

## Change and Reaction in BBC Current Affairs Radio, 1928 - 1970

Current affairs captures something unique about British broadcasting. Like public service broadcasting it serves to differentiate British from American media and also like public service broadcasting it is influenced more by broadcasting values than by audience ratings. A search for the origins of current affairs radio begins with the 'topical' talks of the 1930s that addressed political issues of the day, usually with the utmost caution. As Scannell and Cardiff (1991) describe, there were some attempts under the first Head of Talks, Hilda Matheson and her successor, Charles Siepmann to address social problems (most notably unemployment and homelessness) but the decade was marked by increasing caution and, in the words of Asa Briggs (1965: 148), a 'swing to the right'. By the beginning of the Second World War, topical talks were in a fairly moribund state and completely unprepared for what was to come. One of the factors which jerked the BBC out of its complacency was the popularity of the Nazi propagandist, William Joyce ("Lord Haw-Haw") who attracted audiences of over a quarter of the adult population. The BBC's response was to employ the novelist, J. B. Priestley to deliver a series of topical talks after the *Nine O'Clock News* entitled *Postscript to the News*. Sian Nicholas accounts for Priestley's success (a 'national sensation') in these terms:

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.

(Nicholas, 1996: 61)

From the high-mindedness of 1930s talks to the plain speaking, 'talking with' of Priestley's *Postscripts* there is clearly a shift from improving, and at times frankly elitist, output to a form of current affairs commentary which was more democratic and far more responsive to audience needs. The purpose of this chapter is to explore other similar – and less well known – developments in BBC radio talk and current affairs

up to and including the 1970s, whilst also raising questions about the extent to which a more democratic and inclusive approach was established, as is widely assumed.

### **Change in the 1950s**

The 1960s are commonly seen as the decade of the most pronounced social and cultural change in Britain. There are numerous accounts, however, which show that the 1950s was also a decade of change and innovation and one in which earlier orthodoxies were undermined (see for example Tracey, 1998; Marwick, 1998). A range of factors contributed to this progressive shift in the BBC, not easily summarised here although some of the most important catalysts can be identified. For a start, changes in social relations and processes from the end of the war to the 1960s challenged the arrogance and elitism of the BBC and 'brought into question the authority of the whole hierarchy of values on which the Reithian system of control, consensus and ethos itself depended' (Burns, 1977: 43). The breaking of the BBC's monopoly with the arrival of ITV in 1955 further contributed to this change. By offering an alternative to BBC television, ITV forced a re-examination of BBC practices and values, indeed, as Janet Thumin (2004: 53) points out, the depiction of the BBC as 'stuffy' and 'highbrow' was part of Independent Television's sales pitch, 'in order to lure viewers to their own, supposedly more accessible, offerings'. In his account of the decline of public service broadcasting, Michael Tracey (1998: 76) sees the replacement of the ultra Reithian William Hayley as director General of the BBC by Sir Ian Jacob as of critical importance. Hayley's most notable achievement had been the creation of the Third Programme, which in its uncompromisingly high cultural output 'allowed not the slightest tinge of populism' (ibid: 69). Jacob had very different ideas about broadcasting and was wholeheartedly committed to the television service, unlike his predecessors. The dramatic rise in the popularity of television in the 1950s was itself a populist development that challenged Reithian values.

Radio was also experiencing some serious self-examination partly due to the success of television and the commercial challenge from Radio Luxembourg. Broadcasting 'family' output on Long Wave, Luxembourg pioneered the highly popular quiz shows *Take Your Pick*, *Double Your money* and *Opportunity Knocks* before they transferred to ITV (Street, 2002: 199). Faced by hugely increased competition, the BBC's

Director of Sound Broadcasting, Lindsay Wellington, set up the Sound Working Party in 1956 to suggest a way forward. The resulting report was, according to Briggs (1995: 39-40), essentially anti-Haley, anti-Reith and anti the old BBC. The report included the stridently anti-Reithian declaration that in future BBC Radio 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' ('The Future of Sound Broadcasting in the Domestic Service' quoted in Briggs, 1995: 40). Similarly, the American commentator, Burton Paulu (1956: 121) provides us with an understanding of why change was necessary. Writing in the 1950s he felt that what the Talks Department needed were 'audience aware producers', 'showmen' rather than 'high-minded scholars'. He thought that it was among these 'purveyors of culture and education' that the least realistic understanding of the audience was to be found and hoped (with some prescience) that the growing competition from television would encourage democratic change.

Technology also came to the aid of those who wanted to change current affairs output. Though the BBC was comparatively slow to convert from disc to magnetic tape, by 1955 tape had largely replaced the disc (Briggs 1979: 582). The impact of tape recording had the potential to solve many problems identified in the 'current affairs crisis' and the perceived failure of talks to be genuinely topical. For example, tape recording made it possible to provide material from around the world and greatly improve the 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 traditional studio-based 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* in 1954. An extract from the *BBC Handbook* of the time describes 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.

(BBC Handbook 1955: 54)

In other words, *At Home and Abroad* was a new and more accessible form of current affairs radio, an alternative to the didactic radio talk and the predecessor to the most important of all radio current affairs programmes, *Today*. It owed its success partly to its magazine structure, its division into a sequence of relatively short segments that allowed the listener to drop in and out of the programme. The magazine format can be traced back to the radio magazines of the war like *The Kitchen Front*, which provided a mainly female audience with domestic advice. Unlike the more sustained single subject talk, the magazine acknowledges the fact that its audience is often engaged in other activities and that radio is a 'secondary' medium.

One final feature of the liberal and more democratic culture of the 1950s (and moving into 1960s) was the decline in deference towards those in positions of power. The Suez crisis of 1956 contributed to that sense that those in authority could be questioned and denied; a mood that was fully expressed in the satire boom of the early 1960s. *At Home and Abroad* had its moments of controversy which greatly upset those in power. In October 1954, the programme's editor, Stephen 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 to the Chairman of the BBC:

I do not consider that the BBC should be used for the publicizing 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>1</sup>

Churchill was appalled that the adventurousness of BBC current affairs, and its greater international reach, had led to the airing of Makarios's anti-British views. Bonarjee's ambition for *At Home and Abroad*, to be topical and to get the most important voices, had led him to seek out and record an enemy of the British government. The daring and innovation of the programme would become a characteristic of the current affairs magazines which followed in the 1960s.

## **News and Current Affairs in the 1960s**

Under the progressive leadership of Hugh Carleton Greene (Director General, 1960-1969), who had been head of News and Current Affairs, the 1960s were undoubtedly a progressive decade for BBC news and current affairs radio. Greene's liberalism can be traced back to his exposure to pre-war German decadence and he had a much more laissez-faire attitude to his producers than his Reithian predecessors. When he took over as director General 'he declared that the BBC under him should be fully alive to the temper of the times' (Hendy, 2007, p.19). At a time when the influence of Reith was still strong in the BBC, Greene was prepared to take risks and to be ahead of public opinion, hence his support for innovative and even controversial programmes such as *That Was the Weeks That Was* and *Steptoe and Son*. In radio news and current affairs Greene made a decisive and important intervention soon after his appointment. He 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 (1995: 327) records the complaints made about this fusion of fact and comment including a letter to *The Times* from the Archbishop of Canterbury. 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.

(quoted in Briggs 1995: 328)

This concern that news and comment should be kept separate was the orthodox view in the BBC but one that Greene and certain senior managers of BBC radio were clearly prepared to challenge. One of the managers who supported the fusion of news and comment, and the general thrust towards a more accessible current affairs output during this period was Frank Gillard (Director of Sound Broadcasting 1963-1970). Gillard was something of a

radio visionary. His varied background included a celebrated career as a BBC war correspondent, his time spent away from the constraints of the BBC in London at West Region (where among other innovations he created *Any Questions*) and his inspiring encounter with American local radio which made him into an enthusiastic supporter of that cause (Briggs 1995: 620). As Director of Sound Broadcasting Gillard quickly 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 (1971: 295) 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'. Indeed, the closure of the Features Department was an iconic moment in the reinvention of BBC radio. Radio features were at their best a creative form of radio art originally devised in the pre-war years. They represented the most challenging and uncompromising form of radio which often combined poetry, classical music and drama. The demise of the radio feature reflects the fact that this heady mix was far removed from the more audience aware radio favoured by Gillard. His later introduction of BBC local radio further widened and deepened the engagement of those outside the traditionally elite and metropolitan BBC.

Gillard's partner in the reform of BBC radio was Gerard Mansell (Chief of the Home Service 1965-1967 and the first Controller of Radio 4). 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. Greene's creation of the 'news plus current affairs' *Ten O'Clock* challenged the orthodox BBC division of news from comment and Mansell shared Greene's views that news and comment should be fused together:

We should seek to break down these barriers, which are largely artificial, and move towards an integrated "news show" formula in which all these ingredients are fused, as I am sure they can be without losing either the well established authority and reputation of BBC news or the all important separation of news and comment.

(Mansell quoted in Hendy 2007: pp 44-5)

Influenced by listening to French radio which he took as his model (Mansell was born and educated in Paris) he favoured not only the further integration of news and comment but also a more informal and conversational style of presentation employing unscripted speech. This aspiration translated into the creation of the controversial news and current affairs programme, *The World at One* in 1965. The programme epitomised Mansell's desire for a more informal, urgent and 'newsy' style produced by a carefully chosen team of producers not recruited from Talks and Current Affairs Group and who were 'less hide-bound by questions of balance, correctness and deference, and much more inclined to be controversial' (Hendy 2007: p. 48). But the most controversial component of *The World at One* was the presenter, graphically described here by Hendy (2007: pp. 48-9):

William Hardcastle, who had been a Washington Correspondent for Reuters after the War and an Editor of the *Daily Mail* ... was a large, beetle-browed, untidy person, cigarette-smoking, hard-drinking and shirt-sleeved, and he brought to *The World at One* some of the urgency and heat of Fleet Street. His breathless delivery mangled the conventions of measured speech that still held sway across most of the Home Service, and prompted a regular flow of complaint by disappointed listeners.

Perhaps the main reform for which both Mansell and Gillard were responsible was the move towards 'format' or 'generic' radio. In Reith's BBC, an eclectic mix of output was a defining feature of public service broadcasting. The listener would find themselves listening to quite unexpected programmes, sometimes challenging or educational, and this contributed to the Reithian mission to educate, inform and entertain. Format radio, on the other hand, was far more attentive to audience demand, and that audience even included youth. '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 (Street 2002: 109). A few months later BBC Radio 1 was launched. At the same time Gillard renamed his other networks and so Radios 1, 2, 3 and 4 were born. Meanwhile, Mansell was in the business of not only transforming and popularising radio news and current affairs but also, in line with the policy of format radio, bringing as much as possible of it to Radio 4, which 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* and then *The World This Weekend* two years later. He had ambitions to transfer more news and current affairs output to Radio 4 in order to make it the main provider of BBC news and current affairs on either radio or television.

This change towards more 'generic' networks appear to fit a move towards a type of radio which was responsive to a diversity of audience demand, a process that culminated in *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, a distinctly non-Reithian document published in 1969. The 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. What was left of mixed programming would survive only on Radio 4 and the whole policy of format radio, targeting 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.

(Briggs 1995: 785)

The fight against the proposals contained in *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, organized by the cultural elite of the time, was partly driven by the concern that the reorganization of radio into generic networks would dilute the quality of output and in particular on Radio 3. There was also concern that mixed programming was being abandoned. Eventually the outburst against the proposals died down. It probably helped that at the end of the year, Frank Gillard retired, and was replaced by Ian Trethowan, an altogether less radical manager of BBC radio than his predecessor was. The promotion of Mansell to Director of Programmes, and the arrival of a new Controller of Radio 4, Tony Whitby, shortly followed this. Like Trethowan, Whitby was also considered a safe pair of hands, as evidenced in his championing of a return to non-populist current affairs programmes. It is to such programmes that I now turn.

### **Compromise and Reaction in the 1970s**

By the beginning of January 1970 the mood in BBC radio was one of compromise, not

least because BBC management was, in the words of Briggs (1995: 800), ‘anxious ... to reduce contention’. 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’: intelligent and charismatic, he was also an Oxbridge graduate with a particular interest in the work of Matthew Arnold, a literary tradition which Reith himself had subscribed to some fifty years previous. 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. Whitby’s answer was to commission the talk based current affairs programme, *Analysis*. Ian McIntyre, the first and main presenter of the programme in its early years, 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>2</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. McIntyre had joined the BBC in the early 1950s and worked on *At Home and Abroad*. He had been appointed by the Controller of Talks Division and BBC traditionalist, John Green with whom he shared a conservatism about current affairs broadcasting. Green and McIntyre and their close colleagues represented traditional, anti-populist BBC values, including concern about the combination of news and comment in magazine formats.

From the 1950s, McIntyre presented occasional talks and documentaries for the Third Programme. It was this freelance work in the rarified atmosphere of Talks that helped build the informal alliances which then spawned *Analysis*.

Another factor in the creation of *Analysis* was the reaction to the huge growth in journalistic or news-based current affairs exemplified by William Harcastle's *The World at One*. Ian McIntyre 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>3</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. There was more to *Analysis*, however, than the confirmation of McIntyre's identity and indeed his criticisms of BBC journalism were shared by others. The proliferation of news based current affairs, encouraged by Mansell in the pursuit of a more accessible BBC radio, may have at times produced superficial, second hand accounts of events. Michael Green, an early *Analysis* producer who went on to create *File on Four* and become controller of Radio 4 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>4</sup>

The thoroughness with which *Analysis* presenters researched their programmes was seen (especially by Fischer and McIntyre) as in marked contrast to the hasty and ill-researched work of radio journalists. It was a deliberate reaction to the hastiness of fusion programmes

like *The World at One* in its self-consciously meticulous use of primary evidence and in-depth research. *Analysis* was a very demanding and *ambitious* programme made by people who, like their inspiration, John Reith, had little or no time for the corrupting triviality of television. 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 signaled not only an attempt to outdo the much-disliked journalistic competition but also to show superiority over television.

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 including those made by McIntyre and Fischer in the 1960s. The pace of *Analysis* also contrasted with the briskness of far more popular magazine programmes like *The World at One* and *Today* (1970-). For example, the 1974 *BBC Handbook* talks of the ‘more leisurely, considered and reflective’ style of *Analysis*: the one-to-one interviews were tellingly referred to as ‘conversations’. Elsewhere, Whitby wrote a series of articles about the new schedule on Radio 4 in the *Radio Times*. 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.

(*The Radio Times*, 12 March 1970)

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, explicitly underlining its elitist aspirations 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>5</sup>

In other words, the creation of *Analysis* can be seen as running entirely counter to earlier more democratic and inclusive trends. It satisfied the needs and concerns of an elite audience and reaffirmed traditional, Reithian values; values which enshrined not only conventional approaches to a news/current affairs separation but also a belief in the supremacy of radio over television. Interestingly it was not alone in this attempt to reassert traditional radio values. The epic twenty-six part *Long March of Everyman* was an extremely ambitious history of the common man bristling with ambition, it even attempted to breathe life back into the old radio features tradition and was repeated twice in its entirety. Other examples of an apparent attempt to reaffirm quality and standards in Radio 4 output at about the same time were the major drama series *A Century of Modern Theatre* (including Ibsen and Strindberg), a 13-part anthology, *The Modern British Poets* and a remake of *Under Milk Wood* with Richard Burton.

## **Conclusion**

Curran argues that in the liberal narrative the advent of broadcasting in the twentieth century was a development which broadened and deepened democracy. He identifies three claims made by liberal historians: that broadcasting 'diminished the knowledge gap between the political elite and the general public' (2002:6), that changes in the style and tone made for greater inclusivity and finally that developments in broadcasting enabled different social groups to talk to each other. There is evidence in the history of BBC radio to support these claims (as Curran shows) and the liberal narrative provides us with an interesting and certainly plausible broad-brush account of the development of BBC current affairs radio. The success of Priestley's wartime talks, the introduction of the magazine format and the fusion of news and comment in the brasher and more conversational news and current affairs programmes of the 1960s do fit a populistliberal history. Spurred on by the rise of television (including ITV) and competition from Radio Luxembourg and the Pirates, BBC radio marched to a far less exclusive and more audience-aware tune. It is,

however, a potentially misleading gloss on the shifting sands of broadcasting values as they evolved during the first fifty years of the BBC. What is perhaps missing in liberal histories is an account of *reaction* to trends which some vigorously opposed. In the case of radio the reaction came in the form of an opportunist coup to reverse the tide of history and put Reithian values back on the agenda. Furthermore, although the magazinization of speech radio and the breaking of the old news/comment taboo were the result of a far greater sensitivity to public tastes, the priorities of men like Mansell and Gillard were survival and even success in difficult times for radio. Although they may have presided over the streamlining of the networks they also made space for more serious programmes, the uncompromisingly cerebral and exclusive current affairs programme, *Analysis*, among others.

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<sup>1</sup> BBC Written Archive Centre File R5/107.

<sup>2</sup> Ian McIntyre personal communication 26 February 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Ian McIntyre personal communication 26 February 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Green personal communication 27 October 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Greville Havenhand personal communication 30 October 1998.