the head of one's department, one's fellows and, most constantly and evidently, the studio staff with whom one works."<sup>55</sup> Gallagher sees professionalism as enhancing the role of peer groups:

...specialisation and professionalisation within media organisations have led to the growth of powerful professional reference groups – either formal or informal in organisations – which both protect individual producers and provide alternative definitions of success.<sup>56</sup>

At the heart of Burns' discussion of the rise of professionalism in the BBC is the bold claim that the ethos of professionalism had replaced the ethos of public service.<sup>57</sup> In the first few decades of the BBC, at least up to the mid 1950s and the advent of competition, the values of Reith were dominant. Broadcasting was seen as a means to an end, the improvement of the public through programme content and quality. For various reasons, including the growth in the size of the organisation mentioned above

and the competition for audiences with commercial television, Burns claims that functions in the corporation became increasingly specialised, training expanded and professionalism replaced the values of public service.<sup>58</sup>

There is much that is plausible in the account provided by Burns but in the specific case of *Analysis* his model of change is a bit too straightforward. As Elliott and Larson point out, the professional ideal in its *traditional* form was quite different from its more modern meaning. It was this traditional notion of the professional as recipient of a high status education, autonomous at work, 'gentlemanly' and motivated by a public service ethos which seemed to operate not only at *Analysis* but also in the case of *Panorama*. In most cases but not all, this traditional notion of professionalism in the BBC was applied to men reinforcing the masculine production culture. In the discussion of professionalism which follows in later chapters the term 'calibre' is used to differentiate between the more organisational or 'technobureaucratic' definition of professional used by Burns and the traditional ideal, here referred to as 'calibre,' still used by some in 1970s BBC radio. In addition, it is 'calibre' which Wyndham Goldie and later Lindley had in mind when they praised *Panorama* presenters and producers and the case of *Panorama* is worth examining here.

Grace Wyndham Goldie's account of her work as a current affairs producer is couched almost exclusively in terms of the rhetoric of professionalism, which she contrasts to the incompetence of BBC news.<sup>59</sup> What is striking about Goldie's own reflections (and the account of the same period provided by Lindley) is her use of the word 'professional'. One of her first decisions was to create a Current Affairs Unit in 1952 to which she recruited a small team of young producers. It is interesting that although they epitomised her sense of professionalism they were all untrained, on temporary contracts and none of her first three recruits were BBC staff. In what sense then were they 'professional'? In her own words, 'These very different men had one thing in common. They were all of unmistakable quality'.<sup>60</sup> Richard Dimbleby, the pre-eminent *Panorama* presenter was perceived as having qualities of character which earned him the title of 'consummate professional'.<sup>61</sup> The importance of this historically specific definition of professionalism, one which can be seen in the discussions about current affairs radio into the 1970s, is that it alerts us to the fact that

a professional was someone with qualities of intellect (although not always) and above all 'character'. It did not necessarily refer to training, qualifications or indeed being a member of BBC staff.

Furthermore, the accolade of professional was awarded from within the BBC and, as Burns observed, was grounded in some kind of moral order. Burns articulates the issue of 'licence' by using the writings of the American sociologist, Everett Hughes who saw professionalism as a mandate within a moral division of labour:

Professions ... more than other kinds of occupations, claim a legal, moral and intellectual mandate ... In such licences and mandates we have the prime manifestation of the moral division of labour; that is, of the processes by which differing moral functions are distributed among the members of society.<sup>62</sup>

The licence which 'calibre' gave to *Analysis* presenters (and on *Panorama*) was, as is the case with professional licence, to transgress normal boundaries, that is to say to use the powerful medium of broadcasting to express personal opinions. This can be equated with the autonomy of the traditional professional.

The world of the BBC professional was largely a masculine one, only 4 of the 32 key individuals in the Glossary are women. This state of affairs was surely reinforced by the discriminatory culture of the 1950s and 1960s but also by the conservatism of the BBC. Burns refers to the 'BBC type',<sup>63</sup> a public school, Oxbridge educated man with appropriate social and cultural attributes. The male producers and presenters referred to in this thesis were supported by male informal networks (as discussed in Chapters 5 and 9). There are, however, some important women in the history of BBC current affairs radio; Grace Wyndham Goldie is mentioned above and the examples of Hilda Matheson, Janet Quigley and Mary Goldring are all discussed in this thesis. These were most certainly not token contributions and in their different ways these women, despite the prevailing masculine culture, were all extremely influential and creative.

The professionalism debate is a complex one, especially as it relates to media organisations and specifically to the BBC. Distilling from the different viewpoints presented here it is the observation that the label 'professional' was intimately bound up with informal and formal approval of peers based on a traditional notion of the professional. Furthermore, referring back to the discussion of impartiality, those broadcasters perceived as in the top rank of professionals, in other words possessing

'calibre', were licensed to express personal opinions even when in the role of presenter of BBC radio's flag-ship current affairs programme.

Whether those who presented BBC Radio 4's flag ship current affairs programme, *Analysis* in the 1970s and early 1980s were given that privilege because of their perceived calibre, and also given considerable licence to express personally held views, will be crucial for the argument presented here.<sup>64</sup>

### Elitism

The terms 'elite' and 'elitism' are useful for a history of BBC radio. The second term is more problematic than the first and the relationship between the two also needs elaboration. Elites are social groups at the apex of a vertically stratified society. The best known theory of elites is that developed in the nineteenth century by Pareto who identified different types of elites and their 'circulation' in society.<sup>65</sup> The more difficult term, 'elitism' is used here to refer to the belief that high culture is superior to mass or popular culture. Pareto pointed out that high culture tends to be the culture of the elite and by its exclusiveness serves to reinforce their social position.<sup>66</sup> Whether or not high culture, which might include opera, ballet, classical music and selected literary forms and examples is solely the preserve of an intellectual or artistic elite is a moot point. For the purposes of the discussion of 1930s radio it is useful to distinguish between the exclusiveness of those who saw high culture as the preserve of the elite and for the most part inaccessible to the mass and, on the other hand, those in the more radical tradition of Matthew Arnold who saw the 'civilising' potential of culture.

Taking Arnold's views first, his opinion of the civilising quality of culture directly influenced Reith<sup>67</sup> and others in the early BBC (Hilda Matheson, the first Director of Talks, for example):

...[culture] seeks... to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere; to make all men live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light, where they may use ideas, as it uses them itself, freely – nourished and not bound by them.<sup>68</sup>

The early years of the BBC, certainly up to the Second World War, were influenced by a public service ethos which enshrined Arnold's elitist paternalism. Although the

focus of this thesis is mainly on the 'topical talk' (the precursor to what we now call current affairs), the educational talk, championed by Matheson, fully expressed Reith's wish to improve the mass audience by introducing listeners to high culture. Reith's elitism, inspired as it was by Arnold's belief in the need to spread the 'sweetness and light' of culture to all classes so that "the whole of society is in the fullest measure permeated by thought, sensible to beauty, intelligent and alive"<sup>69</sup> contrasts markedly with the views of the elite described by Carey.<sup>70</sup> In his account of the relationship between the intellectuals and the masses in the early twentieth century, Carey describes the literary elite's revulsion towards the mass. Carey's history is polemical or 'populist'<sup>71</sup> but he provides detailed evidence of the elitist views which were very different from Arnold's humanism. Carey's intellectuals not only repudiated mass participation in high culture but universal education itself was seen as dangerous. In this version of elitism, elite culture cannot be made available to a mass audience and had to be guarded and nurtured by the minority who were those few people who could appreciate art and literature. A view famously espoused by the literary critic, F.R. Leavis:

In any period it is often a very small minority that the discerning appreciation of art and literature depends: it is (apart from cases of the simple and familiar) only a few who are capable of unprompted, first-hand judgement.<sup>72</sup>

This exclusive form of elitism is also described by Rose in his history of the working class 'autodidact' in which he quotes Carey on the elite's 'corrosive hostility' towards the 'common reader'.<sup>73</sup>

The belief in the remoteness of the masses from high culture is still a feature of writing about culture today. Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital fully acknowledges the exclusivity of aesthetic sensibility and the distance in particular of the working class from high culture. For Bourdieu the ability to play the games of culture is intimately tied to bourgeois experience of a 'world freed from urgency and through the practice of activities which are an end in themselves...'<sup>74</sup> Bourdieu touches directly on the powerful hostility to be found in the writing of Virginia Woolf (to take one example) towards the working class.<sup>75</sup>

As for the working classes, perhaps their sole function in the system of aesthetic positions is to serve as a foil, a negative reference point, in relation to which all aesthetics define themselves, by successive negations.<sup>76</sup>

The contrast between the BBC's Reithian elitism, with its legacy of Arnold's humanism, and the exclusive form of elitism identified by Carey and others is important for the history of radio talks and Chapter 4, on the history of current affairs radio, includes an account of the intellectual elite in the 1930s and their relationship to radio talks. That elite group consisted mainly of literary figures and their relationship to the BBC and more generally their views of broadcasting and mass education is pertinent for an understanding of 1930s radio talks. Later, in chapters six and eight, the use of elite contributors on *Analysis* is examined. As the evidence will show, these were senior figures in the political elite augmented by academics from the ancient universities, top industrialists, diplomats and so on.

#### Summary and Conclusion

Professionalism, bias and, to a lesser extent, elitism are the main theoretical concepts which have informed this thesis. As this brief account of the literature has shown, the concepts are inter-related and especially professionalism and bias. The Glasgow University Media Group's highly critical examination of bias in news reporting is of interest as it discusses the way bias is communicated within the media text and in a form which may need close content analysis. The thesis here, concerning bias and *Analysis*, pays more attention to the views and dilemmas of broadcasters than that provided by the GUMG and this is a far more tentative history without any grounding in an all-embracing theory of ideology.

Reith, and much later Normanbrook, articulated arguments about impartiality in the BBC which grew out of the necessity to present political ideas and arguments without allowing the power of radio and then television to unduly influence the political process. Despite the rhetoric of balance and impartiality the reality, as expressed by senior figures including Grace Wyndham Goldie and Charles Curran, was more equivocal and pragmatic. Particularly relevant for this thesis was the idea, clearly visible in the early *Panorama*, that personal opinion should be expressed by broadcasters if it reflected what they as experienced journalists felt was true.

The sociology of professions is illuminating for its examination of different, historically specific, ideals of professionalism. Nineteenth century ideals were

founded on public service, autonomy and liberal education. These contrast with the more modern bureaucratic definition with its references to qualifications, association, training and highly specific roles within the occupationally diverse modern organisation. In his influential discussion of the rise of professionalism in the BBC in the 1960s and early 1970s, Burns argues that professionalism has replaced the old public ethos. Intriguingly, the evidence which will be presented about *Analysis* (and to an extent, *Panorama*) suggests that a traditional version of the professional ideal, here referred to as 'calibre', was very much alive in the BBC in the 1970s. Furthermore, calibre gave presenters a licence to express personal opinions. The implications of this will be examined in detail in the discussion of *Analysis* in Chapters 5 to 8.

Elitism features in the Chapter 4 and the literature reveals two different views of access by the mass to high culture. Arnold's radical and more humanistic elitism, which had such an influence on Reith's BBC, can be contrasted with the more exclusive elitism which denied mass access to art and literature and therefore poses an interesting dilemma for a history of early BBC talks featuring as they did some of the most vehemently anti-working class elitists of the 1930s. The next chapter examines the evolution of radio talks from the early single subject educational and topical forms to the populist 'talks magazine' of the 1950s, a selective and schematic history which provides the historical context for the creation of *Analysis* in 1970.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Everett M. Rogers, *A History of Communication Study: A Biographical Approach* (New York: The Free Press, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> See Rogers, 233.

<sup>3</sup> Lindley, *Panorama*.

<sup>4</sup> Grace Wyndham Goldie, *Facing the Nation: Television and Politics 1936-1976* (London: The Bodley Head, 1977).

<sup>5</sup> Philip Elliott, *The Sociology of the Professions* (London: Macmillan Press, 1972).

<sup>6</sup> Magali Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism: a sociological analysis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

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- <sup>7</sup> Briggs, *Vol V*.
- <sup>8</sup> Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).
- <sup>9</sup> John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992).
- <sup>10</sup> Denis McQuail, *Media Performance* (London: Sage, 1992).
- <sup>11</sup> GUMG, *Bad News* (London: Routledge, 1976); - *More Bad News* (London: Routledge, 1980); - *War and Peace News* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1985).
- <sup>12</sup> Martin Harrison, *TV News: Whose Bias?* (London: Policy Journals, 1985).
- <sup>13</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, 25.
- <sup>14</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, 42.
- <sup>15</sup> John Reith in *Radio Times*, 30<sup>th</sup> November 1923 in Scannell and Cardiff, 27.
- <sup>16</sup> Guy Starkey, *Balance and Bias in Radio Four's Today Programme, during the 1997 General Election Campaign*. (University of London unpublished PhD thesis, 2001), 6.
- <sup>17</sup> Goldie, 152.
- <sup>18</sup> Goldie, 152.
- <sup>19</sup> Lindley, 72.
- <sup>20</sup> Lindley, 74.
- <sup>21</sup> Lindley, 73.
- <sup>22</sup> Michael Tracey, *The Production of Political Television* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), 110.
- <sup>23</sup> Charles Curran, Director General 1969 – 1977).
- <sup>24</sup> Charles Curran, *A Seamless Robe: Broadcasting – Philosophy and Practice* (London: Collins, 1979), 71. At the time, the letter was mentioned explicitly in an addendum to Clause 13(4) of the BBC Licence and Agreement in which the Minister 'takes note' of Normanbrook's assurances. For some reason (and most untypically) there is no reference to the letter in Briggs, *Vol V*.
- <sup>25</sup> Curran, 106.
- <sup>26</sup> Curran, 110.
- <sup>27</sup> HMSO *Report of the Committee on the Future of Broadcasting, Chairman: Lord Annan* (London: HMSO, 1977), 266-290. Henceforth, 'Annan'.
- <sup>28</sup> In paragraph 17.19 for example, coverage of industrial relations is described as having a 'fundamental shortcoming'; broadcasters attitudes are referred to as 'dingy and unimaginative' and 'ignorance' is perceived among production staff of industry. Annan, 273.
- <sup>29</sup> Annan, 279.
- <sup>30</sup> For example Donald Shaw and Maxwell McCombs *The Emergence of American Political Issues: The Agenda-Setting Function of the Press*. (St Paul: West Publishing Co., 1977).
- <sup>31</sup> Georgina Born, *Uncertain Vision: Birt, Dyke and the Reinvention of the BBC* (London: Secker and Warburg, 2004), 382.
- <sup>32</sup> Born, 421.
- <sup>33</sup> Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society* (New York: Free Press, 1964).
- <sup>34</sup> Hans Gerth and C.W.Mills, *From Max Weber* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959).
- <sup>35</sup> Elliott, 52.
- <sup>36</sup> Elliott, 94.
- <sup>37</sup> Elliott, 5.
- <sup>38</sup> Larson, 5.
- <sup>39</sup> Larson, 4.
- <sup>40</sup> Larson, 179.
- <sup>41</sup> Larson, 179.
- <sup>42</sup> Larson, 179.
- <sup>43</sup> Quoted in John Caughie, "Before the Golden Age: Early Television Drama." In *Popular Television in Britain: Studies in Cultural History*, edited by John Corner. London: British Film Institute, 1991, 40.
- <sup>44</sup> Caughie, 40.
- <sup>45</sup> Briggs, 1995, 24.
- <sup>46</sup> Independent Television began transmission in September 1955.
- <sup>47</sup> Robert Turnock, *Did ITV Revolutionise British Television?* ([www.rhul.ac.uk/Media-Arts](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/Media-Arts) accessed 14 June 2004), 18.
- <sup>48</sup> Turnock, 18.
- <sup>49</sup> Briggs, *Vol V*, 383.
- <sup>50</sup> Caughie, 199; Turnock, 2004; Susan Sydney-Smith, *Beyond Dixon of Dock Green: Early British Police Series* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2002).

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- <sup>51</sup> Tom Burns, *The BBC: Public Institution and Private World* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1977).
- <sup>52</sup> Burns, 122.
- <sup>53</sup> Burns, 124.
- <sup>54</sup> Philip Elliott "Media Organizations and Occupations: an overview." In *Mass Communication and Society*, edited by James Curran, Michael Gurevitch and Janet Woollacott. London: Edward Arnold, 1977, 145.
- <sup>55</sup> Burns quoted in Elliott, 152.
- <sup>56</sup> Margaret Gallagher, "Negotiation of control in media organizations and occupations." In *Culture, Society and the Media*, edited by Michael Gurevitch, Tony Bennett, James Curran and Janet Woollacott. London: Routledge, 1982, 162.
- <sup>57</sup> Burns, 125.
- <sup>58</sup> Burns, 122-136.
- <sup>59</sup> Goldie, 192. Tahu Hole, the Head of News in the 1950s is usually blamed for its conservatism and general drabness, see Lindley, 24,25.
- <sup>60</sup> Goldie, 149.
- <sup>61</sup> Lindley, 152.
- <sup>62</sup> Burns, 129.
- <sup>63</sup> Burns, *The BBC*.
- <sup>64</sup> Exactly this point is made by Burns, 126.
- <sup>65</sup> Vilfredo Pareto *Selected Writings*, edited by S.E.Finer London: Pall Mall Press, 1966.
- <sup>66</sup> Paul Filmer, "High/Mass." In *Core Sociological Dichotomies*, edited by Chris Jenks London: Sage Publications, 1998, 346.
- <sup>67</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, 9.
- <sup>68</sup> Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1932), 68.
- <sup>69</sup> Matthew Arnold in Lionel Trilling, *Matthew Arnold* (London: Unwin University Books, 1963), 270.
- <sup>70</sup> Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses*.
- <sup>71</sup> Rose, 393.
- <sup>72</sup> F.R.Leavis in *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, edited by John Storey. London: Prentice Hall, 1994, 13.
- <sup>73</sup> Rose, 393.
- <sup>74</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. (London: Routledge, 1984),54.
- <sup>75</sup> Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of working class life with special reference to publications and entertainments* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1971), 247.
- <sup>76</sup> Bourdieu, 57.

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#### 4.

### A SELECTIVE HISTORY OF RADIO CURRENT AFFAIRS, 1927 – 1960.

The aim of this chapter is to explore those historical developments in the radio talk which contribute to an understanding of the creation of *Analysis* over thirty years later. It examines the very significant decision to separate Talks from News<sup>1</sup> in 1935 at a time when the corporation's charter and licence were due for renewal and the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry under Lord Ullswater had begun its work.<sup>2</sup> The 'elitism' of talks in the 1930s, in particular in terms of contributors, and the significance of this for *Analysis* is explained. The early distinction between educational and 'topical' talks is discussed, the latter being particularly important for this research. This selective history, looking as it does at developments which shed light on the emergence of *Analysis*, includes a brief account of developments in the Second World War, including the growth of the magazine format. In the 1950s the talks magazine, *At Home and Abroad*, was in effect the training school for *Analysis* as some of the young men who produced it were to create the latter programme a decade later. It represented the attempt by the Talks department to respond to what was called a 'hunger for topicality' whilst trying to hold on to the conservative broadcasting values ingrained in the department. The chapter ends with the demise of *At Home and Abroad* in 1960. The 1960s themselves revolutionised news and current affairs and that decade, in which *Analysis* was conceived, is left to the next chapter.

Throughout the chapter some of the central theoretical questions which run through this thesis emerge. The specific nature of current affairs and its association with 'topicality' is one of these questions and in particular the negative definition of current

affairs as an output distinct from journalism and news. This opposition was fully expressed in *Analysis*. The elitism of the genre, in particular in relation to those allowed to talk, and a gradual understanding of the importance of 'professionalism' in current affairs broadcasting are also discussed. 'Demand' and 'supply' issues are considered. The perceived demand for topical talks is described as it manifested itself at the beginning of the Second World War and also in the early 1950s. Different approaches to supplying topical programming to meet this need is explained and, in the case of *At Home and Abroad*, the emerging division between magazine-style current affairs and the more traditional talks-based format, a distinction which was to inform the creation of *Analysis* in 1970.

Before looking at the earliest manifestation of what is referred to here as 'current affairs radio' it is helpful to consider the history of the press. Anthony Smith provides a useful account of the division of news and comment in the nineteenth century press and sees this split as rooted in a form of philosophical positivism:

Indeed in the nineteenth century literature on journalism, in the dicta of the great editors of the past such as J.T. Delane, C.P.Scott, R.D.Blumenfield, one can easily discern a sediment of primitive positivism, the belief in the possibility of creating an image of the world compounded of hard facts, upon which a superstructure of speculation and opinion may be built.<sup>3</sup>

For these Victorian editors there was a clear distinction between 'hard facts' and the 'superstructure' of comment. Smith adds that practical factors also encouraged this split. In the nineteenth century, news was sent from the outposts of empire by telegram whereas the longer and more reflective views of correspondents were delivered by letter. Fundamental also to this division was the difference between reporters and correspondents<sup>4</sup>. The reporter was different from the correspondent partly because they knew Pitman short hand and were trained to report speeches word for word and record precise facts, for example on the battlefield or in a law court. The correspondent had a greater licence to express opinions and by implication was well educated and, to use a term which will appear in later chapters, was a person of 'calibre'. This division of labour was to contribute to the gulf between news and talks

in the early BBC.

Although it is tempting to try and graft these journalistic practices on to those in the early BBC we do need to recall that the institution was sharply separated from newspaper journalism, and indeed the first ex- newspaper journalist was only appointed to the BBC in 1932. Two years later, John Coatman, a Professor at the L.S.E. and previously Head of the Indian police force and with no journalistic experience, was appointed head of the BBC news section.<sup>5</sup> Although there is some logic to Smith's views on both positivism and journalistic practices, there is no evidence that the culture of press journalism directly influenced the BBC. But the notion that the journalist was a grafter, busily obtaining facts, whereas the correspondent was different, of a different calibre with a licence to comment on events, is fundamental to an understanding of *Analysis* and is discussed in detail in the next chapter. It will also be suggested that elitist ideas about journalism survived in the BBC and played an important part in the creation of *Analysis*.

The British Broadcasting Company began regular broadcasts on 14 November 1922 from the exiting 2LO facility on the Strand in central London.<sup>6</sup> Understandably there was concern on the part of the Newspaper Proprietors Association that regular news on radio would undermine their business. An agreement was therefore reached that there would be no news before 7pm and that the copy for the news would be supplied for a fee by Reuters. For political and business reasons coverage of controversial subjects was not allowed and this situation continued despite Reith's<sup>7</sup> lobbying. He was keen to develop the news service and to broadcast controversial material, the term 'controversial' being used in particular to refer to political issues where there were differing points of view. Reith requested, to give an example, to broadcast a debate between party leaders in 1924 but this was rejected.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, he was arguing for the establishment of the company as a public corporation. The Crawford Committee, tasked to make proposals on the BBC's future in its report of 5 March 1926, recommended that incorporation take place and also that

there be a 'moderate amount of controversial matter' <sup>9</sup>

May 1926 was a defining moment for the BBC as an institution but also specifically as a news provider. <sup>10</sup> The revaluation of sterling in 1924 had hit the mining industry badly raising as it did the price of exported coal. The owners of the coal mines cut wages and increased the hours of their workers, a situation made a lot worse on 1 May 1926 by the termination of a government subsidy which had underpinned miners' wages. The Trades Union Congress had been in negotiations with the industry but these had broken down and it called the General Strike, which lasted from 4 May to 12 May. In the absence of most newspapers (printers were among the first to take action) the BBC adopted the role of news provider and produced regular bulletins throughout the day.

The importance and significance of the General Strike for the BBC is a complex issue which raises questions about the independence of the company and whether or not Reith was simply doing the government's bidding – a question which lies beyond the scope of this thesis. <sup>11</sup> However, what is relevant about this period is that while remaining independent of government control (Churchill wanted to take over the BBC for propaganda purposes) the BBC adopted a sufficiently pro-government position to secure its independence in the long term; as McIntyre explains, 'the strike took place after the publication of the Crawford Report but before it had been debated in parliament, and there was still much to be done if the Post Office<sup>12</sup> was to be won over to his way of thinking on a number of outstanding issues.' <sup>13</sup> The 'number of issues' included the right to broadcast on matters of controversy. If the pro-establishment caution of the BBC during the strike was indeed a tactic then it worked; the ban on controversial material was lifted in March 1928, fifteen months after incorporation.

Although there is a world of difference between *Analysis* and the talks of the 1930s there are also some striking similarities. Issues such as the choice of speakers, the

nature of their use of language and the suitability of subjects are common to both periods as is the importance in the fashioning of these two styles of radio of individual members of BBC staff. In the 1970s, George Fischer and Ian McIntyre created and led *Analysis*<sup>14</sup>; in the 1950s, Stephen Bonarjee was the driving force behind *At Home and Abroad* (see below) and in the period 1928 to 1932 that creative and leadership role in relation to the radio Talk was taken by Hilda Matheson.

Born in 1888, Matheson studied history at the Society of Oxford Home Students (now known as St Anne's College) and after a spell in army intelligence became, in 1919, political secretary to Nancy Astor, the first woman MP<sup>15</sup>. Matheson was extremely well connected, not only in the world of politics but also among writers and intellectuals including Vita Sackville-West:

Her competence and the fact that she 'knew everybody' so impressed John Reith, when she visited him on Lady Astor's behalf in 1926, that he persuaded Lady Astor to release her to work for him at the fledgling British Broadcasting Company.<sup>16</sup>

In 1927, Matheson was made Head of Talks which at the time included a small news section. She remained in this position until her resignation in January 1932 when she was replaced by her assistant, Charles Siepmann. Soon after that, Talks and News became separate departments.

Much of the discussion which follows centres on Matheson's brief career and the reasons for its end. Also the different position of News in relation to Talks in the BBC is seen as having a wider significance which resonated in the corporation up to the 1970s and beyond. The argument of this thesis essentially follows the interpretation of events to be found in Scannell and Cardiff's history<sup>17</sup> which in places is close to the account of events by R.S.Lambert<sup>18</sup>. They see the relative positioning of News and Talks as significant and the split of news from talks as an essentially conservative move. This analysis contrasts with that of Asa Briggs who sees Matheson's removal primarily as a personality issue.

R.S.Lambert, who edited *The Listener* from 1929 – 1939, described Matheson in these terms:

Hilda Matheson's outlook was that of the typical post-War Liberal, with its idealistic internationalism expressed in mistaken devotion to the League of Nations, its sympathy with Socialistic experiment, its cultivation of the innovating schools of poetry and art, its enthusiasm for feminism.<sup>19</sup>

Matheson's radicalism no doubt contributed to her demise (and is discussed below) but her contribution to radio was to understand the importance of writing 'for the ear'. She taught her news staff to rewrite the 'involved, cumbersome and florid print journalese'<sup>20</sup> of the Reuters copy and turn it into something comprehensible to the listener. Matheson was a great believer in the scripted talk. She believed that a combination of the control and timing afforded by the script together with writing which was relatively informal and written for the ear would produce the most effective broadcast talk. She did experiment with unscripted discussions and Reith himself was not opposed to this, 'provided you can be certain that things will not be said which will subsequently get us into trouble.'<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, the celebrated features producer, D.G. Bridson, was very critical of the lack of unscripted talk, 'that spontaneous speech should have been banned by the BBC for the first odd twenty years of broadcasting is almost unbelievable.'<sup>22</sup> Bridson sees this failure as a result of BBC paranoia, 'the microphone was regarded as such a potentially dangerous weapon that nobody was allowed to approach it until it was fully known what he intended to do with it.'<sup>23</sup> Matheson, however remained a fan of the script and this may have been because of the technical problem of recording voices, even in the studio without the benefit of omnidirectional microphones.

Although it is tempting to follow Bridson and dismiss this approach as hopelessly archaic and criticise both the wooden-ness of the scripted talk and Matheson's apparent lack of adventure, it may be a mistake to be judgemental. BBC radio was the only broadcast service and so when a talk was broadcast the audiences were very large. Often cabinet ministers, governors of the BBC and Reith himself would be

listening. This put considerable pressure on producers to make sure that Talks were perfectly audible and above all had content which was intelligible and not likely to offend. Today, producers use edited tape recording more frequently than listeners often realise to achieve this quality – a luxury which Matheson and her team did not possess. In addition, the recent fragmentation of the audience does allow far greater freedom in the relative obscurity of contemporary speech radio. As will be shown in Chapter 6, the crafted and scripted speech used at times by the presenters of *Analysis* in the 1970s was firmly in the Matheson tradition of broadcast talk.

A central question in current affairs and Talks radio is who has the right to speak. As has been mentioned, Matheson was well connected and appointed partly for that reason. Her speakers were mainly ‘the great and the good’ as the pages of *The Listener* testify<sup>24</sup>. The following editorial from *The Listener* perfectly expresses an obsequious attitude towards those members of the elite who contributed to BBC Talks:

Eight speakers, mostly persons of eminence and all persons of achievement, have now come to the microphone and described their experiences in climbing up the ‘rungs of the ladder’ of life. The interest of these short autobiographies lies not merely in the facts which they recount or in the adventures which they list; but they also attract the listener by an implied promise that the great man or woman concerned will lift a tiny corner of the veil which surrounds every successful career and let us, their more obscure contemporaries, gain an inkling of the magic recipe which has enabled them to make themselves what they have become.<sup>25</sup>

Trade Union leaders were banned from speaking in programmes even when the subject was trade unionism itself<sup>26</sup> but there were some experiments using speakers from outside the establishment. *Time to Spare* was a twelve part series in 1934 by which time Matheson had been replaced by Charles Siepmann, who shared her liberal views but was more keen to introduce topical talks. The series included short talks by unemployed men and women. The talks were widely commented on in the press and had a direct impact in Parliament. Scannell and Cardiff describe the use by Labour backbenchers of extracts from the talks which they claimed ‘could be accepted as reliable because they were broadcast by the BBC and hence were free

from political theory or bias'. So serious was the crisis caused by *Time to Spare* that Ramsay Macdonald summoned Reith to No 10 Downing Street and insisted that the talks must stop.<sup>27</sup> In the end, A.D.Lindsay was brought in to round the series off with an appeal for everyone to recall their personal responsibilities to help the unemployed.

Matheson did launch *Conversations in a Train* in 1931 which at least had the potential to introduce the voice of 'ordinary' people but after an unsuccessful experiment using scripts written and performed by E.M. Forster, Roger Fry, Aldous Huxley and other typical Matheson choices, actors were used to perform scripts with sound effects to give the impression of a train carriage ( a first class train carriage). The series *Men Talking* also suggests in its title an opportunity for working class participation. The series was introduced in 1937 under Siepmann's replacement as Head of Talks, Sir Richard Maconachie. Bravely, the programmes were both unrehearsed and unscripted but the subjects were always 'safe' and uncontroversial (such as 'Football' or 'Manners'<sup>28</sup>) and the 'men' chosen were selected for their personality and ability to communicate. The first group included two advertising agents and one 'unemployed working man and author'.

So although Matheson was perceived by some as a radical, there is little evidence of this in her selection of speakers. This contrasts, however, with the views of some BBC staff outside London. In Manchester, away from the inhibitions associated with Reith and London, there was far more experimentation. For example, Archie Harding, an 'Oxford intellectual Marxist' supported a wider range of voices:

In Harding's view all people should be encouraged to air their views, not merely their professional spokesmen. And that went for the Working Class no less than the Middle and Upper Classes. The air at least should be open to all, as the Press quite obviously was not. As it was, both Press and the BBC were equally tools of what we should now be calling 'The Establishment'.<sup>29</sup>

Harding had been banished to Manchester by Reith after the furore following the broadcast of the controversial *New Year Over Europe* in 1932. Reith is supposed to

have said, 'you're a dangerous man, Harding. I think you'd better go up North where you can't do so much damage.'<sup>30</sup>

The way producers in Manchester managed to incorporate the spoken voices of working class men and women was through their use of the radio feature and documentary. Scannell and Cardiff are justifiably glowing in their account of the work of Olive Shapley who was also based in Manchester and who pioneered the use of the unwieldy recording van to record people talking in their homes<sup>31</sup>. Bridson himself used the script, the studio and music in his attempts to allow working class voices and points of view to be expressed (most notably in *Steel* 1937 and *Coalface* 1938).

The evidence presented here seems to show that talks were far less innovative than features and documentaries, especially those created in Manchester. In the choice of speakers and use of carefully controlled scripts the talk was cautious, although as Seaton and Pimlott point out some prominent radical figures did speak, including Maynard Keynes and William Beveridge.<sup>32</sup> Radio talks and their successors in current affairs like *Analysis* did manage to bring to the microphone some of the most important and influential members of the establishment. In the 1930s, H.G.Wells, Bernard Shaw, T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Bertrand Russell, and E.M. Forster in addition to all the party leaders, royalty, the Archbishops and a wide range of academics from every field graced the airwaves. Today this array of elite voices on radio is commonplace but in the 1930s attitudes to education and the mass media were more complex as shall now be explained.

In his discussion of the hysterical hostility of the English literary intelligentsia to the 'masses', John Carey paints a disturbing picture.<sup>33</sup> Intellectuals and especially the literary elite from the late nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century are shown to despise and fear the 'repulsive masses'. Carey vividly describes the apparent loathing that some famous intellectuals had for what they considered a sub-

human mass. In his decidedly polemical account of the values of some establishment figures, he shows there was a widespread acceptance of eugenics and mass extermination, almost identical to Nazi writing on the Jews. A similar point is made in D.L. LeMahieu's analysis of commercial and elite culture in the early twentieth century: 'The identification of the crowd with the lower instincts, emotions and sensations, though of ancient lineage, became particularly insistent in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.'<sup>34</sup>

In his discussion of the working class autodidact, Jonathan Rose comments on Carey's analysis,

A blunt populist, Carey argues that the fundamental motive behind the modernist movement was a corrosive hostility toward the common reader. Nietzsche, Ortega y Gasset, George Gissing, H.G.Wells, Bernard Shaw, T.S.Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Sigmund Freud, Alduous Huxley, Wyndham Lewis, D.H.Lawrence, Ezra Pound, and Graham Greene all strove to preserve a sense of class superiority by reviling the mean suburban man.<sup>35</sup>

Carey's 'bluntness' can lead him into a rather conspiratorial account of Modernism but both Rose and Carey describe an intellectual elite which had little more than contempt for the masses. This clearly has significance for this discussion because so many members of that elite were contributors to BBC Talks. Why should those who not only despised the masses but also disapproved of mass education and the creation of a 'middle brow'<sup>36</sup> sensibility want to talk on the BBC?

Carey's discussion of these elitist views of the early mass media and education is particularly interesting. It sheds light on the discussion of the 'current affairs broadcaster' in this thesis and the disdainful attitude towards journalists held by men like Ian McIntyre.<sup>37</sup> Popular culture and the early mass media, including the popular press, were widely viewed with contempt by the 1930s cultural elite. F.R. Leavis's famous attack on this manifestation of popular culture<sup>38</sup> and the threat posed to High Culture by the early mass media was widely accepted:

... the popular newspaper presented a threat, because it created an alternative culture which bypassed

the intellectual and made him redundant. By adopting sales figures as the sole criterion, journalism circumvented the traditional cultural elite.<sup>39</sup>

Rose comments on the explosive growth of journalism and journalists in the early twentieth century. In 1881 there were, according to the census, 3,434 journalists, by 1911 this figure had grown to 13,786. Often largely self-taught these working class writers found employment in what E.M.Forster referred to as the 'gutter press'. Popular journalism itself, together with state educational provision produced a despised and over-educated lower middle class:

The growth of popular journalism, public libraries, and Board schools in the late nineteenth century all conspired to create an office-boy intelligentsia paralleling – and often opposing – the modernist intelligentsia.<sup>40</sup>

It is argued in Chapter 5 that the creators of *Analysis* were highly dismissive of journalists and indeed that this elitist disdain was not uncommon at the higher levels of BBC radio management. The idea that some current affairs broadcasters were people of 'calibre,' whereas journalists were not, owes something to the legacy of Forster, Woolf and the 1930s cultural elite and their disapproval of working class 'pen pushers.'

Carey also quotes Nietzsche whose horror of newspapers was more graphic. The rabble 'vomit their bile, and call it a newspaper'.<sup>41</sup> The Victorian novelist, George Gissing based *New Grub Street* on the contrast between genuine art and the scribbling of journalists<sup>42</sup>. Gissing's journalist, Whelpdale, founds a newspaper called *Chit-Chat*, a satirical reference to the popular Victorian weekly, *Tit-Bits*. Carey provides a legitimate defence of *Tit-Bits* which by today's standards was demanding and educational; it had no pictures and was full of extracts from serious novels. Why was such venom directed at popular newspapers and even educational weeklies? The answer is partly to be found in the intellectual's attitude to education itself. Carey quotes D.H. Lawrence:

'Let all schools be closed at once,' he exhorts. 'The great mass of humanity should never learn to

read and write.' Illiteracy will save them from those 'tissues of leprosy', books and newspapers. Without education the masses will, Lawrence hopes, relapse into purely physical life.<sup>43</sup>

Lawrence was not alone in the elite in his opposition to the education of the masses.<sup>44</sup>

There were contrasting views of course and especially in the period after the First World War there was evidence of a greater social conscience even within the literary elite. The influential Cambridge academic, I.A.Richards did not think that appreciation of art, for example, was restricted to a minority. He believed in education and that with the right training members of the middle class and lower middle class could join the literary circle.<sup>45</sup>

So the question remains – how does this contempt for the masses and opposition to mass education and self-improvement square with the regular appearance of the very intellectuals quoted by Carey as contributors to BBC Talks? How does opposition in particular to education allow a man like H.G. Wells to become, according to Briggs, such a broadcasting enthusiast? Briggs quotes a 1930s BBC producer, Lionel Fielden, on Wells and others:

I remember best the trinity of E.M.Forster, Desmond McCarthy and H.G.Wells who all gave us freely of their time and wise counsels, and would sit around our gas fires at Savoy Hill, talking of the problems and possibilities of broadcasting.<sup>46</sup>

According to Briggs, Hilda Matheson simply used her charm and enthusiasm to persuade Wells to speak.<sup>47</sup> There can be no doubt that she was well connected to the literary elite as has already been mentioned and no doubt this helped recruit them, but it hardly solves the fundamental dichotomy. LeMahieu's analysis is rather more helpful here than Carey's because he does identify contradictions in the elitist position. He discusses the case of T.S Eliot and his view of the mass media:

.. many intellectuals held contradictory or unconsciously ambivalent views about commercial culture. T.S.Eliot loathed the democratization of culture, but enjoyed comic strips as an undergraduate, venerated Marie Lloyd, owned a substantial collection of recorded jazz, and became addicted to detective novels. The response of the cultivated elites to the mass media resists easy characterization. It was an intricate mosaic of shifting opinions among complicated individuals who

could not agree among themselves.<sup>48</sup>

This suggests confusion in the minds of the cultural elite and this uncertainty may have weakened resistance to Matheson's invitations to speak on the radio.

There are at least two further possible explanations. Firstly, Reith's BBC was firmly based on principles of public service. It expressed Matthew Arnold's radical analysis of the role of the state in the cultural improvement of the working class.<sup>49</sup> For Arnold and also for Reith, the working class may have been a threat and vulnerable to the most unpleasant drives and appetites but, as Scannell and Cardiff explain:

Culture, for Arnold, was a means of alleviating the strain and hostility between classes in a deeply divided society, and the task of 'civilizing' the masses had a prudent political basis. It was a means of incorporating the working classes within the existing social and political order, and thus preventing the threat of revolt from below. Arnold's best-known essay, *Culture and Anarchy*, expressed that fear in its very title.<sup>50</sup>

Reith and Matheson were supporters of the Arnoldian BBC, uniting the nation and improving the mass through its educational, religious and cultural programming. This is not to say that, for example, T.S. Eliot had changed his views about the masses, but rather that he and other eminent Talkers had been won over to a different strategy for dealing with them.<sup>51</sup> A good example of this change of heart was J.B. Priestley who shared much of the cultural pessimism and elitism of the time. In his *English Journey* of 1934 he criticises mass media (cinema, wireless, newspapers) for their conformity and Americanism.<sup>52</sup> But as discussed below, Priestley became the most important Talks contributor of the Second World War.

An alternative explanation for the presence of elite speakers lies in their perception of their audience. For Matheson the size of the audience was important and she strove for increases in the number of listeners in the same way that she worked to bring the most eminent speakers to the microphone. In particular, she wanted her talks to reach 'isolated' members of society:

As well as broadcasting the best in literature, music and scientific and philosophical thought, radio for her had a special role in breaking down the isolation of people, especially women, whether this was the physical isolation of living in the country or the mental isolation of those who lacked education.<sup>53</sup>

Given the lack of a good universal education at the time she stressed the educational (as opposed to the topical) Talk and took this one step further in the organisation of group listening activities. She encouraged organisations such as working men's clubs, tutorial classes, Christian groups and unemployed groups to listen together on a regular basis. Notes were provided for the benefit of group leaders and even public libraries were notified of forthcoming Talks so that recommended books could be stocked. If John Carey is right about the intellectuals and their view of the masses, it is impossible to believe they shared any of Matheson's missionary enthusiasm. But if, as was the case forty years later at the start of *Analysis*, the audience itself was perceived as an elite, including not only well educated and well informed members of the public but also members of the establishment, opinion formers and policy makers, then those delivering talks in the 1930s could comfort themselves in the knowledge that they were talking to people like themselves.

To the modern eye the titles of talks in the Matheson era look exceptionally worthy and dull. Although in the day time some of them dealt with practical issues, the evening schedule was characterised by talks in series on serious educational themes. As *The Listener* consisted mainly of reprints of broadcast talks it is a useful record at least of those which were felt to be of educational value<sup>54</sup>. A survey of Volume 8 of *The Listener* (July – December 1932) shows that there were contributions on music, history, psychology, literature, art, religion, the 'outdoors' and international issues among other subjects. These talks were frequently in series and strongly educational in tone. There were none at all on domestic politics apart from those given by the representatives of political parties. Some of the international talks are certainly reminiscent of later current affairs talks on the Home Service and Third Programme. An example might be Vernon Bartlett's *Germany: An Impression from Within*<sup>55</sup> in which he gives quite an opinionated account of Germany with references to the Nazis

and the problems brought about by Germany's very high levels of unemployment. He signs off by understating the problem, ' .. I am convinced that the signs of militarism in Germany today are less dangerous than most Frenchman and Englishman believe..'. These international talks however are the exception and *topicality* was certainly not a priority for Matheson.

There was a clear distinction at the time between educational talks and those which dealt with topical issues of the day. The former, given priority by Matheson, were didactic and 'improving' and reflected the Matthew Arnold inspired view of public service broadcasting held by Reith and Matheson. They addressed the listener-as-learner and in particular those seen as uneducated or inadequately educated. The legacy of this broadcasting value can still be seen in BBC Radio 4 and its more explicitly educational output.<sup>56</sup> Topical talks addressed the issues of the day or 'current affairs' and in particular political and economic questions. It is worth noting here that the term 'current affairs' was only first used in the title of an organisational department in the BBC in 1958.<sup>57</sup>

One of the factors which deterred the BBC from topicality and eventually led to retrenchment in the Talks Department after Matheson and her successor, Charles Siepmann had gone, were accusations of bias. Briggs describes how talks on either Germany or the Soviet Union were likely to be seen as controversial<sup>58</sup> and Vernon Bartlett's piece on Nazi Germany in 1933 provoked a letter from the Prime Minister, Ramsay Macdonald who accused it of being pro-German propaganda.

One of the most important subjects dealt with in the 1930s was unemployment and this subject is fully explored in Scannell and Cardiff's history.<sup>59</sup> Individual talks were given on the subject of unemployment by establishment figures including John Maynard Keynes, Seebohm Rowntree and William Beveridge who gave a series of six lectures. A talk by the Master of Balliol, A.D.Lindsay illustrates the style and content well:

All over the country there are men and women who are concerned about the effects of long continued unemployment, who would be only too glad to help and to start schemes for helping the unemployed if they knew on what lines best to set about it.<sup>60</sup>

The solid establishment voice of Dr. Lindsay addresses not the unemployed themselves but those who might help them. A sense of 'we are all in this together' pervades these talks as Kate Lacey explains:

...these programmes did represent, in part, a continuation of the prevailing trend to construct a sense of shared participation in national life by papering over the profound social and class divisions in Britain and ignoring the radicalization of politics which accompanied the current social and economic dislocation.<sup>61</sup>

The example of the eleven part series, *S.O.S.* shows how a 'topical talk' served to 'paper over' social divisions. One of the most interesting and important series on unemployment, *S.O.S.* was presented by a public school master, J.B.Mais and broadcast in 1933 (after Matheson's departure in January 1932). The programme is extraordinary for a number of reasons, all fully discussed by Scannell and Cardiff,<sup>62</sup> but one or two of the main points are highlighted here. Mais had no expertise in the subject but his series on walking in Britain, *The Unknown Island*, had been a success and so he was invited to tour Britain and get a picture of unemployment throughout the country. The belief that someone without any specialist knowledge (but who was felt to be well educated and of good character) could deliver Talks in this most sensitive of areas is noteworthy. To be generous we could say that his strength was his ability as a broadcaster, perhaps in the same way that Ian McIntyre forty years later was allowed to discuss a wide range of subjects because he was valued as a broadcaster of exceptional ability. In his Talks, Mais combines the sort of informal talk which was Matheson's legacy with a well meaning 'transformation of the problem into the politics of the parish pump':<sup>63</sup>

We are not dealing here with unemployables, but with first rate workmen, at least as capable as ourselves ... It is not a charity but a practical expression of friendliness that is needed... There is plenty for you to do and you must do it at once if you care about your fellow countrymen. What therefore can you do at once? Make yourself known to the Manager of your local Labour Exchange, or if you live in a village, to the Schoolmaster or Parson. With their help collect a small number of unemployed who show any interest; find a hut for them to work on, and remember once it is started the men must run it entirely by themselves.<sup>64</sup>

It is striking here that Mais is far less concerned in this extract to explain or describe unemployment or place it in a wider context (the features of post-war 'topical' coverage) but more interested in encouraging the listener to lend a helping hand.

Although the safe, well intentioned but ill informed Mr Mais was given an 11 part series, the representatives of the National Unemployed Workers Movement were not allowed to speak at all. When representatives of the NUWM finally were allowed to meet Charles Siepmann (Head of Talks) Broadcasting House was surrounded by a 'full-scale police guard'.<sup>65</sup> However, despite the condescending and naive nature of *S.O.S.*, it did achieve some unintended expression of working class anger which Cardiff and Scannell show:

In the Rhondda he (Mais) was told that the bosses looked at you 'as though you were a piece of sicked up fat.'

... At Lincoln he attended a meeting to discuss the formation of more clubs for the unemployed, in the course of which 'a black-haired very frail young man got up and asked how anyone could expect an unemployed man to do physical jerks on 15/- a week, or play ping-pong while his wife was sitting at home before a half empty grate with only margarine to eat.'<sup>66</sup>

These words suggest that although *S.O.S.* may have been profoundly apolitical it could not fail to convey something of the suffering and anger of the unemployed.

*S.O.S.* was broadcast in the first few months of 1933 and was followed in 1934 by the twelve part, *Time to Spare* which allowed unemployed people to speak about their experiences. It had a dramatic impact. 'Millions are being turned against the government' declared the *Daily Herald*<sup>67</sup> and the radio talk was viewed increasingly by those outside and inside the BBC as a dangerous genre especially when addressing the issue of unemployment. Despite the caution of the BBC when dealing with topical issues, its conservatism and Reith's 'denial of politics',<sup>68</sup> the 'dangerousness' of its topical talks output led to organisational changes which would separate news from comment for at least twenty years and establish broadcasting values which played their part in the creation of *Analysis* described in Chapter 3.

The resignation of Hilda Matheson from the BBC in October 1931 took effect at the end of the year. Her departure is not very significant for this thesis but it does raise a number of issues and there can be no question that her legacy as the first and perhaps the most innovative Head of Talks is extremely important. Arguably, there is a congruence between the broadcasting values of Matheson and those few men who launched *Analysis* almost forty years later. Her commitment to scripted radio speech, her efforts to get members of the establishment on radio and her understanding of 'writing for the ear' were all priorities for the creators of *Analysis*. It was perhaps inevitable that eventually, Reith and the liberal-minded feminist, Hilda Matheson would fall out. Added to the big differences in personality and values (although they certainly shared a passion and ambition for the BBC) was the growing antagonism towards the BBC from politicians, '...the cabinet seemed to have an excessive regard for the mischief making potential of the corporation particularly in the sphere of news and controversial talks...' <sup>69</sup>

In a sense Matheson had done what Reith had wanted her to do – she had established the radio talk as a highly successful genre and had also brought the great and the good to the microphone. Carney, whose life of Matheson draws on private papers, including her letters to Vita Sackville-West, vividly describes her constant disputes with Reith and other senior BBC staff over the content of talks including accusations that they were too 'highbrow', not topical enough or simply controversial. R. S. Lambert's perceptive account of the BBC up to the Second World War sympathetically and convincingly describes the situation:

The Growth and proliferation of the Talks Department was too rapid and spectacular to last. In production of ideas, planning of programmes, and contact with speakers, Hilda Matheson was outstandingly successful; but the growing complexities of BBC administration imposed a severe strain upon her, as upon many others of the 'creative' staff. She was tactful and persuasive in her championship of the line of action she thought right; but she made enemies by the very persistence of her memoranda, and by the way in which she sought to extend the influence of the Talks Department in all directions, even beyond its natural sphere. She hardly took sufficient account of the prejudice against women in authority which prevailed in the BBC at the time.<sup>70</sup>

As Seaton points out, most of the women employed in the BBC at the time were secretaries.<sup>71</sup> Despite the fourfold increase in the Corporation's staff between 1926 and 1936, 'the number of women in creative jobs had risen by little more than one-third, and in senior administrative positions by barely one-quarter.'<sup>72</sup> This evidence suggests that the BBC was not an easy place for an able woman like Matheson to prosper. To add to her problems there was tension between her and her ambitious deputy, Charles Siepmann. Lambert describes Siepmann as particularly close to Reith<sup>73</sup> and even marked out by the older man as a possible future Director General. Siepmann joined Reith's club, the Athenaeum (an intimacy denied to Matheson as a woman) and stayed at Reith's country home at Beaconsfield. In a possible reorganisation of Talks, Siepmann was seen as the new head, not Matheson. The final crisis which led to her resignation involved a talk to be given by Vita Sackville-West's husband, Harold Nicolson. Nicolson, despite the affair<sup>74</sup> between the two women, was close to Matheson and very much part of her literary circle. He had been invited to talk about modern trends in literature in a huge educational series devised by Siepmann. Nicolson was a brave choice; 'liberal minded, adventurous, and dangerously inclined to recommend books that no decent person would wish to read'.<sup>75</sup> He wanted to talk about two books whose publication was banned in Britain at the time; Joyce's *Ulysses* and D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. In fact Reith and the Chairman of the Governors, John Whitley, wanted to prevent Nicolson from even mentioning the names of these two authors. The row continued for months and in October 1931 Matheson gave notice that she was resigning. Briggs describes her departure as 'concerned as much as anything else with her administrative relations with Siepmann'.<sup>76</sup> Strictly speaking this may be true but it does rather understate the political and gender dimensions of her exclusion.

Any attempt to write a history of current affairs radio in Britain must consider Hilda Matheson's contribution to the establishment of the radio talk as a distinct and highly successful genre. Perhaps her most important contribution was to insist on 'writing for the ear'. She believed that there was an 'art' to speaking at the microphone and in

the history of current affairs radio it is true that the most successful scripted contributions, whether they are complete talks or shorter contributions mixed with interviews and discussion, followed her advice. In the 1970s the main presenters of *Analysis*, Ian McIntyre and Mary Goldring, scripted much of their speech and most notably the introductions and conclusions of programmes. Secondly, Matheson did exactly what Reith wanted her to do and brought some of her intellectual friends and acquaintances to the microphone. In doing this she may have had to break down a prejudice in the cultural elite that the mass audience was ineducable; even that mass education was a bad thing. One of the most exceptional features of *Analysis* was the ability of producers to persuade members of the political class and other elites to contribute to the programme. Thirdly, she gave priority to the educational as opposed to the topical talk.<sup>77</sup> This approach became dated with the growth of educational provision but it seemed to stamp on the BBC, and in particular on speech radio, a view of the audience as listening for self-improvement. Finally, and this is part of her legacy which appears to have faded in impact, Matheson was in some respects highly innovative. Given the very limited repertoire of programme styles and deeply conservative policies of the BBC, *Conversations on the Train* was a remarkably brave and innovative attempt to inform. To persuade writers of the calibre of Forster and Huxley to script a conversation to be performed by actors simulating a train journey was brave and inventive.<sup>78</sup> Chapter 6 of this thesis explores the defining characteristics of *Analysis* and the legacy of the talks tradition which Matheson initiated.

The final part of this discussion of the BBC in the 1930s considers the organisational relationship between Talks and News. The detail is complicated, but whether or not Talks and News should be together in one department and whether the head of News and/ or Talks was judged to be 'safe' was an abiding theme of management discussions under Reith. The reason why it is important to look at these issues is because the relationship between news and current affairs, organisationally and also at a deeper intellectual level, or expressed in an individual's broadcasting values, had a

direct impact on *Analysis* in the 1970s and beyond.

When Matheson was appointed Director of Talks in January 1927 she also controlled a small news section. At the time there was very little for News to do as Reuters supplied news copy and initially it could not be rewritten. Her typical concern for 'writing for the ear' and her determination to develop news reports resulted not only in the movement of the first bulletin from 7pm to 6.30 pm but also a direct tape feed from four agencies into the news room. A selection process then took place:

The sifting of the news is the groundwork of preparing the bulletin, and it leads up to the task of scrutinising what is left and deciding which of the items should be treated at length and which should be given more summary treatment.<sup>79</sup>

Following the recommendations of an internal report which she had herself commissioned,<sup>80</sup> a separate News section was created reporting directly to the Controller of Programmes. The reorganisation of News and Talks took place without Matheson's involvement and contributed to her departure. It led to the creation of a department including both News and Talks under the more trusted Charles Siepmann. This needs some explaining. Siepmann was a liberal just like Matheson and probably shared many of her views on broadcasting. There is no suggestion in any of the sources consulted for this research that his politics or social outlook were more conservative than Matheson's.<sup>81</sup> Indeed his contemporary, R.S. Lambert, claimed he had 'radical and progressive views which he did not trouble to conceal'.<sup>82</sup> But she had gone and he had been given an expanded role including responsibility for news. Perhaps Reith was simply impressed by Siepmann's character, described variously by Lambert as 'handsome' and 'gifted with subtle intelligence, versatility and great charm of manner, was ambitious and liked to have his own way'.<sup>83</sup> The decision, however turned out to be a mistake as both News and Talks were increasingly accused of left-wing bias in the press and also viewed with alarm by government ministers: 'The small news staff came under the control of the flourishing Talks department, an area of dangerous unpredictability, in ministerial eyes, which needed watching and consistently firm handling.'<sup>84</sup>

Reith's solution was to appoint John Coatman as Head of a separate News Department in 1935. As Briggs explains:

Professor John Coatman, former Professor of Imperial Economic Relations at the London School of Economics .. was deliberately brought in as 'right wing offset' to 'balance' the direction of talks and news. Reith had decided to divorce 'News and Topicality' from 'Talks' in May 1934, the first open sign that Siepmann's empire was about to disintegrate.<sup>85</sup>

The arrival of Coatman quickly and unsurprisingly caused tensions between him and Siepmann who was moved in June 1935 to Regional Programming. Coatman was then made Director of News and Sir Richard Maconachie became Director of Talks (February 1936) in what Briggs describes as a 'swing to the right'.<sup>86</sup> News and Talks were now split and both under the control of safe and conservative Directors. Scannell and Cardiff describe the press response to this, "the newspapers saw the separation of news from Talks as the BBC's 'Answer to Tory suspicions of radicalism.'<sup>87</sup> Within the BBC the split was seen as the result of the accusations of left-wing bias. With the Charter and Licence of the BBC due to expire on 31 December 1936, Reith, his lieutenants and the governors were sensitive to accusations of bias in Talks and News. Briggs states that Reith was touching on the subject of Charter renewal as early as 1933. The Ullswater Committee first sat in April 1935, two months before Siepmann's departure to the regions. Scannell and Cardiff describe in detail the 'battening down of the hatches' organised by the Assistant Controller of Programmes, Gladstone Murray. This included rejecting Talks department plans for talks on Communism and Fascism and one by the left-wing German dramatist, Ernst Toller who had left Hitler's Germany.<sup>88</sup> As things turned out, the Ullswater committee spent a lot of time discussing non-political issues such as regional policy and music. Their recommendations encouraged broadcasting on matters of dispute and suggested that more freedom should be permitted in News – there were no recommendations for Talks<sup>89</sup>.

What is striking about this period is the belief that the separation of news and from

comment (in other words, topical talks) was necessary to prevent bias or impartiality. It was believed that this would prevent the contamination of news by opinion and the validation of opinion as more than a subjective account. In the next chapter we will see that the reaction against this division led to news magazine programmes which had a strong current affairs component (such as *The World at One*, see below, Chapter 5). This was largely because without any comment, news programmes become dry and uninteresting. But for some broadcasters, perhaps for a generation, the distinction was an important broadcasting value which was part of Reith's legacy (a view held, with some reservations, by Ian Trethowan<sup>90</sup>). This led some to see themselves as 'current affairs broadcasters', a separate breed from journalists and this crucial distinction is central to the argument in the following chapter.

In the period which followed the split, News expanded, increasing its staff from six to thirty. BBC News also benefitted from the development of sound recording.<sup>91</sup> But radio talks did not benefit from separation from News. Under Matheson, Talks had thrived because of her drive and innovation and wholehearted commitment to the educational talk. Under Siepmann, there was a similar enthusiasm and ambition and his emphasis on the topical talk produced some new approaches. But under Sir Richard Maconachie, Talks became demoralised and cautious:

Sir Richard is a strong-minded man of firm principles, much disliking disorder anywhere. He has lived a large part of his life on the northern frontiers of India; and evidently enjoys a fight against odds. The task he set himself was a return to the old ideal of 'uplift' – but, alas, under circumstances that bereft it of meaning. It was not 'uplift' through adult education – for that was too radical; and not 'uplift' through journalism, because journalism is indecent, and can never be uplifting... Talks ran again in series, more solid than ever; topicality was eschewed; assistants continued to spend their days laboriously twiddling their pens in little white-washed rooms, thinking out ways of combining the edifying with the innocuous.<sup>92</sup>

That 'journalism is indecent' is important to note in the context of the division between Talks and News, and Maconachie's belief in 'uplift' is a reminder of the dominance of educational as opposed to more dangerous 'topical' broadcasting. He expresses perfectly the elitist contempt for journalists and the 'gutter press' as already noted. Maconachie did, however make one important contribution to talks which

had implications for the future. The Ullswater Committee, despite the collective paranoia on the part of senior BBC staff, 'commended the BBC's handling of controversy.'<sup>93</sup> The problem remained of how to deal with issues where there were contrasting opinions without being accused of bias. Maconachie's solution was the 'interlocutor' or interviewer:

The problem ... was to discover the best form in which such 'balanced controversy' could be presented to the public so as –

(a) to allow the speaker the greatest possible freedom of speech

(b) to forestall the tiresome charges of political bias, etc., to which our discussion of controversial subjects had too often given rise in the past.

Both these objects, in my opinion, have been achieved by the free use of the 'interlocutor technique', and cannot be achieved by any other method.<sup>94</sup>

And so the interview was born, not out of any desire to hold politicians to account as it is seen today but as a way of achieving balance and avoiding accusations of bias when handling controversial issues. As described in Chapter 6, the interview on *Analysis* was at first a curiously cautious, even anodyne technique and for some time the word 'interview' was eschewed and 'conversation with..' used instead. Recent controversy surrounding political interviews concerns the modern interrogative style but that has not always been the dominant mode and was certainly not what Maconachie envisaged and was not the style used on *Analysis*.

By the end of the 1930s, and then on through the war years and into the 1950s, News and Talks were organisationally separate. News was increasingly the business of journalists, and as Briggs describes,<sup>95</sup> the mid 1930s saw a number of appointments of former newspaper reporters to the BBC; Edgar Holt, the first person in BBC news to have previously worked as a newspaper journalist arrived in 1932, Vernon Bartlett, already mentioned was the BBC's first 'foreign correspondent'. Coatman, who had no journalistic experience himself appointed a number of staff who did, including R.T. Clark, Kenneth Adam and Anthony Wigan. As described above, the organisational split between News and Talks was perceived at the time as politically motivated but its consequences were profound as is explained in the next chapter. By the end of the

1930s an organisational and cultural divide between BBC journalism and those who provided comment on the news and affairs more generally was fully entrenched in the BBC. Much of what follows is an exploration of how the division between the more populist news broadcasters and more elitist talks producers and contributors was played out in BBC radio up to the 1980s.

### **BBC Talks and the Second World War**

The aim of this selective history is not to survey the development of the BBC talk in all its aspects but rather to identify those specific developments and examples which help shed light on *Analysis* from 1970 onwards. The war was a watershed for the corporation and at the end of it its reputation was greatly enhanced as Briggs notes, 'the sustaining effects of British broadcasting were noted almost everywhere as the war went on and as the BBC established a remarkable international reputation which it has never lost.'<sup>96</sup> But this enhanced reputation probably had little to do with the quality of radio talks and much more to do with the quantity, quality and innovation of its news, together with the much praised Light Entertainment programmes of which Tommy Handley's *It's That Man Again* is the most celebrated. Indeed, as Sian Nicholas points out, pre-war planning by a BBC committee thought that war-time radio would consist of plenty of news and very few if any talks:

Since listeners would presumably be preoccupied with the war, the Sub-Committee on War-Time programmes recommended that there be eight daily news bulletins of up to fifteen minutes in length, with news announcements on every hour on which a bulletin was not provided. The Talks Department, it was widely believed, would be surplus to requirements in the event of war.<sup>97</sup>

That the BBC thought that during a war news comment or 'topical talks' was unnecessary partly reflects the moribund state of the topical talk in Sir Richard Maconachie's Talks Department as well as the likely difficulty of broadcasting on topical themes under the eye of a censor.<sup>98</sup> A plan for war-time broadcasting in 1938 took the planning one step further but 'what is striking about these discussions, apart from the obsession with microphone security, ['Microphone security' meant preventing potentially dangerous views from being broadcast]

is the absence of any provision for independent news and current affairs analysis.’<sup>99</sup> One of the factors which jerked the BBC out of its complacency was the popularity of the Nazi propagandist, William Joyce (or ‘Lord Haw-Haw’ as he was popularly known.) Sean Street’s account of the commercial competition to the BBC in the 1930s reveals the extent and popularity of Joyce.<sup>100</sup> Audience research at the time showed that, ‘no less than 50% of those who listened to foreign stations (or nearly 27% of the whole population) listen to Hamburg [which broadcast Joyce’s talks] ... The statistic relating to Hamburg is a chilling one, touching as it does on one of the phenomena of the first years of the war, the extraordinary hold on the public imagination of the propaganda broadcasts of William Joyce.’<sup>101</sup>

The BBC’s response to Joyce was to use talks to challenge Nazi propaganda and talks became an important feature of BBC output for the rest of the war. A regular slot appeared for talks which followed the *Nine o’clock News*. For a while this was entitled *War Commentary* and was delivered by a military expert. Then, at the end of May and the beginning of June 1940, the British Expeditionary Force retreated from the German Army as it marched into the Low Countries and France. The BBC responded to the evacuation of the retreating BEF from Dunkirk by getting an announcer to read Churchill’s famous ‘we will fight them on the beaches’ speech which he had given that afternoon in the House of Commons. The following night a new contributor was brought to deliver the *Postscript to the News*, the novelist and broadcaster, J.B.Priestley. Priestley’s twenty talks that year were, according to Nicholas, ‘a national sensation’.<sup>102</sup> Her discussion of the success of these topical talks is worth quoting in full:

The popularity of the *Postscripts*, and Priestley’s transformation into the radio personality of 1940, indicates as much the dissatisfaction of the British people with what they were being offered as they do the undoubted craft of the author. In 1940 the Ministry of Information and the BBC were clearly failing to provide the information and the support that a people at war demanded. Not surprisingly, the listening audience wanted to know what was going on; they wanted to be talked with, not talked to. Above all, they welcomed diversity of opinion: in a war that was going to affect almost every aspect of their lives. The British people could not be expected to carry on as usual and trust to their leaders for the rest.<sup>103</sup>

Nicholas draws attention here to a number of factors contributing to Priestley's success. He talked about 'what was going on' and so responded to public demand. Although Priestley's talks barely count as current affairs they were crafted and expertly delivered attempts to interpret often terrifying events. His legacy was to show that a skilled, established and trusted talker, to use the terminology of post-war broadcasting, a 'professional' broadcaster, is an essential part of successful current affairs radio. Almost thirty years later, *Analysis* had learned that lesson and the quality of its presenters was perhaps the crucial part of its success. Like Priestley, they had the ability to 'talk with' rather than 'talk to' their listeners, as is examined in chapter 6 in some detail.

For the purposes of this thesis, the other important development in radio talks was the increased use of the magazine format. An abiding theme in this schematic account of the history of current affairs radio is the way individuals in the BBC become the agents of change over a period of time, carrying with them the lessons and values acquired on one programme which are then implemented on another. The talks producer, Janet Quigley, produced *The Kitchen Front*, a prototype magazine style talks programme. She was responsible in 1957 for turning rather loose ideas for a talks based 'Morning Miscellany' into the *Today* programme, the full expression of the current affairs magazine.<sup>104</sup> As is explained below, the talks magazine, *At Home and Abroad*, played a vital role as a training ground for the future creators of *Analysis* and of course in the continuing example of *Today* the magazine format remains a popular way of delivering current affairs broadcasting. Quigley's *The Kitchen Front* provided tips for housewives on cooking for the family but in its variety of talks, tips, celebrity guests, readers' letters and comedy sketches it reflected the BBC's willingness to provide information in a slightly more digestible and popular format.<sup>105</sup> The same could be said of the *Brain's Trust*, another unexpected phenomenon of the war. A panel of three regulars and two guests answered a wide variety of largely non-political questions and the programme became both extremely popular and highly influential.<sup>106</sup> As Seaton points out, the importance of this and

other innovative radio programmes between 1939 and 1945 was not necessarily that they were to be models for future broadcasting but rather that they represented changes in the corporation itself:

Perhaps the real significance of the *Brains Trust* was that it represented a shift not just in public attitudes, but in the Corporation's willingness to cater for them. Despite restrictions and political interference the '*Trust*' provided for and encouraged an immense public curiosity about the natural world, the world of affairs, and about questions of ethics, philosophy, and psychology, and doing so it began to foster a less aloof and distant image of the corporation.<sup>107</sup>

In the 1930s, topical talks had become timid and dull. The war had changed the BBC, as Seaton describes, and this more open and responsive broadcaster then had the task of explaining the very different world which emerged after 1945. It is useful to think of this transition as a move from the rather inflexible elitism of 1930s talks to the more responsive and populist approach made possible by war time developments.

### **BBC topical talks in the 1950s – the case of *At Home and Abroad***

The BBC was in some ways organisationally quite different in the late 1940s compared to the 1930s. William Haley, Director General 1944 – 1952 had devised a tripartite division of networks<sup>108</sup> during the last years of the war. The 'National and Regional Programme' had been combined into a single 'Home Service' at the beginning of the war and the Forces Programme was launched at the same time becoming the 'Light Programme' at the end of the war. In September 1946 the Third Programme was launched. It would be a mistake to overstate the similarities between these networks and Radios 2, 3 and 4 today. There was far more 'mixed programming' on all three networks and, although there was no news on the Third Programme,<sup>109</sup> there were talks on all three. In the second quarter of 1953 for example there were 86 current affairs talks on the Home Service, 58 on the Light Programme and 25 on the Third.<sup>110</sup>

Stephen Bonarjee was the first producer of *Topic for Tonight* in 1949:

It was designed to treat topical issues in terms which would 'interest and seem relevant to the experience of the average Light Programme listener, who perhaps left school at fourteen or fifteen and whose ideas on economics and politics are nebulous and parochial'. <sup>111</sup>

It is not difficult, as this quote shows, to identify the target audiences for the three programmes. The Light Programme with its entertainment focus, appealed to less well educated listeners. The Third, rarely achieving more than one per cent of all listeners, was aimed at 'persons of taste, of intelligence, and education.' <sup>112</sup> This left the Home Service (and to an extent its successor, Radio 4) occupying a slightly uncomfortable middle ground, as its first Controller felt:

(Lindsay) Wellington was sometimes worried that since 'by force of circumstances' it fell to the Home Service 'to honour most of the Corporation's public service obligations', 'sober commitments could only too easily make for inelastic and unexciting broadcasting'. <sup>113</sup>

Those obligations included news and talks. In addition to these organisational factors were two other factors which need to be addressed in order to understand talks and current affairs in the 1950s; the phenomenal growth of television and the nature of the decade itself.

Television resumed its service after its closure during the war years and 15,000 households had television sets in 1946.<sup>114</sup> In the immediate post war years more people were able to buy their own homes and television ownership grew:

...in 1951 there were two and a quarter million cars, one million television sets, and five million telephones in use in the country, by 1955 there were three and a quarter million cars, over five million television sets, and nearly six million telephones. <sup>115</sup>

Television had a direct impact on the size of radio audiences for both news and news related programmes. Briggs quotes figures which show that the proportion of the adult population listening to radio news on the Home Service fell from 14 per cent in 1955 to 5 per cent in 1960. A news related programme, *Any Questions*, on the Light Programme fell from 16 per cent in 1956 to 6 per cent in 1960. <sup>116</sup> Radio did

eventually regroup as seen in the launch of the *Today* programme in October 1957 (see below).

The growth of television was accompanied by the end of the BBC's monopoly and the launch of ITV in September 1955. The difference between this situation and that facing Hilda Matheson in the early 1930s was considerable. In the 1930s, Talks faced no competition at all. In the 1950s, however, there was competition from two other networks, from BBC television and increasingly from the very popular ITV. It was inevitable that audience share would fall. Television would do most damage where the visual component was important (especially news<sup>117</sup> and arguably drama and entertainment) whereas talks or current affairs, inevitably more concerned with ideas and explanations, had a better chance of survival. Added to this grim picture was the replacement of Haley (very much a radio man) by Sir Ian Jacob who placed particular emphasis on television (and news) and invested heavily in it.

But what of the 1950s themselves? Burns describes it as a revolutionary decade, different from those preceding it:

The 1950s had an apocalyptic quality... They were the years of the Bomb, of the computer, of the exploration of outer space and, of course, of television. All of these things were products of advanced technology, all were spectacular achievements of the twinned development of science and industry, and it was to science and industry that Western civilisation had become increasingly dedicated... But each of them carried its own menace – of universal holocaust, of subjection to a new technocracy of immeasurable consequence...<sup>118</sup>

This 'apocalyptic' decade presented the BBC with a challenge. The rapid succession of events and the momentous technological changes and their consequences had to be examined and explained. There was, to use the language of the times, a 'hunger for the topical'.<sup>119</sup>

This discussion of the radio talk in the 1950s and its evolution into what is now called current affairs centres on the innovative twice weekly series, *At Home and Abroad*. This example was chosen partly because it exemplifies the attempts in the BBC to

respond to the perceived hunger for topical material in the early part of the decade. The audience, increasingly consumerist and demanding, with increased choices of programming and media from which to choose had developed new appetites. Perhaps sensitive to a world changing in new and 'apocalyptic' ways, as Burns suggests, the new listener wanted to be better informed, especially about current events. This is what *At Home and Abroad* attempted to provide. To achieve this, it used a talks based 'current affairs magazine' format close to news in content and close to the news agenda.<sup>120</sup> In addition, *At Home and Abroad* became a useful training ground for future current affairs producers and presenters and in particular Tony Whitby, Ian McIntyre and 'Archie' Gordon. These three men, all of whom played a vital role in the creation of *Analysis* worked together on the talks magazine, *At Home and Abroad*. A decade later, having gone their different ways, they joined together to create a radically different version of current affairs radio.

As already explained, News and Talks were separate in the early 1950s. Under the general heading of 'The Spoken Word' were News Division and the separate Talks Division (led by Mary Somerville, a Reith appointee). As television expanded, Sound Broadcasting was split from Television Broadcasting and Talks Division survived in the former. The term Current Affairs as an organisational title first appeared in 1958 when 'Current Affairs Talks' was created in the Talks Division. This was preceded by a unit called 'Topical Talks' led by the 'Topical Talks Organiser', Stephen Bonarjee who led *At Home and Abroad* and went on to play a key role in the evolution of the *Today* programme.<sup>121</sup>

Written archives provide some insight into the discussions in the corporation leading to the creation of *At Home and Abroad*. In the immediate post-war BBC, talks, ranging from 5 minutes to an hour and scripted by an outside 'expert' in consultation with a BBC producer, were a staple in the radio schedules of all three Programmes (Home Service, Light Programme and the new Third Programme). There were about 5000 talks a year on radio but what were referred to as 'abiding themes' had priority

over 'topicality'.<sup>122</sup> To put it differently, the 'educational' talk promoted by Hilda Matheson had ascendancy over the topical talk. Briggs sees the emergence of talks magazines like *At Home and Abroad* as a response to a 'hunger for topicality', as this memo from Controller, Home Service to Mary Somerville expresses:

The whole world around us is in a state of revolution, and our first priority should be to interest the top half of the Home Service audience in what is happening, and also to increase their intelligent curiosity in, and understanding of, the contemporary world.<sup>123</sup>

In the BBC files from that period, the 'crisis of current affairs' is a persistent theme. It is particularly well expressed in an anonymous paper circulated within Talks Division:

The BBC's News Service has a remarkable reputation; unique among broadcasting organisations... It is efficient, authentic and in every sense professional... The BBC's 'Talks Service', at least so far as current affairs are concerned, enjoys no such standing. The public does not turn instinctively to the BBC for responsible background information or comment. The prevalent atmosphere tends to be one of apathy, provoked less readily to praise than to criticism and sometimes indeed to mistrust.<sup>124</sup>

In order to understand the birth of *At Home and Abroad*, this crisis needs to be examined. Two main causes are suggested here; the legacy of the 1930s (including the separation of Talks from News and the priority given to educational talks) and the policy of not using BBC staff to deliver comment on events but relying on a dwindling supply of outside 'experts'. Before considering these, some mention should be made of the Fourteen Day rule. The BBC was not allowed to broadcast discussions or comment on matters currently being debated in parliament (either house) or to be debated in the next two weeks. It is hard to know exactly how damaging this was to topicality but it was certainly a factor in the current affairs 'crisis' and was eventually abolished after the Suez Crisis at the end of 1956.

In some senses the traumatic experiences of the 1930s for radio Talks, including the departure of Matheson, the split with news and the imposition of a more reactionary regime under Maconachie, continued to echo around the Talks Department in the early 1950s. The crisis of current affairs can in part be traced back to the separation

of News and Talks and the caution imposed on the latter by Reith. The 'public schoolboys' had arrived to stifle earlier radicalism and 'topicality was eschewed.'<sup>125</sup> Mary Somerville was Controller, Talks<sup>126</sup> and had worked in BBC Talks since the 1920s and John Green was her Chief Assistant. Green was a man clearly influenced by Maconachie. He became a young producer under him and is quoted in Briggs from the obituary he wrote of Maconachie in the Times saying that he was 'loved' by all his colleagues.<sup>127</sup> Although John Green (who went on to succeed Mary Somerville as Controller, Talks in 1955) should probably be called 'old BBC'<sup>128</sup> and held on to many of the values and principles of the 1930s, his comments on the news/talks split are very perceptive and support the thesis presented here. In a definitive memorandum to Somerville he bemoaned the lack of liaison between News and Talks:

To a certain extent this ... is bound up with the dichotomy between News and Talks, which like much else sprang from a personal situation. The result of the Siepmann-Coatman quarrel has been no radio form of news (except Radio Newsreel which was initiated by Talks) and no 'leader' type talk. Instead we have reiterated the outmoded distinction between the newspaper on the one hand and the weekly/monthly reviews on the other. More serious is the fact that we have persuaded ourselves that a quite separate technical expertise is involved so that the news man is content to have judgement only of selection and the talks man has tended to have judgement only of moral validity.<sup>129</sup>

Green acknowledges in this quote the harmful effect of the News/Talk split and the division in the BBC between the 'news man' and the 'talks man'. This supports the argument presented here that to understand the background to the creation of *Analysis* in 1970 it is important to realise that the News/Talks split was not merely an organisational issue, it was, for some, a question of identity.

The critique of the BBC's news and talks provision was developed not only within Talks Division but outside the BBC as well. In his forensic discussion of the BBC, the American commentator, Burton Paulu provides us with an understanding of what was going wrong. He felt that the Talks department needed producers who were aware of their audience, 'but most of (Talks Department) producers are high minded scholars rather than showmen'.<sup>130</sup> What was needed were 'audience aware producers'. He thought that it was among these 'purveyors of culture and education'

that the least realistic understanding of the audience was to be found but he also suggested that the growing competition from television would encourage change.

One of the disadvantages of noncommercial monopoly appears in the disregard of the audience found among BBC broadcasters: perhaps the pressure of competition by the ITA will lead to more awareness of the listening and viewing public.<sup>131</sup>

Paulu saw the division of Talks from news as a source of difficulty, '...nor does the News Division have anything to do with commentaries and interpretations of the news or discussions of current affairs; these are the responsibility of the Department of Talks'.<sup>132</sup> In particular he highlighted the problems this creates for news. The old BBC anxiety about combining news and comment, such an important theme in this thesis, was for Paulu responsible for dull, cold and humourless news, 'like a foreign office communique'.

One of Paulu's most perceptive observations concerns the lack of 'professionalism'.<sup>133</sup> Following the tradition established by Matheson (and Reith) in the 1920s, the people who gave talks were chosen because they were felt to be experts and were no doubt people of 'calibre'. BBC staff produced the talks but the idea that a staff member might do the talking would have been seen as totally inappropriate.<sup>134</sup> The idea that a professional broadcaster might be a member of the BBC staff and specialised in making sense of the world for a topical hungry audience was not one which existed in the Talks Division as Paulu commented:

Although the BBC broadcasts news analyses almost every day of the week, it deliberately has avoided developing professional analysts of wide influence ... It does not build up a few men lest it risk their being accepted as the voices of the BBC.<sup>135</sup>

Paulu contrasts the situation in Britain with that in America where the professional broadcaster, for example, Ed Murrow, managed to organise and make sense of news and comment as professional communicators. One of their main tools was the interview which as I have described was introduced principally by Maconachie but

here again interviewers tended to be subject specialists not professional interview specialists<sup>136</sup>. In his autobiography, Ian Trethowan<sup>137</sup> discusses this issue:

The idea of an experienced specialist journalist explaining the events, or interviewing one of the participants to try to elicit more from him, was only grudgingly accepted, and mainly abroad, through the BBC's excellent foreign correspondents.<sup>138</sup>

Again making an American comparison, Trethowan is very critical of the quality of that essential current affairs tool, the interview in the 1950s. 'BBC interviews with British politicians were uncritical, verging on the fawning'.

Some of Paulu's ideas are also to be found in one of the many memos from John Green to Mary Somerville. He wrote for example in June 1953 complaining about the standard of talks and the problem of 'supply'.<sup>139</sup> Not only was this format becoming less appropriate and popular, it was also becoming harder to find the huge number of non BBC staff experts who had to do the talking. Interestingly, John Green sees the BBC's own staff in the shape of overseas correspondents (as Trethowan suggests above) as a solution to the supply problem. This was to become a feature of *At Home and Abroad* and heralded more recent (and controversial) reliance on BBC staff in current affairs and news programming. Despite the growth of the use of BBC staff in 'news sequences'<sup>140</sup> *Analysis* was to stand by the old BBC tradition of using non- BBC staff. The most striking example of this is described in Chapter 7 in the account of *Analysis* in Africa.

In the early 1950s, technology came to the aid of those who wanted to change current affairs output. The BBC was comparatively slow to convert from disc to magnetic tape. In 1951 all sound recording was on disc but in 1952 there were six EMI Midget recorders at Broadcasting House<sup>141</sup> and by 1955 tape had largely replaced the disc. The impact of tape recording on early current affairs broadcasting was slow to have effect but it had the potential to solve many problems identified in the 'current affairs crisis' and the perceived failure of Talks to provide adequate topical talks. Recording allowed unscripted discussions to be controlled and used effectively

in a magazine format. In one of the last issues of the *BBC Quarterly*, Nigel Balchin, having remarked that 'the conversation in my club is often far superior to any I have heard in a broadcast discussion' shows convincingly that taping discussions allows the producer to remove 'hesitations, repetitions, irrelevances and verbal and mental wooliness'.<sup>142</sup> Recording also allowed much greater control over content and that assurance was significant in its increased use in current affairs. Tape recording also made the 'supply' problem easier. Speakers, and even correspondents, could provide material from around the world and greatly improve variety and topicality of programme content. Indeed, by facilitating a move to more actuality, recording took production increasingly away from the studio and thereby undermined the increasingly old-fashioned radio talk.

Faced with the problem of producing topical, news related talks and armed with the new weapon of the Midget tape recorder, BBC Talks launched its new talks magazine, *At Home and Abroad* on 12 January 1954. Its first editor was the 'Organiser, Topical Talks', Stephen Bonarjee. Two extracts from *BBC Handbooks* of the time describe the programme:

The new magazine programme, *At Home and Abroad*, can accommodate up to ten talks in two half hour periods, providing authoritative comment on, and explanation of, subjects which may only have made news on the day of broadcast.<sup>143</sup>

*At Home and Abroad* brings together in two broadcast periods each week both those who are taking part in the making of events and those who are able to elucidate and comment on the events themselves.<sup>144</sup>

Bonarjee's enthusiasm and energy is striking in the memos and papers he wrote at the time. If the series was the radical initiative which is suggested here then it owes much to this man's commitment and vision. He believed in short talks from a wide pool of contributors and topicality was a priority. It was achieved by delaying decisions about programme content till the day of broadcast. It is probably true that Bonarjee was working against BBC tradition and in particular against the instincts of John Green who became his head of department on succeeding Mary Somerville.

Green, as already noted, was a perceptive commentator on the talks situation but he retained a deep suspicion of anything which looked like a populist solution. In this memorandum, he warns of the perils of the talks magazine:

The didactic becomes the discursive and so easier listening. It is for this reason that the magazine talk is favoured as a compromise between light listening and voluminous content. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that magazine talks always tend to lessen the moral responsibility of speakers and to diminish the sense of occasion.<sup>145</sup>

Green is suggesting here that the traditional Talks contributor had a 'moral responsibility' or duty to use his or her expertise responsibly when speaking to an audience of millions – a moral quality which tends to be diminished by the magazine format. Like Green, Bonarjee also held many of the traditional Talks attitudes. He was reluctant at first to embrace the use of recordings, subscribing to the orthodox view that live talks were far preferable. He also upheld the traditional view of the importance of attracting speakers of 'calibre' and proudly lists 'distinguished contributors' to *At Home and Abroad*.<sup>146</sup> However, his reviews of the series tend to highlight the importance of topicality and he was obviously committed to it even at the expense of traditional BBC caution. In his paper on the fiftieth broadcast<sup>147</sup> he gives a special place to the success of that programme in having a five minute piece on the fall of Dien Bien Phu. This had been announced on the news only three hours before *At Home and Abroad* was due on air and had meant recasting the whole broadcast.

After a year of the series his article for *Radio Times* once again stressed the importance of topicality:

The producers concerned would freely concede that the most exhilarating - if sometimes exhausting - factor in their work springs from the challenge of 'immediacy'. Speed in operation and good timing are the essence of the professional problem involved. This was strikingly illustrated by the special interview with the Chinese premier...

The producer, equipped with a tape recorder, had taken the night plane to Geneva to supervise arrangements, and the tapes reached Broadcasting House just in time...<sup>148</sup>

Another innovation which reflects Bonarjee's move away from the traditional talks

format was his enthusiasm for the interview (now seen as the core of radio current affairs provision). In the same Radio Times article, he states that the interview was an important innovation and its use had been greatly expanded, 'normally each broadcast includes an 8-9 minute interview...'.<sup>148</sup>

Despite the innovations brought about by Bonarjee the programme schedules look worthy and dull from today's perspective. *At Home Abroad* on 15 March 1955 consisted of five items in the customary half hour slot following the fifteen minute 9 o'clock news bulletin:

Situation in Formosa

Eden's visit to Turkey

Glut of frozen meat supplies

Defence of Canada's North West frontier

Britain's need for new hotels<sup>149</sup>

But *At Home and Abroad* could also be controversial. In October 1954 Bonarjee arranged an interview with the Cypriot leader, Archbishop Makarios who led the Enosis movement for union with Greece and was seen as a communist agitator by the Churchill government. Makarios had been interviewed on BBC television and Bonarjee had characteristically seized the opportunity to get his own interview. The result was a furious response from Churchill:

I do not consider that the BBC should be used for the publicising of people hostile to this country and the gratuitous advertisement of their case...

I cannot believe that men with so distinguished a record of service as yourself and Sir Ian Jacob could have been content to stand by and see the BBC used to exploit anti-colonial prejudice for the satisfaction of those whose greatest wish is to destroy the British Commonwealth and Empire.<sup>150</sup>

*At Home and Abroad* maintained its magazine format and was little changed up to its demise in 1960. The new Director General, Hugh Carleton Greene, took the decision to move the Home Service evening news from 9p.m. to 10p.m.<sup>151</sup> The

earlier news bulletin together with *At Home and Abroad* were replaced by the new news and current affairs programme, *Ten o'Clock*. Greene had taken the radical step of combining news and comment in a format not unlike the *Today* programme (launched in July 1958). His hand was probably forced by the continued leakage of radio's audience to television. *Ten o'Clock* replaced *At Home and Abroad* but was similar to it and provided current affairs radio five days a week:

There would be scope after a 10 p.m. news for a fuller discussion of current affairs. *At Home and Abroad*, broadcast on Tuesdays and Fridays, had been a success, but 'a still more lively and comprehensive service could be given if time was available every night for current affairs.'<sup>152</sup>

These changes, however resulted in 'a sharp, immediate public reaction to the change'.<sup>153</sup> Even the Archbishop of Canterbury expressed his concern, suggesting that the BBC was departing from the established practice of separating news from comment. The original division of these two parts of the BBC had assumed a moral dimension and it was felt by those who opposed the replacement of *At Home and Abroad* by *Ten o'clock* that the truthfulness of the news might be contaminated by the subjectivity of comment.

The radicalism of *At Home and Abroad* lies not so much in its content, although as the Makarios case shows there was the potential to be deeply unpopular with the government, but rather in its topicality, use of tape recording, use of interviews and discussion and a growing sensitivity to the audience. The series inspired the creation of the *Today* programme, arguably the most important of all British radio current affairs programmes. Paul Donovan's history of *Today*<sup>154</sup> examines the origins of the programme using archive sources and there is no need to repeat his very useful account.

### Summary and Conclusion

Hilda Matheson and her successor, Charles Siepmann ran a BBC Talks Department from 1928 – 1935 which included a tiny news staff. Matheson, like Reith, was

primarily interested in the educational talk. Despite attempts to address unemployment, the main topical issue of the day, a mixture of anxiety and conservatism on Reith's part and the appointment of the deeply conservative and anti-journalistic Richard Maconachie, prevented the development of successful topical talks. The division of Talks from News in 1935 reinforced a talks policy characterised by caution and was to enshrine a split between news and comment in the BBC for at least another three decades. Matheson pioneered the use of the microphone by the cultural elite, despite profound reservations on their part about the masses, education and the mass media. By the start of the war the topical talk had no place in the plans for war-time broadcasting but that was to change rapidly as a result of the success of the Nazi propagandist, William Joyce. The popularity of Joyce's broadcasts necessitated a BBC response which was partly provided by J.B. Priestley who showed the power of the topical talk in 'expert' hands. The war years, with two networks available, made the BBC experiment with more populist approaches and the magazine format was fully developed with implications for the future of the topical radio talk.

After the relative success of the war years the BBC returned to a cautious and highly traditional approach to current affairs in the late 1940s and early 1950s. This caution contributed to the 'crisis of current affairs', the failure of Talks to respond to the perceived 'hunger for topicality' in the audience. The solution was the current affairs magazine of which *At Home and Abroad* (1954 – 1960) was the most significant. This was quickly followed by the creation of the *Today* programme in 1957. Although the magazine format had succeeded, however, traditional and more elitist notions of current affairs broadcasting survived and would resurface in 1970 with the launch of *Analysis*.

Two main themes have emerged in this chapter. The meaning of 'current affairs', a term not used at the time but identifiable in the topical talks tradition and made separate from news by organisational changes in the mid thirties, can usefully be

traced back to pre-war broadcasting. Secondly, the elitism of BBC Talks is clear and the problematic relationship between the intellectual classes and the BBC, especially in the light of recent literature on 'the intellectuals', is addressed. These two themes, elitism and the specificity of current affairs will help make sense of the birth and nature of *Analysis* discussed below.

In the period covered by this chapter, 1928 – 1960, comment on national and international political economic and social issues on BBC radio was transformed from the marginalised topical talk in the 1930s to the current affairs magazine in the 1950s. Despite the considerable change in delivery and programme format, current affairs radio was defined as comment on events which was seen as a separate activity from the reporting of news. The division between the educational and topical talk in the 1930s and the splitting of News from Talks in 1935 established in the BBC the divide between fact and opinion noted by Anthony Smith in the Victorian press. Even in the magazine format of *At Home and Abroad*, Stephen Bonarjee created a talks programme which although close to the news was resolutely different from it. The distinction between news and current affairs has a philosophical or logical grounding in statements of fact (verifiable) and statements of opinion (not verifiable) and no doubt this contributes to ideas of separateness, but there is also a social class dimension here. Some current affairs broadcasters saw themselves as generalists, able and licensed to comment intelligently on events and quite different from journalists, the largely working class and self educated 'scribblers' so derided by the literary elite. Running throughout this thesis is the (elitist) notion that current affairs, at least in the minds of some senior BBC staff, was intellectually and generically distinct from news, and that current affairs broadcasters were different and indeed of higher 'calibre' than journalists. Chapter 5 explores how this fundamental split led to the creation of *Analysis*, perhaps the purest expression of current affairs.

It is difficult to think of current affairs on radio and television today without associating it with presenters; John Humphrys and James Naughtie on Radio 4's

*Today* programme and Jeremy Paxman on BBC2's *Newsnight* are good examples from the turn of the century. In the 1930s, and more generally in topical talks, the chosen speaker was a specialist on that issue, brought to the microphone either because of their eminence or because of their specialist knowledge. The words used by Sian Nicholas to describe talks by J.B. Priestley, 'the undoubted craft of the author' allude to an expertise in communication rather than specialist knowledge. The idea of the 'professional' in current affairs radio does of course suggest a breadth of knowledge of current affairs and beyond but in Burton Paulu's critique of the 1950s BBC it refers primarily to skills of presentation and communication. The lack of professionalism in the Talks Department was seen by Paulu as a fundamental weakness. In Chapters 5 and 6 this theme is revisited and especially the professionalism of the presenters of *Analysis* and the associated idea of 'calibre' with its connotations of distinction and licence.

Chapter 5 looks at the creation of *Analysis* at the end of a decade in which the populists of current affairs had further eroded the distinction between news and current affairs. The 1960s ended with a crisis for the BBC following the publication of the controversial *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, a crisis which gave the elitists their opportunity.

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<sup>1</sup> Talks and News (capitalised first letters) is used to refer to departments or organisational units within the BBC whereas 'talks and news' refer to different programme genres or different content.

<sup>2</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, 156.

<sup>3</sup> Anthony Smith, *Television and Political Life* (London: Macmillan, 1979), 33.

<sup>4</sup> The BBC's journalists around the world are of course 'BBC Correspondents' and not 'BBC reporters'.

<sup>5</sup> Briggs, Vol. 2, 147.

<sup>6</sup> Sean Street, *A Concise History of British Radio* (Tiverton: Kelly Publications, 2003), 30.

<sup>7</sup> John Reith, General Manager of the British Broadcasting Company 1922-1926, Director General of the British Broadcasting Corporation 1927 - 1938.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Tracey, "The BBC and the General Strike: May 1926" In *British Television: A Reader*, edited by E. Buscombe. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000.

<sup>9</sup> Report of the Broadcasting Committee, 1925 quoted in Tracey, "The BBC and the General Strike."

<sup>10</sup> Tracey, "The BBC and the General Strike."

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- <sup>11</sup> But fully discussed in Briggs, *Vol. 2*; Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting* and Ian McIntyre. *The Expense of Glory: A Life of John Reith*. London: Harper Collins 1994.
- <sup>12</sup> The General Post Office under the Post Master General was the government department responsible for broadcasting.
- <sup>13</sup> Ian McIntyre, 147.
- <sup>14</sup> Together with a small group of influential colleagues as I discuss in Chapter 5.
- <sup>15</sup> Fred Hunter “Hilda Matheson and the BBC, 1926 – 1940.” In *Women and Radio*, edited by Caroline Mitchell. London: Routledge, 2000. Hunter’s article usefully places Matheson’s work in the context of her life. It does however contain on important error, the ‘Red Woman’ in Reith’s diaries was not Matheson but Mrs Snowden, a governor of the BBC.
- <sup>16</sup> Hunter, 42.
- <sup>17</sup> Scannell and Cardiff *A Social History of British Broadcasting*.
- <sup>18</sup> R.S.Lambert, *Ariel and His Quality*.
- <sup>19</sup> R.S. Lambert quoted in Hunter, 44.
- <sup>20</sup> Hunter, 43.
- <sup>21</sup> Reith, 2 February 1927 quoted in Briggs *Vol. 2* 150.
- <sup>22</sup> Bridson, 52.
- <sup>23</sup> Bridson, 20.
- <sup>24</sup> *The Listener* magazine in the 1930s consisted mainly of transcripts of broadcast talks.
- <sup>25</sup> *The Listener* 6 July 1932.
- <sup>26</sup> Jean Seaton and Ben Pimlott, ‘The struggle for ‘balance’.’ In *The Media in British Politics*, edited by Jean Seaton and Ben Pimlott. Aldershot: Avebury, 1987, 137.
- <sup>27</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, 66.
- <sup>28</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, 169.
- <sup>29</sup> Bridson, 31.
- <sup>30</sup> Reith quoted in Scannell and Cardiff, 140.
- <sup>31</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, 345.
- <sup>32</sup> Seaton and Pimlott, 137.
- <sup>33</sup> Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses*.
- <sup>34</sup> D.L.LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy: Mass Communication and the Cultivated Mind in Britain Between the Wars* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988) 107.
- <sup>35</sup> Rose, 393.
- <sup>36</sup> Virginia Woolf distinguished between the university educated, modernist ‘high-brows’, the uneducated ‘low brows’ and the mainly self-taught, working class ‘middle brows’. Virginia Woolf, ‘Middlebrow’ in *Collected Essays* (New York: Brace and World, 1967), 196-203.
- <sup>37</sup> Discussed in the next chapter.
- <sup>38</sup> F.R.Leavis, *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture* (Cambridge: The Minority Press, 1930).
- <sup>39</sup> Carey, 6 – 7.
- <sup>40</sup> Rose, 418.
- <sup>41</sup> Nietzsche quoted in Carey, 7.
- <sup>42</sup> Carey, 107.
- <sup>43</sup> Carey, 15.
- <sup>44</sup> See references to the views of both T.S.Eliot and Virginia Wolf in Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working Class Life With Special Reference to Publications and Entertainments*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1971.
- <sup>45</sup> LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy*.
- <sup>46</sup> Briggs *Vol. 2*, 127.
- <sup>47</sup> He certainly found her charming; according to Michael Carney in his biography of Matheson *Stoker: The Life of Hilda Matheson OBE 1888 – 1940* (Llangynog: Michael Carney, 1999), 45 ‘... she described to Vita (Sackville-West) a squalid and unpleasant approach he made to her in his flat at the very top of the St.Ermin’s building near St James’s Park.’
- <sup>48</sup> LeMahieu, 103.

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<sup>49</sup> Arnold, Matthew. *Culture and Anarchy*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1932.

<sup>50</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, 9.

<sup>51</sup> LeMahieu provides an interesting discussion of the confusion in the minds of the literary elite in his account of the ideas of the Cambridge academic, I.A.Richards. On the one hand, Richards shared many of the ultra-elitist views of the Bloomsbury set, for whom the masses were forever distanced from high culture, but he also believed in the responsibility of the elite to perform an uplifting role in the cause of social solidarity. He believed that through education (and therefore educational broadcasting) art could be appreciated by the lower social classes, LeMahieu, 135. This attitude is particularly well captured by Tom Burns who refers to, 'those who saw the proper role of the BBC in the life of the nation as exemplary, its civilising effects in cultural terms were something which should be matched in increasing the amount and the quality of information, and the level of sophistication among the public at large..' Tom Burns, 149.

<sup>52</sup> Cited in LeMahieu, 317.

<sup>53</sup> Carney, 39.

<sup>54</sup> R.S.Lambert the editor of *The Listener* from 1929 was previously Head of the Adult Education Section, a post which then went to Charles Siepmann who became Matheson's deputy and then her replacement. The educational bias in *The Listener* may reflect Lambert's interest in educational talks, shared by Matheson.

<sup>55</sup> *The Listener* 9 November 1932.

<sup>56</sup> BBC Radio 4's *In Our Time* (presented by Melvyn Bragg) is a good example of educational programming and is part of a dramatic increase in educational programming generally in BBC radio and television. This emphasis on learning and improvement is also seen in the BBC's huge and explicitly educational web site.

<sup>57</sup> Concern about the ignorance of soldiers led to the establishment of the Army Bureau of Current Affairs at the beginning of the Second World War (Rose, 222).

<sup>58</sup> Briggs, Vol. 1, 146.

<sup>59</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*..

<sup>60</sup> *The Listener* 13 July 1932.

<sup>61</sup> Lacey, 29.

<sup>62</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, 58-9.

<sup>63</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, 60.

<sup>64</sup> J.B.Mais in *The Listener* 25 January 1933 quoted in Scannell and Cardiff, 60.

<sup>65</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, 61.

<sup>66</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, 60.

<sup>67</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, 68.

<sup>68</sup> Jean Seaton, 'Reith and the denial of politics.' In *Power Without Responsibility: The Press and Broadcasting in Britain, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition*, edited by James Curran and Jean Seaton London: Routledge, 1997.

<sup>69</sup> Andrew Boyle, *Only the Wind Will Listen* (London: Hutchinson, 1972), 254.

<sup>70</sup> Lambert, 68 – 69.

<sup>71</sup> Seaton in Curran and Seaton, 125.

<sup>72</sup> Seaton in Curran and Seaton, 125.

<sup>73</sup> Although Siepmann does not earn a mention in McIntyre's detailed exploration of Reith's private life (McIntyre, *The Expense of Glory*).

<sup>74</sup> The love affair ended in the first few months of 1931. Her father, whom she adored, had died in September 1930.

<sup>75</sup> Carney, 71.

<sup>76</sup> Briggs, Vol. 2, 141.

<sup>77</sup> It is worth noting here that the perception of the BBC as a news gathering and disseminating organisation, and even that this is its primary role, is comparatively new. I am grateful to Andrew Crisell of the University of Sunderland who has suggested in correspondence that there persisted within the BBC up to the Second World War and afterwards, "a certain contempt for politicians and those things which were marked by the topicality and ephemerality of politics." It could be argued that the BBC's 'news era'

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began with the appointment of the former Director of News and Current Affairs, Hugh Carleton Greene as Director General in 1960.

<sup>78</sup> It could be argued that these are not qualities of contemporary current affairs radio.

<sup>79</sup> *The BBC Year Book 1933*, 178.

<sup>80</sup> The 'Macer-Wright' report see Scannell and Cardiff, 113.

<sup>81</sup> Scannell and Cardiff for example 153 – 160 describe Siepmann and Matheson as like-minded and both were committed to 'the creation of an informed public opinion'.

<sup>82</sup> Lambert, 66.

<sup>83</sup> Lambert, 70.

<sup>84</sup> Boyle, 254.

<sup>85</sup> Briggs *Vol. 2*, 147. The quotes are from Reith's diary.

<sup>86</sup> Briggs *Vol. 2*, 148.

<sup>87</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, 118.

<sup>88</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, 156 - 159

<sup>89</sup> Briggs (1965), 501.

<sup>90</sup> Trethowan, 80.

<sup>91</sup> A bewildering variety of systems were used including the Blattnerphone steel tape machine, the Wats disc and the Philips Miller sound-on-film device. All described in Street, *A Concise History of British Radio*, 49.

<sup>92</sup> Lambert, 85-86.

<sup>93</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, 170.

<sup>94</sup> Maconachie quoted in Scannell and Cardiff, 171.

<sup>95</sup> Asa Briggs *The BBC: The First Fifty Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 117 – 118.

<sup>96</sup> Briggs, *Volume 3*, 11.

<sup>97</sup> Nicholas, 19.

<sup>98</sup> The Ministry of Information monitored and intervened in the work of the BBC throughout the war.

<sup>99</sup> Nicholas, 19.

<sup>100</sup> Street, *Crossing the Ether*.

<sup>101</sup> Street, *Crossing the Ether*, 250.

<sup>102</sup> Nicholas, 60.

<sup>103</sup> Nicholas, 61.

<sup>104</sup> Donovan, 7.

<sup>105</sup> Nicholas, 76-85.

<sup>106</sup> Seaton in Curran and Seaton, 137.

<sup>107</sup> Seaton in Curran and Seaton, 138.

<sup>108</sup> The term 'network' (to refer, for example to Radio 4) was not widely used till the late 1960s. Before then both 'programme' and 'service' were variously used.

<sup>109</sup> The first news bulletin was broadcast on the Third Programme in 1963 (at 11pm) see Humphrey Carpenter *The Envy of the World: Fifty Years of the BBC Third Programme and Radio 3 1946 – 1996* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1996), 214.

<sup>110</sup> Briggs *The BBC: The First Fifty Years*, 252 – 253.

<sup>111</sup> Briggs *The BBC: The First Fifty Years*, 248 (source of the quote not given).

<sup>112</sup> William Haley in Carpenter, 12.

<sup>113</sup> Briggs, *The BBC: The First Fifty Years*, 253.

<sup>114</sup> Crisell, 73.

<sup>115</sup> Briggs, *The BBC: The First Fifty Years*, 278.

<sup>116</sup> Briggs, *Volume 5*, 222 – 223.

<sup>117</sup> Crisell describes the vitality and visual panache of ITN (the ITV news provider) which was set up in 1955. Apart from having some of the best presenters, ITN used 'an unprecedented quantity of film' and 'managed to send back the only film - shots of Port Said - from the 1956 Suez War, and in the following year gained an exclusive interview in Cairo with Britain's arch-enemy, President Nasser.' Crisell, *Introductory History of British Broadcasting*, 98.

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- <sup>118</sup> Burns, 46 – 47.
- <sup>119</sup> Lindsay Wellington, Controller Home Service 6 April 1950 quoted in Briggs, *Vol. 4*, 580
- <sup>120</sup> *At Home and Abroad* led directly to the *Today* programme and shared the current affairs magazine format. They were both edited by Stephen Bonarjee.
- <sup>121</sup> Donovan, *All our Todays*.
- <sup>122</sup> Briggs, *Volume IV*, 580.
- <sup>123</sup> Lindsay Wellington, Controller Home Service 6 April 1950 quoted in Briggs, *Vol. 4*, 580.
- <sup>124</sup> Anonymous paper entitled 'Current Affairs' BBC Written Archive Centre (henceforth WAC) R13/408/7 5<sup>th</sup> March 1953.
- <sup>125</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, 160.
- <sup>126</sup> Somerville was a Reith appointee from the 1920s and the distinct impression gained from reading the archives is that she did not understand the broadcasting world of the 1950s. Michael Carney describes her as attributing to herself Matheson's own achievements, including being the first talks producer, 'In this confused memory she had transformed herself into Hilda Matheson' Carney, 77.
- <sup>127</sup> Briggs *Vol. 2*, 149
- <sup>128</sup> Ian McIntyre's account of his interview with Green when McIntyre first joined the BBC supports this view, interview with Ian McIntyre, 26 February, 1999.
- <sup>129</sup> Green to Somerville 29 May 1953 WAC R13/408/7
- <sup>130</sup> Burton Paulu, *British Broadcasting: Radio and Television in the United Kingdom* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), 121.
- <sup>131</sup> Paulu, 121.
- <sup>132</sup> Paulu, 157.
- <sup>133</sup> As discussed in Chapter 2, the term 'professionalism' is open to a variety of definitions. In Paulu's case he equates it with expertise.
- <sup>134</sup> This tradition of using non BBC staff as presenters was very influential in the case of *Analysis*. McIntyre himself was not on the staff when employed as the main presenter in 1970.
- <sup>135</sup> Paulu, 174.
- <sup>136</sup> It does help to contrast the situation then with current affairs output at the time of writing. The influential *Today* programme (a news based current affairs magazine) is presented by experienced, professional BBC staff members (most notably, John Humphrys). They use the interview as their main technique and through it provide an implicit commentary on events which gives meaning, interest and pace to the programme.
- <sup>137</sup> Ian Trethowan was Director of Radio when *Analysis* began.
- <sup>138</sup> Trethowan, 80.
- <sup>139</sup> WAC R13/408/7 19<sup>th</sup> June 1953.
- <sup>140</sup> The term 'news sequences' has come to refer to magazine style programmes which combine news and comment, most notably the *Today* programme.
- <sup>141</sup> Briggs, *Vol. 4*, 582.
- <sup>142</sup> Nigel Balchin 'The Unscripted Discussion' in *BBC Quarterly*, Volume 6, April 1953 – January 1954
- <sup>143</sup> *BBC Handbook* 1955, 54.
- <sup>144</sup> *BBC Handbook* 1957, 67.
- <sup>145</sup> Green 'Note on Current Affairs Talks' 23 October 1952 WAC R13 408/7
- <sup>146</sup> 'At Home and Abroad Contributors' 1 July 1954 WAC R51/106/3.
- <sup>147</sup> WAC R44/22 20 July 1954
- <sup>148</sup> Stephen Bonarjee "At Home and Abroad celebrates its first birthday" *Radio Times* 7 January 1955
- <sup>149</sup> WAC R44/22.
- <sup>150</sup> Churchill to Cadogan (Chairman of the Board of Governors) 22 October 1955 WAC R51/107
- <sup>151</sup> Briggs, *Vol. 5*, 327.
- <sup>152</sup> *Radio Times* 16 September 1960 quoted in Briggs *Vol V*, 326.
- <sup>153</sup> *Radio Times* 16 September 1960 quoted in Briggs *Vol V*, 327.
- <sup>154</sup> Donovan (1998).

## 5.

### THE BIRTH OF ANALYSIS, 1960 - 1970

This chapter continues the history of BBC current affairs radio which at the end of Chapter 4 had reached 1960 and the end of *At Home and Abroad*. It will explore the institutional context of the creation of *Analysis* in 1970 by explaining developments throughout the 1960s and in particular the growth of programmes on the BBC which combined news and comment. The 1960s was a troubled time for BBC radio as competition from television continued to erode radio audiences in an era when 'post-television' radio in Britain had yet to find a way of competing with the relatively new medium. The solution to BBC radio's problems was outlined in the pamphlet, *Broadcasting in the Seventies*<sup>1</sup> which signalled the move to 'format radio', in other words the creation of separate radio networks targeting different audiences and featuring different radio output. This change, and others associated with it, led to a hostile reaction from the cultural elite<sup>2</sup> and this created an opportunity for a group of men who subscribed to more traditional BBC ideas about news and comment (that they should be separate) to create *Analysis*. Who these men were and how they met is significant for a history of current affairs radio and is described here. It is also significant as an illustration of the informal networks in the BBC described in the study by Tom Burns of the corporation written at the time.<sup>3</sup> Finally, the importance of the presenter in *Analysis* is explained and the idea of the professional current affairs broadcaster is discussed.

Although 1969 and the publication of *Broadcasting in the Seventies* is seen as a defining moment in the establishment of radio, in reality many of the significant changes had already taken place. Two changes are relevant and need examination. The first was an accelerated loosening throughout the decade of the distinction between news and current affairs to which the creation of *Analysis* can be seen as a reaction. The second was the evolution from the tripartite arrangement of networks (Home Service, Light Programme and Third Programme) which all contained elements of mixed programming<sup>4</sup> to 'format' radio<sup>5</sup> in which programmes of the

same genre and with the same target audience were scheduled in separate networks. Both of these developments are particularly significant for a history of *Analysis*.

As noted in the previous chapter, in 1960 the newly created Director General of the BBC, Hugh Greene closed down *At Home and Abroad* and the solidly factual *Nine O'clock News* (which had been in existence since the 1920s) and created a daily news and current affairs programme, *Ten o'Clock*. Briggs records the complaints made about this fusion of fact and comment including a letter to *The Times* from the Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>6</sup> Despite the protests over *Ten o'Clock*, Greene further consolidated news and current affairs under the Editor of News and Current Affairs in June 1960, a role which he then absorbed into his own as Director General. The anxieties expressed about these changes are important if only because to the modern listener, so used to news and comment in one programme, they are difficult to comprehend. The author and critic, Joanna Richardson was particularly critical of the abolition of the *Nine O'clock News*:

The BBC should keep news and comment absolutely distinct. It should not concede too much to popularity; and it should cater for listeners .. who like to have the news straight, and form their own opinions.<sup>7</sup>

This concern that news and comment should be kept separate was the orthodox view in the BBC but one that Greene and the senior managers of BBC radio were clearly prepared to challenge. Three men in particular, Frank Gillard, Gerard Mansell and Richard Marriott, were responsible for radical changes to BBC radio to which *Analysis* was a reaction.

Frank Gillard was something of a radio visionary. His varied background included a celebrated career as a BBC war correspondent<sup>8</sup>, his time spent away from the constraints of the BBC in London at West Region (where among other innovations he created *Any Questions*<sup>9</sup>) and his inspiring encounter with American local radio which made him into an enthusiastic advocate of local radio in Britain.<sup>10</sup> Gillard was eventually lured away from West Region to become Director of Sound Broadcasting in 1963. He established his credentials as a man of action by abolishing both *Children's Hour* (1927 – 1964) and the Features Department. As Features had been the home of some of the most innovative and challenging radio, servicing almost

exclusively the Third Programme and staffed by some of radio's most famous names (including Laurence Gilliam, Louis McNeice and D.G. Bridson), its abolition was a brave if perhaps unsurprising move as Bridson himself confessed:

... the end of Features Department came as no great surprise to me: I merely deplored it as yet another wrong decision at the top, this one more likely than any other to put an end to the kind of radio I valued. The end would possibly have come sooner than it did but for the advocacy of Lindsay Wellington and his personal loyalty to Gilliam. With his retirement in 1963, there was apparently nothing to delay it further.<sup>11</sup>

The abolition of the Features Department is not directly relevant to this discussion but it does show both Gillard's radicalism (in his willingness to abolish such a well established department) and the climate of change in BBC radio at the time.

The other interesting appointment of a 'radical' was Gerard Mansell's promotion to Chief of the Home Service in May 1965. Like Gillard, Mansell had not come from BBC radio's natural London centre at Broadcasting House but had spent the previous fourteen years at Bush House, the home of External Services. Mansell went on to chair the key Policy Study Group on the final report of which *Broadcasting in the Seventies* was largely based. Mansell believed in format radio as a cost effective and practical way of delivering diverse content in the modern, televisual world and by 1970 his ideas had won the day.<sup>12</sup> Another important figure who added to the spirit of change in radio in the mid 1960s was Richard Marriott who had been Wellington's Chief Assistant (Mansell's Chief Assistant was Clare Lawson Dick). Curiously, Marriott retained the title 'Assistant Director of Sound Broadcasting' at least till 1967. During the 1960s, Gillard, Mansell and Marriott were to have a profound effect on the organisation of speech radio in particular as the remainder of this chapter describes.

Under Gillard's direction, the radio networks were reorganised and renamed. The detail of this is not directly relevant here but a brief account is necessary. After the failed experiments with the Third Programme in the late 1950s and early 1960s in which niche services<sup>13</sup> replaced the usual high brow programming in the early evening, a 'Music Programme' was introduced which filled the time between 7 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. Given that the Third Programme also included some sport and educational programmes, it had lost any coherent identity. Meanwhile 'Pirate

Radio' had started with Radio Caroline in 1964 beaming pop music to huge audiences of young people in Britain mainly from ships moored in the North Sea. In June 1967 legislation dealt with the pirates by making it illegal to service their ships.<sup>14</sup> A few months later BBC Radio 1 was launched. At the same time Gillard renamed his other networks: Radios 2, 3 and 4 were born. These were not, however, simply name changes. Mansell's Radio 4 was emerging as the main place for news and current affairs. He had started down that road with the introduction of *The World at One* in 1965 and he had ambitions to transfer more news and current affairs output onto Radio 4:

There was (in 1967) a general climate in which it was understandable that more news and current affairs should be injected into Radio 4. ... I was at that point already thinking of the future shape of Radio 4. And I was casting a hungry eye on what was then the Light Programme and became Radio 2, because they carried Radio Newsreel in the evening, and I was really thinking that Radio 4 should be moving in the direction of being the main provider of news and current affairs in BBC Radio.<sup>15</sup>

So the move towards format radio had begun well before the publication of *Broadcasting in the Seventies* and Mansell was an important agent in that process. He was supported by Richard Marriott whose Working Party looked at the organisation of radio in 1967 and 1968. In the mid 1950s, aware of the increasing competition from television and, perhaps more worryingly, Radio Luxembourg, Marriott had set up a Sound Working Party<sup>16</sup> whose remit was to modernise and cut costs. Briggs reminds us that in 1958, for the first time, the number of joint radio and television licences exceeded the number of radio only licences and also that the expenditure on television exceeded that for radio.<sup>17</sup> The report of the Marriott committee was presented a year earlier and contained statements about broadcasting which were distinctly non-Reithian. It argued that the BBC should continue to maintain,

... the best professional standards of composition, production and performance and the highest standards of integrity and impartiality.. [in future it should] ... seek to cater for the needs and tastes of its audiences without seeking, as it perhaps had done too much in the past to alter and improve them.<sup>18</sup>

This extract reflects a move away from Reithian ideas of improvement towards a more populist interest in the perceived 'needs and tastes of its audiences'. The significance of Marriott's views are to be found in the report of his Working Group in January 1969 which formed the basis of the report of the Policy Study Group

which in turn was the basis for *Broadcasting in the Seventies*. Marriott suggested 'generic programme services' including the proposals that Radio 3 should be predominantly serious music and Radio 4 mainly the 'spoken word'. Radio 4 should also become the principal location of news and current affairs.<sup>19</sup> In the final year before the publication of *Broadcasting in the Seventies* Marriott's Working Party was replaced by the new Policy Study Group under Gerard Mansell.

As already suggested, *Broadcasting in the Seventies* was the culmination of a process of change towards more 'generic' networks. The work of the Policy Study Group under Mansell was assisted by representatives from the management consultants, McKinsey and Co. The three reports produced by Mansell in early 1969 were broadly in line with those of the preceding Marriott committee. *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, (finally written by Gillard's successor as Managing Director, Radio, Ian Trethowan and published in July 1969) was the opportunity for a small group of very determined men<sup>20</sup> to create their own version of current affairs. Trethowan's document had a particular impact on Radio 3 which became almost exclusively a music network relying increasingly on records. Almost all speech content on Radio 3 was transferred to Radio 4. Mixed programming would survive only on Radio 4 and the whole policy of format radio, targetting specific audiences with discrete programme content was made explicit. Within weeks the Campaign for Better Broadcasting was launched to fight the changes. In a letter to *The Times* signed by Sir Adrian Boult, Professor Max Beloff, Jonathan Miller, Henry Moore and others the gravity of the attack was well expressed:

[The BBC's policy] seriously threatens the unique role the BBC has played in the cultural and intellectual life of the country [and would] prove disastrous to the standards and quality of public service broadcasting... the issues involved transcend any individual or group interest and we feel that only by organizing all dissent into a unanimous voice will there be any hope of affecting a fundamental change of heart at the BBC which is proceeding with its plans despite the evidence of public dismay.<sup>21</sup>

The story of *Broadcasting in the Seventies* and the fight against its proposals organised by the cultural elite of the time was partly driven by the concern that the reorganisation of radio into generic networks would dilute the quality of output and in particular on Radio 3. This was exacerbated by proposals to reduce the number of BBC orchestras.<sup>22</sup> There was also concern that the traditional Reithian notion of mixed programming was being abandoned. Eventually the outcry against the

proposals died down. It probably helped that at the end of the year, Frank Gillard retired. *Broadcasting in the Seventies* was in a sense the culmination of Gillard's radical and populist approach which had influenced the management and direction of radio throughout the 1960s. It was Gillard who had killed off *Children's Hour* and the Features Department and had presided over the growth of news and current affairs fusions and Gillard had introduced Radio 1. The BBC's critics would have been right to see Trethowan as a much safer and less radical manager of BBC radio than his predecessor. After Gillard's departure BBC radio regrouped and this was the moment for *Analysis*.

By the beginning of January 1970 the mood in BBC radio was one of compromise, as this revealing extract from Briggs shows:

During the spring of 1970 BBC top management had shown itself anxious, above all else, to reduce contention. Trethowan had never liked polarization. Mansell, who became Director of Programmes, Radio, in January 1970, wanted his colleagues to get down to programme making as quickly as possible...<sup>23</sup>

In January the new Controller of Radio 4, Tony Whitby, had arrived in post having been proposed by Trethowan. He appeared to have the right qualities to 'reduce contention'. He is described in Briggs's work as a man who 'combined intelligence, enthusiasm and charm and listened carefully to his critics... Perhaps it helped that while at Oxford he had written a thesis on Matthew Arnold: he knew what 'Philistines' were'.<sup>24</sup> Whitby's Radio 4 had now inherited some of the speech programming which had previously existed on Radio 3. If ever there was a time to introduce a cerebral, single subject current affairs programme then this was it.

*Analysis* was created in part to quieten the BBC's critics. With the BBC still bruised after the uproar over *Broadcasting in the Seventies* this was a good time to introduce on Radio 4 a demanding, single subject current affairs programme, reminiscent of an in-depth Radio 3 documentary. McIntyre himself takes this view:

What had been going on in the background, in the BBC at the time was the changeover from the old format of the Home Service and so on, to the networks, to a sort of streaming which they said was to be generic broadcasting... and in all the uproar about this, one cause of concern was what was going to happen to serious current affairs broadcasting, so in a way, the idea for *Analysis* was that it should be a sort of demonstration of good faith to the listener that there were going to be serious things done.<sup>25</sup>

So *Analysis* in McIntyre's words would be 'serious', a demanding-listen which would stretch the listener and also feature important people as contributors discussing the main current affairs issues of the day. *Analysis* was also the result of a decision to move Radio 3 style talks programmes from the newly 'formatted' Radio 3 to the more mixed Radio 4. So the 'serious' *Analysis* with its Radio 3 heritage would signal clearly to the members of the Campaign for Better Broadcasting and their supporters that they were wrong to think that the quality of public service broadcasting had been damaged. The new current affairs programme would enshrine the traditional ideas of quality as formulated by Reith.

The four men directly responsible for creating *Analysis* were Tony Whitby (Controller, Radio 4), Ian McIntyre, an occasional presenter of talks programmes on Radio 3, Lord Archie Gordon (Editor, Talks and Documentaries Radio) and the producer, George Fischer. As discussed in Chapter 4, McIntyre had worked on *At Home and Abroad*.<sup>26</sup> He had joined the Current Affairs Talks Department in 1957 to work alongside Archie Gordon and Tony Whitby (both important in the early stages of *Analysis*). He was appointed when John Green was Controller, Talks and is of the opinion that his similarities with Green had played a part in his appointment as he explains in this frank comment:

[Stephen Bonarjee] told me many years later that [McIntyre's similarities to Green] had been an element in John Green's wanting to appoint me. Because I, like John Green, had been at Cambridge. I, like John Green, had been President of the Union at Cambridge, I, like John Green was a Tory.<sup>27</sup>

McIntyre not only shared with Green a social background, but also a conservatism about current affairs broadcasting. As suggested in the previous chapter, Green (clearly influenced by Sir Richard Maconachie) represented traditional elitist or anti-populist BBC views, including concern about the combination of news and comment in magazine formats. Like Green, McIntyre was not only a broadcasting conservative. After a short career as a member of BBC staff, McIntyre spent most of the 1960s on the staff of the Conservative Party in Scotland and was the unsuccessful Conservative candidate for Roxburgh, Selkirk and Peebles in 1966. From the 1950s, he had presented occasional talks and documentaries for the Third Programme. It was this freelance work which helped build the informal alliances which then spawned *Analysis*. McIntyre recalls being asked to make some

programmes on India by Archie Gordon. Both men had worked on *At Home and Abroad* in the 1950s. The producer was to be the Hungarian, George Fischer, who recalls what happened:

I moved over to domestic services [from BBC External Services] in '67 –that's when I met McIntyre, who was in the middle of making a gigantic programme about India. But his producer, Lord Archie Gordon, was just appointed to run the department [Talks and Documentaries Radio]. So Archie asked me 'could I take Ian on?' And I said 'Well - with pleasure.' <sup>28</sup>

This informal network extended further than this immediate group of four. It also included Howard Newby, Controller Radio 3 who went on at the end of 1971 to become Director of Programmes, <sup>29</sup> Radio and Ian Trethowan, Managing Director, Radio. McIntyre saw this exclusively male group as a support network for the new current affairs programme:

... it was a marvellous situation, because here was George [Fischer], who was a good friend, here was Tony [Whitby], he was a good friend, here was Howard Newby who was a good friend and old colleague ... and here was Trethowan, so it was a tremendous stack. I mean that was real protection for the programme ... <sup>30</sup>

The importance of informal networks in the BBC is one of the themes in Tom Burns exploration of the public and private aspects of the corporation. He was struck by the presence of a 'BBC type' especially among talks producers. They combined 'intelligence, assurance, receptivity, and social deftness ... the special code of manners and style of behaviour, speech and demeanour..'. <sup>31</sup> Burns describes the formation of 'acquaintanceship networks' developing in the BBC as people moved up the hierarchy and, as was the case with the creators of *Analysis*, these were generally male groups. Those at the top shared allegiance to a 'moral order' and a commitment to change which would keep their values alive in the BBC:

... their own sense of the fitness of BBC things had brought them to the top. The moral order permeated all network and all levels, but people at the top were, by definition, especially conscious of it, felt responsible for maintaining it, and, if need be, trying to correct or reorient it. <sup>32</sup>

These 'BBC types' often shared a similar educational background. Ian Trethowan's autobiography contains some useful further clues on the way friendship, and the ties created by working together, impacts on future careers. He describes Tony Whitby, alongside whom he worked on the television series *Gallery*, in glowing terms, 'we

formed an admirable working partnership' and 'only later did I realise how fortunate I was to have as my first editor in the BBC someone as balanced and mature as Tony Whitby.'<sup>33</sup> A few years later Trethowan was responsible for the appointment of Whitby as Controller, Radio 4. Trethowan also comments on his own appointment as Managing Director, Radio, 'at the personal level, both Charles Hill [Chairman of the BBC] and Charles Curran [Director General] simply liked the idea of my being around.'<sup>34</sup> As already noted, Burns made much of the burgeoning professionalism of the BBC at the time, but the candid reflections of men like Trethowan and McIntyre, suggesting a system of preferment made on the basis of social compatibility, familiarity and friendship, appear to challenge that professional image.

Another factor in the creation of *Analysis* was the reaction to the huge growth in journalistic or news-based current affairs. Ian McIntyre, the first presenter of *Analysis*, supported the traditional BBC distinction between news and current affairs to the extent that he defined himself as *not* a journalist.

Journalists were people who worked for newspapers, and there were some people who had come from newspapers and worked in the BBC's News Division, and they called themselves journalists, some of them, but we did not regard ourselves as journalists, we regarded ourselves as current affairs broadcasters, and it was a very different sort of animal really. The business of journalists was to get the news and present it. Our business was to get behind the news, and dig and illuminate and go a bit further, and they were very, very distinct disciplines, we thought. News didn't agree, and were resentful that we made the distinction, but it was a distinction we made.<sup>35</sup>

McIntyre's argument here is based on a sense of his own identity grounded in the old Talks/ News bifurcation of the pre-war BBC. This dislike of journalists may reflect the contempt with which they were held by the literary elite in the 1930s (see Chapter 4). But there was more to *Analysis* than the confirmation of McIntyre's identity and indeed in his criticisms of BBC journalism he did have a point. The proliferation of news based current affairs had at times produced superficial, second hand accounts of events.<sup>36</sup> Interviews with former *Analysis* staff revealed a widespread commitment to in-depth use of primary sources whereas journalists were seen as being reliant on secondary sources. Michael Green for example expresses the commonly held view that a great deal of journalism was and is superficial and derivative:

There was a group of people in Broadcasting House who took a very sceptical view of the journalism made in Broadcasting House which they thought was superficial ... this drove them to another pole

which said 'how are we going to put into the network something which people will find more challenging, less superficial, more demanding, more authoritative, more first hand?' I would certainly take the view that much of journalism now, as then is derivative and second hand ..broadcast journalism is essentially a rewrite agency ... and at that time the tide of daily journalism was engulfing people and the end result was a bit unsatisfying for some listeners and they wanted something a bit more challenging.<sup>37</sup>

*Analysis* was created by people who wanted to challenge the superficial, journalistic account of the world. They did this by making the use of primary sources their creed. Interviews, original copies of speeches, debates read directly from Hansard, books written by interviewees<sup>38</sup> were all preferred to secondary sources. Despite the near non-existence of *Analysis* files for the 1970s at the BBC Written Archive Centre, it is possible to find some circumstantial evidence of commitment to primary sources. This memorandum from George Fischer to Archie Gordon comments on the proposed visit to the USA by Fischer and McIntyre:

There are several 45 – 60 minute (or even longer) conversations in that visit to the U.S. Speakers we have been in touch with or have been trying to get are L.B.Johnson, Dean Rusk, George Ball and Ralph Nader. I strongly recommend that Ian should be given the opportunity to spend some time at the UN headquarters to collect and record material for the forthcoming UN programmes. ... McIntyre's visit to the UN headquarters would make a very substantial difference to the content and the authenticity of the UN programmes.<sup>39</sup>

Fischer was committed to primary sources and very reluctant to use journalists as contributors on *Analysis*, as he explains in this interview extract:

... the distinction that *Analysis* had – and people sometimes don't seem to get this – we worked only with primary sources. In other words: we didn't work from news cuttings. If there was a House of Lords report we did actually read the .. thing from beginning to end ( or Ian did if I didn't) I can't recall many occasions when we had journalists in the programme. It was always 'from the horse's mouth'.<sup>40</sup>

There are two aspects to this approach to current affairs and the primacy given to in depth and original research and both reflect the *Analysis* mantra that current affairs radio is different from news. Firstly, the thoroughness with which *Analysis* presenters researched their programmes was seen (especially by Fischer and McIntyre) as in marked contrast to the hasty and less thoroughly researched work of radio journalists. Secondly, by stressing the importance of what Fischer called 'from the horses's mouth', journalists themselves could not be used as contributors to editions of *Analysis*. The examination of individual editions of *Analysis* in subsequent chapters illustrates these defining qualities.

United by affinity, shared experiences in radio and what are characterised here as conservative broadcasting values, especially as they contrasted with journalism, the men who created *Analysis* perhaps had one further belief which contributed to their solidarity: a commitment to radio itself. The triumph of television over radio in the 1950s and 1960s may have moved Mansell and Gillard to compromise and create popular but secondary radio but some radio producers clearly wanted to assert radio's superiority. Newby described one of the qualities he admired in McIntyre, "... he liked McIntyre's 'deep commitment to radio broadcasting, and his belief, unlike most of his contemporaries, that it really did have an important part to play in the future.'" <sup>41</sup>

*Analysis*, as revealed by the examination of individual programmes in later chapters, was extraordinarily *ambitious*. McIntyre and Fischer in particular were driven by their commitment to getting the most distinguished contributors and basing their programmes on the most rigorous research. This 'driven' quality to their work perhaps signalled not only an attempt to outdo the much disliked journalistic competition but also to show superiority over television. A similar ambition can be seen in the twenty-six part radio feature, *The Long March of Everyman* (1971-1972) produced by Michael Mason. The early 1970s produced some notably ambitious radio which symbolised this assertive mood.

Returning to the details of the birth of *Analysis*, the programme that Whitby and others created was weekly<sup>42</sup> and forty-five minutes long. Each edition dealt with one subject and was broadcast on Thursday evening with a repeat on Sundays. The form and style of *Analysis* was exceptional only for its simplicity. There were three main variations in the series; a pre-recorded documentary featuring a scripted presentation and the voices of contributors; a live discussion chaired by the presenter and a one-to-one interview usually with a leading British politician. There are almost no variations from these three programme formats with the exception of the occasional combination of documentary and follow up studio discussion. In addition, *Analysis* was purely a speech programme, there was rarely any 'actuality'. *Analysis* was similar to its forerunners in Radio 3 and the Third Programme such as those made by McIntyre and Fischer in the 1960s. The pace of *Analysis* contrasted

with that of programmes like *The World at One* and *Today*. The 1974 *BBC Handbook* talks of its 'more leisurely, considered and reflective' style and the one-to-one interviews were referred to as 'conversations'.

The newly appointed Controller, Radio, Tony Whitby wrote a series of articles about the new schedule on Radio 4 in the *Radio Times*.<sup>43</sup> His mission for *Analysis* is particularly revealing:

We've got to accustom the audience to the fact there will be tougher programmes in the new Radio 4 than there were in the old one. Between 9 and 10 in the evening, the fare will tend to be more thoughtful, tougher in intellectual terms, and will include material previously thought of as Third Programme.

Let's take an example. *Analysis* is the new current affairs documentary which I shall put on Friday nights at 9.15. Now my brief for the programme is - to be true to your subject. Say what you want to say, say it clearly, lucidly, in a form that a reasonably intelligent, reasonably well informed person can understand. Aim at excellence, and at nothing else. There's no word about the size of the audience in that brief. If it gets a low audience figure, I shall not be surprised. So the programme is protected to that extent. If it gets a larger audience I shall be delighted. There is no reason why it shouldn't - anybody can tune in to the radio at 9.15 on a Friday night.<sup>44</sup>

Whitby makes explicit here the Radio 4 inheritance from Radio 3. *Analysis* is described as an example of this 'tougher' and 'more thoughtful' programme. The suggestion that 'excellence' is more important than any consideration of the audience is typically Reithian. The rather throwaway remark that 'anybody' could listen is perhaps a little disingenuous. A rather more realistic view of the audience is provided by Greville Havenhand who was both producer and the series editor in the mid 1970s:

... you were aiming at an elite audience ... you were actually aiming at opinion formers, and because the average Joe Public wasn't going to turn on to a programme like that at eight o'clock on a Thursday evening for three quarters of an hour .. you could have made it a popular programme but it wouldn't have been popular ... you were aiming at a certain intellectual level that would appeal to these people.<sup>45</sup>

As explained in the Introduction, research into the audience for *Analysis* is not part of this thesis. The 'perceived audience', however is easy to discern from comments such as the one above; well educated and well informed and possibly including 'opinion formers' or members of elite groups. All the interviewees who had worked on *Analysis* said similar things about their listeners. Because the audience was felt by producers and presenters to be small and knowledgeable, this facilitated the programme's intimacy and informality which can be detected in existing

recordings. Contributors were told who the audience was and encouraged to speak more freely as a result:

When you got someone for the programme you actually explained what the audience was and said this is not a mass audience, this is an opinion formers' audience ... they had their guard down and they also didn't talk down.<sup>46</sup>

Encouraged to believe that they were talking to their peers, elite contributors may have been less guarded than for a television current affairs programme like *Panorama* with its considerably larger audiences. The effect of this on programmes is seen in the tendency to assume knowledge and understanding of the wide-ranging political, historical and cultural (especially literary) references which are made in most editions of *Analysis*.

Another distinctive feature which is discussed in greater detail in the next chapter was the choice of contributors. This is a contentious area for current affairs broadcasters as Charles Curran put it, 'the selection of news of a factual kind is difficult enough. The selection of people to comment on it, or even simply to explain it ... is much harder.'<sup>47</sup> *Analysis*, unsurprisingly for such an ambitious programme, always aimed for the most prestigious contributors possible. One-to-one interviews were normally reserved for prime ministers, the chancellor of the exchequer and foreign heads of state.<sup>48</sup> Other contributors were used as experts and academics from Oxford, Cambridge and London universities featured prominently as did a wide range of prominent politicians, trade unionists, diplomats, industrialists and others. As already noted, a distinctive feature of *Analysis* in the 1970s was its antipathy to journalism. It is no surprise, therefore, that there were no journalists, including specialist correspondents, among contributors at the time.<sup>49</sup>

In the Introduction, the concept of professionalism and its significance in the 1950s and 1960s was introduced, and this is returned to here. A feature which *Analysis* did share with programmes like *The World at One* was in the use of a 'professional' presenter who acted to 'anchor' the programme. Although very much taken for granted today on contemporary current affairs radio and television, the idea of a personality presenter who provides a narrative framework within which varieties of views and argument can be expressed was an innovation of the 1950s. In BBC

television news the news reader was seen for the first time in 1955 and they remained anonymous.<sup>50</sup> The main catalyst for change was the newly formed ITN which borrowed American techniques and used named presenters on camera who also gathered, selected and wrote news. One of their first news presenters, Robin Day proceeded to become a doyen of current affairs presentation and presented both *Panorama* and *Analysis*. On radio, William Hardcastle anchored *The World at One* and *The World this Weekend* while the colourful Jack de Manio presented *Today* from 1958 – 1971. Similarly, Richard Dimbleby was a presenter of *Panorama* from 1955 – 1965. The importance of a respected and professional presenter in current affairs broadcasting is well expressed in Robin Day's appreciation of Dimbleby:

It was Richard's solid presence and personality which won the viewers, kept the viewers, guided the viewers and held the programme together ... No presenter or anchor man has ever achieved his combination of qualities, his rapport with the viewer, his professional aplomb, his mellifluous speech, his sense of occasion, be it glad or gloomy, or his easy natural authority.<sup>51</sup>

Dimbleby's 'professionalism' was exactly what Paulu had felt was missing in BBC current affairs in the 1950s. The lesson had been learned that successful current affairs broadcasting depended on a presenter whose expertise included both knowledge of current affairs and an ability to communicate.

Robin Day was a good example of a much used current affairs presenter. In just one week in the early 1970s he presented *Panorama* on the Monday; chaired a radio phone-in on Tuesday; chaired a discussion on media censorship for Radio 3 on the Thursday; presented *Analysis* on the Friday and chaired a television debate on Sunday.<sup>52</sup> This degree of exposure made Day a broadcasting celebrity and added to his stature as a guide and referee in the programmes he presented.

One way of understanding the rise to prominence of the presenter is to consider the growth of the range of voices to be heard on the BBC. According to John Corner, as society became more pluralistic in the 1960s, so broadcasting had to make a wider range of views heard. He provides a useful typology:

I have distinguished between the 'univocal' and the 'multivocal' functions of factual programming... 'Univocal' functions primarily involve the speech of presenters and commentators... 'Multivocal' functions involve the selection, combination and weighting of the different voices and viewpoints which a programme may access.<sup>53</sup>

In factual programming, the 'multivocal function' requires a presenter or referee to 'select, combine and weigh' the differing points of view. Corner has also described the move in the 1950s from a more Reithian and didactic talks tradition towards the exploration of viewpoints in discussions and interviews at approximately the same time as Britain 'pluralised'.<sup>54</sup> This expansion in the range of voices on the BBC included working class speech and regional dialects, an innovation pioneered by the features producer, Charles Parker, whose celebrated *Radio Ballads*<sup>55</sup> were built around recorded working class speech. The 1960s and 1970s were of course a time of increased diversity of viewpoints. Generational differences in the 1960s, combined with the gradual end of the post-war political consensus and the radicalisation of British politics in the 1970s, all contributed to this diversification. These processes greatly increased diversity of opinion and, crucially, the proliferation of spokes-people on whom current affairs producers might draw. Trade unionists, politicians from a wider array of parliamentary and non-parliamentary parties, activists, peace campaigners, feminists, Marxists, neo-liberals, ethnic minority leaders and so on were all part of Corner's notion of pluralised Britain and all needed marshalling by highly skilled presenters.

So the current affairs broadcaster had a licence to coordinate, referee, judge and narrate the multiplicity of viewpoints and information which the listener needed to guide him or her through the complex terrain of 'affairs'. In the case of *Analysis*, Ian McIntyre and Mary Goldring, the two main presenters of the programme, performed the task of marshalling a variety of viewpoints in the creation of editions of the programme. There is clearly a problem here if presenters assume the role of political referee as already mentioned in the discussion of bias in the Introduction. What of the presenters' own political views? Is it possible for a public service broadcaster to use presenters of known political persuasions to anchor 'flagship' current affairs programmes? The minutes of a News and Current Affairs Meeting in February 1970 show management thinking on this subject:

D.G.<sup>56</sup> recalled recent discussion at News and Current Affairs Meetings of presenters whose personal commitment to particular attitudes emerged on the air over a period. He had at first taken a fairly relaxed view, on the understanding that a man could not always be expected to conceal his personal feelings, that he could declare them in advance, and that the existence of presenters with different attitudes provided a kind of balance. But he had come to wonder whether that line was not too weak.

Perhaps one had to say that a presenter is expected, as a professional, to conduct discussions and interviews without revealing his personal attitudes.<sup>57</sup>

So although there was sensitivity to the problem of impartiality here, the official view was that if presenters were sufficiently *professional* then bias could be avoided. The perceived potency of professionalism to overcome bias is clearly naïve as later discussion of the selection of contributors, choice of subjects, use of language, interview questions and implicit assumptions in scripted material will show. On *Analysis* the trust in the professionalism of presenters with strong political views was certainly tested. Two men with strong political opinions were used as presenters: Ian McIntyre, as already mentioned, a former Conservative Party employee and parliamentary candidate and John Vaizey, closely associated with Margaret Thatcher and a man of trenchant neo-liberal views.

### Summary and Conclusion

*Analysis* expressed and (for some) resolved the tensions between populism and a Reithian elitism in the BBC in the late 1960s and early 1970s. On the one hand, the Mansell and Gillard inspired version of current affairs was journalistic and challenged the distinction between news and comment in magazine format news sequences. On the other hand, a non-journalistic tradition of talks-inspired current affairs still survived in Radio 3 and was still championed by a network of men committed to uncompromising standards of research and guest selection.

The BBC was rocked by the response of the cultural establishment to *Broadcasting in the Seventies* and this was the right moment to create a new and challenging radio current affairs programme. In the rigorousness of its research, the calibre of the contributors and the professionalism of its presenters, *Analysis* was to demonstrate that, in the words of Ian McIntyre, ‘serious things’ would indeed be done on air.

The birth of *Analysis* was the result of the efforts of a small group or informal network of men who shared the same traditional broadcasting values. The importance of the informal network is one of the main themes of the sociological account of the BBC at the time by Tom Burns<sup>58</sup> and that emphasis is broadly supported by this thesis. The relationship between McIntyre and Fischer was

particularly strong and long-lasting<sup>59</sup> but there were others, in particular with Tony Whitby, who had originally met McIntyre on *At Home and Abroad* in the 1950s. The case of *Analysis* does seem to support the view that personalities and alliances were of critical importance in the BBC.

As in the previous chapter, the specificity of 'current affairs' has been a constant theme in this discussion of the birth of *Analysis*. Elitism emerges as the defining characteristic of the programme, or at least as it existed in the minds of its creators - elitist because it was anti-populist, or anti-journalistic, in its approach; no journalists would be contributors and shoddy, journalistic research techniques were to be scrupulously avoided; elitist in the selection of contributors, which would include members of a variety of political, academic and other international elites; elite also in its view of its audience, likely to consist of opinion-formers and people not that dissimilar to the speakers themselves. A final aspect of this elitism was its ambitious affirmation of radio in opposition to the great populist medium of television. *Analysis* expressed the belief that current affairs exists mainly in the realm of ideas and arguments, not in the world of spurious visual imagery.

Although in many ways *Analysis* expressed the traditional Reithian values passed down through Maconachie in the 1930s to John Green and then Ian McIntyre, in its use of regular presenters, of whom one could be seen as the 'main' presenter, the programme reflected modern professional radio practice. Kumar wrote that newsreaders *were* the news<sup>60</sup> and it remains to be seen whether the views of the presenters of *Analysis* in the 1970s and early 1980s were the subject of the programme every bit as much as the current affairs topic itself.

The ideas and evidence presented here already sound alarm bells. Would the combination of elitism and freely operating presenters (given a licence to control programme content,) produce balanced and impartial editions of what became a 'flag ship' current affairs programme? Or would a conservative (if not Conservative) partiality appear, and in particular if the presenter had their own political beliefs? These questions will be answered mainly in Chapter 8. The next chapter will look at the details of the evolution of *Analysis* over 13 years from its

inception and in particular in the evolution of the use of 'broadcast talk' by its two main presenters.

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<sup>1</sup> BBC, *Broadcasting in the Seventies* (London: BBC, 1969).

<sup>2</sup> A letter written to the press at the time articulated the anger of the cultural establishment. It claimed that the BBC's policy 'seriously threatens the unique role the BBC has played in the cultural and intellectual life of the country', and would 'prove disastrous to the standards and quality of public service broadcasting.' (Briggs, *Vol V*, 785.)

<sup>3</sup> Burns, *The BBC*.

<sup>4</sup> Usually seen as a Reithian precept, the unexpected mixture of programme content in one network was felt by many, including William Haley (Director General of the BBC 1944 – 1952) to produce an improving effect on the listener who is surprised into listening to more demanding programmes.

<sup>5</sup> Format radio is also referred to as 'generic' radio, the latter being more in use today.

<sup>6</sup> Briggs, *Vol V*, 327.

<sup>7</sup> Joanna Richardson *The Listener*, 19 May 1960 quoted in Briggs, *Vol. V*, 328.

<sup>8</sup> Described in Leonard Miall, *Inside the BBC: British Broadcasting Characters* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1994).

<sup>9</sup> Sean Street, *A Concise History*, 110.

<sup>10</sup> Briggs, *Vol. 5*, 620 – 621.

<sup>11</sup> Bridson, 295. This does add a rather interesting dimension to my argument. Whilst there are informal networks that are the catalyst for change in the BBC there are conversely networks which do the opposite and prevent change from taking place.

<sup>12</sup> My knowledge of Mansell's views come from David Hendy's interview with Gerard Mansell (2001) as part of his Radio 4 history project. (Unpublished *History of Radio 4* for Oxford University Press).

<sup>13</sup> Early evening programmes were made for hobbyists among others. Of course a case could be made that with its audience share of less than 1% the Third Programme was itself a niche network.

<sup>14</sup> Street, *Concise History*, 109

<sup>15</sup> Gerard Mansell interview with David Hendy. Radio 4 history project 2001.

<sup>16</sup> Briggs, *Vol. V*, p36

<sup>17</sup> Briggs, *Vol. V*, 34

<sup>18</sup> From 'The Future of Sound Broadcasting in the Domestic Service' 1957 in Briggs, *Vol. 5*, 40.

<sup>19</sup> Briggs, *Vol. V*, 730.

<sup>20</sup> In particular, Ian McIntyre, George Fischer and Tony Whitby.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in Briggs, *Vol. V*, 785.

<sup>22</sup> Briggs, *Vol V*, 764- 766.

<sup>23</sup> Briggs, *Vol. V*, 800.

<sup>24</sup> Briggs, *Vol. V*, 800.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Ian McIntyre 26 February 1999

<sup>26</sup> There is a useful brief account of Ian McIntyre's career and especially his time as Controller, Radio 3 in Carpenter, 298-301.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Ian McIntyre 26 February 1999

<sup>28</sup> Interview with George Fischer 22 September 2000. The strength of the friendship between McIntyre and Fischer is further revealed by the words of dedication at the beginning of McIntyre's biography of Reith, 'To George Fischer, Friend and Comrade for many years in John Reith's BBC.' Ian McIntyre, *The Expense of Glory*. In addition, Carpenter also refers to their close association, " 'George was an important ally,' says McIntyre, while Fischer – a man of immense charm as well as conviction – speaks of McIntyre with total admiration." Carpenter, 301 – 302. In the preface to a collection of radio talks edited by McIntyre we read these telling words, 'The largest debt to be recorded, however, is to George

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Fischer, a man relentlessly and unfashionably concerned with the importance of the English language.' Ian McIntyre, *Words* (London: BBC, 1975).

<sup>29</sup> Evidence of Newby's admiration for McIntyre is provided by Humphrey Carpenter. Commenting on McIntyre's appointment as Controller of Radio 4 in 1976 he writes: "Howard Newby says that he himself was 'largely responsible' for this appointment..." Carpenter, 298.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Ian McIntyre 26 February 1999

<sup>31</sup> Burns, 99.

<sup>32</sup> Burns, 84.

<sup>33</sup> Trethowan, 105.

<sup>34</sup> Trethowan, 122.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Ian McIntyre 26 February 1999

<sup>36</sup> It could be argued that by its very nature news is superficial. If news is simply the facts, as insisted by the BBC tradition of bifurcating news and opinion, then it could hardly be in depth. In addition the 'sequences', as news/current affairs sequence programmes like *Today* were called, attempted to hold the attention of an audience often on the move by switching quickly from one subject to another.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Michael Green 27 October 2000.

<sup>38</sup> Ian McIntyre recalls reading everything written by Roy Jenkins prior to interviewing him.

<sup>39</sup> George Fischer memorandum to Editor, Documentary and Talks Programmes (Radio) 4 June 1970, WAC R 51/1

<sup>40</sup> Interview with George Fischer 22 September 2000.

<sup>41</sup> Carpenter, 298.

<sup>42</sup> There were usually 25 to 30 programmes a year divided into three blocks.

<sup>43</sup> The late afternoon news and current affairs magazine *PM* began in the same week as *Analysis*.

<sup>44</sup> Tony Whitby in the *Radio Times* 12 March 1970.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Greville Havenhand 30 October 1998.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Greville Havenhand 30 October 1998.

<sup>47</sup> Curran, 115.

<sup>48</sup> George Fischer was clearly disappointed at not getting an interview for McIntyre with President Nixon.

<sup>49</sup> Ian Trethowan highlights the difficulty of allowing reporters or 'correspondents' to comment on events in the traditional BBC:

"The BBC made a clear distinction between 'news' and comment'. In principle this was right, but problems arose over where and when they drew the line. What British broadcasting journalists now, and Americans then, regarded as a perfectly normal explanation of the news was rigidly excluded from the BBC's bulletins... The idea of an experienced journalist explaining the events, or interviewing one of the participants to try to elicit more from them, was only grudgingly accepted, and mainly abroad, through the BBC's excellent foreign correspondents." Trethowan, 80.

<sup>50</sup> Briggs, *Vol V*, 63.

<sup>51</sup> Robin Day in Lindley, 167.

<sup>52</sup> Krishan Kumar, "Holding the Middle Ground: The BBC, the public good and the professional broadcaster." In *Mass Communication and Society*, edited by James Curran et al. London: Edward Arnold, 1977, 243.

<sup>53</sup> John Corner, *The Art of Record* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 23.

<sup>54</sup> Corner, *The Art of Record*.

<sup>55</sup> The first of these was *the Ballad of John Axon* (1958) which celebrated working class heroism in speech and music.

<sup>56</sup> Director General, Charles Curran.

<sup>57</sup> Minutes of News and Current Affairs Meeting 6 February 1970 WAC R101/399/1

<sup>58</sup> Burns, *The BBC*.

<sup>59</sup> Up to the departure of McIntyre from the BBC in 1987 (Carpenter, 319).

<sup>60</sup> Kumar, "Holding the Middle Ground," 243.

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6.

*ANALYSIS: 1970 - 1983*

The main aim of this chapter is to look at the form and style of *Analysis*, the way it approached serious national and international issues and how that evolved over thirteen years. In particular it will examine the use of different programme formats; changes in production and presenting staff; the 'agenda' of the programme expressed in the choice of subjects; the selection of contributors; the evolution of 'broadcast talk' and the use and style of the *Analysis* 'Conversation' – the name used for long one-to-one interviews. The question of the politics of the programme will be referred to here and in much more detail in Chapter 8. The theme of elitism is returned to and especially in the approach to broadcast talk. The importance of the presenter is again considered in the more detailed examination of individual programmes. Another issue which is explored in this chapter is the relationship between the programme, the individuals who made it and the BBC, as expressed in the discussions at the Weekly Radio Programme Review Boards.

The transcription for the first edition of *Analysis* begins as follows:

*Analysis*

The War for Jenkins' Ear

Produced by George Fischer

Presented by Ian McIntyre

Tape No:

Duration: 41' 20"

Transmission 10<sup>th</sup> April, 1970.<sup>1</sup> 2115-2200. Radio Four

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ANNOUNCER We are now broadcasting the first in a new weekly current affairs series entitled ANALYSIS. Tonight's programme is called THE WAR FOR JENKINS' EAR. It's introduced by Ian McIntyre.

MCINTYRE: Next Tuesday sees the annual enactment of a classical piece of British folk ritual. Budget Day ranks with the Grand National or a deciding Test against Australia. Not everyone is altogether clear about what's going on, but most people feel a vague sense of involvement. One of the most important things about ritual is that it shouldn't change. There will, therefore, be the traditional speculation about what the Chancellor is going to drink at the despatch box; Mr. Leo Abse will, as always, give sartorial expression to his inflamed Celtic imagination, and the inevitable Sir Gerald

Nabarro will excite controversy as to whether he is doing a commercial for a well-known firm of Covent Garden outfitters or rehearsing for an amateur revival of *EAST LYNN*.<sup>2</sup>

The first programme offers some clues about what approach to current affairs was to be characteristic not only of this edition but of many over this period. The schedule printed in *Radio Times* for Radio 4 on Friday 10 April 1970 reveals the plethora of other programmes which in different ways dealt with issues of the day; *PM* from 5pm to 6pm; *News Desk* from 7pm to 7.30pm; *Any Questions* from 8pm to 8.45pm. In the 30 minutes before *Analysis* there was a new series *Whom the Gods Loved* which that week was a dramatised portrait of John Keats. *Analysis* was then broadcast from 9.15pm to 9.58pm followed by the weather and then at 10pm *The World Tonight*, 'Douglas Stuart reporting, with voices and opinions from around the world.'<sup>3</sup> On television, BBC1 had *The Main News* from 8.50pm to 9.10pm.<sup>4</sup>

What is clear from these schedules is the quantity of news and news based comment against which *Analysis* hoped to make a distinctive contribution. Forty-one minutes was to be devoted to one subject, in this case Roy Jenkins' 1970 budget, the last Labour budget before the General Election two months later which was won by the Conservative Party under Ted Heath. It was presented by Ian McIntyre who was the main presenter of *Analysis* from 1970 to his promotion to Controller, Radio 4 in July 1976.<sup>5</sup> It was produced by George Fischer who produced almost all of Ian McIntyre's programmes until Fischer's promotion in August 1972 to the post of Head of Talks and Features Programmes Radio (soon to become Head of Talks and Documentaries Programmes Radio).

Individual editions of *Analysis* were essentially the creation of the presenter working closely with a producer. The production process started with a suggestion for a programme, often provided in writing by a producer to be discussed at a meeting attended by Head of Talks and Documentaries and Senior Producer or Editor of *Analysis* with other Talks and Documentaries producers present. When a subject was chosen a presenter would be selected. Ian McIntyre was the main presenter from 1970 – 1975

and Mary Goldring from 1976 to the end of the period covered by this thesis. A variety of other presenters were also used on an ad hoc basis and their names appear throughout this chapter and Chapter 8. Because of the lack of documentary evidence in the BBC's written archive, details of the production process can only be learned from interviews. These suggest that although producers were well qualified (Roland Challis for example had been a BBC foreign correspondent, Tom Read was formerly the education correspondent of the *Daily Mirror*) the presenter authored the programme, frequently referred to as an 'essay'. Typically (in the case of McIntyre) for a standard pre-recorded edition, after interviews had been gathered by the presenter and producer, the presenter would then script the introduction and conclusion and any links between the interviews.

## 1970

As has been already explained in Chapter 5, *Analysis* was the product of three developments within radio. Firstly, the proliferation of news-based current affairs magazines such as *The World at One* and *Today* which were seen by the creators of *Analysis* as superficial and derivative. Secondly, the protests which followed the publication of *Broadcasting in the Seventies* and the subsequent desire to prove that the BBC still did 'serious things'. Thirdly, the relocation of the demanding radio talks on Radio 3 to Radio 4 as a result of the move to more 'generic' programming heralded by *Broadcasting in the Seventies*. The first edition of *Analysis* fully betrays its origins. Unlike the 'news sequences' as the current affairs magazines were often called, "The War for Jenkins' Ear" dealt with only one subject, the British economy. Ian McIntyre states as the aim of the programme 'a general look at the current state of the economy and its future prospects'. Inevitably this produced a consideration of a number of economic issues, including growth in the economy, the power of trade unions, inflation, investment, the Common Market and incomes policy. As suggested in the previous chapter, *Analysis* was an *ambitious* project. McIntyre and Fischer in particular were ambitious in their desire to create something outstanding and excellent and this reflected their own wish to affirm radio in opposition to television. This ambition is seen in the sweeping brief for individual editions of *Analysis* and this was to be a feature of editions

throughout the 1970s and early 1980s taking on as they did wide-ranging interviews with serving Prime Ministers and foreign heads of state and editions with titles such as 'Northern Ireland' and 'Into the 1980s'.

As discussed in the previous chapter, *Analysis* explicitly rejected journalists and journalism and this was a defining characteristic of the programme and contributed to its elitist nature. The first edition of *Analysis* was an opportunity for the point to be made that what was seen as the typical journalistic use of secondary sources (press cuttings, other journalists and so on) would not be a feature of *Analysis*. McIntyre refers in his introduction to a report on the British economy by the American Brookings Institute published two years earlier. He quotes from the report and then presents lengthy contributions to the programme from the report's author, Richard Caves, a professor at Harvard. Another contributor is introduced with these telling words:

For some years now no newspaper article or radio programme on the state of the economy has been complete without some reference – normally derogatory – to the 'gnomes of Zurich'. The current view of our economy expressed by Gilbert de Botton, however, who is Managing Director of Rothschilds in Zurich, is far from gnomic... <sup>6</sup> (emphasis added)

In this extract, McIntyre scores twice against radio current affairs magazines. He pokes fun at their repetitive reliance on a cliché ('gnomes of Zurich') and then produces one of the most senior Swiss bankers, further proof that *Analysis* was better researched than its rivals. The other contributors are the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund; the General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress; the Director General of the Confederation of British Industry; the Oxford economist, Peter Oppenheimer <sup>7</sup> and two bank-bench MPs, Richard Marsh (Labour) and John Biffen (Conservative). None of these contributors was a journalist. By any standards this was an impressive line-up.

The programme begins with an introduction of approximately 2 minutes 40 seconds <sup>8</sup> and is typical in Ian McIntyre's use of references (discussed later on in this chapter in a section on 'broadcast talk'). He also evokes a traditional image of England; the Test Match, the Grand National and the colourful eccentrics of the House of Commons. As

discussed later, McIntyre's presentation is slightly mannered and displays a rather clever disinterestedness, but it is one which is designed to hook the listener in to a private world of important people discussing current affairs.

The first edition is a pre-recorded documentary with edited comments from the main contributors followed by a recorded studio discussion in which McIntyre chairs an exchange between Marsh and Biffen. There is then a particularly long contribution from Oppenheimer (6 minutes 10 seconds) in which he takes a fairly belligerent view of trade unions, 'our trade union structure is absolutely medieval .. the attitude of union leaders is very often .. economically illiterate' <sup>9</sup> . The whole programme is 'book-ended' by the presenter with an introduction and a brief conclusion. So, if this edition was typical, *Analysis* was to be a fairly demanding single-subject programme with an impressive collection of contributors (but no journalists) and an experienced broadcaster providing a guide through the material. The material might be drawn from original primary sources not available on other current affairs programmes. This was the reaction at the programme review board five days later:

"Analysis: The War for Jenkin's Ear" Radio 4, 10 April

C.R.4 <sup>10</sup> said this programme had met his highest hopes. It was intended as a "no-holds-barred" look at a serious subject and in the event had proved riveting listening. It had been entertaining, well-written, balanced and thoughtful. The difficulty would be for subsequent programmes to keep up such a very high standard. <sup>11</sup>

It is clear from this minute that Tony Whitby was delighted by the first edition and in particular its qualities as a well crafted radio programme which was 'riveting listening'.

The question of balance, the subject of the next chapter, is worth mentioning here. It could be argued that the programme was politically balanced as among the contributors were representatives of both political parties, two bankers, two academics, a trade union leader and an employers' leader. However, both academics were politically conservative and McIntyre himself was known for his Conservative views. It would, of course, be wrong to adopt a determinist account of *Analysis* in which bias is crudely reduced to the numbers of contributors of differing political viewpoints. The discussion, however, did

suggest that trade unions were a 'problem' and in need of 'reform', ideas first introduced to the discussion by McIntyre. The subject is raised at three different points in the programme and the impression given is that there is a link between problems in the economy and the trade union movement.

During the rest of 1970 *Analysis*, led by McIntyre and Fischer covered domestic and international subjects with an emphasis on mainstream politics. Specialist presenters were used on occasions including Robert Kee, who presented an edition of *Analysis* on Northern Ireland.<sup>12</sup> The choice of Kee is hardly surprising as this description of him by Richard Lindley shows:

Kee was a highly intelligent and cultivated man, who would later write a definitive history of Irish nationalism, translate innumerable German texts, and could still be found in the British library at the age of 80 researching a book on Francois Mitterand.<sup>13</sup>

Kee's intellectual ability and scholarly interests would have made him an ideal candidate for presenter of *Analysis* with its commitment to seriousness and thorough research. His programme on Northern Ireland was well received at the Programme Review Board where Whitby stressed the quality of research, 'it had been extremely well researched and had been written and spoken with considerable distinction. It had not been afraid to call in evidence in the form of Acts of Parliament.'<sup>14</sup> During 1970, *Analysis* was discussed at the Review Board on thirteen occasions and this attention continued until in 1978 when the new Managing Director, Radio, Aubrey Singer, altered the focus of the meetings to concentrate less on programmes and more on audience figures for networks as a whole. Most reviews in the first half of the 1970s served to stress the success of the programme and the quality of the presenter. The review of an edition on France is typically euphoric:

Analysis: A Year without De Gaulle (Radio 4, 15 May)

Described by M.D.R.<sup>15</sup> as absolutely first-class. Ed.D. & T. (R)<sup>16</sup> said that it had shown Ian McIntyre's development as a commentator of great style and grace. H.F.E. (R) considered that McIntyre had been so good as to make the listener impatient with the other speakers.<sup>17</sup>

This minute from the review board is interesting in its emphasis on form rather than

content, McIntyre being commended for his 'style and grace'.

One edition which attracted criticism, however had the typically broad title, 'Vietnam'.<sup>18</sup> At the Programme Review Board it was criticised because Ian McIntyre had not been to Vietnam: as the Controller, Radio 3, Howard Newby put it, '... it was wrong to have a programme about Vietnam presented by someone who had never been there.'<sup>19</sup> Unsurprisingly McIntyre was defended by Controller, Radio 4, Tony Whitby: '...McIntyre was known and trusted as a radio journalist and there was surely a case to be made for derived authority'.<sup>20</sup> Although others spoke in favour of this *Analysis*, this very detached approach to commenting on other countries was subsequently dropped. In its place the 'parachuting' of presenters in to foreign countries became a feature of *Analysis* and later that year McIntyre visited the Middle East to interview Golda Meir.<sup>21</sup> This edition is noteworthy for two reasons. Firstly, it attracted press attention and both the *Guardian* and the *Sunday Times* had articles based on the programme.<sup>22</sup> According to George Fischer this attention was a priority for Whitby, '... he wanted a programme which, next day, was discussed by politicians, members of government and above all .. press coverage in the quality press.'<sup>23</sup> But this edition also attracted criticism of McIntyre's interview technique, as this memo from the archives reveals:

20<sup>th</sup> July 1970:

Michael Adams, Director of Information, Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding, to 'The Producer of Analysis':

'... I hoped that she (*Golda Meir*) would be asked some pertinent and challenging questions. Unhappily she was not, and I do not think it unfair to say that the programme constituted a 45-minute advertisement for the Israeli point-of-view in the present grave controversy in the area... I suggest that if the Israeli Minister of Information had been conducting the interview, he could not – from his own Government's point of view – have improved on the pattern of questions submitted by Ian McIntyre... May I assume that a future edition of *Analysis* will be devoted to an equally comprehensive and sympathetic examination of current Arab thinking...?'<sup>24</sup>

This forthright criticism of *Analysis* is a useful reminder of the problem, identified at the end of the last chapter of the combination of a relatively autonomous broadcaster with strongly held political beliefs presenting such a prominent BBC current affairs programme. McIntyre was certainly sympathetic to the Israeli cause as his book on Israel demonstrates.<sup>25</sup> The response to the criticism was mixed. Michael Adams

received a typically dusty reply from the producer, George Fischer, ‘It would be a mistake to think that all broadcasters despatched to the Middle East to gather material for our programmes are briefed to reduce everything to the Procrustean bed of the Arab-Israeli conflict.’<sup>26</sup> The minutes of the Programme Review Board, however, report that the edition of *Analysis* two weeks after the Meir interview, ‘Egypt and the Middle East’ was a ‘balance to the interview with Mrs. Meir’.<sup>27</sup> This suggests a rather more conciliatory approach from radio management.

During 1970 and 1971 the team of McIntyre as presenter and Fischer as producer worked tirelessly (or so it would seem given their extremely high standards of research<sup>28</sup>) on *Analysis*. In the first half of 1971, for example, they made nine editions together (see Table 1).

This list demonstrates the range of subject matter which McIntyre and Fischer felt able to address; from disarmament to feminism, from high profile interviews of senior politicians to the debate about commercial radio.

1971

15 January	What case for commercial radio? <sup>29</sup>
5 February	Sisterhood is powerful.
19 February	How much denationalisation?
12 March	The name of the game is SALT. <sup>30</sup>
19 March	Europe – the debate continues
2 April	The Rt. Hon. Reginald Maudling MP
21 May	Rhodesia: the view from Salisbury <sup>31</sup>
4 June	Against the stream.
18 June	The Rt.Hon. Edward Heath M.P.

Table 1. Editions of *Analysis* made by Ian McIntyre and George Fischer, January – June, 1971.

The McIntyre/Fischer treatment of feminism, 'Sisterhood is Powerful' was not one of the more successful editions, unsurprisingly given the masculine production culture of *Analysis* at the time. McIntyre met a member of the American Women's Liberation Movement and managed to be charming but patronising in an old-fashioned BBC manner. The edition serves to remind us that the men who made the early editions of *Analysis* were not equipped to provide insight into the emergence of feminism, one of the main social movements of the time.

*Analysis* producers were often recruited from outside the Talks and Documentaries department. Roland Challis was one such producer who felt his appointment was designed to introduce some balance in the programme:

I went to see Arthur Hutchinson [Head of Talks and Current Affairs Group, Radio] ... Arthur was, as I understand the matter, a bit concerned about *Analysis*. He felt it was going off in certain directions which he didn't think were altogether BBC so I didn't have to ask very hard. He was quite keen to get me involved, and it was done like that...  
I think he felt that Fischer and McIntyre in particular had political agendas, both on the world scene and the domestic scene... <sup>32</sup>

Greville Havenhand, who arrived at *Analysis* on a secondment in 1974 working closely with the producer, Anthony Rendell,<sup>33</sup> shared Arthur Hutchinson's concern:

George Fischer was an unreconstructed Right Wing Hungarian, who came out in '56, and there was very much a 'Reds under the beds' [atmosphere] and Rendell was also of that complexion. And I'm not saying anything, but there was, one always felt there was a .. somehow, a right of centre agenda which again was something one had to try and pull back, because having, by that stage, thirteen or fourteen years in news and current affairs, with balance, was very much the thing. <sup>34</sup>

As this quote shows, perhaps surprisingly, Havenhand had come from the very current affairs background which the creators of *Analysis* so disliked. Even more surprising was the appointment of Tom Read who, after producing *News Desk* and *The World Tonight*, joined the Special Current Affairs Unit (SCAU) under Bernard Tate and then joined *Analysis* in 1978. The unit, like 'Talks and Documentaries', existed within the

broader Current Affairs Group.<sup>35</sup> A more complete history of Radio 4 will eventually reveal the depth of animosity between Ian McIntyre as Controller, Radio 4 (1976 – 1978) and SCAU<sup>36</sup> which is not of direct relevance here. The profound disagreements between Talks and Documentaries and SCAU were rooted in the anti-journalism culture which defined *Analysis*. The transfer of Tom Read from the journalistic SCAU to George Fischer's Talks and Documentaries can be interpreted as a similar move to the Challis and Havenhand appointments and made at a senior level within Current Affairs Group to promote balance.<sup>37</sup> Whether or not it succeeded is discussed in Chapter 8 in the discussion of *Analysis* and its treatment of the rise of Thatcherism.

### Mary Goldring

In May 1975, Mary Goldring<sup>38</sup> presented her first *Analysis*. One year later, Ian McIntyre was promoted to Controller, Radio 4 and his career at *Analysis* ended. Mary Goldring then became the main presenter of the programme, a position she held for eight years. In some respects this was a surprising choice. Given McIntyre's strong suspicions about journalists and the decidedly male world of Talks and Documentaries, the choice of a female journalist might appear strange. According to Greville Havenhand (then Senior Producer, *Analysis*), he brought her onto the programme where she clearly impressed George Fischer,<sup>39</sup> who said of her 'she's a very hard headed journalist of the best kind'.<sup>40</sup> A fuller account of Fischer's admiration of Goldring is provided by Tom Read who produced many of her editions of *Analysis*:

I think [George Fischer] thoroughly approved of Mary because if he hadn't she wouldn't have remained. I think he approved and admired her tremendous originality... Ian [McIntyre] could convey ideas in his own way in a programme ... but equally Mary could make her point in a very different way. They were both equally valid intellectually, but doing it in different ways..<sup>41</sup>

The stylistic changes brought to *Analysis* by Goldring are considered later in this chapter and in particular her use of language, both in her scripted commentaries and in her interview technique. This will show very significant changes from her predecessor whilst retaining the depth and intellectual credibility of the programme.

Mary Goldring's first *Analysis*, 'The Bigger the Better' on local government, was broadcast on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> May 1975 and produced by Michael Green. It is an unremarkable edition of the programme but it does show qualitative differences in approach. *Analysis* had now been moved from Fridays to Thursdays and forward 30 minutes to 8.45pm. This moved it away from *Any Questions* which preceded it in 1970.<sup>42</sup> 'The Bigger the Better' is a fairly typical current affairs documentary with scripted presentation from a guiding presenter and the recorded comments of a range of contributors. It ends with a recorded interview. Although this was not vintage Goldring and it took a while before she established her distinctive style, it did indicate a change of direction. The subject is viewed through the experiences of Liverpool and the new Metropolitan Council of Merseyside. In the early years *Analysis* was very London-centric so this focus on a northern city was unusual. Goldring opens the programme with these words:

Did you vote in local Government elections today? Did you even know that elections were going on outside Northern Ireland? It's a pity if you didn't, because today was the first chance many people will have had to show how they feel about the biggest single Town Hall shake up since Queen Victoria's jubilee.<sup>43</sup>

Goldring's introduction is short (approximately 30 seconds) and shows her direct style of broadcast talk; her use of questions, short sentences and direct address. It is also possible to detect the slightly hectoring or 'headmistressy' tone which became a distinctive feature of her presentation and particularly effective in her interviews. The introduction is then followed by Vox Pops,<sup>44</sup> the brief contributions of two anonymous residents of Liverpool. The third contributor is named but is described as 'a citizen of Merseyside'. The use of Vox Pops was highly unusual for *Analysis* and the overall selection of contributors was also a break from previous norms; of the eight other contributors five are local councillors, two are academics but neither from Oxbridge or London. The only unsurprising contributor is the Minister for Planning and Local Government, John Silkin. There is no sense in this edition of listening in to the thoughts of a London based cultural and political elite. Despite a degree of innovation in the choice of contributors (less metropolitan and less elitist) no journalists are used.

In terms of content the programme suggests that there are endemic problems in trying to balance the need for efficiency and democratic aspirations in local government. Large, professionally run city councils might be more efficient but they are perceived as removed from the electorate. Mary Goldring was a business and economics journalist and she often focussed on issues such as efficiency, profit, enterprise and the economy more generally. Some of her comments are predictive of future Conservative government policies in relation to the public services:

GOLDRING: An awful fear is dawning on Company Executives, that the local authority officials that they talk to couldn't run a wheel stall. Could industry give them any tips?

DAVIS [Employer's representative]: The answer to that is yes... ...To run a business properly obviously good systems are no good unless they are used effectively by the people in the operating situation .. this again is where we local authorities are well behind private industry...

GOLDRING: That's the sophisticated long-term view that everybody ought to be taking, but the immediate town hall concern is with wages. And why fewer local authorities are actually managing to employ a 100,000 more people than the old ones did. <sup>45</sup>

Goldring's themes here are worth noting; the application of commercial practices to local government and the problem of wage costs as a result of over-manning. Over the following years she was to return repeatedly to the problems of the British economy and the public services as *Analysis* became the sounding board for concerns about the state of the Britain and its economy and tough solutions to those problems. The extent to which *Analysis* was expressing a political agenda is fully discussed in Chapter 8.

An edition which illustrates this concern with Britain's economic troubles was 'Keep the Home Tyres Turning' on 27<sup>th</sup> November, 1975. <sup>46</sup> Presented by Mary Goldring it was produced by Greville Havenhand. The main theme was the perilous state of the British car industry which at the time was the recipient of large government subsidies. The contributors included an M P, the Managing Director of the Automobile Association, a fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford and employers and trade union representatives (seven contributors in all). Goldring uses the familiar documentary format to address issues of under-investment; inefficiency in the manufacturing process; whether government subsidies should be continued and the poor state of industrial relations. Her use of language is characteristically acerbic although her deep-seated scepticism about the

industry is directed towards both the employers (going to government with a 'briefcase full of ultimatums' and 'the rattle of the begging bowl') and to the workers ('once those strikes are over ... go on grizzling in odd corners...'<sup>47</sup>).

Some of Goldring's programmes, especially those made after she had fully established herself as the main presenter of *Analysis*, experiment with the usual format. 'Down with Skool' broadcast on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1979 addressed the question of vocational education in schools in the month after the election of the new Thatcher government in June of that year.<sup>48</sup> By this time she was using a wider range of contributors (twelve on this occasion) and they included students, school headteachers, trade unionists as well as administrators and academics. The edition begins with these words:

GOLDRING: This being the season of end of term school reports and all that nail-biting horror of examination results, we thought we'd do one of our own: on whether schools are actually teaching children what they need to survive the eighties. It is commonly said they are not. ... Suppose we start with children who leave school at sixteen – as about half of them do, and for the twenty-five thousand or so, their first job could be behind the counter at Woolworths. Now you'd think that after a century of more or less compulsory schooling, we'd be able to educate children for that, but after hearing Woolworths Personnel Director, Pat Downs you may change your mind.<sup>49</sup>

This is an investigative documentary with contributors summoned like witnesses in a court of law, as Gareth Thomas observes in his review of the programme.<sup>50</sup>

He comments that the result is a kaleidoscopic picture containing often contradictory points of view. At the centre of the programme is Goldring who combined her characteristic use of the first person singular and plural ('let me introduce you to some of the critics'; 'we'll go into more detail later') with an unusual use of temporal indicators ('now', 'later' and even 'it's only half an hour ago that he said'<sup>51</sup>). 'The overall effect is of an idiosyncratic personal voice, determined to get behind the surface data to the heart of the issue.'<sup>52</sup>

Mary Goldring clearly had strongly held views and the reputation of *Analysis* together with her own burgeoning celebrity gave her the freedom to express these. This was not always appreciated within the BBC as this highly significant extract from Programme Review Board minutes shows:<sup>53</sup>

Analysis: A Question of Performance, 8.45pm, Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1976.

DPR <sup>54</sup> commended an admirable example of what Analysis was all about. A complex subject had been beautifully pulled together by Mary Goldring...

HRB felt there had been a hint of editorialising at various points, e.g. reference to nationalised industries as "disaster areas". Mr. Green <sup>55</sup> explained that the presenter of Analysis was deeply involved in it, and produced an integrated essay, not merely a linking of other people's work. CR4 <sup>56</sup> said this was a distinctive feature of Analysis, from which it drew much of its strength, and that DPR said that he felt such an approach was acceptable in this particular context.

HTDR: <sup>57</sup> 'it had always been understood that, because presenters were chosen for their quality of intellect he or she was allowed a degree of involvement not permitted elsewhere.' <sup>58</sup> (emphasis added).

This short exchange is particularly revealing and is worth examining further. 'HRB' had detected a 'hint of editorialising' in a Goldring programme on the performance of the British economy (the term 'editorialising' referring to the expression of opinion). The producer, Michael Green's defence of Goldring expresses exactly the values of *Analysis* at the time; not using other people's work (as journalists were seen to do) but rather presenting an 'essay' which reflected their deep 'involvement'. Both McIntyre and Fischer jump to Green's defence and Fischer adds that Goldring's licence to editorialise was justified by her 'quality of intellect'. In other words, because Goldring and other *Analysis* presenters had greater intellect than other BBC presenters, they were allowed to express their views. The theme of editorialising by 'high calibre' presenters is returned to in some detail below.

It is worth making some final remarks about the change-over from McIntyre to Goldring as presenters of BBC radio's flagship current affairs programme. McIntyre was the man of letters who crafted elegant and often entertaining editions of *Analysis* supported by a cast of elite contributors and utilising his own immense capacity to read around the subject and retain large amounts of knowledge. Although a very political animal his style of presentation was beguilingly detached. The mood of his programmes was that of a privileged world; members of the establishment exchanged views which the listener was allowed to overhear. It was also non-confrontational, interviews were 'conversations', there was never any aggression or even irritation on McIntyre's part, everyone seemed to succumb to his charm. By the mid 1970s the problems of the British economy had become more acute. Mary Goldring, already a distinguished journalist specialising in the

economy, was a bold but logical choice to succeed McIntyre. She represented a very different tradition but quickly impressed George Fischer, even though she made the experience of listening to *Analysis* a very different one. Any tie to the talks tradition of the old Third Programme/ Radio 3 was broken. She brought an urgency to *Analysis*, which became far less sympathetic to contributors in its mission to explain the crisis of the British economy and the failures of the political class and the trade union movement.

Inevitably this is a selective survey of *Analysis* output over thirteen years totalling over 350 programmes. Apart from the two main presenters others were used, including most notably Robin Day, Brian Beedham, Peter Oppenheimer, John Eidinow, Michael Charlton, John Vaizey (discussed in the next chapter) and, significantly, Gerald Priestland. During 1975, Ian McIntyre took a sabbatical from *Analysis* to do other work and his place was largely filled by Gerald Priestland and John Vaizey, both of whom began presenting during 1974. Gerald Priestland was a celebrated BBC foreign correspondent whose reports from the USA and Vietnam in particular made his a familiar voice to Radio 4 listeners. He had also presented the 7pm news sequence, *Newsdesk* and by 1974 felt the need for a change:

The prestige programme of radio talks and documentaries department was *Analysis*, then anchored by Ian McIntyre. He was about to devote himself exclusively to a series about the Jews – would I be interested in taking over for a year? I leapt at the chance of extending my range into longer programmes than I had been asked to do before. *Analysis* included documentaries made abroad as well as those more economically assembled in the London studio. <sup>59</sup>

Although Priestland describes himself as ‘taking over’ the role of main presenter there appears to be no evidence that this was formally recognised and the extensive use during 1975 of John Vaizey combined with George Fischer’s reservations about Priestland (greatly enhanced by the disastrous Priestland interview with Margaret Thatcher (see below) ) makes that claim look over-ambitious.

Most of the programmes Priestland presented were produced by Greville Havenhand who became the senior *Analysis* producer during 1975. As Priestland put it, ‘I had the support of an old friend, Greville Havenhand, as my personal producer.’ <sup>60</sup> The two men

travelled abroad to make editions on Vietnam, Greece, Spain, Yugoslavia and in the USA. Relations were much more difficult, however, between Priestland and his Head of Department, George Fischer:

The one drawback was the department's head, a large brooding man, one of the BBC's 'Hungarian mafia' notorious for assassinating other people's programmes, who hovered over one's shoulder like a thunder cloud complaining about 'self-indulgence' and 'insufficient rigour' and reducing female producers to tears. <sup>61</sup>

One of Priestland's first programmes for *Analysis* was 'Greece without Colonels' (17 October 1974) which he recorded on his own. At the Programme review Board Ian Trethowan (Managing Director, Radio) was particularly pleased with Priestland's performance:

He noted how well Gerald Priestland had made the transition from journalism of the "shooting from the hip" variety <sup>62</sup> to something more demanding. The programme had possessed a clear intellectual framework. He had been grateful also for Priestland's explanation of what the individual political parties were and what they stood for. <sup>63</sup>

'Vietnam without Americans' (30 January 1975) was one of the most news-oriented editions of *Analysis*, in which Priestland's customary personal voice conveyed his own disillusionment with all involved in the conflict (post- US withdrawal). There is something slightly uncomfortable about the proximity of this edition to news events which lacks the calmer and more penetrative approach which was distinctive of the programme. The softer approach taken by Priestland <sup>64</sup> was noted at the Review Boards:

D.P.R. <sup>65</sup> asked if Gerald Priestland was settling into the programme: one could not but be struck by the gentleness of his manner, in contrast with Ian McIntyre's approach. Mr. Havenhand replied that Priestland was growing happier in his new role. He worked his way gently into an interview... occasionally he missed things, but often he deliberately held himself back in order to allow an argument to develop. <sup>66</sup>

Priestland's style and approach to interviews, therefore, were less penetrating and 'forensic' than McIntyre's. An approach which led to Priestland's demise as an *Analysis* presenter.

The programme for 17 July 1975 was titled, 'The Leader of the Opposition, The Right Honourable Margaret Thatcher, M.P. in conversation with Gerald Priestland.' Everyone involved (apart from Margaret Thatcher) agrees the interview was something of a disaster, including Priestland himself. 'A long interview with Mrs Thatcher was a failure because she refused to listen to my questions and simply played the political gramophone records she had brought with her – I hadn't the nerve to bully her.' <sup>67</sup> The same view was taken by Greville Havenhand, the producer who said that Priestland felt the failure 'deeply'. The remarkable feature of the transcript is Priestland's reluctance or inability to challenge anything Margaret Thatcher said. Instead he followed each of her long policy statements with a new question. This *Analysis* was fully discussed at the programme Review Board:

H.C.A.G.R. <sup>68</sup> said that this had been one of the most effective party political broadcasts he had heard recently: it had been very soft on Mrs. Thatcher. C.R.4 <sup>69</sup> had been very disappointed: Gerald Priestland had appeared, only to disappear almost altogether, while Mrs. Thatcher had been made to appear domineering and "carrying on". <sup>70</sup>

In the discussion which followed other senior radio staff added their dismay at this 'bad interview'. The Controller of Radios 1 and 2 commented, 'Priestland was capable of better than this. It had sounded almost as if he had been told to hold back, which could surely not be so.' <sup>71</sup> Gerald Priestland only lasted a few more months as a presenter of *Analysis*. It is interesting to note that he was clearly seen as having the calibre to be a presenter, even the main presenter <sup>72</sup> but for some he lacked Goldring's inquisitorial toughness (to become a defining feature of current affairs radio) and he was unsympathetic to the programme's right-leaning agenda. <sup>73</sup> The departure of Priestland is significant because it made it possible for Goldring to become McIntyre's successor as the second principal presenter of the programme for the second half of the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s.

### **Broadcast Talk**

As stated earlier, the aim of this chapter is to examine the evolution of *Analysis* over a

period of 13 years. The changes in the use of language have already been mentioned but a fuller exploration of how 'broadcast talk' evolved, especially in the presentations of Ian McIntyre and Mary Goldring would be relevant here.

Radio speech is unusual. While it can appear similar to unrehearsed conversation it is often highly artificial. Nowhere is this more true than in the form that broadcast talk takes when addressing current affairs. Shingler and Wieringa<sup>74</sup> use the term 'intermediate' to describe broadcast talk. Here they follow Ian Hutchby's<sup>75</sup> use of the word to capture the double-faced nature of speech on radio - being both mundane or everyday and also public or institutional. Any contemporary discussion of speech on radio must acknowledge the work of Paddy Scannell and David Cardiff<sup>76</sup> who together and individually have charted the evolution of broadcast talk in the BBC. As already discussed in Chapter 4, under the leadership of Hilda Matheson, the BBC's Talks Department in the 1920s developed a distinct style. This included a use of broadcast talk which was conversational rather than declamatory, 'intimate rather than intimidating'.<sup>77</sup> The priority for the BBC at the time was to look for techniques of delivery which would maintain the interest of a very diverse audience. A style of writing 'for the ear' was developed which retained sufficient informality to sound unscripted. *Conversations on a Train* (1932-1938) used scripted discussions of issues of the day set in a train compartment complete with sound effects. *Men Talking*, introduced in 1937, was unscripted and allowed 'ordinary' men to air their views. But despite these innovations there was an emerging bifurcation of Talks between those which were more populist and entertaining and those which were more formal and academic and dealt with weightier current affairs. This division was finally entrenched by the creation of the tripartite arrangement of networks after the end of the war.<sup>78</sup> The more innovative styles of presentation, which acknowledged the needs of the listening audience, came to be seen as unsuitable for communicating serious or controversial ideas.<sup>79</sup>

Freed from any concerns about accessibility, from the late 1940s onwards, Third Programme Talks were academic and demanding, sometimes in the extreme. They

assumed that the audience was well educated and able to follow an argument delivered without interruption, by one voice. Controller of Talks at the time was Mary Somerville whose view of Talks was heavily influenced by her veneration of Oxbridge culture. In his history of the Third Programme, Humphrey Carpenter quotes P.H. Newby on Somerville. 'She said her ideal Third Programme talk was the kind of talk that went on at high table.'<sup>80</sup> Somerville recruited the Cambridge don, Noel Annan to write reviews of Third Programme Talks. She described Annan as someone " 'like ourselves' - that is, with a Third Programme outlook."<sup>81</sup> Included in Annan's observations on Talks is a suggestion that for a month speech on the Third should be in French, and indeed one of the first Third Programme unscripted talks was delivered by Henri Matisse, in French.

None of this cultural elitism or reliance on Oxford and Cambridge Universities is surprising. One of Matheson's great achievements in the early 1930s was to bring the cultural elite into the studio (as discussed in Chapter 4). The BBC had then, and continues to have, a close relationship with 'Oxbridge'. Throughout the history of current affairs talks and more recent current affairs documentaries and programmes like *Analysis*, contributors have been persistently, but not exclusively, drawn from Oxford and Cambridge.<sup>82</sup> This has implications for broadcast talk, as Burns explains,

BBC culture, like BBC standard English, was not peculiar to itself but an intellectual ambience composed out of the values, standards and beliefs of the professional middle class, especially that part educated at Oxford and Cambridge.<sup>83</sup>

Two of the main developments which contributed to a change in broadcast talk were the introduction of tape recorders in the early 1950s and the move towards shorter news-related topical talks in magazine style formats such as *At Home and Abroad*, a precursor to the news-based current affairs which came to dominate radio from the 1960s with programmes like *The World at One* and *Today*. The use of recording on these programmes allowed the BBC to experiment with more confidence in the use of unscripted interviews. As a result of new programme formats and new technology, factual speech on radio was moving away from the scripted, indigestible talk which had characterised output since the 1920s. To reinforce this there was a shift from the use of

non BBC staff, often university academics, as 'talkers' to the increased use of BBC staff, some of whom were trained as journalists, with all the implications that had for broadcast talk. A good example of this was the presenter of *The World at One* (from 1965), William Hardcastle.

Despite these changes, the univocal radio talk delivered by non-BBC staff continued on the Home Service and the Third Programme throughout the 1960s. A collection of these talks <sup>84</sup> contains scripts by the usual establishment voices and one of these, 'Trouble in the University' about student radicals is worth quoting to illustrate the use of language typical of the format,

'I mentioned just now the game of 'prolier than thou'. If there is one game even more boring it is called 'dressing by the left'. This is only played among the virtuosi and is a contest in purity. One man establishes himself as the true diviner of the 'real' proletarian viewpoint. He then has to maintain his position as the genuine incorruptible one by looking over his left shoulder to make sure nobody else is there. All positions to the right, of course, are opportunist and what happens in that direction does not matter, but once let somebody stand on your left and your position crumbles. The main rule of the game is therefore: never be caught in a compromising position. I have suggested that no on-going political position corresponds to this position, certainly not the Soviet Union, which arouses unmitigated contempt, especially from the protagonists of the Kronstadt rebellion. But I may be wrong: for the genuine adherent of the 'Pure Land' sect there remains Cuba. Hence periodic pilgrimages to that happy country. <sup>85</sup>

It is easy to be critical of this self-consciously clever, mannered talk. The double entendres and obscure references add to the patronising tone. The speaker was David Martin, a sociologist at the L.S.E. The problem was the format, the Radio Talk, not necessarily the talker. The format allowed for the rather tedious statement of views which in multivocal talks-based programmes would have been challenged, or at least edited down.

Moving forward to the example of *Analysis*, as presented by Ian McIntyre from 1970 — 1975, it is striking how similar his broadcast talk was to the style and use of language typical of a Third Programme/ Radio 3 talk. What is also striking is the contrast in styles between McIntyre and his successor, Mary Goldring. As in the David Martin example already quoted, McIntyre adopted a mixture of an academic register with more

conversational language. On the one hand he was erudite and apparently very well informed (and his commentaries were full of cultural and literary references) while at the same time using sufficient wit and irony to win over his audience. Typically the latter was used at the beginning of the programmes. Here is an example:

A great place for jokes Cairo. I suspect they have a certain therapeutic value; without them the chaos that is Cairean traffic and the inert mindlessness of the bureaucracy would drive everyone screaming up the walls of the Mohammed Ali mosque.<sup>86</sup>

There is something patronising in McIntyre's introduction to Egypt here which conveys an image of bad drivers and incompetent government. He also assumes that the listener knows about the 'Mohammed Ali mosque'. The assumptive nature of McIntyre's use of references, whether they are to Cairo's buildings or more generally literature or history is a definitive feature of his talk. Almost every *Analysis* edition presented by him contains numerous references of this sort. This has two possible consequences. The listener is reminded that he or she is presumed to be someone on whom a reference to Shakespeare, Dickens or whatever is not lost. The 'highbrow' nature of *Analysis* is thereby signalled, but the 'highbrowness' of the listener is also acknowledged. This leads on to the second consequence of McIntyre's references - the *intimacy* they create.

A small body of writing exists on the defining characteristic of radio which is worth a mention at this juncture. Andrew Crisell's discussion of the 'characteristics of radio'<sup>87</sup> focuses on radio's 'blindness' (a shorthand for the lack of visual images) from which both advantages and disadvantages follow. In his discussion of the advantages, he considers the extensive use of the imagination, the 'suggestiveness' of radio and its immediacy and flexibility. What is perhaps missing in this analysis is an acknowledgement of the *intimacy* generated by the assumptions which presenters make that they and their listeners are co-present in the same cultural and social world. McIntyre's allusions to a wider field of knowledge and understanding will have excluded many but will also have invited others to share with him in his elite world.

Although McIntyre's speech on *Analysis* was mainly scripted, it was written for the ear, not for the page, as this example shows (also the first words of a programme):

Suddenly everybody in Northern Ireland is signing petitions. I was approached by a well-dressed unionist lady outside the city hall in Belfast yesterday morning. 'Come and give us your signature for peace', she said. And then having had a closer look at me she added, 'It doesn't matter if you're a stranger.'<sup>88</sup>

Although this was a programme about current affairs, the introduction is helpfully located in a place and the writing is full of visual imagery. We can almost see the rather scholarly, disinterested Ian McIntyre strolling around the streets of Belfast, Cairo or wherever making amusing but rather superior judgements<sup>89</sup> about the 'well dressed ladies' or 'mindless bureaucrats' he happens upon. McIntyre gives the impression of being sufficiently removed but well informed to pass judgement. Parallels with the Third Programme are obvious but McIntyre was far more skilled at writing for the ear than his academic predecessors, a skill which he took seriously:

...basically I write for radio, and that was very important to write properly for radio, I mean to make it 'one to one', and direct and sharp and to catch the interest of the audience... a good beginning was always very important, certainly, and we discussed the ideal length of the beginning, which was perhaps not less than a minute and a half, because you had to establish yourself and your audience.<sup>90</sup>

McIntyre's use of language achieved more than hooking in the audience, it could also convey a political message. In 'Through Arab Eyes', for example, there is heavy use of irony in the almost contemptuous references to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. They also illustrate McIntyre at his most emotive:

... the bold young boyos of the Palestine liberation movement... there they sit in Beirut, snug as cuckoos in a sparrow's nest...

... it must be rather restful in a way to be a Marxist/Leninist revolutionary; purged of doubt, cocooned in dogma, text-book answers to all the questions anyone could ever possibly ask.<sup>91</sup>

As McIntyre's influences lay in academia and the old Third Programme, those of his successor, Mary Goldring's were in journalism, and in particular from her time at the *Economist*. As already mentioned, Goldring's style was clipped. She addressed the

audience far more directly than McIntyre and used conversational and colloquial speech much more. Her style was also more didactic. In some editions she was clearly concerned to explain something to the audience, to educate the listener.<sup>92</sup> Here is a typical Goldring introduction:

You know somebody don't you whose wife's uncle told him that he'd heard in the pub about a man who was better off living on social security than he was going to work? I can go one better. I've met the man.<sup>93</sup>

Goldring's broadcast talk is peppered with colloquialisms; 'scroungers', 'pub', 'fiddle', 'bloke', 'stuff' and so on. She also uses conversational phrases; 'I'll tell you why..', 'well most of us know...', 'we'll start with the big stuff..' In the BBC, Goldring's style was not to everyone's taste:

Thursday, 21 September 1978

Analysis (Radio 4, 8.45 p.m.)

H.S.C.A.U.R.<sup>94</sup> commended this programme as an excellent "tour d'horizon". He did not particularly like Mary Goldring as a presenter. Manager, Radio Oxford concurred, he disliked her "headmistressy" style. C.R.4,<sup>95</sup> bemoaning the lack of other such headmistresses, commended the style of Mary Goldring, she was an eccentric broadcaster and her interviewing was still somewhat weak, but she wrote and presented in a first class professional manner.<sup>96</sup>

The 'headmistressy' style is a reflection of her didacticism, in her desire to explain a subject she sometimes sounded teacherly.

The change from Ian McIntyre's elegant, but seemingly disinterested, Third Programme style to the more laconic and didactic Mary Goldring was not just a stylistic change but reflected important shifts in *Analysis's* production team. As already discussed, the appointment of Greville Havenhand as Senior Producer, *Analysis* in 1975 and then his replacement, Tom Read in 1978 marked a shift towards a more journalistic style. Havenhand had worked on *The World at One* in the 1960s and then *The World Tonight* and Read came originally to the BBC from newspaper journalism and in the 1970s was in the Special Current Affairs Unit. Both men came to *Analysis* having had no talks or documentaries experience and neither had worked for Radio 3. Together with the emergence of Mary Goldring, a celebrated journalist in the field of business and

economics, as a presenter of *Analysis* the shift away from the talks tradition epitomised by McIntyre to the journalistic modes of delivery appeared complete.

It is frequently said of *Analysis* that it was a radio 'essay'.<sup>97</sup> This refers primarily to the documentary format where the presenter selected material from pre-recorded interviews, put them in a logical sequence and provided a commentary consisting of an introduction and conclusion with linking comments as they were needed. Given that amount of control the presenter was in a sense the author of the programme and indeed the word 'essay' is appropriate. Although stylistically the move from McIntyre to Goldring was significant the importance of the presenter and their use of language remained central throughout the 1970s. For example, Brian Beedham, the Foreign Editor of the *Economist* was used fairly regularly on the programme during the 1970s and was well thought of at the Programme Review Board. In this programme review, for example, the comments are positive and interestingly focus on his role in terms of 'performance':

Analysis (Radio 4, 7 June 1973)

D.P.R. [Howard Newby] said this had been a substantial programme of a kind which he personally liked very much. ... What Brian Beedham had to say had always been worth hearing, but in this programme he had shown considerable improvement as a broadcaster. H.T.D.P. [George Fischer] said he had been very pleased with the programme and in particular with Brian Beedham's performance... C.R.4. [Tony Whitby] had also enjoyed the programme, though he regarded Brian Beedham's contribution as the most important part of it...<sup>98</sup>

Although this only represents a part of the discussion, it is striking that the quality of the programme is assessed in terms of the performance of the presenter rather than in terms of its content (for example any particular news ideas or insights which the programme provided.) This is strongly reminiscent of the praise given to McIntyre's edition on De Gaulle when his 'style' and 'grace' were commended.

*Analysis* was quintessentially a programme of 'talk'. It was in the carefully crafted words of its presenters that its essence lay. Stylistically there were important changes in the mode of broadcast talk but talk remained the only source of meaning in a programme without actuality or theme music. Contained in this use of language, especially in the

selection of vocabulary, were the occasionally conspicuous values of the presenters. In this extract from a programme on social security and poverty Goldring's use of language is clearly value-laden (selected words have been highlighted):

And now you want to know whether there really are **work-shy scroungers** on the **fiddle**. Make up your mind when you've heard them. I'm not here to draw moral judgements but to make a common-sense judgement on **why work doesn't pay in Britain** and what we could do about it. It's surprising what **you can get away with**.<sup>99</sup>

Goldring uses the language of the Right in her assertion that 'work doesn't pay' (presented as unquestionable) and she reflects the increasingly important neo-liberal view of poverty and social security benefits, a theme returned to in Chapter 8.

### **'Conversations' – the *Analysis* interview**

Despite the change in the main presenter, *Analysis* retained many of its original features. It remained a single subject, 45 minute current affairs programme utilising a very limited range of documentary techniques. Recorded interview extracts with selected contributors interspersed with the scripted words of the presenter continued to be the basis of most editions. Studio discussions were rare but short sequences of interviews were frequently used. The one-to-one interview over a whole programme was a distinctive feature of *Analysis* from its inception and the practice of interviewing the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the Chancellor on a near annual basis was followed, especially in the early years. The one-to-one interview over 45 minutes was a novelty for the BBC and the style of interviewing employed on *Analysis* was originally developed by Ian McIntyre. To understand this technique and its evolution during this period it is helpful to look at the origins of the interview technique in the 1950s. The difference between British and American interviewing at that time was striking, as Ian Trethowan explains: 'Even in the 1950s BBC interviews with British politicians were uncritical, verging on the fawning. American broadcasters had developed a much more robust approach.'<sup>100</sup> The move towards the American style epitomised by the great journalist and broadcaster, Walter Cronkite, happened not on the BBC but in commercial television. BBC television news in the 1950s was moribund

under the uninspiring and autocratic leadership of Tahu Hole, described here by Leonard Miall:

In 1947, through a series of unconnected events ... Tahu Hole came to be promoted by Haley into a post that was well beyond his capabilities. BBC News at that time was respected throughout the world. Hole thought he could maintain that reputation by following a line of extreme caution. Insecure, and uncertain in his news judgement, he ran the News Division on a policy of safety first.<sup>101</sup>

Hole's caution included not allowing news readers to appear in view to prevent a 'cult of personality'. The level of incompetence in BBC news broadcasting at the time gave the newly created Independent Television News a great opportunity, one which changed both the nature of news broadcasting and also news interviewing. The first ITN 'newscasters' were Christopher Chataway and Robin Day.<sup>102</sup> Although Chataway was the initial success, it was Day, a barrister by training, who had the biggest impact:

Viewers detected a gleam in the eyes behind the spectacles. Critics began to note in all the ITN interviewers, but in Day above all, a new, less deferential style of questioning. Day became the leader, and almost the symbol, of a more abrasive style of television journalism.<sup>103</sup>

Robin Day went on to become a presenter of BBC television's flagship current affairs programme, *Panorama*. In his account of the story of that programme, Richard Lindley describes Robin Day's interviewing style:

The way Day conducted ... interviews, like the barrister he had trained to be, was a very significant development. Gone were the fawning, unctuous questions and, as a result, the patronising, condescending answers that had been typical of previous political interviews on television; in came direct effective questioning that revealed more than the general public had ever known before about the world's leaders.<sup>104</sup>

Robin Day is a significant example for *Analysis* not only because he presented a number of editions of the programme in the 1970s but also because there are distinct similarities between his rigorous and 'forensic' approach and that used by McIntyre and others. Such was the power of the television interview and so prestigious and popular was *Panorama*<sup>105</sup> that in a relatively short period of time questions were being asked about to whom politicians were answerable: parliament or Robin Day? Lindley cites Day himself saying, 'The attitude of many politicians was one of envy, fear and resentment,

summed up by one Sunday tabloid in the question “Who does Robin Day think he is anyway?”<sup>106</sup> In a period of barely 10 years, the BBC had moved from anonymous and unseen television newsreaders to celebrity presenters, epitomised by Day. During the 1960s, however, politicians learned how to deal even with Robin Day. They learned how to parry questions and stall the interviewer, as a result of which *Panorama* interviews became increasingly ritualised.<sup>107</sup> In addition, and this is a criticism which is particularly significant for *Analysis*, Day was very much an establishment figure. Lindley’s judgement which follows could easily have been written about Ian McIntyre:

The fact was that Robin Day, though a trenchant and fearless interrogator, was a fully paid-up life member of the political world at Westminster; he subscribed to its agenda and ways of working. His questioning might be tough but it was never radical; holding a deep respect for those who had been elected – he had after all tried hard to be one of the elect himself – he was content to deal with the issues the politicians wanted to talk about rather than insist on raising those they didn’t.<sup>108</sup>

By the early 1970s Day came to be seen as a liability and he left *Panorama* in 1971. It is not surprising that he was attracted to the long one-to-one interviews on *Analysis* and he was welcomed by George Fischer. An interview with Lord Hailsham on law reform<sup>109</sup> received great praise from the Programme Review Board and Fischer particularly admired Robin Day’s ability to read and digest a report published on the morning of the interview (once again the quality of the primary research was seen as key to the programme). The comments at the Programme Review Board reveal admiration for the programme and for Robin Day’s technique:

Robin Day’s interview with the Lord Chancellor – Lord Archie Gordon’s last production enterprise before retirement – was very warmly commended. D.P.R.<sup>110</sup> said it had been a remarkable programme which 25 years ago would have been regarded as an astonishing achievement. The standard of programmes now was such that what would have been regarded as totally exceptional was accepted as no more than a normal part of the output. M.D.R.<sup>111</sup> thought it a brilliant programme.<sup>112</sup>

Meanwhile, Ian McIntyre was also developing the ‘conversational’ style of interview on *Analysis*. The term implies exactly the sort of cosy mutual admiration which Robin Day’s critics accused him of. In fact the term is rather misleading. Both McIntyre and Fischer claim that the conversational style over 45 minutes was just as revealing as the more aggressive form of news interview. Here Fischer describes the interview with the

## Israeli Prime Minister, Golda Meir:

Well we had a bit of luck with Golda Meir because that was to my knowledge the first conversation – they weren't really interviews. I mean this is interesting about Ian. You won't find there, you know, the sort of hammering away: "Now! Could I have a 'yes' " and, you know, that sort of rubbish. There's a conversation, and the idea was a very simple one, to allow your 'partner' if you like, to reveal as much of his or her mind as possible in 45 minutes. <sup>113</sup>

McIntyre's technique is well illustrated in his interview with Margaret Thatcher broadcast on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1973. <sup>114</sup> At the time, Thatcher was Secretary of State for Education. <sup>115</sup> The starting point of the interview was the recently published White Paper on education but the programme as a whole ranged over most aspects of education policy for all age groups. By modern standards the interview is decidedly 'soft' and rather than challenging Thatcher's answers (as a contemporary interviewer would now do) most of the fairly long responses are left unchallenged in order to move on to another issue. McIntyre only interrupts Thatcher once in the whole programme. The following is one of the rare occasions where he seems to be at all testing; it also illustrates the general tone of McIntyre's questioning:

MCINTYRE            May we go back to philosophy and policies for a moment more generally? In your party's manifesto at the last election, you said this, "Labour's insistence on compulsory reorganisation on rigid lines was contrary to local democracy." What would you say to the criticism that you've devoted a lot of energy in the past two and a half years to impeding the comprehensive plans of some local authorities.

THATCHER           Well that's a very selective quotation.

MCINTYRE           All quotations are by definition.

THATCHER           All quotations are but let me just complete it... <sup>116</sup>

An interview with the Prime Minister, Harold Wilson in June 1974 <sup>117</sup> reveals the same approach as that used for Thatcher, if perhaps a little more intellectually tough. <sup>118</sup> Once again rather than challenging answers given, McIntyre, based on apparently extensive research, covers a wide range of issues including the recent General Election, Northern Ireland, inflation, Europe and the forthcoming referendum, South America, Africa, North Sea oil and devolution. The mood is relaxed and informal but 'there is the sense of intellectual sparring between an experienced interviewer and a famous politician renowned for the quickness of his wit.' <sup>119</sup> Part of the sparring employs allusions which

assume wide-ranging knowledge on the part of the listener. Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and the Greek Sophists are all referred to along with Kennedy, Napoleon and the more specific 'Sunningdale', 'Phase Three' and the 'Kilbrandon Paper'. Once again the programme was praised at the Programme Review Board:

D.P.R. <sup>120</sup> had thought well of this broadcast. Ian McIntyre had been splendid. D.P.R. had been impressed with the firmness and sense of reality with which McIntyre had conducted the interview; it must have been a tiring 45 minutes for the Prime Minister.  
... Before the recording Mr. Wilson had complimented Ian McIntyre as the man responsible for the most thoughtful interviews to be heard today. <sup>121</sup>

Richard Lindley's judgement of Robin Day, already quoted as someone who belonged to and indeed revered the same establishment as the politicians he interviewed, can surely be applied to McIntyre whose interview style was very different from Day's much more confrontational approach. That Wilson complimented McIntyre before the interview reinforces that impression and although their shared world made a particularly relaxed and expansive programme, it also gave the listener the impression of a politician being called to account for his actions.

As a journalist with a reputation for plain speaking, Mary Goldring took the long *Analysis* interview into more confrontational territory. A particularly good example of her approach is seen in her interview with the Chief Executive of the state-supported car manufacturer, British Leyland. <sup>122</sup> The interview took place during the infamous 'Winter of Discontent' when the level of industrial conflict reached a particularly high level in the final months of the Labour Government under James Callaghan. Goldring is terse, direct and inquisitorial in her approach. Rather than the familiarity and warmth of a McIntyre interview, Goldring is highly critical of her subject and in particular his style of management. Goldring uses short but challenging questions throughout the interview; 'Are you going to close plants?' and 'How does a stoppage affect quality?'. She also does not allow Edwardes' answers to go unchallenged:

Edwardes: ... I'm suggesting there are better ways of raising tax than to tax hell out of somebody who's working hard – that's not clever.

Goldring: But can you prove that tax is stopping people from working? <sup>123</sup>

and later,

Goldring:	How hard do you work yourself?
Edwardes:	I work very hard.
Goldring:	Why?

The change in the interview style from McIntyre to Goldring reflected not only a change of personalities but also a change in the social and political context during the 1970s. McIntyre's interviews were carried out at the end of the period of consensus and relative prosperity in British society and politics and before the far more turbulent late 1970s. Margaret Thatcher's election as leader of the Conservative Party and the increased political and industrial unrest at the time made the rather cosy, non-confrontational approach of McIntyre increasingly irrelevant. It was not only Goldring who employed the more challenging approach on *Analysis*; Michael Charlton, who was well known as a former reporter on *Panorama*,<sup>124</sup> presented occasional editions of *Analysis* including a notable interview with James Callaghan as Leader of the Opposition in 1980.<sup>125</sup> It was a particularly difficult time for Callaghan, who resigned as leader five months later. The left was in the ascendancy and the divisions within the party would soon lead to the creation of the breakaway SDP in the following year. Charlton correctly identifies the most important policy areas (wages and incomes policy, Britain in Europe and Nuclear Disarmament) but repeatedly returns, much to Callaghan's annoyance, to the issue of his leadership. As Gareth Thomas describes in his review of the programme, Charlton is persistent in his questioning and there is a great deal of resistance from the interviewee:

After several attempts to get Callaghan to reveal something of his intentions – to his obvious slight annoyance – Charlton even tries a final time in the last few seconds of the interview, 'Can I risk your displeasure by returning at the very end...?'. It is interesting to note the difference between this style of interview and a typical McIntyre interview in the early years of *Analysis*, which was much more relaxed and intellectually, as opposed to journalistically, probing. Also, at one point Callaghan is clearly irritated by the requests for him to comment on quotes attributed to others – 'This interview, if I may say so, seems to be becoming a question of what I think about other people's opinions...'<sup>126</sup>

There is also a greater rapidity in Charlton's questioning than in the earlier more leisurely style. Here is an example of Charlton pushing Callaghan in an exchange:

Charlton: Well which, therefore of the three constitutional issues .. do you regard as the most fundamental and important?

Callaghan: I think they're all important.

Charlton: Well. let's take the first one first ... isn't that what party conference decided?

Callaghan: Yes.

Charlton: And are you in favour of that?

Callaghan: No.

Charlton: Well, how's that going to be resolved? <sup>127</sup>

*Analysis* in this period provides us with some insight into the ongoing debate about the political interview and in particular concern about its aggressive use on Radio 4's *Today* programme.

### Summary and Conclusion

In the period 1970 –1983, *Analysis* established itself as a programme which covered a wide range of national and international current affairs issues. It was presented by a variety of presenters of whom McIntyre and Goldring were the most prominent. Presenters had considerable autonomy, not only scripting and organising the main content of programmes but also in their licence to editorialise. The freedom of *Analysis* presenters was supported by senior radio staff at the Weekly Radio Programme Review Boards citing the 'calibre' of presenters as justification. *Analysis* was clearly popular with senior BBC staff (as the extracts from Programme Review Boards cited in this chapter reveal) and the programme apparently achieved the task originally set for it by Tony Whitby, to be a tough and intellectually challenging listen. However, the heady mixture of the editorial freedom of the presenter and their evidently strongly held political views (for example McIntyre on Israel, Goldring on nationalised industries) could result in political bias. This needs further consideration and will be the subject of the final chapter.

'Broadcast talk' in BBC current affairs radio developed from the didactic pre-war radio talk and the 'high table' style of the Third Programme talk to the more informal and journalistic style to be found in news sequences in the 1960s. *Analysis* encapsulated these two traditions with McIntyre's elegant and crafted script owing much to the best of

the talks tradition whereas Goldring's use of direct address was more journalistic. Their interview styles were also different; McIntyre's politely conversational style was nevertheless effective over 45 minutes, helped by his meticulous preparation. Goldring was much more brusque and even hectoring, an approach she shared with Michael Charlton. Other examples of their different approaches appear in the next two chapters.

The conceptual themes of the precise nature of current affairs, elitism and of the role of the presenter as a 'professional' have all been prominent in this examination of the first 13 years of *Analysis* and are discussed in turn below. In addition the question of political bias has emerged as an issue and in particular a possible right wing bias in the talk of McIntyre and Goldring.

*Analysis* represented a specific notion of what current affairs was, developed by the prime movers in its creation; Ian McIntyre, George Fischer and Tony Whitby. As discussed in Chapter 5, for these men, current affairs was seen as a serious and cerebral activity, in marked contrast to the perceived superficiality of journalism and the spurious visual imagery of television. *Analysis* reasserted BBC radio's commitment to 'serious things' <sup>128</sup> in the difficult times following the publication of *Broadcasting in the Seventies* when a reaffirmation of traditional public service values was felt necessary (and in particular by the Controller of Radio 4, Tony Whitby). The seriousness of *Analysis* can be seen as a reflection of the elitism of the talks tradition with its roots in the 1930s, a feature which was much more prominent in editions presented by McIntyre than those presented by Goldring. That elitism was expressed in the selection of elite contributors; in the at times obscure cultural references (especially to works of literature); in the perception of the audience as an elite (by both producers and radio management) and in the conversational interview style. As Richard Lindley reminds us, Robin Day (and certainly Ian McIntyre) were highly accomplished broadcasters but Day was 'a fully paid up life member of the political world at Westminster.' <sup>129</sup> The change brought to *Analysis* by its second principal presenter, Mary Goldring, were linguistic but also reflected a more populist approach to current affairs. If McIntyre's elitism was grounded

in a tradition most fully expressed by Third Programme talks with that high table quality so favoured by Mary Somerville then Goldring's more journalistic and direct approach represented a more populist programme. Goldring redefined *Analysis* both stylistically (direct speech, wider range of contributors, more didactic) and was allowed to do so because of her perceived professionalism: as McIntyre said as Controller, Radio 4 in 1978, Goldring was an 'eccentric broadcaster' but she 'wrote and presented in a first class professional manner'.<sup>130</sup>

The cases of McIntyre and Goldring on *Analysis* are reminiscent of the celebrated presenters of *Panorama*. The presenters of the programme included the semi-permanent, Richard Dimbleby and the 'guest stars' who were often former politicians. Here the twin themes of impartiality and professionalism are clearly connected. Because of Dimbleby's perceived professionalism, even though he occupied a highly sensitive position anchoring the ship current affairs programme, he could avoid bias.<sup>131</sup> The former Labour politician, Woodrow Wyatt, was a good example of a 'guest star'. He was also someone with strongly held political opinions which were dramatically expressed in one edition of the programme when he spoke directly to the membership of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, urging them to vote against the Communist candidate in their forthcoming elections.<sup>132</sup>

Goldring's perceived professionalism gave her the licence to change the way *Analysis* presented current affairs. From the programme extracts presented in this chapter it appears that presenters, and in particular McIntyre and Goldring, also had a licence to editorialise, to express their own opinions and that this was sanctioned by George Fischer, for example, as Head of Talks and Documentaries, because of their 'quality of intellect'.<sup>133</sup> Professionalism, articulated at the Review Boards in terms of intellect and calibre was used as a defence or self-justification for expressing opinions. Whether or not *Analysis*, and in particular its presenters, editorialised in support of emerging neo-liberal ideas in the 1970s will be the main theme of Chapter 8.

The next chapter is a case study of the coverage of Southern Africa by *Analysis*. It provides a different perspective on the main theoretical themes: of the precise nature of current affairs as expressed in *Analysis*, the selection of contributors, evidence of editorialising and the role of the presenter. The case of *Analysis* in Africa provides useful evidence of the ambitious international dimension of the programme and helps assess its strengths and weaknesses.

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<sup>1</sup> A Friday.

<sup>2</sup> *Analysis* 10 April 1970.

<sup>3</sup> *Radio Times* 2 April 1970, 59.

<sup>4</sup> *Analysis* competed against *Miss England 1970* (BBC 1, 9.10pm to 9.55pm) and *World Cinema: Bunuel's The Criminal Life of Archibaldo de la Cruz* (BBC 2 9.10pm to 10.40 pm).

<sup>5</sup> Ian McIntyre made no programmes during 1975 in order to make way for other radio work.

<sup>6</sup> *Analysis*, 10 April 1970.

<sup>7</sup> Oppenheimer was subsequently recruited to present *Analysis* occasionally and then became one of the main presenters of *File on Four* (1977-).

<sup>8</sup> The timings presented here are approximate and based on calculations rather than timed listening.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Oppenheimer, *Analysis*, 10 April 1970.

<sup>10</sup> Controller, Radio 4, Tony Whitby.

<sup>11</sup> WAC, Radio Weekly Programme Review Board Microfilm, 15 April 1970.

<sup>12</sup> *Analysis*, 8 May 1970.

<sup>13</sup> Lindley, 74.

<sup>14</sup> WAC, Radio Weekly Programme Review Board Microfilm, 13 May 1970.

<sup>15</sup> Managing Director, Radio, Ian Trethowan.

<sup>16</sup> Editor, Documentaries and Talks Radio, Archie Gordon.

<sup>17</sup> WAC, Radio Weekly Programme Review Board Microfilm, 20 May 1970.

<sup>18</sup> *Analysis*, 29 May 1970.

<sup>19</sup> WAC, Radio Weekly Programme Review Board Microfilm, 3 June 1970.

<sup>20</sup> WAC, Radio Weekly Programme Review Board Microfilm, 3 June 1970.

<sup>21</sup> *Analysis*, 17 July 1970. The issues around 'parachuting' the presenter into a foreign country are explored in more detail in Chapter 7.

<sup>22</sup> WAC, Radio Weekly Programme Review Board Microfilm, 22 July 1970.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with George Fischer, 22 September 2000.

<sup>24</sup> WAC, R51/1332/1 20 July 1970.

<sup>25</sup> Ian McIntyre, *The Proud Doers: Israel After Twenty Years* (London: BBC, 1968). The book was based on a series of documentaries made by McIntyre and Fischer designed to reflect the point of view of the countries they visited. It was balanced by a similar series on Arab countries presented by Michael Adams.

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- <sup>26</sup> WAC,R51/1332/1 27 July 1970 George Fischer to Michael Adams.
- <sup>27</sup> WAC, Radio Weekly Programme Review Board Microfilm, 5 August 1970.
- <sup>28</sup> McIntyre describes the high standards set by George Fischer, 'I can remember the first time I interviewed Roy Jenkins, I was sent home to Edinburgh with every single book Jenkins had ever written, so that I ... was really well prepared for him..' Interview with Ian McIntyre 26 February 1999.
- <sup>29</sup> This edition is discussed in Sean Street, *Crossing the Ether*.
- <sup>30</sup> Strategic Arms Limitation Talks.
- <sup>31</sup> This programme and 'Against the stream' are discussed in chapter 7.
- <sup>32</sup> Interview with Roland Challis, 18 August 2000.
- <sup>33</sup> Rendell soon left to become Assistant Head of Current Affairs Group Radio in 1975.
- <sup>34</sup> Interview with Greville Havenhand 30 October 1998.
- <sup>35</sup> Talks and Current Affairs Group (Radio) was led by Arthur Hutchinson until his replacement by Martin Wallace in 1974. The group was then renamed 'Current Affairs Group'. In 1978 a further reorganisation created 'Current Affairs' headed by Peter Woon with the new title 'Editor News and Current Affairs Radio' and this situation remained for the rest of the period covered by this thesis.
- <sup>36</sup> This is well illustrated by the 1976 Presidential Election affair. Upon appointment as Controller, Radio 4, Ian McIntyre discovered that his predecessor, Claire Lawson-Dick had asked SCAU to prepare for coverage of the 1976 US Presidential election campaign. Tom Read quoted McIntyre's reaction to SCAU's plans as follows: "... 'what's this rubbish you're trying to land on me? I don't approve of this, I think your ideas are tired, your presenters are awful, your contributors are not what we want.' I don't think I [Tom Read] should really say more about it than that, but it does show up this rivalry between Talks and Docs and current affairs ...' Interview with Tom Read, 14 August, 2000.
- <sup>37</sup> The BBC Written Archives do not show why individual appointments were made and so the only evidence for this claim is from a mixture of common sense and the interview transcripts.
- <sup>38</sup> Her *Who's Who* entry described her as, 'Air and Science correspondent, 1949-74, Business Editor, 1966-74, Economist Newspaper; economist and broadcaster 1974-.' (*Who's Who* 1982, London: Adam and Charles Black, 1982), 850.
- <sup>39</sup> The two men both claimed responsibility for recruiting Mary Goldring.
- <sup>40</sup> Interview with George Fischer 22 September 2000.
- <sup>41</sup> Interview with Tom Read 14 August 2000.
- <sup>42</sup> It is also worth noting the long term impact of the *Broadcasting in the Seventies* reforms which turned Radio 4 into a more generic and speech-based network: Friday 10<sup>th</sup> April, 1970 featured two music programmes with studio orchestras, but there were no music programmes on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1975.
- <sup>43</sup> *Analysis*, 1 May 1975.
- <sup>44</sup> The broadcasting term for 'the voice of the people'. Always recorded on location.
- <sup>45</sup> *Analysis*, 1 May 1975.
- <sup>46</sup> My discussion of this programme draws on the review of it by Gareth Thomas available on 'Analysis Online' <http://analysis.bournemouth.ac.uk/AnalysisOnline> accessed 17 June 2003.
- <sup>47</sup> *Analysis* 1 May 1975.
- <sup>48</sup> See Gareth Thomas's review on 'Analysis Online' <http://analysis.bournemouth.ac.uk/AnalysisOnline> Accessed 17 June 2003.
- <sup>49</sup> *Analysis*, 4 July 1979.
- <sup>50</sup> Programme review by Gareth Thomas, 'Analysis Online' <http://analysis.bournemouth.ac.uk/AnalysisOnline> Accessed 17 June 2003.
- <sup>51</sup> *Analysis*, 4 July 1979. Programme review <http://analysis.bournemouth.ac.uk/AnalysisOnline> Accessed 17 June 2003.
- <sup>52</sup> Programme review by Gareth Thomas, <http://analysis.bournemouth.ac.uk/AnalysisOnline>.
- <sup>53</sup> I am grateful to David Hendy of the University of Westminster for providing this edited extract from the archives.
- <sup>54</sup> Director of Programmes Radio, D.T.Muggeridge.
- <sup>55</sup> Michael Green, the producer.
- <sup>56</sup> Controller Radio 4, the newly appointed, Ian McIntyre.

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<sup>57</sup> Head of Talks and Documentaries Radio, George Fischer.

<sup>58</sup> WAC, Radio Weekly Programme Review Board Microfilm 28 July 1976 (from David Hendy's research notes). David Hendy's appropriate use of emphasis has been retained.

<sup>59</sup> Priestland, 248.

<sup>60</sup> Priestland, 248.

<sup>61</sup> Priestland, 248.

<sup>62</sup> Presumably a reference to Priestland's time at *Newsdesk* of which he wrote, 'Since I was the principal linkman and wrote all my own material, I found myself back in the business of near-editorialising: it was fun to see how close to the wind one could sail.' (Priestland, 239).

<sup>63</sup> WAC, Radio Weekly Programme Review Board Microfilm, 27 October 1974 (date illegible).

<sup>64</sup> Priestland, as he fully acknowledges in his autobiography, was a troubled and sensitive man who suffered severely from depression and eventually became known for the humanity and intimacy of his later programmes as religious affairs broadcaster.

<sup>65</sup> Director of Programmes, Radio, D.T.Muggeridge.

<sup>66</sup> WAC, Radio Weekly Programme Review Board, 19 March 1975.

<sup>67</sup> Priestland, 249.

<sup>68</sup> Head of Current Affairs Group Radio, M.W.Wallace.

<sup>69</sup> Controller, Radio 4, the newly appointed Clare Lawson-Dick. Her predecessor, Tony Whitby, had resigned earlier in 1975 suffering from cancer. He was central to the creation and early direction of *Analysis* and his early death was a great blow to all those involved but in particular to one of his oldest colleagues and friends, Ian McIntyre. Around this time McIntyre took a break from the programme. Lawson-Dick was close to retirement and took over the Controllership for a year prior to the appointment of McIntyre in 1976.

<sup>70</sup> WAC, Radio Weekly Programme Review Board Microfilm, 23 July 1975.

<sup>71</sup> There is no evidence that Priestland was told to hold back and it would seem very out of character for either Priestland or Havenhand to allow themselves to be gagged in this way.

<sup>72</sup> That McIntyre and Priestland were perceived as having the same authority was stated explicitly by Ian Trethowan at the Programme Review Board, 15 December 1971. See Appendix A.

<sup>73</sup> According to Greville Havenhand there was an argument between Fischer and Priestland, 'and it was really the end of Priestland on *Analysis*'. Priestland wanted to say that Yugoslavia under Tito was more democratic than the Soviet Union. Fischer thought it was not a democracy and this could not be said. An argument followed.

<sup>74</sup> Martin Shingler and Cindy Wieringa, *On Air: Methods and Meanings in Radio* (London: Arnold, 1998).

<sup>75</sup> Ian Hutchby, "The Organisation of Talk on Talk Radio." In *Broadcast Talk*, edited by Paddy Scannell London: Sage, 1991.

<sup>76</sup> David Cardiff, "The Serious and the Popular: Aspects of the Evolution of Style in the Radio talk 1928 – 1939." In *Media, Culture and Society: A Critical Reader*, edited by Richard Collins et. al. London: Sage, 1986; Paddy Scannell, "The Relevance of talk." In *Broadcast talk*, edited by Paddy Scannell. London: Sage, 1991; Scannell and Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting*.

<sup>77</sup> Cardiff, 230.

<sup>78</sup> The Home Service, The Light Programme and The Third Programme.

<sup>79</sup> Cardiff, 244.

<sup>80</sup> Carpenter, 126.

<sup>81</sup> Carpenter, 125.

<sup>82</sup> Of course the precise nature of the cultural and intellectual elite changed between the 1930s and the 1970s, although it is probably true to say that in Britain the ancient universities remained at the vanguard of the elite - defining and sustaining it. Interestingly, the BBC itself became another cultural institution which helped define and nurture these elites and this relationship is touched on in this thesis.

<sup>83</sup> Burns, 42.

<sup>84</sup> Derwent May, *Good talk 2: An Anthology from BBC Radio* (London: Gollancz, 1968).

<sup>85</sup> May, 127.

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- <sup>86</sup> *Analysis* 28 January 1972.
- <sup>87</sup> Andrew Crisell *Understanding Radio 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (London: Routledge, 1994), 3 – 16.
- <sup>88</sup> *Analysis* 16 June 1972
- <sup>89</sup> Some caution is needed when passing judgement on broadcast talk of another era. To contemporary ears Ian McIntyre's can sound aloof and detached but I acknowledge the problem of judging the past using the standards of the present.
- <sup>90</sup> Interview with Ian McIntyre 26 February 1999.
- <sup>91</sup> *Analysis* 28 January 1972. Ian McIntyre's portrait of Israel based on three programmes made for the Third Programme *The Proud Doers: Israel After Twenty Years* (London: BBC, 1968) reveals his deep affection for the state and the people and is scathing of 'Arab nations,' referring at one point to 'the Syrians, eternal jackals to Nasser's paper tiger' (McIntyre, *The Proud Doers*, 1.)
- <sup>92</sup> It might not be too far fetched to see Goldring in the tradition of 'educational talks' associated with the work of Hilda Matheson in the 1930s.
- <sup>93</sup> *Analysis* 20 January 1977.
- <sup>94</sup> Head of Special Current Affairs Unit, Bernard Tate.
- <sup>95</sup> Controller, Radio 4, Ian McIntyre (CR4 1976 – 1978).
- <sup>96</sup> Weekly Radio Programme Review Board 27 September 1978, WAC Programme Review Board Microfilm. It is unsurprising that McIntyre defends his successor in this review board. Her critic, Bernard Tate represented a department (SCAU) which for McIntyre epitomised the superficial news based current affairs he felt had come to dominate Radio 4.
- <sup>97</sup> A term used by both Michael Green and Ian McIntyre in interviews.
- <sup>98</sup> Radio Weekly Programme Review Board 13 June 1973, WAC Programme Review Board Microfilm.
- <sup>99</sup> *Analysis*, 20 January 1977.
- <sup>100</sup> Trethowan, 80.
- <sup>101</sup> Miall, 125.
- <sup>102</sup> Trethowan, 81.
- <sup>103</sup> Trethowan, 81.
- <sup>104</sup> Lindley, 75.
- <sup>105</sup> As Lindley puts it, '*Panorama* had become (in the early 1960s) part of the fabric of the nation. Every Monday night eight million people or more tuned in to it.' (Lindley, 76).
- <sup>106</sup> Lindley, 168.
- <sup>107</sup> Lindley cites Peter Black's article in the *Daily Mail* 4 May 1967 in which he criticises the ritualism of a recent *Panorama* interview with the Foreign Secretary, George Brown (Lindley, 170).
- <sup>108</sup> Lindley, 171.
- <sup>109</sup> *Analysis*, 30 June 1972.
- <sup>110</sup> Director of Programme, Radio, Gerard Mansell.
- <sup>111</sup> Managing Director, Radio, Ian Trethowan.
- <sup>112</sup> WAC, Radio Weekly Programme Review Board Microfilm, 5 July 1972.
- <sup>113</sup> Interview with George Fischer, 22 September 2000.
- <sup>114</sup> Once again I draw here on the review by Gareth Thomas, 'Analysis Online' <http://analysis.bournemouth.ac.uk/AnalysisOnline> accessed on June 20 2003.
- <sup>115</sup> As Gareth Thomas rightly points out it is intriguing to note that the choice of a departmental minister was uncharacteristic for *Analysis*. This was two years before her election as party leader.
- <sup>116</sup> *Analysis* February 2 1973.
- <sup>117</sup> *Analysis*, 6 June 1974.
- <sup>118</sup> See Gareth Thomas, 'Analysis Online' <http://analysis.bournemouth.ac.uk/AnalysisOnline> accessed on June 20 2003.
- <sup>119</sup> Gareth Thomas, 'Analysis Online' <http://analysis.bournemouth.ac.uk/AnalysisOnline> accessed on June 20 2003.
- <sup>120</sup> Director of Programmes, Radio, PH Newby.
- <sup>121</sup> WAC, Radio Weekly Programme Review Board Microfilm, 12 June 1974.
- <sup>122</sup> *Analysis*, 17 January 1979.

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<sup>123</sup> *Analysis*, 17 January, 1979.

<sup>124</sup> He joined *Panorama* in 1963 and left in 1975. As it was for Robert Kee and Robin Day, *Analysis* was an ideal programme for Michael Charlton who shared many of Fischer and McIntyre's views about current affairs and the BBC, 'He was, and remains, an unashamed elitist.' (Lindley, 102).

<sup>125</sup> *Analysis*, 11 June, 1980.

<sup>126</sup> Gareth Thomas, 'Analysis Online' <http://analysis.bournemouth.ac.uk/AnalysisOnline> accessed 20 June 2003.

<sup>127</sup> *Analysis*, 11 June 1980.

<sup>128</sup> Interview with Ian McIntyre, 26 February, 1999.

<sup>129</sup> Lindley, 171.

<sup>130</sup> Weekly Radio Programme Review Board, 27 September 1978, WAC Programme Review Board Microfilm.

<sup>131</sup> Lindley, 34.

<sup>132</sup> Lindley, 66.

<sup>133</sup> Weekly Radio Programme Review Board, 28 July, 1976, WAC Programme Review Board Microfilm.

## 7.

### ANALYSIS IN AFRICA

*Analysis* was a programme with a strongly international agenda. Throughout the period 1970 – 1983 there were editions each year featuring foreign countries. In 1974 for example there were 33 editions of *Analysis* including two on India and one each on France, Italy, Portugal, Greece and Iran. In the same year there were also editions on 'Pentagon Policies', 'Paris and Bonn', 'One Man's Europe' and Helmut Schmidt.<sup>1</sup> The USA and Ireland (both sides of the border) were frequently discussed partly because events in those countries had such a great influence on Britain and British politics in the 1970s and early 1980s.

This chapter is a case study of the treatment of southern Africa (including both South Africa and Rhodesia<sup>2</sup>). In the period in question, both countries were ruled by highly repressive white minority governments and in both resistance movements were active. This raises the question of how *Analysis* addressed what was one of the most significant international issues of the day, in terms of political orientation and also in the style of presentation. To put it more bluntly: how would the urbane and seemingly disinterested Ian McIntyre present editions of *Analysis* on Apartheid? How would Mary Goldring differ in her approach to these issues with her much more didactic and direct manner? Southern Africa also presented a particular challenge to a programme so committed to the collection of primary sources at the expense of the more convenient use of secondary sources such as journalists. As this case study reveals, the opposition to the use of existing BBC sources was resolutely adhered to in Africa and presented some unique problems.

Two related but separate issues need considering when addressing the relationship between the BBC and Africa in the period leading up to the end of apartheid. Firstly

the BBC's External Service broadcasting to Africa, discussed by Gerard Mansell in his history of the World Service <sup>3</sup> and secondly coverage of African and especially Southern African developments by BBC News and Current Affairs programmes. As Mansell describes, after a period of post-war neglect of Africa by the BBC there was a marked change of direction. 'The 1960s, in a sense, were the decade of Africa.' <sup>4</sup> He sees this as the result of a policy shift from within government and the BBC to use broadcasting more proactively to maintain influence in Africa and even 'to become one of the agents working towards the creation of an African consciousness'. The result was the building of new high-power short wave transmitters on Ascension Island in 1967 mainly to improve coverage to the West Coast of Africa as well as the creation of new programmes such as *Focus on Africa* which provided daily current affairs coverage of the continent.

Despite this interest in influencing the political and cultural life of Africa, there was far less concern to provide coverage of Africa for BBC television and radio in the 1960s and early 1970s. It is an interesting comment on the BBC at the time that it was so concerned to have political and cultural influence but at the same time less interested in reporting on African affairs to the domestic audience. Here the BBC reflected the performance of the British press. *The Times* only opened a Cape Town bureau in 1969, *The Telegraph* had one correspondent for both South Africa and Rhodesia, *The Guardian* was denied a South African correspondent until 1977. In 1972 the BBC had one radio correspondent in Southern Africa (the only foreign radio correspondent in the Republic) and also used Peter Niesewand as a stringer in Rhodesia. <sup>5</sup> Their first television correspondent, John Humphrys arrived in 1977. Although this lack of resident correspondents certainly hampered BBC coverage of African affairs it was a feature of *Analysis* to 'parachute' their highly regarded presenters into a foreign country and have no contact with resident journalists even when these were available.

One of the most striking features of the coverage of Southern Africa on *Analysis* was its episodic nature. On average thirty programmes were made each year and in the

period from May 1971 to May 1973 there were six editions of *Analysis* on sub Saharan Africa, five of which were presented by Ian McIntyre. There were no programmes on sub Saharan Africa between 1973 and 1980. This is surprising given the acceleration in events during that time - Mozambique and Angola achieved independence, 575 people died in the Soweto Uprisings and the UN Security Council imposed an arms embargo on South Africa. In 1980, however, Mary Goldring, the main presenter of *Analysis*, then made three programmes - two on South Africa and the third on Rhodesia. No further programmes were made on the region until 1985. As there was relatively extensive coverage of Africa early in the 1970s by *Analysis* when the region was quieter than it was to become we are left with the question why the BBC and the *Analysis* team chose to focus as on this international issue at that time at the expense of others. One former producer has commented,

Such a commitment of resources to a single place in three successive years is indeed remarkable. Even given the currency of the Rhodesian issue in the early seventies, I cannot recall any view within the department or BH [Broadcasting House] more broadly that this particular issue weighed so heavily against other topics in the news as to merit what now looks like a disproportionate commitment of resources.<sup>6</sup>

A generous interpretation of this concern with Africa followed by apparent neglect is that *Analysis* deliberately avoided being driven by a news agenda (and by the priorities of journalists). It could be argued that the view was taken that Africa had been ignored and the time had come to focus current affairs resources on the region. Once Africa became more adequately covered (for example by BBC television's news current affairs programme *Panorama* which featured Southern Africa six times between 1973 and 1978) then *Analysis*'s agenda setting work would have been done and it could safely move on to other issues and other regions of the world.

Ian McIntyre presented five editions of *Analysis* on Southern Africa, the first two of which are in some ways the most revealing and form the basis of the discussion here. His first foray into Southern Africa for *Analysis* seems to have been more the result of luck than judgement. The minutes of the Analysis Meeting for 1 February 1971 read:

#### South Africa

C.R.4 [Controller Radio 4] agreed to Ian McIntyre's visit to South Africa as the visit to Moscow became impracticable.<sup>7</sup>

McIntyre arrived in Rhodesia five years after the imposition of sanctions following Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence. These are the first words of McIntyre's introduction to the 45 minute programme:

An agreeable town, Salisbury - broad streets, some fine modern buildings, better curio shops than you find in most cities in South Africa, and at the right time of year, the glory of jacaranda trees.<sup>8</sup>

This is a good example of McIntyre's style, his use of visual imagery and establishment of a sense of place. It is striking in this introduction how unlike it is to contemporary current affairs programmes, although Radio 4's *From Our Own Correspondent* employs exactly the same use of 'broadcast talk'. The danger in this attractive style is that the listener is positioned as a tourist rather than a student of current affairs. This is a particularly good example of what McIntyre calls 'writing for the ear'. The programme makes use of five contributors, four of whom are white. In order to ascertain the views of black Africans, McIntyre asks a white former missionary, the academic, Marshall Murphee, to say what he thinks Africans are thinking. There is some implied sympathy for the white Rhodesians in the tone of the presentation and some admiration on McIntyre's part for the sanction-busting Rhodesians. He also suggests that White Rhodesians are less prejudiced than their neighbours: 'White Rhodesians are certainly not in the grip of an ideology on racial matters in the way that nationalist South Africans are.'<sup>9</sup>

McIntyre is fairly dismissive of the black political leadership describing them as of 'moderate calibre' and tending to 'take refuge in generalities and slogans'.<sup>10</sup> An important part of this edition of *Analysis* is an interview with the Prime Minister, Ian Smith, who is given what we would consider by today's journalistic standards a fairly soft interview. In a revealing exchange, which no doubt would have been noted back in London, he makes it clear that 'unimpeded progress to majority rule' is the main

stumbling block in the negotiations with the British government. In his final comments, McIntyre warns that the black African population, already twenty times the size of the white population, will double in the next eighteen years.

The treatment of the Rhodesian situation by *Analysis* in this first programme on Southern Africa looks, with the great benefit of hindsight, rather complacent and a little too sympathetic towards the white minority. There is no serious representation of the views of the African majority or their leaders. McIntyre's empathy contrasts sharply with the views of Peter Niesewand writing for the Listener as a Rhodesian resident. He talks of 'the white façade ... like a pot of hot oil'.<sup>11</sup> He describes the whites as going willingly into a laager<sup>12</sup> and asks if Rhodesia is becoming an apartheid state. His tone and critical edge contrast sharply with McIntyre's style. 'The View from Salisbury' however was lavishly praised in the BBC's Radio Weekly Programme Review Board as the minutes describe:

Very warmly commended. Director of Programmes Radio said the interview with Mr Ian Smith had been in the nature of a scoop. Managing Director, Radio said it was the best interview he had ever heard Mr Smith give. Controller, Radio 4 said he thought the programme was quite simply the best documentary Radio 4 had done. Ian McIntyre was getting better and better.<sup>13</sup>

The second *Analysis* edition on Southern Africa, 'Against the Stream'<sup>14</sup> is on South Africa itself. Of the thirteen contributors twelve are white and one is black. As Laurence<sup>15</sup> points out in his book on media coverage of South Africa, reliance on white opinion was typical of coverage of South Africa at the time and resulted in a failure to represent black feelings, attitudes and plans.<sup>16</sup> There was not only 'black exclusion' but also 'black viewpoint exclusion'. The problem was not helped by the de facto and in some cases de jure banning of black voices in South Africa. In this significant piece of radio, three features among many are of note. McIntyre is utterly scathing in his remarks about the white and ethnically English, United Party. He describes them as a 'pushover' with 'little credibility.' He refers to their 'obtuseness' in opposition and suggests that it 'excludes itself from the political debate'. This level of editorialising might appear astonishing, especially given that it is an attack on a

foreign political party, and underlines the considerable licence given to the most prestigious *Analysis* presenters.

A second feature of 'Against the Stream' is McIntyre's use of the distinction between two supposed factions within the Afrikaaner community; the 'Verligtes' or more enlightened Afrikaners and the 'Verkramps' who are described as more bigoted and old-fashioned. McIntyre suggests that the former are trying to persuade the latter to change and hence produce a more liberal South Africa. There is a sense of potential for progress within the Afrikaans community if this internal process can be given time to proceed. It may be, however, that McIntyre had fallen victim to the South African propaganda machine. In their discussion of this propaganda effort, both Sanders<sup>17</sup> and Laurence describe the 'war of representation' led by the Department of Information and targeted at foreign journalists: 'Throughout the 1970s, the South African government engaged in an extensive campaign of propaganda and disinformation in order to counter the work of the global anti-apartheid movement.'<sup>18</sup>

Laurence argues that propaganda was organised around themes and one of these was to persuade the rest of the world that an erroneous struggle between progressives and traditionalists was taking place.

All the evidence suggests that the verligte/verkrampste debate in South Africa was in effect nothing but a public relations campaign: all words, no deeds, with the aim of buying time for apartheid.<sup>19</sup>

It is perhaps not surprising that despite his reputation and undoubted skill as a broadcaster, McIntyre may have been influenced by propaganda and disinformation generated by the Department of Information, but the understanding he had of South African affairs was surely not helped by the practice of 'parachuting' commentators in. As Sanders suggests, it was difficult enough for local journalists to operate and he describes the work of individual journalists in South Africa at the time as 'complicated and chaotic'. He goes on to say that it appeared to be 'subject on multiple levels to both manipulation and the random factor.'<sup>20</sup> The case against this edition of *Analysis* is supported by the minutes of a BBC News and Current Affairs meeting quoting the

Head of that group, Arthur Hutchinson: “.. the South Africa Foundation had written to praise the fairness of the Analysis programme on South Africa.” <sup>21</sup>

The South Africa Foundation was in fact a privately funded propaganda agency described by Ruth First as ‘one of the most effective propaganda organisations in the Western World’. <sup>22</sup> It appears that not only had the BBC’s flagship radio current affairs programme swallowed the South African regime’s propaganda but also accepted a pat on the back for doing so.

The third notable feature of ‘Against the Stream’ however is a highly critical conclusion. The last words of the programme are given to Bruckner de Villiers, a member of the Christian Institute of South Africa of whom McIntyre says, ‘he seemed to me to speak with a moral authority that was absolute’. What follows is a highly emotive, even passionate denunciation of apartheid, interspersed with music to add to the emotional force of the message:

We are reducing millions of fellow South Africans to non-persons – people who simply, although they may be physically there, are not ideologically there. They have no rights, they have no presence, they are invisible men...

When human beings are not granted the right to possess a little part of the soil upon which they live this is an inhumanity. When human beings are not granted the right to have their families around them and to listen to the laughter of their kids this is inhumanity. When husbands are forced to spend many months away from their wives, away from their children, this is inhumanity. <sup>23</sup>

We have no way of knowing how the ‘elite’ listeners to *Analysis* would have responded to this striking and radical conclusion but broadcasters of the calibre of McIntyre and Fischer would surely have known that it would make an impact. Introductions and conclusions to editions of the programme were always most carefully prepared having as they did the main impact. The almost unique inclusion of music in this edition of *Analysis* reinforces the view that McIntyre and Fischer were determined to make their audience sit up and listen.

An evaluation of ‘Against the Stream’ needs to balance strengths and weaknesses. On the one hand its content may have been influenced by propaganda and the failure to

use black contributors invites censure even though it was made thirty years ago. That the BBC was so pleased to receive praise from a pro-apartheid front organisation adds to this negative assessment. On the other hand, at least *Analysis* was taking Southern Africa seriously at a time when there was so little coverage elsewhere and in the final denunciation of apartheid there is a powerful anti-apartheid message.

Ian McIntyre was the principal presenter of *Analysis* until his promotion to Controller of Radio 4 in 1976 when Mary Goldring assumed that position. Whereas McIntyre's influences lay in the rather disinterested and academic style of the Third Programme talk, Goldring came from the world of print journalism, she was a trained economist and had worked on *The Economist* magazine. Her producer, George Fischer has compared her to her predecessor,

Ian [McIntyre] ... is a highly cultured man and of course it shows... Mary is exactly the opposite. She's a very hard-headed journalist of the best kind. And she is always more interested in nuts and bolts than in ideas - *always*.<sup>24</sup>

Goldring made three programmes on Southern Africa, all in 1980, during her nine years as an *Analysis* presenter and all of these programmes were produced by Tom Read. 'The Springtime of Mr Botha' made in early 1980 shows a dramatic change from earlier editions, at least in terms of contributor selection. The first words are spoken by a fifteen year old black African girl and there are at least six non-white contributors of the fourteen who speak. The range of contributors includes among others a government minister, a doctor, a businessman, a trade unionist, a missionary and (briefly) the Editor of *The World* newspaper, Percy Qoboza. As was typical of Goldring's approach, emphasis is given to the economic situation in South Africa, so the views of bankers, economists and business people are given particular weight.

Listening to Mary Goldring present an edition of *Analysis* made twenty years ago at the beginning of the end of apartheid, with P.W.Botha recently installed as Prime Minister and Nelson Mandella still facing ten more years in prison, is revealing. The programme's analytical quality depends not only on the range of contributors but also

in the tone of her voice and her use of language. Goldring's speech is clipped and formal and conveys meaning in its dry delivery. Her scepticism about reforms made by the South African government under P.W.Botha are communicated both by her tone of voice and her direct use of language.<sup>25</sup> For example, she interviewed Piet Koornhof, a minister under Botha who argues that apartheid is dead and claims in the programme that very soon the world will view South Africa with different eyes. Goldring responds,

Well, what did you make of all that? You see a lot of what's locally known as petty apartheid has gone, white only labels and that sort of thing... But the basic framework of what's called grand apartheid, that is still intact. Most hated aspect probably is the carrying of passbooks and the marriage laws.<sup>26</sup>

The experience of listening to this edition leaves the listener with a deep impression of Goldring's scepticism about the South African government's much publicised reforms. However, at the same time she is persuaded of an almost inevitable change driven by economic and demographic factors and this could be seen as the weakness of this edition. There is repeated reference to the growth of the black African population and the rising purchasing power of black Africans. The claim is made that the standard of living of blacks is constantly improving and that political change must follow on from this growth in the power of the 'black rand'. With the benefit of hindsight we can say this was an over optimistic and inaccurate assessment. The economism of this argument underestimated the determination of the white government to resist political and social change by the use of military force against the black population in the years that followed. Goldring's message of guarded optimism now looks sadly over-optimistic. In addition, the impression that black Africans were becoming more and more affluent was a part of the propaganda effort of the government and masked far greater inequalities including the fact that the non-white population was a propertyless underclass:

... lacking in all the overseas mass media's reports, news items and articles about South Africa: that in effect black South Africans are barred by the whites from participating in the lucrative property market of their own country.<sup>27</sup>

Laurence goes on to explain that the increase in black income at the end of the 1970s, on which Goldring's argument was based, was short lived and quickly followed by a huge increase in black poverty following a fall in the price of gold and a balance of payments crisis.

Shortly after the transmission of Goldring's two programmes on South Africa, Robert Mugabe became Prime Minister of Zimbabwe and at the end of the year Goldring and Read returned to make the programme entitled 'Mr Mugabe Counts his Friends'. The programme reports on the transition from white rule and draws heavily on the accounts of both Ian Smith, the former Prime Minister and Mugabe himself who is scathing of British support for his country,

... what are we getting from Britain? Virtually nothing. A mere pittance. Well I suppose it's a lesson to us that we cannot always trust the promises made to us by others.<sup>28</sup>

The tone adopted by both Smith and Mugabe is remarkably conciliatory and much is said about the need for reconciliation. At one point Smith says,

... I think Mr Mugabe is more of a reconciler than I was. I think he has more patience than I had .. today we are working together in an effort to try to build a future in our country.<sup>29</sup>

This edition of *Analysis* was seen at the time as a great success and was nominated for the 1981 Prix Italia. Listening to it now and bearing in mind the crisis and repression which have characterised the country since 1980, we can see that that praise was justified in this exemplary piece of radio current affairs. Contained in the 45 minutes are the diplomatically worded aspirations of politicians but also Goldring's customary scepticism and on this occasion she accurately detects the potential for trouble. She observes the former soldiers of the liberation struggle who were expecting 'the spoils of war' '... they assumed white property would be theirs and they have been very roughly disabused by the police.'<sup>30</sup>

But she argues that the government must requite those expectations to maintain stability. Her foresight is almost uncanny. She goes on to stress the problem of a

shortage of land available to blacks with rising unemployment and high expectations. Goldring is also sensitive to an authoritarianism in the Mugabe government but she expresses this with caution saying for example that his government strikes her as decent but 'hyper-sensitive to criticism'. One minister is quoted saying that the democratic constitution imposed by Britain 'doesn't lend itself to some of our dreams and visions'. A possible reference to the creation of a more authoritarian regime.

### Summary and Conclusion

Some conclusions can be drawn from this coverage of Africa by the BBC. The prestige of the programme and its main presenters helped produce opinionated and highly engaging documentaries. These often included interviews with political leaders. There is a strong editorial line expressed by both Ian McIntyre and Mary Goldring which is dismissive of apartheid and its apologists. That message is partly expressed through the use of rhetoric, irony and well chosen words. But in the case of McIntyre in particular and Goldring to a lesser extent, the microphone remains firmly in the presenters' hands and is only rarely handed over to the victims of oppression. McIntyre is similar to Bernard Levin in this respect who wrote persistently in the *London Times* during the early 1970s attacking apartheid. Both expressed personal distaste but this is no substitute for giving a sustained voice to Black Africans themselves. *Analysis's* coverage of South Africa failed to identify the nascent black leadership, a task which could only really be performed by resident black journalists, such as Percy Qoboza, who had not only the detailed knowledge but of course the access that parachuted commentators from London could never hope to achieve.

The case of Southern Africa and account in *Analysis* of events and issues at the time sheds further light on the twin themes of professionalism and bias which are prominent in this thesis. Despite its status as the main single subject BBC radio current affairs series, the presenters of *Analysis* did not feel constrained by the BBC's

obligations to be impartial. Because *Analysis* was presented by people of the perceived 'calibre' of Ian McIntyre or Mary Goldring, they had a licence to express personal opinions. Although it is possible years later to point out the errors in some of McIntyre and Goldring's statements and opinions the praise within the radio establishment at the time (both in the BBC and beyond) was lavish. This cosy introversion strongly reinforces the ideas about professionalism developed by Burns<sup>31</sup> that approval and licence came from within the BBC and especially from senior staff. In this case study of *Analysis* in Africa the themes of professionalism and bias are intimately connected. The minutes of the Weekly Review Board make it quite clear the esteem with which both presenters were held and their calibre was such that, irrespective of the errors which we can now see (including the uncritical acceptance of pro-apartheid propaganda), they had the licence to express personal views about one of the key international issues of the day.

That the preparation of editions of *Analysis* was based on the use of primary sources was something of an article of faith among senior producers.<sup>32</sup> Their particular interpretation of what current affairs meant partly rested on this commitment. In the African case, however, the naivety of this approach is clear. The presenters arrived for their short stays in whichever country had been chosen in order to gather first-hand information. Presenters were 'parachuted' because the use of secondary sources, including resident journalists, was inimical to the values of the programme. The failure to use local journalistic knowledge hampered both McIntyre and Goldring's understanding of the situation. Niesewand in the case of McIntyre and Qoboza in the case of Goldring both had local knowledge and might have helped the presenters gain a more realistic perspective. It was commendable to go to the countries in question and to speak to local people but it is surely not too harsh to suggest an arrogance in this approach. That being said, *Analysis* took Africa seriously at a time when other news organisations were silent and in its refusal to follow a news agenda it succeeded in bringing the listener's attention to a neglected subject at a crucial time.

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- <sup>1</sup> Gerald Priestland refers to the slightly over-ambitious nature of this international coverage, 'I made the inevitable After Franco – Who? In Spain, After the Colonels – Who? In Greece, and After Tito – Who? In Yugoslavia.' Priestland, 249.
- <sup>2</sup> Now known as Zimbabwe.
- <sup>3</sup> Gerard Mansell, *Let the Truth be Told* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982).
- <sup>4</sup> Mansell, 246.
- <sup>5</sup> Niesewand was arrested by the Rhodesian authorities in 1973, sentenced to two years hard labour but quickly released after protests from London.
- <sup>6</sup> Quoted from a letter written by a producer of *Analysis* in the 1970s and marked confidential.
- <sup>7</sup> WAC R51/1, 038/1 1 February 1971.
- <sup>8</sup> *Analysis*, 21 May 1971.
- <sup>9</sup> *Analysis*, 21 May 1971.
- <sup>10</sup> *Analysis*, 21 May 1971.
- <sup>11</sup> Peter Niesewand. "How Do You Like Rhodesia?" *The Listener*, March 25<sup>th</sup> 1971.
- <sup>12</sup> In other words retreating into the security of their own fortified, community.
- <sup>13</sup> WAC, Radio Weekly Programme Review Board (Microfilm), 26 May 1971.
- <sup>14</sup> *Analysis*, 4 June 1971.
- <sup>15</sup> John C. Laurence was the pseudonym of Len Clarke, an anti-apartheid campaigner and writer particularly active in the 1960s and 1970s.
- <sup>16</sup> John Laurence. *Race, Propaganda and South Africa*. (London: Victor Gollancz, 1979).
- <sup>17</sup> John Sanders, J. *South Africa and the International Media 1972-1979*. (London: Frank Cass, 2000).
- <sup>18</sup> Sanders, 2.
- <sup>19</sup> Laurence, 1959.
- <sup>20</sup> Sanders, 8.
- <sup>21</sup> WAC, R51/1, 038/1, 11 June 1971.
- <sup>22</sup> Sanders, 70.
- <sup>23</sup> *Analysis*, 4 June 1971.
- <sup>24</sup> Interview with George Fischer, 22 September 2000.
- <sup>25</sup> See Chapter 6 on Goldring's use of direct speech.
- <sup>26</sup> *Analysis*, 20 February, 1980.
- <sup>27</sup> Laurence, 112.
- <sup>28</sup> *Analysis*, 17 December, 1980.
- <sup>29</sup> *Analysis*, 17 December, 1980.
- <sup>30</sup> *Analysis*, 17 December 1980.
- <sup>31</sup> Burns, 124.
- <sup>32</sup> For example, Interview with Michael Green 27<sup>th</sup> October 2000.

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## ANALYSIS AND THE RISE OF THATCHERISM

This chapter will examine the relationship between *Analysis*, especially in the 1970s, and the emergence of that change in thinking and policy in the Conservative Party frequently referred to as 'Thatcherism'.<sup>1</sup> Up to this point in the thesis, it could be argued that the subject matter has been, for all its pretensions, a minority programme, in a minority genre, broadcasting on a secondary medium. In the specific case, however, of *Analysis* and what has been termed the Conservative 'counter-revolution'<sup>2</sup> broader questions of bias and the role of current affairs broadcasting at a time of ideological change are raised. The suggestion that the BBC's flag-ship current affairs radio programme was sympathetic to 'Thatcherite' ideas will need detailed empirical support which this chapter aims to provide. There is a considerable body of evidence which suggests that the programme was, in the words of one of its most astute former producers, Michael Green, 'right leaning'.<sup>3</sup> In the words of former producers, in the selection of contributors and topics, in the choice of presenters and in the language and argument contained in editions of the programme, there is substantial evidence that there was a bias towards the new Conservative ideology. There is also some counter-evidence. Where deviant cases exist these have been referred to and conclusions have only been drawn where they are secure in terms of supporting evidence and a rational and fair argument.

Before examining the evidence, it is useful to revisit the twin concepts of professionalism and bias. As has already been discussed, the interpretation of professionalism employed in BBC radio at the time was closely related to ideas of quality and 'calibre' (see above, Chapter 2). In *Analysis*, as in *Panorama* before,<sup>4</sup> the calibre of presenters was felt by some in the BBC to give them the right to express personal views. Furthermore, the BBC's commitment to impartiality centred on the need to achieve a balance across a range of programmes as, for example, expressed by Charles Curran.<sup>5</sup> In an evaluation of *Analysis* and its political

orientation in the 1970s there are two different possible points of view which can be spelt out here.

It could be (and no doubt was) argued that, given that both McIntyre and Goldring were highly respected broadcasters who both researched their programmes in depth, it was perfectly acceptable for them to express views and reach conclusions as they saw fit. Their undoubted calibre as broadcasters and the particular essay format of *Analysis* vindicated their expression of opinion. This would certainly have been the view of Charles Curran and his successor, Ian Trethowan and also of the Weekly Review Board including George Fischer as Head of Talks and Documentaries, Radio. The alternative view is that *Analysis* was not presented to the audience as a *personal* reflection but rather as BBC radio's most important single subject radio current affairs programme. Unlike the current affairs magazines (*Today*, for example) this was the place to find really searching, in-depth analysis. Like *Panorama* on BBC television, *Analysis* was the weekly current affairs programme, offering the listeners comprehensive national and international coverage of current affairs using the most prestigious broadcasters and contributors available. It follows that if it was politically partial in a systematic manner then any recourse to claims that balance was achieved in BBC radio across a range of programmes or that the presenters had a licence to hold forth because of their calibre is pure sophistry.

### **The Rise of Thatcherism**

During the 1970s, and in particular after the General Election of February 1974, a change began to take place in the Conservative Party. Ideas associated with monetarism and neo-liberalism became increasingly influential in the party and beyond. The term 'Thatcherism'<sup>6</sup> slipped into the vocabulary to describe both the new ideas themselves and their translation into policies enacted by the Conservative Government under Margaret Thatcher from 1979 onwards. The available accounts of the rise of Thatcherism<sup>7</sup> make it clear that this was a revolution which had its roots *inter alia* in the work of think tanks, especially the Institute for Economic Affairs, and the speeches of the right wing Conservative politician and intellectual, Enoch Powell. At the same time as these developments were taking place, BBC Radio 4's *Analysis* had established itself as a 'right-leaning' programme; the evidence presented so far in this thesis certainly offers no obstacle to that contention

and there is plenty of evidence in the personal biographies of presenters, in the views of producers at the time and in analysis of the transcripts to support it. *Analysis* was also an intellectual programme, it aimed quite explicitly to look at ideas underpinning policies and concerning the social, economic and political spheres, as they were expressed by politicians, academics and others. This raises the obvious question: how did *Analysis* respond to the new wave of thinking in the Conservative party?

One of the most important texts in neo-liberalism, Friedrich von Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*, was published in 1945. He argued that economic planning, like socialism itself, would inevitably end in tyranny. Hayek called himself a liberal, rather than a conservative, and his attack on the state and its interference in the running of the economy is often referred to as a 'neo-liberal' approach. According to Hugo Young, 'Margaret (Thatcher) was among the thousands of people who devoured Hayek's book in 1945.'<sup>8</sup> In 1955, the Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA) began to publish pamphlets in support of economic liberalism, or the 'free market' as it was also known. In his meticulously researched book on right wing think tanks, Richard Cockett discusses how the free-market, but non-partisan, IEA was used by the leaders of the 'counter-revolution' in the Conservative party as a source of arguments and education:

...it was the attention that Mrs Thatcher, Sir Keith Joseph and Sir Geoffrey Howe paid to the IEA that gave the Institute its critical political influence, as they became, of course, the three leaders of the 'counter-revolution' in the economic management of Britain that the IEA had been urging on all who would listen since 1955.<sup>9</sup>

One of the IEA's principal contributors was the American economist, Milton Friedman. In the 1970s he became the most famous exponent of 'Monetarism' and used Institute publications to argue for tight control of the money supply in order to combat inflation (then at a very high level), even at the cost of high unemployment.

The 1970 –1974 Conservative government under Edward Heath was initially committed to policies remarkably similar to those later espoused by Thatcher. Within two years, however, there was a retreat. This was the famous 'U turn' which entered deep into the Conservative psyche, subsequently to be repudiated by

Margaret Thatcher in her famous words 'the lady's not for turning'.<sup>10</sup> By 1974, inflation had reached 13.5% per annum and a miners' strike led to a general election in February which the Conservatives lost.

From the general election in February 1974 to Thatcher's triumph in 1979, power in the Conservative party shifted to the neo-liberal wing grouped around Thatcher and her chief ally, Sir Keith Joseph. As the Conservatives (or at least a significant number of them) moved to the right so the Labour Party, and the left more generally, was increasingly divided between the Marxist left and the rest of the party. The 1970s was a decade of polarised ideological debate, with prominent neo-liberals on the one hand opposed by their equals on the left,<sup>11</sup> adopting clearly opposed positions on issues including trade unions, nationalised industries and education. At the same time the international agenda included the debate about the Cold War and Soviet expansion, Apartheid and the crisis in Northern Ireland. As it transpired, this was a good time to launch a new, weekly current affairs programme devoted to political ideas.

Heath's defeat at the February general election in 1974 marked the beginning of changes in Conservative philosophy which led to the rise of Thatcherism. In the eight months in 1974 between the February election and the second election in October, which Labour also won, the senior Conservative, Sir Keith Joseph opted for a 'roving brief'<sup>12</sup> in the party to explore policy options. According to Young, he was particularly influenced at that moment by the anti-Keynesian views of the Director of the IEA, Alfred Sherman. Thatcher herself (Joseph's 'closest friend in the cabinet'<sup>13</sup>) was busily engaged in departmental business but Joseph experienced a political conversion which was to have huge significance for the future of the party. He was finally convinced by the neo-liberal argument and rejected the political views he had held as a member of Heath's government. So great was the change that he felt that his former position was not Conservative: 'It was only in April 1974 that I was converted to Conservatism. I had thought I was a Conservative but I now see that I was not one at all.'<sup>14</sup> On June 22<sup>nd</sup> 1974, Sir Keith Joseph articulated his change of mind and openly acknowledged his errors as a minister in a speech in Upminster:

The path to Benn is paved with thirty years of interventions; thirty years of good intentions; thirty years of disappointments. For half of that thirty years Conservative Governments, for understandable reasons, did not consider it practicable to reverse the vast bulk of the accumulating detritus of Socialism which on each occasion they found when they returned to office.<sup>15</sup>

On the same day, a new policy think tank, the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) was launched by Joseph and Thatcher. Previously (in February), Sir Ian Gilmour, perhaps the most serious thinker of the One Nation tradition, had been appointed Chairman of the Conservative Research Department (CRD), with another important left-wing Conservative, Chris Patten, as its director. These developments suggest that the battle lines were being drawn in the few months between the two elections; the One Nation Conservatives, loyal to Heath on the one hand and the free marketeers, led by Sir Keith Joseph, on the other. On 5<sup>th</sup> September, 1974 in Preston, Joseph delivered his most important contribution to the debate, in a defining moment for the party and British politics. Alfred Sherman was 'crucially involved in Joseph's most daring assault on (Heath's) orthodoxies.'<sup>16</sup> He was also helped in writing the speech by the journalists, Peter Jay and Samuel Brittan and by Joseph's cabinet colleagues, Margaret Thatcher and Geoffrey Howe.<sup>17</sup> The speech was a clear statement of monetarism and a rejection of the post-war consensus. Joseph repudiated the goal of low unemployment and made it quite clear that Heath had to go. The principal theme of the speech and the title of a booklet which developed its core Thatcherite doctrine was 'Inflation is Caused by Governments'.<sup>18</sup> A reminder, if it were needed, of how close Joseph's thinking was to Enoch Powell's earlier critique and quoted here from a speech made in 1965:

Our economic troubles – our inflation, our balance of payments, our growing indebtedness – are politician made... Theirs is the dishonesty, theirs the thriftlessness, theirs the unwillingness to face the facts of life. There is no mystery about inflation: it is willed by governments..<sup>19</sup>

Four weeks later, Heath had lost another election and a leadership contest ensued. At first, Joseph was a serious contender but in the same month as the election he made his notorious 'eugenics' speech in Birmingham in which he bemoaned the numbers of children born to lower class mothers. One month later he withdrew from the leadership contest and Margaret Thatcher became the neo-liberal standard bearer. In February, 1975, Thatcher was elected Leader of the party and four years after that, in May 1979, she became Britain's first woman Prime Minister.

## Defining Thatcherism

Thatcherism, as it was articulated in the 1970s, in particular in the speeches of Sir Keith Joseph, combined values and beliefs which have subsequently entered the political mainstream and have become profoundly hegemonic. Clearly, in order to explore the relationship between Thatcherism and the radio programme, *Analysis*, it is important to define her political creed. The core ideas of the 1974 – 1979 period were drawn from some strongly held antipathies towards what were felt to be overweening collective institutions; the state and the trade unions in particular. As Shirley Robin Letwin points out in her discussion of the meaning of Thatcherism, it is neither a theory nor an ideology but essentially a practical response to an historical state of affairs.<sup>20</sup> At the heart of this practical response is a view of the individual:

Although the Thatcherite conception of the individual has never been announced in a single soliloquy at centre stage, or indeed ever articulated, it has been the clear, though implicit, theme of a series of speeches, policies and acts. After fifteen years of the rhetoric and practice of Thatcherism, its outlines are clear. The individual preferred by Thatcherism is, to begin with a simple list: upright, self-sufficient, energetic, adventurous, independent-minded, loyal to friends, and robust against enemies. A preference for this sort of individual, though far from universal, is not exclusive to Thatcherism, but what matters here is the role it plays in Thatcherism.<sup>21</sup>

A great deal follows from Thatcher's desire to remove any obstacles in the way of this self-sufficient individual; policies of low taxation, minimal state interference, celebration of personal wealth and achievement, toughness on crime and intolerance of privilege, 'closed shops' and self-serving professions. There is a simplicity and clarity in this 'practical' philosophy which no doubt contributed to Thatcher's great electoral success. These are the values of a hard-working, lower middle-class grocer's daughter from Grantham:

The iconography of Grantham is almost as familiar as the manger in Bethlehem: Alfred Roberts' famous corner shop, with the Great North Road thundering past the window; the sides of bacon hanging in the back, the smell of baking bread, young Margaret weighing out the sugar; the saintly father, the homely mother, Victorian values – thrift, temperance, good housekeeping, patriotism and duty.<sup>22</sup>

John Campbell, in his discussion of what Thatcher learned from her father, distils the Roberts creed down to three core beliefs – hard work, ambition and moral certainty.<sup>23</sup> There is an obvious connection between these simple virtues, the longer list of individual qualities identified by Letwin and the neo-liberal, anti-statism of Powell and then Joseph. These beliefs were also translated into the international

dimension. Absolute resolve against the enemy, communism, became a particular feature of Margaret Thatcher's political career even before she became Prime Minister. In that resolve, a loyalty to Britain's main friend and ally, the USA, was a significant feature, and of course especially after the election of President Reagan in 1981. John Ranelagh, who worked in the Conservative Research Department during this period also stresses the simplicity of Thatcherism:

Thatcherism was about some very simple principles, just as two generations earlier the Welfare State had been...

Thatcherism held that people should work harder; that they should look things in the face and decide whether what they had been told for thirty-five years is true. It considered that neither Europe nor the unions had the weight ascribed to them in the 1960s and early 1970s. It was nationalistic, and positive that Britain was not doomed to secular decline... It was convinced of the need for light government and sound money for a healthy, productive and free society. <sup>24</sup>

Her speeches then, and after she became Prime minister, constantly reaffirmed what she saw as British virtues, which she felt had been under attack by the forces of collectivism. This extract is taken from her first major speech as leader, delivered to the Conservative Central Council in Harrogate:

Self-reliance has been sneered at as if it were an absurd suburban pretension. Thrift has been denigrated as if it were greed. The desire of parents to choose... the best possible education for their children scorned...

Do not believe, however, in spite of all this, that the people of this country have abandoned their faith in the qualities and characteristics that made them a great people. All that has happened is that we have temporarily lost confidence in our own strength. We have lost sight of the banners. The trumpets have given an uncertain sound. <sup>25</sup>

### **Thatcherism and the media**

As already discussed, Sir Keith Joseph was to be the main trumpet blower for the counter-revolution. Although he had proved himself unsuitable for the role of leader he came into his own as the main philosopher and proselytizer of Thatcherism. As Young describes, not only did Joseph tour the country, including the largely hostile universities, arguing the case, but he also developed the economic and political philosophy of Thatcherism: 'He spoke about inflation, employment, the money supply, the role of unions... the limits of government... from platform after platform through 1975 and 1976, Joseph expatiated on the errors of the past..' <sup>26</sup> Thatcher herself acknowledged the importance of Joseph and in so doing stressed the role of the media and, interestingly, the target audience:

Keith made that faith into something that intelligent people were willing to share. And their acceptance spread the message through the press and other media to everybody. If Keith hadn't been doing all that work with the intellectuals, all the rest of our work would probably never have resulted in success... It was Keith who really began to turn the tide back against socialism. He got our fundamental intellectual message across, to students, professors, journalists, the "intelligentsia" generally.<sup>27</sup>

There was considerable support for neo-liberal ideas and monetarism in the British press during the 1970s and even before 1975. Richard Cockett provides a particularly detailed account of the conversion to non-Keynesian economics of some of the leading economists and political commentators of the time.<sup>28</sup> Maurice Green was editor of the most right wing broadsheet newspaper, the *Daily Telegraph* from 1964 to 1974 and was described as a 'very firm economic liberal and took a keen interest in the ideas of the IEA.'<sup>29</sup> He employed Alfred Sherman as a leader writer (who became Director of the Centre for Policy Studies). The staff of the IEA frequently contributed feature articles. Cockett describes *The Times*, the *Financial Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* as 'all important in introducing the thinking of the IEA to a wider audience.'<sup>30</sup>

The case of Peter Jay is particularly important. Although a part of the Labour establishment (the son of a Labour Minister and married to James Callaghan's daughter) he was converted to monetarism at the end of the 1960s. 'From 1970 onwards, under Jay's direction, *The Times* became a leading advocate of monetarism, and, like the *Daily Telegraph*, was very critical of Edward Heath for his handling of the economy during 1972-4.'<sup>31</sup> This point needs emphasising as it bears on the critical case of John Vaizey, like Jay a member of the Labour Party, who presented *Analysis* during 1975 and 1976 and is discussed later in this chapter.

The monetarist case, and more general free market economics, were enthusiastically taken up by Joseph and Thatcher and became the foundation of Thatcherism, especially from 1983 onwards. This does not mean that everyone who supported free market economics or monetarism was necessarily a Conservative. Members of the Labour Party either became converts and then joined the Conservatives or remained in the party but, like the Labour Chancellor, Denis Healey and even the Prime Minister, James Callaghan, distanced themselves from Keynesianism. The

Labour Party was becoming increasingly polarised at this time and in 1981 a group of senior Labour politicians left the party to form the Social Democratic Party (SDP). There was some resonance between Thatcherism and the policies of the SDP which, among other policies, defended private enterprise and was highly critical of trade union power.

In his discussion of the role of the media in the dissemination of Thatcherite ideas, Richard Cockett concentrates on the press.<sup>32</sup> He shows how key newspaper editors and journalists were persuaded by neo-liberal arguments and then wrote influential articles in support of them. William Rees-Mogg, for example, as editor of *The Times*, became a highly influential neo-liberal, even attending the meetings of the Mont Perelin Society, the oldest and most prestigious neo-liberal body, chaired in the early 1970s by Milton Friedman.<sup>33</sup> Rees-Mogg added to a powerful lobby in the early 1970s about which Cockett is absolutely clear, ‘..there is probably nothing of equal importance in post-war British newspaper history than the role played by the *Daily Telegraph*, *The Times* and *Financial Times* in converting a wider public to monetarism.’<sup>34</sup> There is no mention, however, of either radio or television coverage in Cockett’s account. After a detailed description of the right wing press, ‘crucial to the transformation in the intellectual climate during the mid-1970s’,<sup>35</sup> he proceeds directly to discuss the work of the IEA in British universities. That a radio programme, and in particular *Analysis*, might have contributed to the new thinking will be argued here and it is surely a weakness in Cockett’s otherwise impressive history that he ignores broadcast media.

There is, however, a different and contrary account of the press and the rise of Thatcherism provided by John Ranelagh. He suggests that, for a variety of reasons, the serious press, led by *The Economist*, played no part in supporting the new ideas:

...Heath was supported in the serious press (in 1974), notably by *The Economist* which derided Joseph... *The Economist* had become the fount of common wisdom by the mid-1970s... The magazine was hostile to monetary-market principles, and had egged on the go-go for growth in 1971-2. ... Its great strength was that it did not seek a value system to impose on the British nation. Its role in forming opinion came about partly because other instruments of opinion-forming had fallen away. *The Times* (too much the prisoner of the increasingly distrusted establishment), the *Spectator* (discredited by its Gaullism), the *New Statesman* (becoming too militantly Left), *Encounter* (suspect because it had received funding from the US Central Intelligence Agency), all had been found lacking in one way or the other.<sup>36</sup>

Notably missing from this list are the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Financial Times*, both identified by Cockett as neo-liberal and highly influential. It would be possible to discount Ranelagh's slightly more polemical and less securely researched argument.<sup>37</sup> Ranelagh, however, was drawing from personal experience and his observations, based on five years in the Conservative Research Department, cannot be totally discounted. Whether or not the press aired or supported neo-liberal ideas prior to 1979 may be significant for radio, and in particular, *Analysis*. If Ranelagh is right, and it was the case that the press was an inadequate forum for the new ideas and agenda, then clearly that would have created an opportunity for serious current affairs radio.

### **The Political Orientation of *Analysis***

What exactly, then, were the politics of *Analysis* in its first 13 years? As already suggested, the evidence may not be that compelling. An unambiguous and systematic bias in favour of the politics of the Conservative Party would have been impossible for such a prominent programme. George Fischer's response to the suggestion that McIntyre might have been sympathetic to Thatcherism was couched in terms of 'professionalism':

No. You see - Ian is a professional. ... a professional in the sense, you know, I can't recall a single instance, in all the years I have worked with him, where I thought, "Mm hm - Ian, you are sailing close to the wind...". Never. Never. In fact, it's the opposite. I mean, in *my* view, he always gave probably a harder time to the Conservative Party, probably subconsciously thinking, "Well, better watch this because people will accuse me of favouring them."<sup>38</sup>

Fischer's use of 'professionalism' to repudiate any bias on McIntyre's part is contradicted by the minutes of the Weekly Programme Review Board for 15<sup>th</sup> December 1971 (Appendix A). The idea that quality or calibre (or 'professionalism') of the presenter gave them the licence to express their own opinions was widely held in BBC radio as those minutes show and this will be discussed below.

As already explained, however, Thatcherism was a nebulous concept in the 1970s which makes it hard to label any programme or paper 'Thatcherite'. The values and policies associated with it were in a process of development. In addition, they were firmly rejected by the left of the Conservative party, including leading members of the Shadow Cabinet and of the Conservative Research Department. At the same

time, those on the right of the Labour Party flirted with neo-liberal and monetarist ideas and the party leadership increasingly distanced itself from Keynesianism. Concern about the power of trade unions or the threat of Marxist infiltration was central to Thatcherism and her beliefs but these views were widely held in the political establishment including within the Labour Party (some of whose members were to defect in 1981 to form the Social Democratic Party). These ideas and values were not synonymous with Conservatism at the time and some were rejected by the so-called 'One Nation' Conservatives. It follows that if editions of *Analysis* were anti-trade union in tone, to take just one example, this would have reflected views held across the political divide and not just associated with Margaret Thatcher. The evidence needed to show bias will have to be more than piece-meal correlation of this kind.

The central question then is whether *Analysis* contributed to a neo-liberal agenda during the 1970s and early 1980s across a range of editions dealing with national and international subjects. Thatcherism can be reduced to some simple propositions (at least with the benefit of hindsight) which makes this a more straightforward process. In the domestic sphere, editions which addressed the power of trade unions, the importance of profits or the problems of nationalised industries would all reflect the concerns of the 'counter-revolution' in Conservative thinking. Similarly, a focus in the international arena on the threat of Soviet Power and the dangers of disarmament would also be in tune with the Thatcherite agenda. At a more speculative level, the 'mood' of Thatcherism was also important. Intolerance of vested interests, patriotism combined with a frustration at Britain's decline, admiration for the simple virtues of hard work and family life, dislike of the 'nanny state' interfering in the lives of individuals were all part of what Shirley Robin Letwin calls the 'vigorous virtues'.<sup>39</sup> As Peter Riddell put it writing in 1983, 'Thatcherism is essentially an instinct, a series of moral values and an approach to leadership rather than an ideology.'<sup>40</sup> It has been suggested in the discussion of the differing styles of the principal presenters (see above Chapter 6) that Ian McIntyre reflected the Radio 3 talks tradition in his urbane, disinterested and leisurely conversations, often with the representatives of the establishment. Mary Goldring's style was radically different; terse, direct, impatient and with a sense of urgency to understand and explain

Britain's economic problems to her listeners. Perhaps the shift from McIntyre to Goldring had a greater significance than simply a change of presentational style.

### **The views of staff**

This section refers to the political opinions of some of those who worked on *Analysis* and also the views held by some producers of the political orientation of the programme. The interview evidence points to a perception of *Analysis* as a programme of the political Right. The two producers quoted, Roland Challis and Greville Havenhand both describe Ian McIntyre and George Fischer as people with their own right of centre agendas. In addition, the two most influential figures in the 'pre-Goldring' era of *Analysis*, Ian McIntyre and George Fischer, were, respectively, a former Conservative parliamentary candidate and a former refugee from the Hungarian Revolution in 1956. The Radio 3 producer, Philip French, described Fischer as 'politically, very different from most East European *emigres*, who tend to be liberal – George was a conservative anti-Communist.'<sup>41</sup> The fact that McIntyre and Fischer held right-wing views is not in itself significant. As shown above, Fischer believed that McIntyre, as a professional, could distance himself from his political opinions. A different view is held by one of the most perceptive of the former *Analysis* producers interviewed for this research, Michael Green. His career in the BBC culminated in ten years as Controller of Radio 4. With Ian McIntyre's encouragement, Michael Green developed the original idea for the Manchester based current affairs series, *File on Four* (1977 - ). Particular notice can be taken of Green's comments about *Analysis*. He had a good relationship with McIntyre and Fischer and a very successful career in BBC radio. His time at *Analysis* was a useful period and an important stepping stone to higher things. He respected Fischer and McIntyre and his comments appear to combine fairness with criticism. He supports the view suggested by John Ranelagh that neo-liberal ideas were not widely reported in the early and mid-seventies, and especially not in the BBC:

*Analysis* was very much a programme of its time in the seventies where the BBC was accused in large measure of simply embracing the liberal/ progressive ticket. I mean Thatcherism came as an astonishing surprise to the BBC, it came from nowhere ... in a way, *Analysis* was a sort of beacon of unorthodoxy in this sea of liberal progressive consensus where the Right, particularly the Right and the challenging Right was not much heard. I think it surfaced rather more in *Analysis* than in some other places.<sup>42</sup>

Michael Green acknowledges the role of Fischer and McIntyre in creating a place in the schedule where these views could be expressed:

It was a challenge to the BBC to seek out the intellectual underpinning of the Right... *Analysis* was probably the one recognisable place where [Right wing thought] started to get airspace and I think the programme was really quite prescient in that domain ... it was clearly partly driven by the kind of people who ran the... I mean Ian and George particularly who I think would both describe themselves as of right of centre persuasion but who spotted something different ...<sup>43</sup>

There is considerable tolerance here of the presumed 'political bias' in *Analysis*. Representing the orthodox BBC position in his comments, Michael Green is suggesting that not only can a single programme adopt a political position but that a current affairs series broadcast over a period of years can 'lean' (to use his word) in a particular direction because this is balanced by other programme output. Given that much of the other output embraced what he calls 'the liberal/ progressive ticket' there would be balance in the overall schedule. The same view is held by Roland Challis, perhaps of all the former producers the most critical of the politics of *Analysis*:

My view about balance, it ... really is only sustainable ... as an argument over a period of time. Has the BBC in the past six months, you might say, or over the past year, or does it in general endeavour to ensure that a balance of society's thinking emerges? To ask for arithmetic balance in any single programme is really asking for something that doesn't happen...<sup>44</sup>

The interview evidence suggests that former producers perceived *Analysis* as leaning to the political right, led by two particularly strong characters of Conservative opinions, and in addition two of those former producers feel that was justifiable in order to create a balance across the BBC output as a whole. Michael Green articulates the dilemma of a public service broadcaster trying to help its audience understand current affairs. The BBC was faced by the challenge of Thatcherism which in his words 'came from nowhere'. As a public service broadcaster with a remit to inform the electorate the BBC was bound as Michael Green said 'to seek out the intellectual underpinning of the Right'.<sup>45</sup> *Analysis*, in his view, was an appropriate place to do this. Speaking to a very small but well educated (or elite) audience it had the time and the brief to examine and air the new ideas. The danger, which he did not mention, was that by giving priority to neo-liberal ideas *Analysis* might also give them legitimacy; a concern which will be considered later.

## The Cold War

One of the main ways of understanding the political nature of *Analysis* is to identify its 'agenda'. The subjects chosen for individual editions of the programme and the priorities chosen within those editions will show what issues were felt to be important to presenters (who authored their programmes). From 1970 – 1983, *Analysis* was a mainstream current affairs programme in which the British Economy and party politics, together with country-by-country international coverage, were by far the dominant subjects. Quite consistently over the thirteen years, *Analysis* concentrated on Westminster-oriented politics and economics together with international issues. In the international coverage, Ireland, Europe and the Middle East all made regular appearances. In its coverage of trade unions, the benefits system and above all the Cold War, however, *Analysis* did develop a more focussed agenda.

Between 1975 and 1983 there were thirty editions which gave priority to Cold War themes including disarmament, the threat of communism, détente, the balance of military power and Eurocommunism. The number of editions on this subject per year was as follows; 1975 – 4, 1976 – 6, 1977 – 5, 1978 – 3, 1979 – 2 (possibly due to the general election), 1980 – 5, 1981 – 3, (1982 only one edition of *Analysis* was broadcast), 1983 – 3. In addition there were individual editions on countries such as Vietnam and Poland couched in terms of Cold War politics. These editions were usually presented by specialists with a particular interest in international politics including John Eidinow, Chris Ffitch and Laurence Martin (Professor of War Studies at King's College, London and subsequently Vice Chancellor, Newcastle University).

The communist threat was a central plank of Margaret Thatcher's philosophy; not only was there the threat of Soviet domination but also the threat from within, in the shape of socialist politicians and trade unionists.

Her short-term purpose might be freeing the British economy, but her ultimate ambition was to eradicate not just the symptoms of socialism, but the virus itself, whose source and breeding ground was the Soviet Union. Thus the struggle for the British economy was part of the global struggle against Communism.<sup>46</sup>

One of Laurence Martin's first programmes on the Cold War was 'NATO and the Uncertain Balance' broadcast on 26<sup>th</sup> February, 1976, two weeks after 'The State of the Soviet Union'<sup>47</sup> and only five weeks before 'Alexander Solzhenitsyn.'<sup>48</sup> In his opening remarks, Martin describes NATO as 'the basis of our security now for over a quarter of a century' adding,

Mrs. Thatcher issued her warning about the growth of Soviet military power and had the good luck to be denounced by the Russians and, less surprisingly and certainly less significantly, by Mr. Mason.<sup>49</sup>

In the first minute of the programme, NATO is praised, Margaret Thatcher paid an oblique compliment and the Labour Secretary of State for Defence, Roy Mason's criticism of her is mocked. The striking feature of this edition is the unbalanced panel of contributors, four of whom were from the military establishment:

Sir Peter Hill-Norton	Admiral of the Fleet
Admiral David Bagley	Commander-in-Chief of US Naval Forces, Europe
Colin Humphreys	Assistant General Secretary, NATO
General Sir John Hackett	former Commander NATO Northern Army Group
Pieter Dankert	Chairman of the Dutch Parliamentary Foreign Relations Committee.

Even though there was a significant disarmament movement at the time which might have provided some different points of view, this was not represented in a highly partial edition. Although there were at the time some articulate and prominent opponents of the arms race and advocates of unilateral and multilateral nuclear disarmament in Britain, Martin chose a Dutch politician whose views were pro-NATO and anti-disarmament:

DANKERT: I think that in view of the overall balance at the moment, which certainly in the conventional field is not in favour of NATO, then at least as far as combat strength is concerned we should try to keep the actual posture.<sup>50</sup>

Although described by Martin as a 'left wing' politician he certainly did not reflect the left-wing critique of NATO and his presence appears to be a token one. As a discussion of the views of the military establishment the programme works well but

this was not how it was presented to the listener. Those on the political left and opposed to nuclear proliferation would surely have been justified in feeling that their views were simply ignored.

Another good example of *Analysis* on this subject is 'A Dangerous Imbalance', broadcast on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1979 and also presented by Laurence Martin. The title itself is indicative of the content. The list of contributors includes the former US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger and the former Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, General Alexander Haig. The programme takes for granted the 'intensive build up of Soviet military strength at all levels.'<sup>51</sup> Martin constantly stresses, as do his contributors, the weakness of NATO, the Soviet threat to stability and the possibility of Communist global domination as this dramatic extract shows,

The danger is that if the Left is given a veto over NATO policy, West Germany and ultimately Western Europe may have to dance to a Russian tune, at first in military policy, later perhaps in foreign and domestic policy as well.<sup>52</sup>

This is a strident statement for the presenter of a mainstream BBC current affairs programme. It is asserted that the actions of the political left may lead to Soviet control of domestic politics in Europe. Martin goes on to argue in favour of the deployment of Cruise missiles and other US controlled nuclear weapon systems in Western Europe and in particular in West Germany. His views were very much in tune with those expressed at the time by Margaret Thatcher. Her speech to the Chelsea Conservative Association in July 1975, immediately before Harold Wilson left for the Helsinki Conference on East-West relations, fully expressed the views which later earned her the title, 'Iron Lady'. Like Laurence Martin, she believed that NATO was becomingly dangerously weak and that disarmament talks played into Soviet hands.

### **Trade Unions and Marxism**

Another example of giving particular salience to an issue is the treatment of Trade Unions. As with the Cold War, the framing is one of threat and danger. Speaking as a presenter, Peter Oppenheimer's unchallenged harangue against unions and their leaders in the first edition of *Analysis* is mentioned above. He returned to his theme in 'The Stony Road' on 15 May 1975, this time in the role of presenter. The three

contributors to this discussion of the problems of the British economy were Professor Robert Neild (former Chief Economic Adviser to the Treasury), Professor Nat Wolfe and Brian Griffiths who was a monetarist economist and became Head of Margaret Thatcher's Policy Unit in Number Ten Downing Street (Griffiths was identified by John Ranelagh as one of 'Thatcher's People' in his book of that name.)<sup>53</sup> This edition of *Analysis* illustrates well the opportunity the programme gave presenters to express personal opinions:

OPPENHEIMER ... Germany has had very high levels of unemployment, higher than we have, combined with lower rates of inflation and this I am afraid inevitably brings us to the question of the role of trade unions and whether the collective activity of trade unions is either a major factor in contributing to our inflationary difficulties, or even more broadly than that, whether it's a major factor contributing ... to the industrial backwardness and lack of investment and slow growth...<sup>54</sup>

It is worth dwelling a little on this short extract. Oppenheimer, a man clearly well thought of in the BBC who went on to present *File on Four*, in his privileged role as presenter on BBC radio's flagship current affairs programme encourages the listener to believe that British trade unions are responsible for high inflation rates, industrial backwardness, lack of investment and slow growth. This in a programme which included no trade unionist and one anti-union supporter of the Labour Party. It was reviewed at the Weekly Programme Review Board at which Oppenheimer was strongly commended. George Fischer observed that Robert Neild 'had interesting things to say: though a strong supporter of the Labour Party, he blamed Britain's current economic problems on the Trade Unions.'<sup>55</sup> Despite the long discussion of trade unions in this edition there was no trade unionist present and the argument that unions were contributing to Britain's economic difficulties was unchallenged.

Mary Goldring would return frequently to the subject of trade unions during her time as the main presenter on *Analysis*. Repeatedly, unions were seen in terms of their potential threat rather than as a positive influence and it is this spin which resonates with the Thatcherite approach. In 'What are we here for Brothers?'<sup>56</sup> Goldring remarks, '.. we have become conditioned to think of unions as bodies corporate so powerful they can pull down governments with the twitch of a muscle...'. It could be argued that this was a time of serious industrial relations conflict and the question of union militancy was widely discussed. However, by constantly referring to trade unions as a source of threat and danger and a cause of inflation, the flight of capital,

poor public services and so on, *Analysis* was adopting a position close to Thatcherite anti-trade unionism. Very little time was given to the more orthodox left analysis of the problems of British industry which blamed underinvestment, the failures of British management and the education and training of the workforce.<sup>57</sup> The Bullock report of 1977<sup>58</sup> expressed this alternative approach and argued for increased worker representation on the boards of companies; unsurprisingly, Lord Bullock did not contribute to *Analysis*.

As well as the importance and danger of the Cold War and trade union militancy, *Analysis* also based a programme on a discussion of a paper written by Professor Julius Gould of Nottingham University in which he ‘accused a group of left-wing academics in British higher education of attempting to stifle freedom of thought and expression in their teaching, by imposing a monolithic, doctrinaire Marxist ideology on their students.’<sup>59</sup> In many respects the Gould argument fails to stand up in the face of a particularly robust defence of higher education by Stuart Hall and Richard Hoggart. In the discussion at the Programme review Board, George Fischer suggested that the programme ‘had been concerned primarily to examine whether the Gould approach might develop into a witch hunt that limited academic freedom, not with Marxist infiltration of the educational system.’<sup>60</sup> Despite Fischer’s uncharacteristically liberal position and the weakness of Gould’s argument, the overall effect is to add to the salience of the infiltration argument. To the regular listener to *Analysis* the interconnectedness of the themes of the Cold War, Trade Union power and Marxist infiltration in the universities would surely have been clear. As would have been the fact that these were the very themes to which Margaret Thatcher and Sir Keith Joseph constantly returned.

### **Social Security**

Social Security payments and their potential to undermine the work ethic and act as a disincentive to work was a cause celebre of Thatcherism. In ‘Whose Benefit?’<sup>61</sup> Mary Goldring responds to the debate taking place at the time about the ‘abuse’ of the social security system. Using the voices of claimants themselves and a number of contributors to whom she refers as ‘poverty professionals’, Goldring presents an apparently balanced programme which addresses the demoralising effect of unemployment and the powerlessness of claimants. And yet, despite Goldring’s

obvious sympathy, once again greater salience is given to a subject intimately connected to the neo-liberal cause. For the listener, when the details of the rather technical argument have been forgotten, the importance of the subject itself would remain. Crucial to the framing are the words of the presenter, and especially when the presenter is someone as prestigious and authoritative as Ian McIntyre or Mary Goldring.<sup>62</sup> At the beginning of 'Whose Benefit?' we are introduced by Goldring to a graduate claimant:

JOHN: My name is John I'm a university graduate. I'm 31 years old. When I left university I was probably 26 I think with a social science degree which was virtually unmarketable so for three years after leaving I found myself unemployed for perhaps 80 per cent of the time. Partly through choice I admit, because there was nothing open to me, and you know partly because I didn't feel like working basically. I did take part time teaching jobs occasionally and I found that I could claim payments for my part time teaching and still sign on as unemployed in the daytime. Got away with that for quite a long time....

GOLDRING: Its illegal you know to work and to go on getting benefits and so is simple scrounging, refusing to take jobs.<sup>63</sup>

The message of this sequence coming at the beginning of the programme is quite clear. People ('scroungers') are 'getting away' with it. Work 'doesn't pay' in Britain. To illustrate the point we hear John, with his 'unmarketable' social science degree who 'didn't feel like working basically'. In her conclusion, Goldring is unenthusiastic about simply letting the buying power of benefits fall, 'but then I fancy even less asking people to pay new and higher taxes on their incomes, on the houses they own, on their pension contributions, their family benefits, even their school meals and everything short of food they buy in the shops.' She goes on to speculate that it would cost 'two to three billion... if we were going to bring the cash grants a man gets for his children while he is working into line with those that he gets when he is not working.' Her final words and the final words of the programme are these:

And I have to say fairly to you that if a Chancellor of the Exchequer had that sort of money to give away in his budget, then there are better ways he could spend it to the benefit of the country as a whole. We may all have been children at some time or another in our lives, but we're not all of us going to be parents.<sup>64</sup>

The precise meaning of 'we're not all of us going to be parents' is far from clear. Perhaps the most convincing reading is that parenthood is a choice and those who make should be responsible for their children and not rely on the benefit system. A

sentiment very much in tune with the views of Margaret Thatcher and Sir Keith Joseph at the time.

*Analysis* certainly gave prominence to the Cold War, trade unions and social security benefits; themes which were at the heart of the Thatcherite agenda, linking as they did to the qualities of hard work, individualism, self-reliance and patriotism. To an extent these were the main issues of the day, of concern across the main political parties. There were, however, issues of more concern to the more liberal/ politically left-wing audience which *Analysis* paid scant attention to including the emergence of feminism, environmentalism, Welsh and Scottish nationalism and the case for withdrawal from Europe.<sup>65</sup> But a very wide range of other issues were also covered. So ambitious was the original brief for the programme, one very much kept alive by George Fischer after the death of Tony Whitby in 1975 and then the departure of Ian McIntyre in 1976, that the prioritising of one or just a few issues would have been very difficult. Every year it was felt necessary to cover a wide range of domestic and, in particular, international issues, as well as fitting in one-to-one interviews and responding to general elections, budgets and other events in the Westminster calendar.

What is perhaps more striking is the treatment or the framing of subjects very close to Thatcherite policies and values: Eidinow on Trade Unions, Martin on Soviet power, Goldring on benefits. Before providing a more thorough exploration of the role of the presenter, which will include some contextual remarks and an assessment of programmes presented by John Vaizey and Mary Goldring, it is useful to look in more detail at the choice of contributors to *Analysis* and whether that selection reflected a political orientation.

### **The Contributors**

A head count of contributors to *Analysis* in the period 1970 – 1989<sup>66</sup> does reveal that a number of prominent Thatcherites and others with neo-liberal opinions did appear on the programme, while representation from the One Nation wing of the Conservative Party appears to be weaker. On the other hand, many important thinkers on the right either did not contribute or only made one appearance. It is also true that Labour Party politicians and left wing academics contributed to

*Analysis* between 1970 and 1989; Tony Benn and Denis Healey, both prominent Labour politicians (although representing different wings of the party) made regular contributions.<sup>67</sup> The statistics are difficult to interpret but some attempt must be made to measure the extent to which prominent Thatcherites were allowed to speak.

Margaret Thatcher was interviewed on five occasions during the 1970s in one-to-one interviews lasting forty-five minutes each. Her first interview was in February 1973 when she was Secretary of State for Education. In his review of this programme, Gareth Thomas wonders, with some justification, why she was chosen:

This is clearly one of the most fascinating of all the early *Analysis* programmes, in view of the fact that within just two years Mrs. Thatcher was to become the Conservative leader. Since Ian McIntyre had worked for many years for the Conservative Party, and therefore would have certainly known a great deal about Thatcher, it is intriguing to wonder why she was chosen for the programme; there are not many examples of *Analysis* devoting a whole interview simply to a departmental minister.<sup>68</sup>

If Thatcher herself was given airtime on *Analysis* what of those around her? This presents a problem deciding exactly who counts as 'Thatcherite' at the time. In his book on this group, John Ranelagh explains who he feels counted as 'Thatcher's People' in the time before she became Prime Minister:<sup>69</sup>

This book is concerned with Margaret Thatcher and the people who helped her to devise and to implement Thatcherism. .. It is about the very small number of individuals who were responsible for the theory and the practice of Thatcherism, which is a particularly British expression of liberal economic and philosophical thinking.<sup>70</sup>

... Thatcher's people revolved around Margaret Thatcher, rather than the Conservative Party. There were never many of them: fewer than thirty men were responsible for the ideas and the plans that formed Thatcherism.<sup>71</sup>

Ranelagh then lists twenty-six people whom he calls 'Thatcher's People'. The following table shows the names of this group<sup>72</sup> and the number of appearances they made on *Analysis* between 1970 and 1989 (see Table 2).

Tim Bell	0
John Biffen	7
Milton Friedman	2
Ian Gow	0
Brian Griffiths	4
Ralph Harris	1
Friedrich von Hayek	0
Geoffrey Howe	6
John Hoskyns	5
Bernard Ingham	0
Keith Joseph	9
Enoch Powell	4
Nicholas Ridley	6
Alfred Sherman	2
Norman Strauss	2
Norman Tebbit	2
Nigel Vinson	0
Alan Walters	3
William Whitelaw	3
David Wolfson	0
David Young	0

Table 2. Appearances by ‘Thatcher’s People’ on *Analysis*, 1970 – 1989.

Clearly, many, but not all, of the prominent Thatcherites were invited to speak on *Analysis* and some were regulars. To this could be added other notable figures who were close to Margaret Thatcher and articulated the neo-liberal position (see Table 3).

Added to this evidence is the absence on *Analysis* of prominent left-wing, anti-Thatcher Conservatives. Edward Heath (Prime Minister 1970 – 1974) appeared a modest three times but his supporters, Jim Prior and Francis Pym only once each. Most importantly, Ian Gilmour, arguably the pre-eminent thinker of One Nation Conservatism never contributed.

		Appearances
John Vaizey	Monetarist economist and friend/advisor of Thatcher.	15
David Howell	One of 4 men before 1979 who 'personified and guaranteed the intellectual thrust of early Thatcherism.' <sup>73</sup>	5
Patrick Minford	'An inflexibly ideological monetarist...' <sup>74</sup>	3
Roger Scruton	Right wing philosopher and member of Thatcherite Conservative Philosophy Group	2
Samuel Brittan	Monetarist journalist on the <i>Financial Times</i> and co-author of Joseph's 'Preston Speech.'	5
T.E.Utley	<i>Telegraph</i> journalist and Thatcherite.	2
Max Beloff	Thatcherite academic.	3

Table 3. Appearances by other prominent 'Thatcherites' on *Analysis*, 1970 – 1989.

In methodological terms this evidence poses almost as many question as it answers. Did the Thatcherites express their views fully on *Analysis*? Were their views presented sympathetically or marginalised and represented as extremist? Appearance as a contributor to *Analysis* was not necessarily an endorsement. However, the examples of programmes quoted in this thesis and the sixty editions reviewed recently<sup>75</sup> show no evidence of 'Thatcherites' being treated in this way. There are, however, examples of trade unionists, social security claimants and those on the political left having their views more seriously questioned or devalued. One of the best examples of this is discussed later in which Ian McIntyre attacks the 'insularity' of the Labour Left.<sup>76</sup> Also mentioned are two examples of 'tokenism' in the use of contributors from the left. Pieter Dankert, the 'left-wing' Dutch MP who was opposed to any form of disarmament and uncritical of NATO in 'NATO and the Uncertain Balance'<sup>77</sup> and Robert Neild, the Labour Party supporter who attacked the trade unions in 'The Stony Road'.<sup>78</sup> There is a strong case here for asserting that in its selection and use of contributors in the 1970s, *Analysis* favoured the right of the Conservative Party at the expense of other political positions.

## Presenters

Although contributors did influence the content and direction of editions of *Analysis*, more so in the discussions than in the carefully edited interview extracts, the presenters unquestionably ‘authored’ their own programmes by selecting recorded interview extracts and scripting their own contributions including the very important introduction and conclusion. Before examining detailed examples of how presenters gave *Analysis* its political orientation, further consideration is needed of the role of the current affairs presenter in the BBC at the time.

The rise to prominence of current affairs and news presenters is discussed above (Chapters 4 and 5). Writing in the 1970s, Burns and Kumar both examined the enhanced role of the presenter in the 1960s and 1970s and the influence of the American ‘news anchor’. Presenters became the stars of BBC news and current affairs with the licence to referee and narrate world affairs for a BBC increasingly acting as a ‘middleman’ in the public sphere. The BBC turned to broadcasters of the ‘calibre’ of Robin Day to perform a near impossible role, refereeing the clamour of competing voices in current affairs programmes while maintaining their own neutrality. Gerald Priestland was another ‘calibre’ presenter who described his increased autonomy in 1970 on the Radio 4 early evening programme, *Newsdesk*, ‘since I was the principal linkman and wrote all my own material, I found myself back in the business of near-editorialising: it was fun to see how close to the wind one could sail.’<sup>79</sup> Clearly, Ian McIntyre as the main presenter of *Analysis* up to 1975 was also in a powerful position. As the principal author of editions of a programme which he had played such an important part in creating, supported by well trained producers and with close allies higher up the radio hierarchy, together with his impressive intellectual skills and a wide range of political and cultural interests McIntyre must have looked fairly impregnable. However, an edition of *Analysis* which he presented in December 1970 served to reveal the tensions produced by his role.

‘The Government and Opposition 2. Labour’ on 10<sup>th</sup> December was the second of two editions looking at the two main political parties. Although it is less the programme itself and more the reaction to it at the Programme Review Board (see

Appendix A) which is of note, it is worth commenting on the edition first. McIntyre begins in a typically breezy (some might say arrogant) manner, mocking a listener who had written to complain about bias in the previous edition:

MCINTYRE ...‘I don’t wish to be rude’, she went on amiably, ‘it’s just that I thought your treatment of the Tories downright sycophantic’. Madame, I’m obliged to you. One day if you have the time, I’d be intrigued to hear from you when you’d decided you did wish to be rude about something. Those who toil in the vineyard that John Reith planted tend to become connoisseurs of perjorative adjectives, mind you, but this, rudely meant or not, was a new one. ‘Aggressive’, ‘brash’, ‘slanted’ or ‘anti-British’ are old and trusted friends. To be called ‘sycophantic’ is so original as almost to induce disorientation.<sup>80</sup>

McIntyre here is not trying very hard to conceal his disdain for his critics and is quite happy to joke about the accusation of bias. Perhaps in this, the second year of the widely praised and supported *Analysis*, he felt invincible. In the programme which follows he refers repeatedly to divisions in the Labour Party:

Another way of describing ... the Left/Right battle would be to say that Labour isn’t really one party but two: a coalition in fact between what in Europe would probably be called social democrats and socialists.<sup>81</sup>

He pursues this theme when questioning the left-wing Labour MP, John Mendelson:

MCINTYRE How much damage do you think the Common Market issue has done the party?  
MENDELSON I think it’s done no damage at all...

and again later,

MCINTYRE What are you aware of as the main stresses within the Labour Party at the moment?  
MENDELSON There are no stresses...  
MCINTYRE A lot of people outside the party would say that the tensions and antagonisms even within the party are in fact sharper than for a good time past.  
MENDELSON I would completely deny that...<sup>82</sup>

Mendelson goes on to state that any disagreement is purely political and refutes strongly the suggestion from McIntyre that there are more personal stresses and strains. McIntyre then comments on Mendelson’s riposte:

MCINTYRE        John Mendelson, the Labour MP for Penistone giving, I thought, quite a good illustration of why some people think that the view the Labour left takes of the realities of political life is an excessively insulated one.

McIntyre's message is clear: the Labour Party is seriously divided and the left of the party insulated from reality. It is a fairly transparent example of partiality and the programme caused considerable disquiet in the BBC as evidenced five days later. This edition produced the longest ever discussion of *Analysis* at the Programme Review Board,<sup>83</sup> a discussion which raised the whole issue of the role of the presenter, editorialising in current affairs programmes and the presenter as the voice of the BBC. It also demonstrated the way that the supporters of McIntyre and *Analysis* could close ranks in the face of criticism, especially of political bias. Their main concern, however, was McIntyre's conclusion. Here it was felt that the presenter was presuming to give advice to the Leader of the Opposition. It does say something of the culture of the day and within the BBC that bias in the programme's content was ignored but McIntyre's *impertinence* could not be. The Review Board discussion began with a fairly gentle critical comment from 'CR3 Designate.'<sup>84</sup> This was followed by a positive comment from Lord Archie Gordon<sup>85</sup> and then a more assertive statement in support of McIntyre from Ian Trethowan as Managing Director, Radio:

M.D.R. recalling the previous week's discussion, said that Ian McIntyre's approach and style in dealing with the Labour Party had been the same in dealing with the Conservatives. He had been just as impartial in the second programme as in the first.<sup>86</sup>

Gerard Mansell, in his role as Director of Programmes, Radio then intervened going straight to the heart of the matter:

D.P.R. said that nevertheless he had been worried by the basic decision to use Ian McIntyre in both programmes not just as presenter, but as someone with a very sharply defined view of his own which found expression in his summing up.<sup>87</sup>

Mansell went on to ask what the reaction would be if instead of McIntyre, 'some other presenter, such as William Hardcastle, had been used in this role? ... he was as authoritative an observer of the contemporary scene as Ian McIntyre.' Hardcastle, of course, was the presenter of *The World at One* which represented a very different form of current affairs, an anathema to Ian McIntyre and George Fischer. Mansell's question elicited a highly revealing reply from Trethowan:

M.D.R. thought William Hardcastle was a first-class newsman, but that as a political analyst he was not in the same league as Ian McIntyre. Because of the authority conferred on them by their knowledge and experience Ian McIntyre and Gerald Priestland were entitled to go further in the direction of expressing opinions than other radio presenters.<sup>88</sup>

The antagonism between the more populist news-based current affairs championed by Mansell and the purer *Analysis* style supported by Trethowan is revealed in those words. They also reveal the reality of BBC policy on the expression of opinion in current affairs broadcasting; it is perfectly acceptable providing the presenter who expresses his or her own opinions has sufficient 'authority'. This is the same point that was made by George Fischer five years later at the Review Board with regard to Mary Goldring's right to express her own views, 'because presenters were chosen for their quality of intellect he or she was allowed a degree of involvement not permitted elsewhere.'<sup>89</sup> Mansell, however, was clearly not prepared to allow this view to go unchallenged,

In his view it was dangerous to encourage a presenter to editorialise directly in the way Ian McIntyre had done in this programme. ... D.P.R. thought that such a direct expression of opinion would be perfectly acceptable in a series of talks of say, the "Personal View" kind. But in "Analysis" Ian McIntyre was being used as a display of evidential material and as a political commentator.<sup>90</sup>

So despite Mansell's forceful arguments, the view taken by the supporters of *Analysis*, including Trethowan, was that presenters of sufficient calibre were allowed to express their own views on *Analysis*. They were not expected to be impartial. The green light shone brilliantly for *Analysis* presenters of sufficient perceived calibre who wanted to use the programme as a platform. This freedom was particularly significant because so many of those chosen to present *Analysis* were sympathetic to Thatcherism. Two presenters whose views are of particular interest were John Vaizey, who helped present the programme in 1975 and 1976, and the most prominent of all the presenters and arguably the pre-eminent radio current affairs broadcaster of her generation, Mary Goldring.

By the end of 1974, Ian McIntyre had presented eighty five editions of *Analysis*.<sup>91</sup> He took a temporary break to return in 1976 to make only three programmes prior to his appointment as Controller, Radio 4. This left an important gap in the presentational team. Who would cover for McIntyre and who eventually would

succeed him as the main presenter? The answer to the second question was Mary Goldring but in the interim Gerald Priestland was used primarily to cover international affairs while the economist and academic, John Vaizey presented editions dealing with economic and domestic issues. Vaizey had previously been a contributor to the programme <sup>92</sup> and had already begun a career as a part time presenter of radio current affairs programmes. <sup>93</sup> George Fischer was clearly impressed by Vaizey, a professor of economics with a particular interest in education. In total, Vaizey only presented eleven editions of *Analysis* but at a critical time for the Tory counter-revolution and a moment of transition in British politics. <sup>94</sup>

During the 1970s, a number of prominent members of the Labour Party defected to the Conservatives and in particular to the neo-liberal wing led by Margaret Thatcher. The Conservative MP, Patrick Cormack collected the retractions of eight of the most famous of these people. <sup>95</sup> John Vaizey was not one of them but he was another good example of someone who had converted to the right as Cockett describes:

An equally spectacular retraction <sup>96</sup> was made by the economist John (later Lord) Vaizey, who had served on the executive of the Fabian Society and who had served the Labour Party both locally and nationally since the late 1940s. In the early 1970s he got to know Mrs Thatcher whilst she was Secretary of State for Education, and by 1975 was one of her more trusted and intimate advisers. <sup>97</sup>

Vaizey's enthusiasm for Margaret Thatcher and her beliefs was expressed in his letter of congratulation to her following her election as leader of the Conservative Party in February 1975:

As one of your fans, I must say that I am extraordinarily glad for our country that you are now leader of a great party... You are not only the leader of the Tory Party, but you are the political leader of our nation, and I think that many people wish you to call attention to the fact that the nation is not divided by class or by sex or by race, but it is divided between the people who want to serve the nation by earning their own living, by giving voluntary services to the Community, and those who for purely selfish interests, in the trade unions or property developers, seek to make money for themselves and let the rest go to hell. <sup>98</sup>

Despite Vaizey's closeness to Thatcher and Thatcherism<sup>99</sup> he remained a member of the Labour Party and was raised to the peerage by Wilson in his resignation honours. In an intriguing minute in the Programme Review Board for 7<sup>th</sup> January 1976, George Fischer comments,

..it had not been possible to allow him to continue as presenter of "Analysis" once he had taken the Labour Whip in the Lords. For his part, Lord Vaizey denied that he was a Labour supporter but all depended on his voting record.<sup>100</sup>

Clearly his voting record satisfied Fischer (he was described by Cowling as a 'Thatcherite Life Peer'<sup>101</sup>) and Vaizey presented his next edition of *Analysis* only ten weeks later. Although nominally still a member of the Labour establishment when he became an *Analysis* presenter, Vaizey was an unequivocal Thatcherite. A close adviser to Thatcher and a former socialist with all the zeal of a repentant sinner, he belonged with Paul Johnson, Max Beloff, Kingsley Amis and many others to what Hugo Young called 'her favourite community of former socialists'.<sup>102</sup> That such a politically committed man, so close to Thatcher and so bitter about Labour, should have been chosen to present the BBC's flag-ship current affairs radio programme is significant for this thesis. *Analysis* presenters authored their programmes and through their scripted talk framed the issues as they chose. One can only wonder what George Fischer was thinking when he gave John Vaizey that responsibility.

As a presenter, Vaizey combined a rather superficial balance and impartiality with personal opinions. His first edition as presenter was 'Tomorrow's Pound'<sup>103</sup> broadcast between the two general elections of 1974 on the subject of inflation. After the introduction we hear the voices of a trade union leader (Alan Fisher), a former director of the International Monetary Fund (Pierre Paul Schweitzer), an industrialist (Lord Watkinson) and an economist (Roger Opie). The last expert contributor to be introduced is Alan Walters, perhaps the most important monetarist economist in Britain whose impact on Keith Joseph and Thatcher was profound.<sup>104</sup> Vaizey's comments between these contributions and his general marshalling of arguments towards a conclusion favours Walters. After a comment from Fisher, the trade unionist, Vaizey remarks, 'That sounds a bit optimistic to me..'. At this point we are over half way into the programme and it is here that Walters speaks. This positioning gives greater prominence to his opinions coming as they do after others have spoken and closer to the concluding sequence. Walters first contribution lasts for 2 minutes 38 seconds, longer than any other. This is followed by a brief linking comment from Vaizey which concludes 'But it is alright showing what policies

won't work. What policies will? Professor Walters is a monetarist.' There is then another long contribution from Walters (1 minute 24 seconds) and then these words from Vaizey, 'Monetarism is a doctrine that a large number of people think is correct.' There are then two more significant contributions from Walters as well as the other contributors and then we arrive at the end of the programme. By this point we have learned that the contributors are either 'optimistic' or 'pessimistic' about the Labour government policy of voluntary prices and incomes restraint (the 'Social Contract'). Fisher, Opie and Watkinson are all optimists. They think the policy of moderation is workable. Walters is a pessimist as Vaizey explains in his conclusion, 'Alan Walters says the social compact won't work. People never do exercise moderation while the economy is being debauched.' But what of Vaizey himself? These are his (edited) final words:

I must say that I am a bit of a prophet of doom. From what I've heard from these people, the problem is quite clearly not a economic one, it is a moral issue. We don't need more technical advice, we need the will to overcome inflation. The western world hasn't been in such disarray since 1947 ...  
... All over the world, governments of the left and right and the centre are toppling because of it. Surely it is not too much to hope that somewhere there are a few statesmen who can say to the people of the world, you know what needs to be done, let us do it. And meanwhile, until then in Moscow and Peking somebody must be rubbing his hands.<sup>105</sup>

In this conclusion, Vaizey identifies himself with the monetarist 'pessimism' of Alan Walters. He dramatises the threat of inflation which, like Thatcher, he sees as a moral problem. What is needed is firm leadership which speaks to the understanding of ordinary people who 'know what needs to be done'. Meanwhile the communist super powers look on. Sentiments entirely congruent with those expressed at the time by Margaret Thatcher.

Vaizey's third edition, 'Aspects of Profit' (14<sup>th</sup> November 1974) deals with a favourite Thatcherite theme. It coincided with the week of Denis Healey's first Labour budget of the parliament following the second general election of 1974. In a manner typical of *Analysis*, the details of Labour's economic policy are not mentioned and instead Vaizey's introduction distances the programme from news events:

We want to stand back a bit tonight from the detail of current argument and go into the whole case for and against profits. What are the facts? And above all, what do the key figures in the debate really have to say for themselves?<sup>106</sup>

The very words 'profit' and 'capitalism' (both used repeatedly in the programme) had neo-liberal connotations at the time. One Nation Tories like Heath rarely spoke unapologetically of profit, this was left to 'extremists' like Enoch Powell and of course Thatcher herself with her, '...defiant assertion of the practical and ethical superiority of capitalism, her ringing defence of the morality of seeking a profit...' <sup>107</sup>

Vaizey establishes in this introduction two contrasting viewpoints after providing what he calls 'a bit of background':

Profit is actually the difference between the costs of production and the receipts of the firms and nationalised industries that make up our economy. It's in that sense a surplus. Its major function is to provide the funds that are ploughed back into the economy in the form of investment in machines and factories and all the real productive wealth of the economy. But it also provides an income for the owners of capital – not only wealthy people, of course, but also pension funds and charities and other shareholders. Now, is this income a necessary payment to call forth enterprise and initiative and saving? Or is it a pure surplus derived from grinding the faces of the workers? <sup>108</sup>

There is clearly no real balance in this argument. Profits are presented as a good thing for the benefit of the whole community and the left wing case derided as extremist. Arguably the dichotomy, between profit and no profit was not at issue. There were, however, contrasting views at the time of what counted as legitimate or excessive profits, expressed in Heath's famous attack on " 'Tiny' Rowland's Anglo-African trading company as the 'unacceptable face of capitalism'." <sup>109</sup> Vaizey, however, is suggesting that the argument is between the defenders of profit on the one hand and the extremists of the left who are against them. Note how Vaizey, like Thatcher herself, dramatises politics into a battle over the very survival of capitalism:

... a lot of trade union leaders recently have regarded the fall in profits as a sign that we are in the middle of the crisis of capitalism which Marx predicted and they are regarding this as the end of capitalist society. <sup>110</sup>

Vaizey here rolls together the enemies of profit, trade unionists and Marxists. He makes it quite clear where he stands. Towards the end of the programme and also in his conclusion which ends with the suggestion that profits, '... should be renamed, the blood transfusion that the economy needs', he asks how viable the mixed economy of private and state owned businesses really is. Answering his own question he refers to Sir Keith Joseph who '... isn't the only man who has expressed

doubts..’ He also mentions the then Shadow Secretary of State for the Environment, Margaret Thatcher whom he quotes on the need to defend profit, following her contribution with the comment, ‘That was Mrs. Thatcher’s words (sic). There’s no doubt that many people would agree with her...’ <sup>111</sup> Neither the Leader of the Opposition, Ted Heath, nor the Shadow Chancellor, Robert Carr, contributed or are even mentioned, although Tony Benn, Labour Secretary of State for Industry, does contribute.

Vaizey returned to the subject of profit in ‘The Politics of Persuasion’ on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1975. <sup>112</sup> Once again he presents polarised views on the management of the economy which seem to ignore the middle ground of One Nation Conservatism. Michael Foot, Secretary of State for Employment, also contributes. The main subject under discussion was the Social Contract, which was a voluntary corporatist policy designed to persuade employers and workers to restrict increases in prices and wages. The monetarist case is expressed by Professor David Laidler, the government case by Foot and others and the by now customary left wing trade unionist is the Scottish miners leader, Mick McGahey. This polarisation is also present in ‘The Way of the Left’ on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1975 in an edition about another favourite theme of Thatcherism, the insidious growth of Marxism in British institutions. We hear the views of left-wingers themselves including the Trotskyist, Robin Blackburn and the Communist, Bert Ramelson. On the other side of the argument we hear from Brian Crozier of the right wing Institute of Conflict Studies. The Marxist academic, John Savile also contributes as do a Labour MP and a trade unionist. Vaizey uses his three contributors from the left to create a sense of real threat which is expressed in this chilling conclusion:

... in the 1945 Parliament several Labour MPs were expelled because they were Communists or Crypto-Communists. I’m assured that a similar purge now would lead to the expulsion of several MPs from the Labour Party. And in the Trade Union movement, many influential posts are openly held by Communists or Trotskyists. Whether this is to be regarded as subversive or not depends upon your point of view. From the point of view of the great majority of people who accept democratic and constitutional ideas, the threat to our society is undoubtedly serious. It isn’t so much that one day we’ll wake up to see Russian troops disembarking at Tilbury as that the subversion will take the form of corrupting and breaking up the institutions which make democracy work. <sup>113</sup>

Vaizey was an ideal presenter for *Analysis* in the mid 1970s. Being nominally part of the Labour establishment but with quite vocal right wing opinions he was able to

open the programme up to Thatcherite values and priorities at a crucial time in the growth of the Conservative counter-revolution. Focussing as he did on the Thatcherite domestic agenda including profit, poverty, the failures of progressive education,<sup>114</sup> and the Marxist threat, he gave space in his programmes to the far left (largely to prove his own point), the Labour Government and carefully selected neo-liberals while almost totally ignoring the 'left' of the Conservative party. In his comments throughout each programme and especially his concluding remarks he repeatedly adopts a position on the Conservative right which he went on to articulate fully in his later recantation of socialism.

Finally, in this examination of the positions adopted by *Analysis* presenters, we return to Mary Goldring. As suggested above (Chapter 6), from 1975 onwards, Goldring imposed a very different style on *Analysis*, one which was far more direct and explicitly opinionated than the previous main presenter, Ian McIntyre. The links with *Analysis's* heritage in the Third Programme and Radio 3 Talks tradition were broken and the 'Headmistressy' Goldring began her apparent mission to explain the extent and causes of Britain's economic crisis. From her first edition as presenter<sup>115</sup> she quickly revealed her priorities and concerns; the failures of nationalised industries,<sup>116</sup> the inadequacies of state education,<sup>117</sup> the abuse of the social security system,<sup>118</sup> and, as I have mentioned already, the dangers of the trade unions.<sup>119</sup> In her use of language and her direct and rather clipped interview style she developed that 'idiosyncratic personal voice'<sup>120</sup> which was severely critical of the very institutions and practices which for Thatcher and Thatcherism were inimical to the entrepreneurial individual.

On 5<sup>th</sup> March 1980, 'Mary Goldring in Conversation with Sir Keith Joseph, Secretary of State for Industry' gave her the opportunity to question Thatcherism's foremost thinker. Less than a year into the first Conservative administration under Margaret Thatcher, Mary Goldring makes it quite clear she is not satisfied with the performance so far. Questioning Joseph on cuts in expenditure, which she clearly approves of, she repeatedly criticises him for not being bolder as these separate comments show:

GOLDRING: ... this is where it seems to me you are open to criticism...

... this must be very discouraging for you...

... I'm wondering if you've lost your nerve?

But why are you finding it so difficult to cut government spending? You see a great deal was talked about this in opposition. Is it because you meet union opposition? <sup>121</sup>

At the end of the programme, Joseph requests rather ominously, for 'a slightly more aware attitude that jobs might be lost if economic behaviour doesn't change.' Goldring responds sympathetically, 'Sir Keith, you make it sound so easy. I hope you're right. Thank you very much.'

There is evidence that as Goldring grew in confidence and stature as presenter of *Analysis* she felt emboldened to express her increasingly tough economic and political views. 'Whipping the Cream' was broadcast on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1981 a few weeks after the announcement of government plans to cut expenditure on Higher Education. In his review of the programme, Gareth Thomas describes Goldring's hard line position:

Goldring is at her most forthright, frequently giving her opinion – as with the phrase '...academics justify going for the soft option, that closing departments is cheaper than closing universities.' She allows herself extensive concluding remarks in which her views are expressed with little or no attempt at balance. In response to Carlisle's <sup>122</sup> decision not to close down any complete university, she comments '... that vestigial awe of universities that is drummed into us at childhood... it means the government has lost an unrepeatable opportunity to throw some redundant institutions to those wolves. I cannot myself see any difference between closing a surplus steel plant and closing a surplus university'. This is a fine example of the iconoclastic Goldring, for whom there are no sacred cows. <sup>123</sup>

An interview with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson, on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1983 once again reveals Goldring's sympathy for Conservative government policy. <sup>124</sup> Her approval of Lawson is not concealed: 'Look, I'm going to try a bit of flattery and say that you are much too professional an economist – and it's a long time since a new chancellor knew anything about economics...' <sup>125</sup> As Gareth Thomas points out in his review of the edition, it is full of political judgements 'very close to monetarist ideology'. She speaks very positively of the USA's 'lovely tax cuts'; she commends government economic success, '..the government's done marvels with inflation...'; she condemns an industrial dispute in Warrington: '..

violent picketing and rent-a-mob .. now it's not just a squalid little industrial dispute..'.<sup>126</sup>

Goldring frequently appears sympathetic to the neo-liberal cause but she was a more subtle thinker than some of her strident colleagues, sometimes revealing a warmth and understanding alien to many on the right. In 'The Lost Generation' broadcast on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 1983, she discusses the very high level of unemployment (3 million) prior to the 1983 General Election. She talks of the 'cruelty of telling a man that he's finished at fifty.' She expresses her feelings about the 'lost generation' of workers in emotive terms: 'They don't starve. They rot.' But at the same time these very high levels of unemployment are seen as inevitable, indeed as having very clear historical precedents:

This is how we lose a generation of workers. During the transformation from one technology to another. The steam revolution of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century; the chemical revolution of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century; the micro-electronic revolution of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>127</sup>

Just as she had seen the end of Apartheid as the inevitable result of the increasing power of the 'black rand' in 'The Springtime of Mr Botha'<sup>128</sup> so she was resigned to the economic inevitability of mass unemployment. There is of course no suggestion that the Conservative monetarist experiment was at fault, no reference to the acceleration in the rise in unemployment under Thatcher, increasing by 836,000 in 1980 alone, the largest increase in one year since 1930. The programme includes among its contributors the monetarist economist, Patrick Minford, a government adviser who predictably blames generous social security benefits and artificially high wages (caused by irresponsible trade unions) for the high level of unemployment.

Above all, Goldring used *Analysis* to voice the very concerns which defined Thatcherism. And not only did *Analysis*, presented by Goldring, speak for Thatcher. She spoke *like* Thatcher. A didactic, impatient and morally certain woman who spoke her mind and challenged the orthodoxies of the consensus politics of the post war period. For the small, elite audience of *Analysis* perhaps Mary Goldring was a surrogate Thatcher, hectoring her listeners about the awesome power of trade unions, the failure of state institutions and the fecklessness of the unemployed.

One final piece of evidence is presented here, although its precise significance is hard to judge. The minutes of an early meeting at the Centre for Policy Studies in November 1974 (see Appendix B) show that Fischer and McIntyre were identified, even within the small group forming around Thatcher before her election as leader of the party, as important opinion-formers: ‘... Keith Joseph, Nigel Vinson, Martin Wassell and Jock Bruce-Gardyne to arrange to visit all critical opinion-formers in media on Burnett’s list *plus Ian McIntyre and George Fisher (sic)*’ (*Emphasis added.*) Does the inclusion of McIntyre and Fischer’s names in the minutes suggest a familiarity between this most Thatcherite of think tanks and the two main figures at *Analysis*? As historical evidence it is far from conclusive but the CPS was certainly conscious of *radio* as well as television and Sir Keith Joseph’s ambition was to use both to influence the climate of opinion, as this minute from an earlier CPS Management Meeting shows:

We have already decided that we will try to field suitable speakers whenever television and radio are looking for protagonists on economic arguments. I [Keith Joseph] am shortly seeing representatives of television and radio to discuss the service we could give them in suggesting names as well as possibilities of some lively debates.<sup>129</sup>

This raises the prospect of communication between the CPS and *Analysis* which would be damning evidence indeed. As already mentioned above, however, almost all files relating to *Analysis* are missing from the written archive.

### Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has provided an account of the rise of Thatcherism in the mid 1970s, defined what the term meant and presented evidence to show the degree to which *Analysis* was sympathetic to the new philosophy. Different views have been expressed about the extent to which Thatcherite ideas (or their antecedents) were covered in the media. Cockett has described quite widespread coverage of monetarism and neo-liberalism, especially in the *Daily Telegraph*. Ranelagh, on the other hand, felt the press, including *The Times* and *The Economist*, remained broadly supportive of Heath’s ‘One Nation’ ideas. Neither of these commentators mentions radio.

A range of evidence to show the political partiality of *Analysis* has been presented in this chapter. The politics of George Fisher and Ian McIntyre and the views of producers, especially Michael Green, about the programme suggest it was 'right leaning'. The agenda followed by the programme between 1970 and 1983 was ambitious in its coverage of national and international topics but there is some evidence of particular attention being paid to the Cold War, trade unions, Marxist infiltration and the system of welfare benefits; all close to the new right agenda. Detailed examination of examples of editions on these themes shows highly selective and personal accounts which systematically exclude liberal/left points of view. In editions covering the Cold War, the failings of British industry, social security benefits and divisions on the left in particular, the highly partial and selective opinions of presenters is conspicuous. Presenters were perceived as men and women of such calibre and experience that they could, and did, use *Analysis* to express their own opinions. The examples of Laurence Martin, Ian McIntyre, Mary Goldring, Peter Oppenheimer and John Vaizey are used to illustrate this. Although it became accepted practice on *Analysis* to give right wing presenters this licence it did not go unchallenged and the long discussion at a Weekly Programme Review Board in 1971 is discussed. Gerard Mansell was almost a lone voice in questioning the use of *Analysis* in this way.

The selection of contributors strongly suggests that at the very least, 'Thatcher's people' made regular appearances on the programme and, of particular significance, the Heathite wing of the Conservative Party was largely excluded. While acknowledging the dangers of reliance on selective statistics the fact that the twenty-one people identified by Ranelagh as 'Thatcher's people' appeared on average 2.6 times on *Analysis* between 1970 and 1989 cannot be ignored.

In conclusion, the evidence shows that *Analysis* was sympathetic, at times to the point of being uncritical, to the ideas and policies of Thatcherism at the very time when these were first being mooted and to an extent ignored by the press. Using a neo-Marxist critical framework to be found, for example, in the writing of the Glasgow University Media Group at the time,<sup>130</sup> it would be a straightforward task now to locate *Analysis* in the capitalist ideological framework. This thesis has not employed Marxist grand narratives and these will not be introduced here. There is,

however, another interpretation which is more sympathetic to the role of the BBC as a current affairs broadcaster with a duty to present new political ideas in mainstream programming. A conclusion is now needed which evaluates *Analysis* and considers the version of current affairs radio created by George Fischer, Ian McIntyre and others. *Analysis* presented political ideas with an uncompromising commitment to primary sources and in the hands of opinionated 'calibre' presenters. In the Conclusion which follows, these issues will be addressed and the broader lessons of this research will be presented. It is possible to use this case study of one radio current affairs programme, albeit the flag-ship of the time, to comment more generally on the nature and difficulties of current affairs broadcasting in the BBC.

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<sup>1</sup> The term is defined below both in the text and also footnote 6.

<sup>2</sup> Cockett, 176.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Michael Green, 27 October 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Lindley, 72.

<sup>5</sup> Curran, 114-120.

<sup>6</sup> A brief, introductory glossary of terms may be useful here. 'Thatcherism' has come to mean the ideas, values and policies associated with Margaret Thatcher and is examined in greater detail later in this chapter. 'Neo-liberalism' (also referred to as 'liberalism') is a philosophy which emphasises freedom from state interference and is often associated with Adam Smith's, *Wealth of Nations* and more recently Von Hayek's, *The Road to Serfdom*. 'Free market' philosophy stresses freedom in the market place from state intervention and so is explicitly opposed to nationalised industries, state economic planning and state subsidies to industry. 'Monetarism' is the policy of controlling inflation by limiting the money supply and often associated with the American economist, Milton Friedman. It is acknowledged that these are practical definitions, made for the purposes of writing radio history and may not stand up to the kind of scrutiny to be found in a sophisticated treatment such as Mark Bevir and R.A.W.Rhodes 'Narratives of Thatcherism'. *West European Politics*, (Special Issue), Vol, 21, No. 1, 1998.

<sup>7</sup> Including John Campbell, *Margaret Thatcher, Volume One: The Grocer's Daughter* (London: Pimlico, 2000); Young, *One of Us*; Cockett, *Thinking the Unthinkable*.

<sup>8</sup> Young, 22.

<sup>9</sup> Cockett, 176.

<sup>10</sup> Young, 65.

<sup>11</sup> The discussion of *Analysis* and its political coverage in the penultimate chapter of this thesis gives details of the most prominent neo-liberal and Marxist thinkers of the time.

<sup>12</sup> Campbell, 265.

<sup>13</sup> Young, 78.

<sup>14</sup> Sir Keith Joseph in John Ranelagh, *Thatcher's People* (London: Fontana, 1991), 123.

<sup>15</sup> Sir Keith Joseph in Campbell, 268.

<sup>16</sup> Young, 88.

<sup>17</sup> Young, 88.

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- <sup>18</sup> Campbell, 269.
- <sup>19</sup> Roy Lewis, 60.
- <sup>20</sup> And as a long-term associate of the IEA, a Director of the Centre for Policy Studies and a member of the Tory Philosophy Group, she is well placed to offer a view; see, Letwin, 31.
- <sup>21</sup> Letwin, 32-33.
- <sup>22</sup> Campbell, 1.
- <sup>23</sup> Campbell, 2.
- <sup>24</sup> Ranelagh, 65.
- <sup>25</sup> Margaret Thatcher in Campbell, 334.
- <sup>26</sup> Young, 102.
- <sup>27</sup> Margaret Thatcher in Morrison Halcrow, *Keith Joseph: A Single Mind* (London: Macmillan, 1989), 97 in Ranelagh, 152.
- <sup>28</sup> Cockett, 183-187.
- <sup>29</sup> Cockett, 183.
- <sup>30</sup> Cockett, 184.
- <sup>31</sup> Cockett, 186.
- <sup>32</sup> Cockett, 183-188.
- <sup>33</sup> Ranelagh, 192-193.
- <sup>34</sup> Cockett, 188.
- <sup>35</sup> Cockett, 188.
- <sup>36</sup> Ranelagh, 138-139.
- <sup>37</sup> John Campbell is critical of Ranelagh's account of a famous strategy meeting of the Shadow Cabinet in May 1974. Campbell describes Ranelagh's version as 'graphic', 'from an unnamed source' and 'very dubious'. (Campbell, 267).
- <sup>38</sup> Interview with George Fischer, 22 September 2000.
- <sup>39</sup> Letwin, 26.
- <sup>40</sup> Riddell, 7.
- <sup>41</sup> Carpenter, 301.
- <sup>42</sup> Interview with Michael Green, 27 October 2000.
- <sup>43</sup> Interview with Michael Green, 27 October 2000.
- <sup>44</sup> Interview with Roland Challis, 18 August, 2000.
- <sup>45</sup> Interview with Michael Green, 27 October 2000.
- <sup>46</sup> Campbell, 338.
- <sup>47</sup> *Analysis*, 12 February, 1976.
- <sup>48</sup> *Analysis*, 1 April, 1976.
- <sup>49</sup> *Analysis*, 26 February, 1976.
- <sup>50</sup> *Analysis*, 26 February, 1976.
- <sup>51</sup> Laurence Martin, *Analysis*, 12 December, 1979.
- <sup>52</sup> Laurence Martin, *Analysis*, 12 December, 1979.
- <sup>53</sup> Ranelagh, 8.
- <sup>54</sup> *Analysis*, 15 May 1975.
- <sup>55</sup> WAC Radio Weekly Programme Review Board Microfilm, 21 May 1975. A rather unguarded and partisan remark from Fischer who equates here being 'interesting' with being anti trade union. Perhaps his confidence in expressing these views in a scrupulously minuted meeting attended by all the senior BBC radio managers reveals something of the views held by some senior BBC radio managers at the time.
- <sup>56</sup> *Analysis*, 25 October 1978.
- <sup>57</sup> David Childs, *Britain Since 1945* (London: Routledge, 2001), 193.
- <sup>58</sup> *The Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Industrial Democracy (Chaired by Lord Bullock)* (London: HMSO, 1977).
- <sup>59</sup> Programme review by Gareth Thomas, <http://analysis.bournemouth.ac.uk/AnalysisOnline> accessed 17 June 2003.
- <sup>60</sup> WAC Radio Weekly Programme Review Board Microfilm, 2 November 1977.
- <sup>61</sup> *Analysis*, 20 January 1977.
- <sup>62</sup> It is worth speculating briefly on what a listener at the time might take from the experience of listening to *Analysis*. To recall or even to follow the 45minute argument would have been a test but the importance of the subject itself and, crucially, the opening and closing remarks of the presenter might have stayed in the listener's mind. Whatever the aural memories were it is clear that listening to programmes is very different from reading transcripts and excerpts as they are presented here.

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- <sup>63</sup> *Analysis*, 20 January 1977.
- <sup>64</sup> *Analysis*, 20 January 1977.
- <sup>65</sup> Childs, 193-202.
- <sup>66</sup> To do this I have used the Analysis Online database which covers the first two decades of the programme and so goes beyond my chosen period of 1970 – 1983.
- <sup>67</sup> Between 1970 and 1989, Tony Benn contributed to 14 editions and Denis Healey to 13.
- <sup>68</sup> Programme review by Gareth Thomas, 'Analysis Online'  
<http://analysis.bournemouth.ac.uk/AnalysisOnline> accessed 17 June 2003.
- <sup>69</sup> Ranelagh was not the only person to attempt to identify the key Thatcherites and I have also referred to Maurice Cowling who wrote, 'The New Right has been conducted by about 50 people (mainly graduates and mostly men) who have come from no one type of social, sexual, or intellectual background...' Cowling, 11.
- <sup>70</sup> Ranelagh, vii.
- <sup>71</sup> Ranelagh, 1.
- <sup>72</sup> I have omitted her husband, Dennis Thatcher, from this table as he was a private rather than a public supporter.
- <sup>73</sup> Young, 145.
- <sup>74</sup> Young, 146.
- <sup>75</sup> Programme Reviews by Gareth Thomas and Hugh Chignell,  
<http://analysis.bournemouth.ac.uk/AnalysisOnline> .
- <sup>76</sup> *Analysis*, 10 December 1971.
- <sup>77</sup> *Analysis*, 26 February 1976.
- <sup>78</sup> *Analysis*, 15 May 1975.
- <sup>79</sup> Priestland, 239.
- <sup>80</sup> *Analysis*, 10 December 1971.
- <sup>81</sup> *Analysis*, 10 December 1971.
- <sup>82</sup> *Analysis*, 10 December 1971.
- <sup>83</sup> See Appendix A.
- <sup>84</sup> Controller of Radio 3, Designate, Stephen Hearst.
- <sup>85</sup> Editor, Talks and Documentaries Radio.
- <sup>86</sup> WAC Radio Weekly Programme Review Board Microfilm, 15 December 1971.
- <sup>87</sup> WAC Radio Weekly Programme Review Board Microfilm, 15 December 1971.
- <sup>88</sup> WAC Radio Weekly Programme Review Board Microfilm, 15 December 1971.
- <sup>89</sup> WAC, Radio Weekly Programme Review Board Microfilm, 28 July 1976.
- <sup>90</sup> WAC Radio Weekly Programme Review Board Microfilm, 15 December 1971.
- <sup>91</sup> Statistic taken from 'Analysis Online'.
- <sup>92</sup> Vaizey contributed to 'How many Degrees?' (22.10.1971); 'The National Nest Egg' (19.7.1973); 'What is to be done?' (17.1.1974); 'Election Special' (14.2. 1974).
- <sup>93</sup> For example 'Whatever Happened to Equality' (Radio 3, 19 June 1974) was a series made by Talks and Documentaries, Radio. It had featured some notable thinkers of the right including Isiah Berlin, Milton Friedman and the journalist, T.E.Uttley. In the discussion of one of these programmes at the Weekly Programme Review Board, George Fischer is reported as saying that 'Professor Vaizey was being trained as a professional broadcaster; he was one of the very few distinguished academics prepared to make an effort to acquire the necessary skills.' (WAC, Radio Weekly Programme Review Board Microfilm, 26 June 1974). It is interesting to speculate whether Vaizey's exposure to some of the most important thinkers on the right at the time had an impact on his own views. Fischer commented at the same Review Board, '(Vaizey) had remarked afterwards that what had been said during the programmes had led him to modify his intellectual stance in some matters.'
- <sup>94</sup> 16<sup>th</sup> May, 1974, 'Tomorrow's Pound'; 20<sup>th</sup> June, 1974, 'A New Magna Carta' ; 14<sup>th</sup> November, 1974, 'Aspects of Profit'; 27<sup>th</sup> February, 1975, 'The Politics of Persuasion'; 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1975, 'On the National Health' 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1975, 'A Home of Their Own'; 4<sup>th</sup> December, 1975, 'The Way of the Left'; 18<sup>th</sup> December, 1975, 'Reviving the Regions'; 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1975, 'The Poor are they always with us?'; 20<sup>th</sup> May, 1975, 'The Price of Progress'; 17<sup>th</sup> June, 1975, 'The Reluctant Recruits'.
- <sup>95</sup> Patrick Cormack, *Right Turn: Eight men who changed their minds*. (London: Leo Cooper, 1978).
- <sup>96</sup> Equal to the case of Paul Johnson, a former editor of the *New Statesman*.
- <sup>97</sup> Cockett, 228.
- <sup>98</sup> John Vaizey letter to Margaret Thatcher quoted in Cockett, 228.
- <sup>99</sup> Also mentioned by Campbell, 373 and Cockett, 409. Vaizey wrote a letter to the *The Times* on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1980 in which he spelt out his total disillusionment with the Labour Party and pulled no

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punches, 'Increasingly the Labour Party membership was swamped by bombastic polytechnic lecturers regurgitating inaccurately the half-baked ideas of sentimental Marxists that Tawney would not have let in to his lecture room. As serious analysis of social and economic ideas it was pathetic.' A similar attack appeared in *The Cambridge Review* 27<sup>th</sup> April 1981.

<sup>100</sup> WAC Radio Weekly Programme Review Board Microfilm, 7 January 1976.

<sup>101</sup> Cowling, 11.

<sup>102</sup> Young, 409.

<sup>103</sup> *Analysis*, 16<sup>th</sup> May 1974.

<sup>104</sup> Young, 212-216.

<sup>105</sup> *Analysis*, 16<sup>th</sup> May 1974.

<sup>106</sup> *Analysis*, 14<sup>th</sup> November 1974.

<sup>107</sup> Campbell, 375.

<sup>108</sup> *Analysis*, 14<sup>th</sup> November 1974.

<sup>109</sup> Campbell, 375

<sup>110</sup> *Analysis*, 14<sup>th</sup> November 1974.

<sup>111</sup> *Analysis*, 14<sup>th</sup> November 1974.

<sup>112</sup> Two weeks after Margaret Thatcher's election as leader of the Conservative Party.

<sup>113</sup> *Analysis*, 4<sup>th</sup> December 1975.

<sup>114</sup> *Analysis* 20th May 1976.

<sup>115</sup> *Analysis* 1<sup>st</sup> May 1975.

<sup>116</sup> *Analysis* 27<sup>th</sup> November 1975.

<sup>117</sup> *Analysis* 4<sup>th</sup> July 1979.

<sup>118</sup> *Analysis* 20<sup>th</sup> January 1977.

<sup>119</sup> *Analysis* 25<sup>th</sup> October 1978.

<sup>120</sup> Programme review by Gareth Thomas, 'Analysis Online'

<http://analysis.bournemouth.ac.uk/AnalysisOnline>. Accessed 17 June 2003.

<sup>121</sup> *Analysis* 5<sup>th</sup> March 1980.

<sup>122</sup> Mark Carlisle, Secretary of State for Education.

<sup>123</sup> Programme review by Gareth Thomas, <http://analysis.bournemouth.ac.uk/AnalysisOnline> Accessed 17 June 2003.

<sup>124</sup> A full review of this edition by Gareth Thomas is available on

<http://analysis.bournemouth.ac.uk/AnalysisOnline> on which my own discussion is partly based.

<sup>125</sup> *Analysis* 30<sup>th</sup> November 1983 quoted in a programme review by Gareth Thomas,

<http://analysis.bournemouth.ac.uk/AnalysisOnline> Accessed 17 June 2003.

<sup>126</sup> *Analysis* 30<sup>th</sup> November 1983 quoted in a programme review by Gareth Thomas,

<http://analysis.bournemouth.ac.uk/AnalysisOnline> Accessed 17 June 2003.

<sup>127</sup> *Analysis* 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 1983.

<sup>128</sup> *Analysis* 20<sup>th</sup> February, 1980.

<sup>129</sup> Centre for Policy Studies, Minutes of Management Meeting, 16<sup>th</sup> October 1974. CPS archive, London School of Economics Library.

<sup>130</sup> For example, Glasgow University Media Group, *Bad News*, (London: Routledge, 1976).

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## 9.

### CONCLUSION

The original aim of this research was to provide a history of *Analysis* from 1970 to 1983 which would explain how it was created, by whom and why. In addition the research would uncover the historical antecedents which influenced the form that *Analysis* took and also the development of the programme over thirteen years and the coverage it provided of selected political issues.

The aim of this chapter is to revisit some of the evidence and arguments in the thesis which have answered those original questions and from which conclusions can be drawn. It is organised thematically around the conceptual themes introduced in Chapter 3 and in addition the evidence and arguments concerning informal networks and the nature of current affairs broadcasting are also reconsidered. The conclusion will identify the most important lessons to be learned from the thesis and also suggest future research which might draw on this thesis.

#### Elitism and Populism in the BBC

In many ways, *Analysis* was a profoundly elitist programme and especially when presented by Ian McIntyre. The constant references to the literary canon and the highly assumptive nature of the political coverage (described in Chapter 6), combined with the choice of prestigious contributors, all support this claim. The BBC was, and to an extent still is, an elite cultural institution which not only recruited from Oxbridge but retained an aura of the senior common room<sup>1</sup> as well as prioritising the needs of the elite in its programme policies. Discussion of the evidence here, however, attempts to distinguish between different elitist traditions and in particular between the more radical and humanist tradition of Arnold and Reith and the 'ultra-elitism' identified by Carey and Rose.<sup>2</sup> The evidence in Chapter 4 shows that although Matheson, and her successor, Charles Siepmann, managed to recruit the cultural elite to deliver talks on the BBC in the 1930s, exclusionary and anti-journalistic values were to influence the history of BBC radio. *Analysis* is an

interesting example of the impact of competing broadcasting values on programme making, especially those organised around the elitism/populism matrix which is worth briefly reviewing here.

Despite the extraordinary hostility of the British literary and intellectual elite to the working class, universal education and the mass media, BBC talks were dominated by their contributions (as Chapter 4 describes). J.B. Priestley is a good example of this change of heart, from the 'vehement critic of mass culture'<sup>3</sup> who deplored the way advertising, welfare and mass communications had created 'the mass mind, the mass man',<sup>4</sup> Priestley became the foremost radio broadcaster of the early years of the war. Contributing to this conversion of the intelligentsia to the BBC was the post-war creation of the Third Programme, a radio network catering exclusively for the cultural minority. At the same time, populist programming not only received a huge boost from the legendary war-time entertainment programmes (most notably *It's That Man Again*) but also from the creation of the Light Programme at the end of the war. In factual programming the *Brains Trust* was a great popular success and, like the development of magazine formats, reflected a greater sensitivity to the mass audience.

If it is the case that the Third Programme was elitist and the Light, populist then the Home Service was something of a battle ground between these traditions. In the 1960s in news and current affairs the populists, led by Mansell and Gillard, held sway, introducing 'news sequences', especially on the Home Service, which combined news and comment in a magazine format. The publication of *Broadcasting in the Seventies* fully expressed the triumph of the populist tradition. Those who opposed the policy unsurprisingly evoked 'the Reithian concept of Broadcasting'<sup>5</sup> in their defence of mixed programming and especially Radio 3. Chapter 5 on the 'Birth of *Analysis*' depicts that event as an elitist gesture in response to the hostile reaction to *Broadcasting in the Seventies* from the intelligentsia and the artistic community. *Analysis* did draw on the traditions of the Third Programme talk and in its fervent anti-journalism embodied the values of the 1930s BBC. Where *Analysis* differed was in its positioning on Radio 4 and not on Radio 3 with its tiny audiences. *Analysis* was certainly a difficult and demanding forty-five minutes but McIntyre's radio background was on the 1950s magazine, *At Home and Abroad*, and

his insistence on the importance of 'writing for the ear' and the evidence of the recorded programmes themselves shows that *Analysis* was a mainstream programme.

This section began with the assertion that *Analysis* was elitist, but that needs qualifying; it was elite but mainstream, a form of programming largely missing from the BBC today. The continued existence of Radio 3 and the arrival of the arts channel, BBC 4, are examples of the marginalisation of 'difficult' programming onto niche networks. *Analysis* wanted to speak to a wider audience and the replacement of McIntyre by the celebrated journalist, Mary Goldring, fully reflects that ambition.

There is clearly a fundamental tension in the BBC between its more explicitly public service, elitist programming (for example on Radio 3, BBC 4 and *Analysis*) and its populist, mass audience output. The birth of *Analysis* can be explained in terms of this tension. The rise of populist and more digestible 'news sequences' in the 1960s, together with the backlash against proposals in *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, created perfect conditions for the birth of a programme which symbolised the 'serious' and the 'difficult' in radio current affairs spoken by representatives of the broadcasting and wider political and intellectual establishment.

Media and Cultural Studies have distinguished themselves by their interest in popular culture, an area which had hitherto been seriously neglected. Elite culture, however, and in particular in the case of broadcasting, is worthy of attention as this thesis has attempted to show. Future research is needed, however, to discover how the audience responded to the demands of *Analysis*. What mode of listening was employed for programmes which, even in written form, are so challenging? There can be little doubt that radio's 'secondariness'<sup>6</sup> is seriously challenged by this example. There is little if any research on listening as a 'primary' activity, which it would have needed to be for the early 45 minute editions of *Analysis*.

### **Professionalism and Calibre**

The huge expansion of the BBC in the 1950s and 1960s was accompanied by a process of 'professionalisation' which has been widely discussed by BBC 'insiders' as well as commentators from outside (and discussed above in chapters 3 and 5 and elsewhere). The rise of professionalism in the corporation can be explained using

sociological accounts of professionalisation which see it as part of the modernisation of the economy, the division of labour and the growth of large-scale bureaucracies. To a large extent this was the approach used by Burns who drew heavily on the sociological tradition in his argument that professionalism had replaced the public service ethos in the BBC.

On the other hand, the case of *Analysis*, especially as it is revealed by the minutes of the Weekly Radio Programme Review Board, provides an interesting new perspective which to an extent both challenges and supports earlier orthodoxies. The critical importance of a peer or 'reference' group in the allocation of professional status is confirmed by the minutes of the review board where individuals were praised or condemned. In these minutes and in the interviews, the term, 'professional' was used to indicate high levels of competence and, importantly, admired personal qualities.

Research on *Analysis*, however, also reveals shortcomings in other writing on BBC professionalism. In the case of *Analysis*, and also *Panorama*, the word was used not in any modern sense (skilled, qualified, trained, member of a professional association and so on) but as in the traditional, nineteenth century ideal of the professional as someone possessing *personal* qualities. The term 'calibre' refers to distinction and personal attributes and it is argued throughout this thesis that this is exactly what was meant by Lindley in his comments on *Panorama's* 'giants'<sup>7</sup> and in the praise given to the celebrated presenters of *Analysis*. Calibre is a traditional version of 'professional' and is a useful term to understand the choice of *Analysis* presenters and, critically, the licence they were given. The documentary evidence is unequivocal in support of this claim. Ian Trethowan as Managing Director, Radio praised McIntyre in terms of the 'league' he was in compared to an 'ordinary newsman' and said he possessed special authority because of his knowledge and experience which entitled him to express his opinions; he was 'a man of stature'.<sup>8</sup> In other words, the calibre of the presenters gave them the licence to use *Analysis* to express their personal views. Furthermore, McIntyre and Fischer were unquestionably BBC traditionalists and Reithian in terms of their broadcasting values. Their sense of professionalism was certainly not in opposition to the public service ethos as Burns claimed.<sup>9</sup> They may well have been in the minority and an

historical anomaly but, along with other traditionalists (Ian Trethowan and Charles Curran for example) they continued to exert great influence on BBC radio well into the 1980s.

The rise of professionalism in the BBC in the 1950s and 1960s is a common theme in histories of radio and television and the BBC itself. The case of *Analysis* is particularly important in this area because it reveals a completely different way of conferring legitimacy on broadcasters. They were 'professionals' but not in the modern sense. The term was undoubtedly used, not least by McIntyre, to praise Goldring (see above, page 127) but this did not signify any universal characteristics (qualifications, training and so on) but highly traditional, even Victorian, personal qualities. This is why the slightly archaic term 'calibre' has been used in this thesis. This ascription of personal qualities in a broadcaster (especially a presenter) had important implications for the impartiality of individual programmes which will now be discussed.

## **Bias**

The discipline of Media Studies and its precursor, the study of Mass Communications, has paid particular attention to the subject of bias in the mass media's political coverage. This tradition spans from Walter Lippman's work on propaganda published shortly after the First World War<sup>10</sup> through the 'limited effects' and 'agenda setting' research in the mid twentieth century to more recent British studies, like those of the Glasgow University Media Group. The Annan Inquiry received evidence from the Glasgow group and Stuart Hall,<sup>11</sup> both critics of media bias from a neo-Marxist perspective, and their views are discussed in the Annan report.<sup>12</sup> There is no doubt that Annan took the charge of bias seriously and a significant part of the discussion of News and Current Affairs in the report are devoted to issues of bias or the question of 'impartiality'.<sup>13</sup>

In the BBC itself, two main approaches to this question are identified in this research. The orthodox view can be traced back to Reith himself and his advocacy of balance or 'impartiality'. The BBC would cover matters of 'controversy' by presenting a balance of viewpoints. The difficulties of maintaining impartiality, and indeed whether it was a possibility, emerged in many of the later accounts of the

BBC written by insiders like Wyndham Goldie, Curran and more recently, Lindley.<sup>14</sup> The recognition that subjective choices have to be made in programme production which might hamper impartiality; whether balance should be achieved in one programme or across a range of programmes; the need to give voice to personal opinion in political programming, all of these were addressed and these are the issues reviewed by Annan. The alternative, more sceptical, view in the BBC was that bias did exist in some political programming and this was largely the result of presenters or producers allowing their own political views to influence programme content. A good example of this is seen in the minutes of the programme review in December 1971<sup>15</sup> where the Director of Programmes, Radio (Mansell) is scathing in his attack on the use of Ian McIntyre (a well known Conservative) as the *Analysis* presenter. Similar views were expressed by former *Analysis* producers in interviews. There was general agreement among the small sample interviewed that the programme was 'right leaning' and that this was largely due to the political views of Fischer and McIntyre.

The detailed evidence discussed in Chapters 6 and 8 certainly supports the view that *Analysis* was not impartial and in particular that it provided sympathetic coverage of Thatcherite ideas from a very early stage. In the choice of subjects covered, the selection of contributors and in particular in the words spoken by the presenters, there is compelling evidence that ideas and policies which we now label 'Thatcherite' got a sympathetic airing on *Analysis*. What is of particular interest here is the relationship between ideas of professionalism and calibre current in BBC radio, the use of *Analysis* to express personal opinion and the broader issue of the nature of current affairs.

Lindley takes the view that it is the role of the current affairs broadcaster to tell the truth as he or she sees it and in doing this he brings together, if only implicitly, the themes of bias/impartiality and professionalism. The 'giants' of *Panorama* had a right, even a duty, to tell the truth and this was the role of the current affairs broadcaster. On both *Panorama* and *Analysis*, the calibre of the presenters was felt to give them a licence to express their personal views. The irony of this is that professionalism (or 'calibre') was not, as Annan, for example, suggested,<sup>16</sup> a *solution* to the problem of bias but it was the *cause*. Because presenters like

McIntyre and Goldring were held to be of the highest calibre, they were allowed to use *Analysis* to voice their own views.

It could be argued that *Analysis* was simply an opinion piece. It did not really matter that personal views were expressed because this was simply a place where that happened and there were other balancing programmes elsewhere. This is a false argument because *Analysis* was, at least up to the launch of *File on Four*,<sup>17</sup> the 'flagship' current affairs radio programme. It was presented as an in-depth, fully researched evidence-based programme and not as a personal essay.<sup>18</sup> This relationship between the expression of personal views by presenters and the perceived qualities of professionalism is one on which any sort of conclusion can only be reached after further consideration of the nature and role of current affairs broadcasting (after the following section on informal networks).

### **Informal networks**

This account of the history of current affairs radio has featured named individuals and their relationships with others. This is partly due to the research methodology (Chapter 2) which used the kinds of evidence which foreground who did what and when.<sup>19</sup> One of the reasons why Burns stresses the 'private world' of the BBC is because his research was partly based on interviews with staff.<sup>20</sup> A more anonymous history of the corporation would ignore the decisive interventions of key individuals and the evidence presented here illustrates how in the field of current affairs (or topical talks) the goals and beliefs of a few key individuals were decisive. Both Hilda Matheson in the late 1920s and early 1930s and Grace Wyndham Goldie in the 1950s made interventions in programme policy which shaped programming for years. In the case of *Analysis*, a small group of men created the programme which expressed their own ideas about good broadcasting and in particular serious current affairs radio. Before looking once again at who these individuals were, their influence on others and the networks they formed, a note of caution should be sounded against over-personalised history. Both Lindley<sup>21</sup> and Donovan<sup>22</sup> provide journalistic and highly personalised accounts of *Panorama* and *Today* respectively. For Lindley, the history of *Panorama* is the history of the individuals who made it, as producers and journalists. Although these are invaluable guides in an impoverished area they tend to ignore the wider broadcasting context. This is, of course, a matter

of balance. To ignore the influence of named individuals in the BBC is a mistake<sup>23</sup> (and discussed below) but over-emphasis on names can cause us to lose sight of wider cultural or social factors.

The creation of the distinctive genre of the radio talk was mainly the work of Hilda Matheson who, it is argued here, shared Reith's interest in the educational talk. The two main contributions made by Matheson to factual radio were the development of 'broadcast talk' (and in particular a scripted form which was written 'for the ear') and the introduction of the cultural elite to the microphone. Given the antipathy of this elite to their audience and even to education, that was quite an achievement. Matheson's successor, Charles Siepmann, continued her development of the talk but he showed more interest in topical talks (as in the series *Time to Spare*). This liberal/ progressive start to the radio talk was terminated by the appointment in 1936 of Sir Richard Maconachie as Director of Talks. The evidence<sup>24</sup> shows that Maconachie was both politically and culturally a conservative. Although the progressive wing of the BBC saw his leadership as deeply dispiriting<sup>25</sup> he brought a new generation of 'BBC types' into radio talks and created a respectability which was so fondly remembered by one of those 1930s producers, the man who gave Ian McIntyre his first job in the BBC, John Green.<sup>26</sup>

Post-war talks were dominated by Mary Somerville, who had worked with Matheson and Green, and so the talks tradition worked its way through these key producers from the 1920s to the appointment of McIntyre in the early 1950s and on to the creation of *Analysis* in 1970. If this was the more conservative, at times more elitist, talks tradition (greatly encouraged by the creation of the Third Programme in 1946) perhaps it was stiffened in its orthodoxy by the emergence of the more populist magazine tradition. Janet Quigley developed the magazine format during the Second World War on the *The Kitchen Front*. She went on to play a key part in the development of the *Today* programme together with Stephen Bonarjee who had been the Senior Producer of *At Home and Abroad*. There is some irony in the fact that it was on *At Home and Abroad* that McIntyre met some of the men with whom he would eventually develop the severely anti-magazine *Analysis*; a resolutely single subject programme since 1970. Archie Gordon and Tony Whitby first met McIntyre on the talks magazine and would be joined by the producer, George Fischer, as the

network of men who made *Analysis* happen. As has been explained in the discussion of news and current affairs in the 1960s, they were partly motivated by the emergence of the populist version of radio comment, the news sequence.<sup>27</sup> This was the result of the populist hegemony imposed on radio in the 1960s by Frank Gillard, Richard Marriott and Gerard Mansell and which was illustrated by programmes like *The World at One* presented by the journalist, William Hardcastle. Here the BBC tradition of separating news and comment was ignored and current affairs became an adjunct of news. Men like McIntyre and his circle saw this development not only as the demotion of news comment/ current affairs but also the victory of the journalists who were an anathema to the purists schooled in the talks tradition. Little surprise that *Analysis* was to totally repudiate populist approaches in its strict adherence to primary sources and the use of non-journalist contributors and presenters like Vaizey, McIntyre, Kee and Oppenheimer who fitted so well into the talks tradition.

It would be wrong to describe BBC current affairs radio as exclusively male; from Hilda Matheson to Mary Goldring there were women who shaped factual radio and their contribution must be acknowledged. Nevertheless, the informal networks which made the creation and survival of *Analysis* possible were exclusively male. All the more remarkable then that George Fischer should have chosen Mary Goldring to front *Analysis* after Ian McIntyre's promotion.

None of this stress on the importance of individual agency and personal alliances and networks in the BBC is surprising or innovative. It is, however, a reminder that studies at the level of programme initiation and making need to acknowledge the critical significance of key individuals and the values they have learned and friendships made in the workplace. This thesis recognises in particular the powerful alliance between two men, the producer, George Fischer and the presenter/Controller, Ian McIntyre. Their Reithian traditionalism not only influenced the creation of *Analysis* but continued to have an impact when McIntyre was made Controller of Radio 4 and then Radio 3.<sup>28</sup> It is a commonplace to see the character and values of men like Reith or, much later, John Birt<sup>29</sup> as having a great influence over the BBC and its policies. It would be wrong to overlook similar personal influence lower down in the corporation and in particular at the level of programme making.

## Current affairs

*Analysis* was (and still is) a striking example of a form of current affairs defined, to an extent, by its opposition to news. This distinction is now largely defunct (not least in radio because of the extraordinary pre-eminence of the radio news sequence, *Today*). It expressed a tradition within the BBC in which news and current affairs (facts and comment) were seen as qualitatively different activities. It was widely felt that to combine the two was morally wrong because comments might taint the purity of facts.<sup>30</sup> In addition some broadcasters thought that current affairs should be liberated from news events and freer to find its own agenda. In this thesis, the distinction between news and current affairs is explained by two different factors; the organisational changes in the BBC which split talks from News in 1935 and a cultural elitism which associated journalism with the lower class 'scribblers' of the 'gutter press'.<sup>31</sup>

In pre-war broadcasting, the 'topical talk' was the place to find commentary on world events and this genre was greatly enhanced by the success of J.B. Priestley's war time *Postscripts*. Post-war, two traditions of current affairs broadcasting developed. The more populist magazine talks, *At Home and Abroad* was unsurprisingly absorbed into the news driven 'sequence', *Ten O'clock* while the traditional and more elitist talks tradition found a home on the Third Programme. *Analysis* combined elements of the traditional topical talk with a presenter-led format which relied heavily on the authorial skill of the presenter and the use of expert contributions.

*Analysis* was initially defined by its anti-journalism. The coded attacks on radio journalism can be seen in the very first edition (see Chapter 6). This animosity expressed itself in many ways, two of which are worth re-stating here. Because it ignored the news agenda (particularly striking in the case of Africa, see Chapter 7) it had a freedom to identify issues which more news based programmes could not. As is argued in Chapter 8, the gradual but revolutionary changes in Conservative thinking in the 1970s were never particularly newsworthy but they were ideal material for a cerebral, radio current affairs programme. The second aspect of the

highly self-conscious opposition to journalism to be found on *Analysis* was the almost totemic belief in the use of primary resources for programme research. Presenters researched programmes with an academic diligence and much was made in the interviews with McIntyre and Fischer of the use of primary sources (interviews with 'key players', government documents, Hansard, specialist publications and so on) in contrast to what was perceived as the lazy, second-hand research carried out by journalists. In the words of Michael Green, radio news was seen as a 're-write agency'. The use of primary sources on *Analysis* performed at least two different functions. It helped keep a distance from the news agenda by producing new issues and evidence and it affirmed the superiority of the programme over its more derivative journalistic rivals. Combined with the fact that each forty-five minute edition of *Analysis* dealt with only one subject (although sometimes rather broadly drawn) the use of in-depth, original research was an important part of both the programme's difficulty and also its strength.

As an in-depth, single-subject current affairs programme, eschewing the news agenda, *Analysis* represented a rather purist version of current affairs radio and one which has largely been replaced by magazine formats. The research for this thesis revealed quite unexpected commitment to the use of primary sources and the refusal, repeatedly made in interviews, to use journalists as contributors or as sources. Although both Gerald Priestland and Mary Goldring referred to themselves as journalists they were felt to be of such distinction that it hardly mattered. Fischer and McIntyre in particular thought that to use a radio journalist (including the much respected BBC foreign correspondents) was somehow lazy and unprofessional. There is clearly potential for further research here given the huge increase in the use of BBC journalists as sources of news and comment on the news sequences and also on the news network, *Five Live*. That research might look at a wider range of problems than those identified by McIntyre or Fischer. If a BBC interviewer uses a BBC journalist as a source of information and comment the danger is that the views expressed are not only taken from a restricted research base but also that they may be seen as expressing the 'views of the BBC.' On their own, BBC presenters, whether, for example, of *Panorama*, *Analysis* or *Today*, will tend to be seen as representatives of the BBC itself. Kumar wrote about "the BBC as middleman, as honest broker, as

manager and impresario” achieved through the “heightening of the significance of the professional broadcaster.”<sup>32</sup>

When the BBC interviewer (as ‘honest broker’) is asking another member of BBC staff for their views not only does this epitomise the journalism scorned by McIntyre and Fischer (and criticised by Michael Green) but it can also be dangerous. When John Humphrys as the presenter of *Today* interviewed the programme’s own Defence Correspondent, Andrew Gilligan, on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2003 a process was set in train which ended in the resignations of both the Chairman of the BBC and the Director General. Invited to comment on government claims about the existence of ‘weapons of mass destruction’, Gilligan alleged that he had been told by a senior official that the government was attempting to deceive the public by claiming that the danger was far greater than they knew it to be.<sup>33</sup> The reason why these allegations were so controversial and ultimately so damaging was because Humphrys and Gilligan were both BBC employees apparently accusing the government of ‘deceiving the public’ on the BBC’s flagship news sequence. When a BBC presenter interviews a BBC correspondent on the *Today* programme it is hardly surprising that what they say sounds like the voice of the BBC. Given the prestige and authority of the BBC it is perhaps little wonder that this turned into a crisis.

Future research might look at the extent to which BBC news and comment use BBC staff as the main source of material (as opposed to outside experts, politicians, academics and so on). It might reveal that this has increased and perhaps that there is an over reliance on BBC correspondents as sources of news and opinion.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

This section will end with a final assessment of *Analysis* itself and in particular its coverage of the rise of Thatcherism. Before that it is useful to summarise briefly the key lessons to be learned from the different themes and the contribution made to our knowledge of the history of BBC radio.

Articulating the populist/elitist tension in the BBC can provide a useful way of understanding developments in the public service broadcaster. These tensions have deep historical roots which have been traced in this study of current affairs radio.

The greater emphasis in Media Studies on populist output should not blind us to the existence of more challenging or serious programming and the different issues it raises.

An awareness of the different meanings of the term 'professional' as it was used in the BBC in the past is important. In particular the contrast between professionalism as the possession of universal characteristics (including qualifications and training) and professionalism as an indicator of personal characteristics. The latter and more traditional definition, here referred to as 'calibre' was current in current affairs radio and television in the research period. Its significance for this research is that the older usage of professional implied autonomy or licence. That licence might include the freedom to express opinions on the air.

Despite the much vaunted impartiality of the BBC, the reality in the case of *Analysis* was far from that ideal as implied in the discussion of calibre above. Detailed consideration of individual editions of the programme reveal some systematic bias which made it a 'right leaning' programme (discussed further below). This is particularly significant in the programme's coverage of core themes associated with Thatcherism, including trade unions, Soviet power, social security claimants and the value of profit.

The case of *Analysis*, and the history of current affairs more generally, provides new, specific evidence of the importance of personal friendship and informal networks in the BBC. This has been discussed before but it has been possible in this research to provide greater detail of the nature and effect of these alliances. One thing which united McIntyre, Fischer and others was a belief in the importance of radio current affairs and its absolute distinction from radio journalism. Here we see an elitist and purist vision of current affairs made a weekly and enduring reality by the strength of informal alliances.

### ***Analysis* 1970 –1983, a final assessment**

The evidence presented in this thesis could be used to vilify *Analysis*. There can be little doubt that it was highly sympathetic to the new right from the mid 1970s

onwards. The use of John Vaizey as a presenter despite his early, whole-hearted commitment to Thatcherism was just one of a number of dubious decisions made which reinforces the case for some censure. In the hands of more politically committed observers (such as the GUMG) this evidence could be used to support a case for ideological bias in the BBC. The argument here, and this conclusion, do not share that theoretical certainty and indeed there is much about the early years of the programme which is admirable. For its ambition, its whole-hearted commitment to radio as a medium, for the refusal to patronise its audience and for its ability to bring the political and other elites to the microphone *Analysis* deserves praise. In addition, the commitment to primary research and the separation from the news agenda helped presenters (and especially Mary Goldring) to be innovative and original.

In a final assessment of *Analysis*, special consideration is needed of its coverage of Thatcherism. Michael Green's view was that the freedom given to the 'professionals' of *Analysis* (McIntyre and Goldring in particular) seemed to contribute to the 'prescience' of the programme.<sup>34</sup> Somehow, he felt, *Analysis* identified the importance of changes taking place in Conservative thinking and articulated these earlier than other programmes. This was done, however, at the expense of impartiality and as a result there was a systematic bias in some editions of the programme to Thatcherite ideas. Gerard Mansell, in his role as Director of Programmes Radio, was surely right in saying at the Weekly Programme Review Board that *Analysis* was not a platform for 'personal views'.<sup>35</sup> This was the flagship, weekly radio current affairs of the publicly funded BBC and listeners in the 1970s deserved a balanced assessment of the Conservative ideological revolution: something they conspicuously did not get.

The problem of bias was compounded by the very existence of a dominant or 'flagship' current affairs programme. Today's media environment is very different, there are far more providers of news analysis on television (for example BBC 2's *Newsnight* and Channel 4's *Channel 4 News*) and radio (Radio 4's *File on Four* and the much expanded *Today* programme) as well as the great diversity of news and opinion available via the internet. Combined with the increased sophistication of the twenty-first century audience, this makes the audience expect less in terms of truth or authority in news comment.

In the 1970s, however, the flag ship current affairs series of the BBC were seen as, and claimed to be, authoritative and impartial. The top presenters and most eminent contributors demanded to be listened to and believed. This case study is a useful reminder of the dangers of public service broadcasting in that heavily restricted media environment, before Channel 4, Sky News and the plethora of opinions that digital technology has made available. Elite, 'flagship' public service provision of news comment may have been a comfortingly reliable and authoritative form of current affairs but its claims of impartiality have been seriously questioned here. Claims which today are less frequently made and less frequently believed.

Impartiality is an important aim of the BBC's political broadcasting but so is making stimulating, relevant and well researched current affairs. *Analysis* had greater success in achieving these latter aims than it did in being impartial. Whatever its failings it represented an intriguing distillation of traditional attitudes combined with newer broadcasting techniques in the BBC. It was a distinguished and controversial programme which sheds light on the evolution of current affairs at a politically crucial time.

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<sup>1</sup> See Burns, 42.

<sup>2</sup> Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses*; Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*.

<sup>3</sup> Carey, 38.

<sup>4</sup> J.B.Priestley in Carey, 38.

<sup>5</sup> Briggs, *Vol V*, 783.

<sup>6</sup> The idea that radio is a secondary medium (second to television and also a secondary activity, for example to driving), see for example, Andrew Crisell, *Understanding Radio 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (London: Routledge, 1994).

<sup>7</sup> Lindley, 52-119.

<sup>8</sup> Weekly Programme Review Board, 15 December 1971 see Appendix A.

<sup>9</sup> Burns, *The BBC*.

<sup>10</sup> Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion* (New York: Macmillan, 1922).

<sup>11</sup> Probably the most important Marxist academic writing on the subject of ideology see Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding" in S.Hall, D.Hobson, A.Lowe and P.Willis (eds), *Culture, Media, Language*, (London: Hutchinson, 1980).

<sup>12</sup> Annan, 276.

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- <sup>13</sup> Annan, 266-291.
- <sup>14</sup> Wyndham Goldie, *Facing the Nation*; Curran, *The Seamless Robe*; Lindley, *Panorama*.
- <sup>15</sup> Weekly Programme Review Board, 15 December 1971 see Appendix.
- <sup>16</sup> Annan, 280.
- <sup>17</sup> In 1977.
- <sup>18</sup> Exactly this point is made by Mansell (as D.P.R. – Director of Programmes, Radio) in minutes of the programme review for 15<sup>th</sup> December 1971, see Appendix A.
- <sup>19</sup> For example, memoranda and programme reviews in the BBC Written Archive, interviews with former *Analysis* staff, memoirs of former BBC staff are all forms of evidence which deal with the actions of individuals.
- <sup>20</sup> Burns, *The BBC*.
- <sup>21</sup> Lindley, 2002.
- <sup>22</sup> Donovan, 1998.
- <sup>23</sup> A feature of Burns, *The BBC*. His important discussion of the informal networks in the BBC is hampered by the absence of named individuals which is understandable in a sociological inquiry but nevertheless this absence makes it hard to appreciate the process and impact of personal friendship in the BBC and its precise impact on programming.
- <sup>24</sup> For example Briggs, *Vol 2*, 148.
- <sup>25</sup> Lambert, 85-86.
- <sup>26</sup> Briggs, *Vol 2*, 149.
- <sup>27</sup> This oppositional quality of informal networks is intriguing but not examined in this thesis. As groups of individuals in the BBC formed alliances so they also made enemies. McIntyre and Fischer in particular disliked radio journalists (widely discussed in this thesis) and that led to a crisis when McIntyre became Controller, Radio 4. He attacked the Special Current Affairs Unit and in particular their coverage of US presidential elections see also Chapter 6.
- <sup>28</sup> McIntyre's reign at Radio 3 is discussed by Humphrey Carpenter, *The Envy of the World*. For an account of his unhappy time as Controller of Radio 4 historians await publication of Hendy's forthcoming history of Radio 4 (Oxford University Press).
- <sup>29</sup> John Birt, Director General of the BBC, 1992-2000.
- <sup>30</sup> See the response to the replacement of the talks magazine, *At Home and Abroad* in 1960 by the news and comment programme, *Ten O'Clock*.
- <sup>31</sup> Rose, 418.
- <sup>32</sup> Krishan Kumar, "Holding the Middle Ground: the BBC, the public and the professional broadcaster," in James Curran et al (eds) *Mass Communication and Society* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), 247.
- <sup>33</sup> For a full account see *The Hutton Inquiry and its Impact*. Edited by Simon Rogers. London: Politico's Publishing and Guardian Newspapers, 2004.
- <sup>34</sup> Michael Green, interview 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2000.
- <sup>35</sup> See Appendix A.

## APPENDIX A

### Weekly Radio Programme Review Board 15 December 1971<sup>1</sup>

#### (b) Analysis: Government and Opposition (Radio 4, 10 December)

C.R.3-Designate<sup>2</sup> thought that this second programme dealing with the Opposition had not been quite as good as the first one, devoted to the Government. At the end of the first programme he had been left feeling that he knew about the present flow and structure of the Conservative Party; he had not been left with similar feelings about the Labour Party at the end of the second programme. He would sum up his criticism of it by saying that it had been hard on personalities and soft on issues. On the first point, it had appeared to dismiss the leading figures on the Labour front bench and settle, almost without explanation, on Mr.Short as the next leader. On the second point, controversial statements which needed further analysis had been allowed to pass unchallenged. Ed.D.& T.R.<sup>3</sup> said that the reasons for tipping Mr.Short as Mr.Wilson's possible eventual successor had been mentioned. M.D.R.<sup>4</sup> recalling the previous week's discussion, said that Ian McIntyre's approach and style in dealing with the Labour Party had been the same as in dealing with the Conservatives. He had been just as impartial in the second programme as in the first.

D.P.R.<sup>5</sup> said that nevertheless he had been worried by the basic decision to use Ian McIntyre in both programmes not just as presenter, but as someone with very sharply defined view of his own which found expression in his summing up. There were two questions which he felt had to be faced. Was it proper for the regular presenter of a programme who, as such, would be identified by many people with the BBC, to express clear views on major political figures? And what would the reaction be if, instead of Ian McIntyre, some other presenter such as William Hardcastle had been used in this role? For several years William Hardcastle had worked on a controversial daily programme,<sup>6</sup> but in many people's view he was as authoritative an observer of the contemporary political scene as Ian McIntyre. C.R.4<sup>7</sup> thought that the second question could not fairly be put in this way. One's idea of William Hardcastle was affected by his association with "The World at One". If, like Ian McIntyre, he had been presenting "Analysis" for the past two years reaction to his name would be very different. M.D.R. thought William Hardcastle was a first-class newsman, but that as a political analyst he was not in the same league as Ian McIntyre. Because of the authority conferred on them by their knowledge and experience, Ian McIntyre and Gerald Priestland were entitled to go further in the direction of expressing opinions than other radio presenters. Ed. R.N.<sup>8</sup>, however, felt

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<sup>1</sup> Re-typed from a poor quality photocopy of the original minutes held at WAC. This is a full and unedited transcript.

<sup>2</sup> Controller, Radio 3 Designate, Stephen Hearst

<sup>3</sup> Editor, Documentaries and Talks Radio, Lord Archie Gordon.

<sup>4</sup> Managing Director, Radio, Ian Trethowan.

<sup>5</sup> Director of Programmes, Radio, Gerard Mansell.

<sup>6</sup> *The World at One*.

<sup>7</sup> Controller, Radio 4, Tony Whitby

<sup>8</sup> Editor, Radio News.

that public political commitment on the part of a presenter did create problems. M.D.R. said a distinction had to be made between present and past commitment. A broadcaster's political activities<sup>9</sup> could not be held against him long after they had ceased. D.P.R. queried the parallel with Gerald Priestland whose comments were oblique and generally threw a shaft of light on a problem from an unexpected angle. In his view it was dangerous to encourage a presenter to editorialise directly in the way Ian McIntyre had done in this programme. M.D.R. said Ian McIntyre was a man of stature whom the BBC was entitled to use in this way. D.P.R. thought that such a direct expression of opinion would be perfectly acceptable in a series of talks of say, the "Personal View" kind. But in "Analysis" Ian McIntyre was being used both as a displayer of evidential material and as a political commentator. He believed the precedent was an unhappy one. C.R.4. said he did not think there was a valid distinction between the two functions. The role of a presenter was to write and broadcast an essay on a given topic, with the limitation that it should be an essay which was fair in BBC terms. He saw "Analysis" as an essay illustrated by evidence which pointed to conclusions. D.P.R. said that his reservation was that Ian McIntyre's view on the particular topic was the only one the listener was offered, but C.R.4. did not think that Ian McIntyre could properly be said to have aired views.

C.R.3.<sup>10</sup> said he had always argued that documentaries should be researched and presented by someone with a mind of his own. You took a man with views of his own on a particular topic and sent him to test those views against reality. However, he felt it was necessary to make a distinction between a one-off programme and a continuing series. The difficulty in the present case was that Ian McIntyre played a continuing role in the BBC's output and would seem to many listeners to be acting as a BBC observer. C.R.4. felt that the nearest BBC analogy was with a television programme such as "Panorama" where a regular reporter like Richard Kershaw would present his conclusions on the Rhodesian situation on the basis of a visit there. M.D.R. agreeing, said that in such a programme the reporter described the state of play as he saw it on the basis of the evidence he had gathered. In McIntyre had been doing no more. D.P.R., however, felt that Ian McIntyre had gone further and that a reading of the programme's script would show this to be the case. Mr. Fischer, who produced the programme, pointed out that Ian McIntyre had had a whole 45 minutes. During this, he had presented his own conclusions on the basis of the evidence provided by people such as Labour M.P.s and Trade Union leaders. He believed that it could be shown that every sentence in his summing up was derived from evidence presented during the programme. Moreover, he felt his continuing role in the programme to be an advantage rather than a drawback, since Ian McIntyre gained authority from it.

D.P.R. thought a part of his anxiety might arise from the fact that in these programmes Ian McIntyre had been talking about matters very close to home and that there was a danger of the BBC's appearing to express loaded views. C.R.3 expressed his surprise that at one point in the programme Ian McIntyre should have appeared to be offering gratuitous advice to Mr. Wilson. Mr. Fischer said this had been based on evidence provided by members of Mr. Wilson's party, but H.F.E.R. (who said he had been unable to hear the programme) thought there was a danger in drawing conclusions from certain bits of evidence packaged in a 45 minute

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<sup>9</sup> See Ian McIntyre's entry in the Glossary.

<sup>10</sup> Controller, Radio 3, Howard Newby.

programme. He felt such conclusions were better justified when based on several years research, and the evidence acquired displayed more fully within the covers of a book. C.R.4 emphasised that "Analysis" was journalism, while M.D.R. said that continuous observation of the political scene over a period often led to a better understanding of its realities than academic research. D.P.R. said he would round off his own argument by affirming that it was not the function of a BBC presenter to write "Times" first leaders, however good they might be. In his view, this was what the concluding passage in "Analysis" on the Opposition had amounted to. When Mr.Fischer protested that "Times" first leaders seldom provided much evidence, C.R.3 said it was an illusion to suggest that evidence could be adequately displayed in a programme. What "Analysis" depended on was Ian McIntyre's integrity. On a point raised by H.P.S.G.R. it was confirmed that there had been no unfavourable reaction to the programme from Party Headquarters.

**APPENDIX B**  
**Minutes of the Management Committee of the Centre for Policy Studies,**  
**November 1974.**

## **APPENDIX C**

**Reviews of editions of *Analysis* for the online database 'Analysis Online.'  
Information taken directly from 'Analysis Online.'**

### **Introduction**

Over the first 20 years of its existence, *Analysis* evolved in both its form and content. To help the researcher understand this evolution, 60 reviews of individual programmes have been put on to Analysis Online. The programmes were chosen at random (although at regular intervals throughout the year) and most of the reviews include the context of the programme and a summary of its content; programme format; the names of participants; some observations on the nature of the discussion; the role of the presenter; use of language and a general comment.

The reviews are likely to be of particular interest to researchers working in the following areas;

- The history of current affairs radio
- The role of the presenter in radio and broadcasting
- Broadcast talk
- Styles of political interviewing (from conversational to more confrontational)
- The careers of Ian McIntyre and Mary Goldring
- British political history 1970 - 1980
- The rise of Thatcherism.

The reviews express the opinions of the two researchers and are subjective reflections on individual programmes, designed to stimulate interest in and use of the Analysis archive.

This research was funded by a grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Board and carried out by Gareth Thomas and Hugh Chignell of the Bournemouth Media School (Bournemouth University) between June and December 2000.

A list of all the reviews on 'Analysis Online.'

~~ONLYME~~

## Date Index

24th April 1970  
'The Sino-Soviet Rift'

Home

10th July 1970  
'Do Comprehensive Schools Work?'

Introduction

4th December 1970  
'The Provincial Press'

Title Index

15th January 1971  
"What Case for Commercial Radio?"

22nd October 1971  
'How many degrees?'

26th November 1971  
'Criminal Justice 71'

28th January 1972  
"Through Arab Eyes"

16th June 1972  
'Northern Ireland'

24th November 1972  
'Which side of the tracks?'

26th January 1973  
"The View from Israel"

2nd February 1973  
'Rt Hon Mrs Margaret Thatcher MP, Secretary of State for Education and Science, in conversation with Ian McIntyre'

7th June 1973  
'Destiny or diversion?'

17th January 1974  
'What Is To Be Done?'

6th June 1974  
'The Prime Minister, Rt Hon Harold Wilson MP in conversation with Ian McIntyre'

21st November 1974  
'Work! Be proud! Be confident!'

30th January 1975  
"Vietnam without Americans"

12th June 1975  
'Whither Labour'

27th November 1975

'Keep the home tyres turning'

22nd January 1976

'Towards One Europe'

3rd June 1976

'Your Money or Your Life'

4th November 1976

'The Middle Way'

20th January 1977

'Whose Benefit?'

26th May 1977

'The Conservative Party'

27th October 1977

'Degrees of Marxism'

3rd November 1977

'My Government will seek...'

8th June 1978

'The View from the Cities'

13th December 1978

'A Recorded Conversation with David Donnison'

17th January 1979

'A Conversation between Mary Goldring and Michael Edwardes'

29th March 1979

'Silk Purse or Sow's Ear?'

4th July 1979

'Down with Skool'

9th January 1980

'Economics in the 80s 2. Britain's prospects'

11th June 1980

'Rt Hon James Callaghan, M.P.'

13th August 1980

'Politics without Power'

14th January 1981

'The Right Honourable Roy Jenkins in conversation with Michael Charlton'

3rd June 1981

'Whipping the Cream'

14th October 1981

'Alternatives to Thatcherism'

16th December 1981

'Plus a Change'

19th October 1982

'Claude Cheysson'

2nd February 1983  
'The Lost Generation'

1st June 1983  
'Policies before Parties'

30th November 1983  
'Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rt Hon Nigel Lawson, M.P.'

21st December 1983  
'The Half-Life of French Socialism'

1st February 1984  
'Argentina After the Generals'

6th June 1984  
'Who wants Socialism?'

7th November 1984  
'Where's the Opposition?'

30th January 1985  
'Robin Leigh-Pemberton'

19th June 1985  
'Pounds, Shillings and Defence'

3rd July 1985  
'Allegro ma non Troppo'

22nd January 1986  
'The Pace of Change. 1. The Problem'

4th June 1986  
'Flying New Colours'

5th November 1986  
'Can Unemployment Be Beaten?'

31st January 1987  
'A Canal Too Far'

15th July 1987  
'No Nukes is Good Nukes?'

12th November 1987  
'The Lie of the Land'

28th January 1988  
'The Need to Know'

7th July 1988  
'Trying Times'

24th November 1988  
'Taking Liberties'

23rd February 1989

'Disarming Tactics'

6th July 1989

'A Capital Idea'

**An example of a review from ‘Analysis Online.’**

Bournemouth University BBC Radio 4 *Analysis* Archive Project.  
AHRB funded Phase 2.

**PROGRAMME REVIEW**

Programme Title Through Arab Eyes                      Date: 28<sup>th</sup> Jan 1972

Context and Content:

Ian McIntyre begins with an account of the prevailing situation in ‘the Arab world’ and draws attention to the importance of former President Nasser of Egypt. In the contributions from the Egyptian speakers, Nasser is praised and his importance stressed. Recent student protests in Egypt are mentioned. There is consideration of the growth of ‘Arab consciousness’ and the role of language, literature and the mass media in that. Nasser’s use of broadcasting is referred to. The possibility of economic integration is considered with reference to Syria, Egypt and Libya. King Hussein of Jordan expresses his hopes for his country and pan-Arabian cooperation. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine is represented and their views expressed. The case for Arab unity, possibly via an ‘Arab federation’ is considered at the end.

Format:

Pre-recorded documentary (which includes both pre-recorded quotations and some question and answer.)

Participants:

<u>Presenter</u>	Ian McIntyre	
<u>Contributors</u>	Halim Doss	Cairo doctor
	King Hussein	King of Jordan
	Ghassan Tueni	Newspaer editor, Lebanon
	Kamal Abdul Magd	Arab Socialist Union
	Ghassan Maleh	Academic, Damascus
	Magdi Wahba	Academic, Cairo
	Omar Nabulsi	Minister of Economic Affairs, Jordan
	Bassam Zayyed	PFLP spokesman
<u>Producer</u>	Roland Challis	

Nature of the discussion: Selected views linked by the presenter with one short passage of pre-recorded question and answer (something of a novelty on *Analysis*)

Role of the Presenter:

A particularly interesting example of current affairs presentation which raises a number of questions (further discussed below).

Ian McIntyre begins with a long introduction which starts with a joke “ A great place for jokes, Cairo...”. In his summing up he tells “a story about the Prophet Mahommed.”

McIntyre’s sympathy for the views of King Hussein are very evident for example saying “...the thoughts of King Hussein ... make a good deal of historical and geographical sense...”. This sympathy is subtly reinforced at one point where there is a recorded question and answer exchange between the two men, suggesting the approval which contrasts so graphically with McIntyre’s evident contempt for the PFLP.

Other judgemental comments include “my impression was that he’s the sort of man who...” and, observing Egyptian police writing down taxi registration plates outside a hotel “this struck me as fatuous ... a modest contribution to .. full employment.” This judgemental position is reinforced by McIntyre’s use of language, see below.

#### Points of reference:

There are the expected references to Arab politicians and places and some slightly more obscure references but arguably not so many that the regular listener would be put off.

#### Language:

Most notable here is Ian McIntyre’s heavy use of irony in his contemptuous references to the PFLP. These range from the almost abusive, “.. the bold young boyos of the Palestine liberation movement... there they sit in Beiruit, snug as cuckoos in a sparrow’s nest...” to the more crafted and ironic, “it must be rather restful in a way to be a Marxist/ Leninist revolutionary; purged of doubt, cocooned in Dogma, text-book answers to all the questions anyone could ever possibly ask...”.

#### General Comment:

The focus on an ‘Arab’ identity implies a distinct and autonomous ethnically based set of needs and characteristics which is now perhaps rather dated. Although this is surely a controversial piece of radio with Ian McIntyre making little effort to disguise his views it is also extremely skilled in terms of pulling the audience along. His style is characteristically intimate and ‘clubbish’ implying a confidential closeness between himself and his audience. For example he talks of a Syrian contributor regularly crossing the Egypt/Syria frontier,

“The border seemed to mean as little to him as the Carter Bar does to a farmer from the Scottish borders on a day trip to Newcastle.”

This edition of *Analysis* emphasises the considerable power which the pre-recorded documentary gives to the presenter. Not only does McIntyre have the ability to select whatever he chooses from the interviews but he also has the time to script his own response. The result is that he dominates the programme by the authority and ease of his own contributions.

Hugh Chignell, August 2000.

## GLOSSARY

**A glossary of the names of the main individuals referred to in the text.**

**Stephen Bonarjee:**

Talks producer. First producer of *Topic for Tonight* (1949-). Senior producer of *At Home and Abroad* (1954-1960) with the title 'Organiser, Topical Talks'. Editor, *Today* programme from 1963 to 1970 as 'Head of Current Affairs Group, Radio'.

**John Coatman:**

First Chief Editor of News (1935-1937). A non-journalist who appointed Richard Dimbleby. Began to establish news journalism in the BBC. Previously a professor at the LSE and Head of the Indian Police Service.

**Roland Challis:**

One of the first producers of *Analysis*, producing 29 editions between 1970 and 1973. Formerly BBC South East Asia Correspondent (1964-1969). Ended his career as Head of BBC monitoring. Interviewed twice for this research.

**Charles Curran:**

Talks producer from 1947 then into BBC administration. Became Director of External Broadcasting in 1959, Secretary of the BBC in 1963 and was Director-General of the BBC from 1969 – 1977.

**Robin Day:**

Joined the BBC as a talks producer in the early 1950s then moved to ITN as a newsreader. Returned to the BBC as reporter for *Panorama*. Presenter of *Panorama* 1967-1977. Presented 7 editions of *Analysis* (1970 – 1981). Often credited with introducing the inquisitorial style of interviewing.

**Richard Dimbleby**

Joined BBC news before the Second World War and became famous as a BBC war reporter (most notably for the liberation of the Belsen concentration camp). Made the 'anchor man' of *Panorama* by Grace Wyndham Goldie in 1955 and continued in that role to 1965.

**Frank Gillard**

BBC war correspondent who became a highly influential Director/Managing Director, Radio 1963-1970. Played a decisive role in the populist trend in radio in the 1960s. Closed Features Department in 1964. Introduced 'generic broadcasting' in the form of Radios 1,2,3,4 in 1967 and initiated BBC local radio in the same year.

**George Fischer**

Joined the BBC in 1963 as a programme assistant in External Services. Moved to network radio in 1967 and met Ian McIntyre with whom he worked as a producer. Became first producer of *Analysis* in 1970 and produced 45 editions 1970-1974, most of them with Ian McIntyre as presenter. Editor, Documentaries and Talks, Radio/Head of Talks and Documentaries, Radio 1972- 1987. Interviewed for this research.

**Grace Wyndham Goldie**

BBC radio talks producer from 1944 then moved to television becoming Assistant Head of Talks, Television in 1954 and Head of Talks and Current Affairs Group, Television 1962-1965. Instrumental in the launch and production of *Tonight*, *Panorama* and *That Was the Week that Was*. On her retirement wrote *Facing the Nation* which examines the relationship between television and politics.

**Mary Goldring**

Followed Ian McIntyre as the main presenter of *Analysis* from 1976 – mid 1980s. Presented 109 programmes 1971 – 1988. Formerly a journalist on the *Economist*.

**Lord Archie Gordon**

Radio talks producer who worked with Ian McIntyre and Tony Whitby on *At Home and Abroad* in the 1950s. Successor to D.G.Bridson as Programme Editor, Arts, Science and Documentaries, Sound then Editor, Documentaries and Talks, Radio till 1972 and George Fischer's predecessor in that role.

**Michael Green**

Produced 25 editions of *Analysis* 1974-1977. Previously worked for the BBC in Manchester. Launched *File on Four* from Manchester in 1977. Controller, Radio 4 1986-1996. Interviewed for this research.

**John Green**

Talks producer who joined the BBC in 1934. Worked under Maconachie. Chief Assistant, Talks after the war under Mary Somerville then Head of Talks 1956 – 1961. Responsible for recruiting Ian McIntyre to the BBC.

**Hugh Carleton Greene**

Director General of the BBC 1960 –1969. Formerly a journalist who became BBC News Editor and Head of the German Section in 1940. On appointment as Director General he closed down *At Home and Abroad* and created *Ten O'Clock* which heralded the emergence of programmes combining news and comment.

**William Hardcastle**

Journalist turned news presenter. His career in the 1960s was championed by Gerard Mansell as part of the move towards news sequences and away from more elitist

talks/ current affairs programmes. He presented, among other programmes, *The World at One*, (1965-) *The World This Weekend* (1967-) and *PM Reports* (1970-).

### **Greville Havenhand**

Produced 88 editions of *Analysis* 1974-1977. Joined the BBC in 1958 and worked on *The World at One* and *The World Tonight*. Worked closely with Gerald Priestland when he presented *Analysis* (and is mentioned in *Something Understood*). Interviewed for this research.

### **Ian McIntyre**

Joined the BBC in 1957 as a talks producer and worked on *At Home and Abroad*. Worked at the Conservative Central Office in Edinburgh during the 1960s and stood unsuccessfully for parliament in 1966. The main presenter of *Analysis* 1970 – 1975 (presented 91 editions 1970 – 1976). Worked closely with George Fischer on *Analysis* and other talks programmes from 1967. Controller, Radio 4 1976-1978 and Controller Radio 3, 1978- 1987. Interviewed for this research.

### **Richard Maconachie**

Appointed Head of Talks to succeed Charles Siepmann in 1936. A reactionary broadcaster who led a cautious Talks Department and prevented the development of topical talks. Was responsible, however, for the early experiments in radio interviewing.

### **J.B.Mais**

Public school master who presented a talks series on walking, *The Unknown Island* in the early 1930s. Then used to present the controversial 11 part series on unemployment *S.O.S.* in 1933.

### **Gerard Mansell**

Chief of the Home Service from 1965. Controller, Radio 4 1967 and Director of Programmes Radio till 1972. A populist broadcaster who pioneered the expansion of news on the Home Service and the creation of 'generic' radio together with Frank Gillard. Chaired the Policy Study Group which led to the publication of *Broadcasting in the Seventies*.

### **Richard Marriott**

Assistant Director, Sound Broadcasting in the 1960s he worked closely with Gillard and Mansell on the move towards 'generic' radio. Chaired policy working parties in the 1950s and 1960s beginning the policy debate which culminated in the publication of *Broadcasting in the Seventies*.

### **Laurence Martin**

Presenter of editions of *Analysis* on defence in the 1970s. Professor of War Studies, King's College London and then Vice-Chancellor, Newcastle University. Stressed the danger of soviet power and the folly of disarmament.

### **Hilda Matheson**

The first director of talks in the BBC. Worked in MI6 during the First World War and then became political secretary to Lady Astor. Appointed by Reith in 1926. The

main influence on the creation of the radio talk and responsible for attracting a sceptical cultural elite to broadcast. Resigned in 1931.

**Peter Oppenheimer**

Oxford economist who contributed to the first edition of *Analysis*. Occasional contributor and presenter up to 1977 when he became the main presenter of *File on Four*.

**Gerald Priestland**

BBC foreign correspondent in the 1950s and 1960s. News presenter (*Tonight*) 1970 - 1976 and occasional presenter of *Analysis* in the mid 1970s. Chiefly remembered as the BBC's religious affairs correspondent.

**J.B. Priestley**

Novelist and commentator who became a radio personality with his *Postscript to the News* (from 1940). An expert communicator who combined skill and personality in these topical talks.

**Janet Quigley**

Talks producer who developed the magazine format during and after the Second World War. Produced *The Kitchen Front* aimed at the wartime housewife and was largely responsible for creating the *Today* programme in 1957.

**Tom Read**

Talks producer who produced 53 editions of *Analysis* in the 1970s and early 1980s. Joined the BBC from the Daily Mirror in 1967. Worked briefly with Greville Havenhand on *The World Tonight*. Joined the Special Current Affairs Unit 1973-1977 and *Analysis* 1977 - 1982. Interviewed for this research.

**Charles Siepmann**

Successor to Hilda Matheson as Director of Talks, 1931 – 1935. Largely shared Matheson's progressive and innovative approach.

**Ian Trethowan**

News presenter and producer who worked on ITN in the 1950s. Joined the BBC in 1963 to work with Wyndham Goldie and Tony Whitby (on *Gallery*). Managing Director, Radio from 1968 and author of *Broadcasting in the Seventies*. Director General of the BBC 1977- 1982.

**Tony Whitby**

Controller, Radio 4 1969-1975. Close friend and colleague of both Ian McIntyre, whom he first met working on *At Home and Abroad* in the 1950s, and Ian Trethowan, who proposed him as Controller. Instrumental in the creation of *Analysis*.

**John Vaizey**

Educational economist and member of the Labour Party who contributed to 4 editions of *Analysis* in the early 1970s and then presented 11 editions in 1975 and 1976. Friend of Margaret Thatcher's but made a Life Peer in 1976 by Wilson. Strong Thatcherite views became public in a letter to the Times in 1980.

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#### **Editions of *Analysis* cited in the text.**

10 April 1970	<i>The War for Jenkins' Ear</i>
8 May 1970	<i>The State of Northern Ireland</i>
29 May 1970	<i>Vietnam</i>
17 July 1970	<i>Golda Meir</i>
21 May 1971	<i>The View from Salisbury</i>
4 June 1971	<i>Against the Stream</i>
10 December 1971	<i>The Government and Opposition 2: Labour</i>
28 January 1972	<i>Through Arab Eyes</i>
16 June 1972	<i>Northern Ireland</i>
30 June 1972	<i>The Lord Chancellor in conversation with Robin Day</i>
February 2 1973	<i>The Rt.Hon. Margaret Thatcher, M.P in conversation with Ian McIntyre</i>
16 May 1974	<i>Tomorrow's Pound</i>
6 June 1974	<i>The Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Harold Wilson, M.P. in conversation with Ian McIntyre</i>
14 November 1974	<i>Aspects of Profit</i>
1 May 1975	<i>The Bigger the Better</i>

15 May 1975	<i>The Stony Road</i>
27 November 1975	<i>Keep the Home Tyres Turning</i>
4 December 1975	<i>The Way of the Left</i>
12 February 1976	<i>The State of the Soviet Union</i>
26 February 1976	<i>NATO and the Uncertain Balance</i>
1 April 1976	<i>Alexander Solzhenitsyn</i>
20 May 1976	<i>The Price of Progress</i>
20 January 1977	<i>Whose Benefit?</i>
25 October 1978	<i>What are we here for Brothers?</i>
17 January 1979	<i>A conversation between Mary Goldring and Michael Edwardes</i>
4 July 1979	<i>Down with Skool</i>
12 December 1979	<i>A Dangerous Imbalance</i>
20 February 1980	<i>The Springtime of Mr. Botha</i>
5 March 1980	<i>Mary Goldring in conversation with Sir Keith Joseph, Secretary of State for Industry</i>
11 June, 1980	<i>Rt. Hon. James Callaghan, M.P.</i>
17 December, 1980	<i>Mr. Mugabe Counts his Friends</i>
3 June 1981	<i>Whipping the Cream</i>
2 February 1983	<i>The Lost Generation</i>
30 November 1983	<i>The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson.</i>