

**RADIO  
TELEVISION  
AND  
SOCIETY**



**SIEPMANN**

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## PREFACE

IN THIS BOOK an attempt has been made to describe the facts about radio and television and to combine those facts with a consideration of the social and psychological effects of broadcasting.

The first purpose of the book is to bring to the general reader the history of a cultural revolution and to show what has been discovered by research concerning the effects of radio and television upon our tastes, opinions, and values. The second purpose is to deal with broadcasting as a reflection of our time and and to throw light upon the problems of free speech, propaganda, public education, our relations with the rest of the world, and upon the concept of democracy itself.

The power of thought and of communicating thought is man's unique attribute. Space had always limited the range of its communication. Radio and television are rapidly abolishing this barrier. What happens when it is gone? With the growth of broadcasting, a revolution is overtaking us. Man is living in a new dimension. What we are witnessing today is the beginning of a transformation in human relations. Private life is yielding more and more to communal life, in the sense that, through radio (and in only slightly less degree through films, newspapers, magazines, and books), we are most of us being daily more subjected to simultaneous common influences. Does this mean that as individuals we draw less on our own inwardness and rely more on outward stimuli? While radio and television have captured popular imagination and have become dominant pastimes in our lives, what are we, the people, doing about controlling and directing this flow of communication?

Radio and television, like atomic energy, are explosive instruments. Our cultural survival depends, in no small measure, upon their proper use. What dominant purpose has broadcasting subserved? What *is* radio 'in the public interest'? Is radio's purpose to give 'the majority of the people what they want'? Is the listener himself being turned into an instrument for the achievement of ulterior ends? An exploration of these questions makes clear the enormous power for havoc as well as for good that resides in radio and television and, more importantly, the responsibility that each of us shares in the final use of such power.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the pioneer work of Dr. Paul Lazarsfeld in the field of listener-attitude research, to the authors and publishers whose materials are quoted in these pages, and to friends and critics who made helpful comments and suggestions on the manuscript. Special thanks are due Mr. Edward Brecher, Dr. Franklin Fearing, Dr. Herta Herzog, Mr. Oscar Katz, Mr. Seymour Krieger, Mr. John Marshall, and to my secretary, Miss Beulah Funk, without whose help, patience, and forbearance this book would never have been completed.

*Charles A. Siepmann*

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## CONTENTS

*Preface, v*

### PART I · *Systems of Broadcasting*

- I Radio in the United States: Early History, 1920-34, 3
- II The Communications Act of 1934, 15
- III The FCC in Action, 24
- IV The Radio Industry, 41
- V Rights and Duties of the Listener, 69
- VI The Listener in America, 82
- VII British, Canadian, and Other Systems, 111

### PART II · *Social Implications of Radio and Television*

- VIII Propaganda and Public Opinion, 168
- IX Freedom of Speech: In Theory, 201
- X Freedom of Speech: In Practice, 218
- XI Radio and Education, 252
- XII World Listening, 292
- XIII Television, 317
- Appendices, 359*
- Index, 399*

RADIO IN THE U. S.: *Early History, 1920-34*

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It is not customary to look a gift horse in the mouth. This fact may account for the widespread ignorance about our system of broadcasting. From the very outset listeners had accepted radio broadcasting as manna from heaven. It came to them without money and without price, entertainment that was free as air.<sup>1</sup> The notion that listeners pay nothing for the services they receive is illusory. But at least no direct payment is involved either by way of tax or subscription, and the public has thus acquired the comfortable sense of getting something for nothing. The indifference that this outlook has bred toward acquiring any knowledge of the conditions under which radio operates is especially regrettable because, under the American system of broadcasting, the listener is called upon to play a role on the fulfilment of which the successful operation of the system in large part depends. Let us proceed, then, to a broad definition of the system we have and explore its historical origins and some of the more important aspects of its operation.

*Radio in the United States is a system of free, competitive enterprise within a framework of governmental regulation. The*

<sup>1</sup> Archer, *Big Business and Radio*, American Historical Society, Inc., New York, 1939, p. 64.

extent of free competition has already been somewhat delimited by tendencies in the direction of centralized, monopolistic control. But between the four networks now in operation, and also between independent stations, competition certainly exists and is indeed the main stimulus to enterprise and to the fuller satisfaction of the needs of listeners. The competitive aspect of broadcasting is the one most stressed in trade circles. Less commonly referred to (and sometimes deliberately soft-pedaled) is the element of government control. The reason is twofold.

In the first place, the radio industry for the most part resents the fact that the government has been allotted an important contributory role in the operation of the system; it would prefer to be entirely free from any subordination to the government. Indeed, its current ambition is to achieve freedom identical with that of press and films.

In the second place, genuine doubt and disagreement persist as to the exact nature and extent of the powers and responsibilities allotted to the government under the Communications Act of 1934. The fact that the role of government in radio is thus disputed is due not merely to ambiguous interpretations of the Act, but also to the persistence of a point of view that sees danger in any encroachment of government on such a field of operation as radio. The whole question is one of a satisfactory working relationship between government and private enterprise in the changed conditions of modern society.

The history of broadcasting in the United States, prior to the passage of the Communications Act of 1934, comprises two phases, each lasting seven years.

#### PHASE I: 1920-26

The story begins in 1920 with the broadcasting by station KDKA of the results of the presidential election of that year. Though it is unlikely (because of the dearth of receiving sets then available) that more than a handful of listeners actually heard this broadcast, the event fired the imagination of the



public, and there followed one of the most astonishing booms in the nation's history. (Television today provides something of a parallel.) By 1922 the demand for sets far exceeded the capacity of manufacturers to provide them.

The rate of increase in the number of people who spend at least a part of their evening in listening in is almost incomprehensible. To those who have recently tried to purchase receiving equipment, some idea of this increase has undoubtedly occurred as they stood perhaps in the fourth or fifth row at the radio counter waiting their turn, only to be told, when they finally reached the counter, that they might place an order and it would be filled when possible. . . It seems quite likely that before the movement has reached its height . . . there will be at least five million receiving sets in this country.<sup>2</sup>

The enthusiasm of would-be listeners was matched by that of would-be broadcasters. Stations, less than a score of which had existed in 1920, spawned the country over at such a rate that by the end of 1922 nearly 600 were in operation. All the virtues and defects of unfettered enterprise were exemplified in the mad rush to develop the new market—rapid expansion, ingenious improvisation, reckless and often unscrupulous competition, in which the interests of the consumer (and, in the long run, of the producer also) were lost from sight. The main problems of this early phase are worth examining as they have, to a large extent, determined the course of subsequent events.

We must realize, in the first place, that broadcasting began as a literal 'free for all.' There were no effective regulations. The powers of the government were limited to those provided by an act, passed in 1912, concerned with radio telegraphy. But as this act had reference only to interstate commerce, it allowed of no jurisdiction over radio communication within a state and was in this, as in almost every other sense, wholly inadequate and out of date. The chaos that developed as more and more enthusiastic pioneers entered the field of radio was indescribable. Amateurs crossed signals with professional broadcasters. Many

<sup>2</sup> *Radio Broadcast Magazine*, May 1922.

of the professionals broadcast on the same wave length and either came to a gentleman's agreement to divide the hours of broadcasting or blithely set about cutting one another's throats by broadcasting simultaneously. Listeners thus experienced the annoyance of trying to hear one program against the raucous background of another. Ship-to-shore communication in Morse code added its pulsing dots and dashes to the silly symphony of sound.

In 1922 the situation was so serious and public indignation so great that President Harding instructed Mr. Herbert Hoover, then Secretary of Commerce, to summon a conference in Washington. Nothing, however, came of it, though all parties agreed that something should be done. (Mr. Hoover wryly commented, 'This is one of the few instances where the country is unanimous in its desire for more regulation.') But the contending parties could not agree on the proper form of regulation. Conference followed fruitless conference in successive years. Both the public and the radio industry urged an orderly allocation of standard wave lengths. A bill was introduced in 1922 but was shelved by Congress year after year. In 1923 Mr. Hoover decided to act and, exceeding his statutory powers, reassigned frequencies to practically all stations in the country. But this was no more than a stopgap measure, and in 1926 his authority was challenged and his action overruled in the courts. In the following year, chaos descended, and a desperate industry appealed to government to clean up the mess created by the mad scramble of selfish interests. Finally, an Act of Congress was passed and a temporary agency of the government, the Federal Radio Commission, was established to put broadcasting on a secure footing.

This brief survey serves to remind us of some facts important to our consideration of radio's later development.

1. Private enterprise, over seven long years, failed to set its own house in order. Cutthroat competition at once retarded radio's orderly development and subjected listeners to intolerable strain and inconvenience. Many people, moreover, were

swindled by the sale of receiving apparatus of inferior design and limited utility, manufactured by fly-by-night firms interested only in quick returns on their investment.

2. Governmental regulation, which was eagerly desired and actually requested by the industry, was late in coming, as the government showed reluctance to interfere. It was the president of the National Broadcasting Company, the first network created, who, in the light of conditions obtaining even at that late date (1927), could thus anticipate it. 'It is true that the picture here is marred for the time being by the lack of police regulation in the air, which has resulted in a vast amount of station interference. But the situation is far from hopeless. . . . Our government will undoubtedly agree sooner or later on measures of regulation.' In these early days, the radio industry was wholly reconciled to governmental regulatory powers that extended far beyond those of a policeman of the air and which might embrace both advertising and program services.

3. These early years of radio's first phase are interesting, also, for the light they throw on the history of radio's financing. We are today so accustomed to the dominant role of the advertiser in broadcasting that we tend to forget that, initially, the idea of advertising on the air was not even contemplated and met with widespread indignation and resentment when it was first tried. How, then, we may ask, was it proposed that broadcasting should cover costs, to say nothing of reaping profits?

The answer is to be found in one of the most extraordinary aspects of radio's early growth: revenue and profits were not considered! It is true one group of early pioneers knew what it was after. The manufacturers of receiving sets (pre-eminent among them, General Electric, Westinghouse and their sales outlet, The Radio Corporation of America) saw that as radio stations multiplied and provided increased service to listeners, the sale of sets was likewise bound to increase. These firms, therefore, engaged in broadcasting as an indirect means of advancing their major economic interest—the sale of sets and other

radio equipment. Many groups, however, pioneered in broadcasting with no clear idea how they were to cover costs. As these costs mounted, the problem of meeting them forced itself on their attention. Several possibilities were canvassed.

One of these was endowment, which the editor of *Radio Broadcast* supported in 1922.

There are various schemes possible, of which the most attractive one, insofar as the general public is concerned, is the endowment of a station by a public spirited citizen. . . We have gymnasiums, athletic fields, libraries, museums, etc., endowed, and for what purpose? Evidently for the amusement and education of the public. But it may be that in the early future the cheapest and most efficient way of dispensing amusement and education may be by radiophone.<sup>3</sup>

It is interesting that endowment was also the plan favored in these early days by David Sarnoff, now chairman and then general manager of RCA. 'He argued that because radio had reached the stage where it actually contributed much to the happiness of mankind it deserved endowment similar to that enjoyed by libraries, museums and educational institutions. Mr. Sarnoff believed that philanthropists would eventually come to the rescue of a hard pressed industry.'<sup>4</sup>

An alternative proposal anticipated the unique method of financing later adopted in New York City by Station WNYC—municipal financing. In all great cities 'large sums of money are spent annually in maintaining free public lectures. . . The same lecture delivered from a broadcasting station would be heard by several thousand people. . . The cost of such a project would probably be less than that for the scheme at present used and the number of people who would benefit might be immeasurably greater.'<sup>5</sup> Another plan called for public subscription. In 1924 a group of New York businessmen formed a committee to

<sup>3</sup> Archer, *History of Radio*, American Historical Society, Inc., New York, 1938, p. 253.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 343.

<sup>5</sup> *Radio Broadcast Magazine*, May 1922, p. 4.

solicit funds from the radio audience for the hiring of high-class radio talent. Dismissed by one radio historian as 'a flight of fancy little short of amazing,' this idea of subscription broadcasting has persisted and is even now being seriously canvassed for the benefit of listeners anxious for programs streamlined to their tastes and exempt from the intrusive annoyance of advertising matter.

In the light of present thinking and practice, it is remarkable that all these different schemes had these things in common: (1) none of them envisaged the prospect of broadcasting's becoming solvent (to say nothing of its growth in less than twenty years to one of the more profitable of modern enterprises); (2) all of them, consequently, thought of broadcasting in terms of public service. It was, indeed, in such terms that the first great national network was conceived, by David Sarnoff. NBC, as he first imagined it in 1922, was to be a non-profit organization, a corporation without earning power, financed by annual contributions (of 2 percent of their gross income from the sale of radio sets and equipment) by RCA, General Electric, and Westinghouse.

Once the broadcasting company is established as a public service and the general public is educated to the idea that the sole function of the company is to provide the public with a service as good and extensive as its total income permits, I feel that with suitable publicity activities such a company will ultimately be regarded as a public institution of great value in the same sense that a library, for example, is today. Also, it would remove from the public mind the thought that those who are doing broadcasting today are doing so because of profit to themselves. In other words, it removes the broadcasting company itself from the atmosphere of being a commercial institution.<sup>6</sup>

NBC, in fact, adhered for some years to this non-profit public-service policy. As late as 1929, its chairman, Mr. Owen D. Young, publicly affirmed that 'its aim has never been to make money, but rather to offer programs of such varied interest that

<sup>6</sup> Archer, *Big Business and Radio*, p. 33.

our people could not afford to miss them.' <sup>7</sup> That policy prevailed just twenty-one years ago.

4. Sponsored programs were first broadcast experimentally in 1922 on station WEA<sup>F</sup> and developed rapidly, though not without outcries from the public and the persistence through many years of the belief that their nature and extent should be subject to strict regulatory control. The following is the reaction of the leading trade journal of that time to advertising on the air.

Anyone who doubts the reality, the imminence, of the problem has only to listen about him for plenty of evidence. Dribbles of advertising, most of it indirect so far, to be sure, but still unmistakable, are floating through the ether every day. Concerts are seasoned here and there with a dash of advertising paprika. You can't miss it; every little classic number has a slogan all its own, if it is only the mere mention of the name—and the shrill address, and the phone number—of the music house which arranged the program. More of this sort of thing may be expected. And once the avalanche gets a good start, nothing short of an Act of Congress or a repetition of Noah's excitement will suffice to stop it.<sup>8</sup>

Objection to advertising was voiced in the same year in more official quarters. 'It is inconceivable,' said Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover at the first Annual Radio Conference in Washington, 'that we should allow so great a possibility for service . . . to be drowned in advertising matter.'

The radio industry, though yielding to the lure of profits, remained for some years relatively cautious and apologetic in its use of advertising. In 1925 no more than the name of the sponsor was generally included at the opening and (more rarely) at the close of programs. Even in 1929 the National Association of Broadcasters adopted 'Standards of Commercial Practice,' which specifically barred commercial announcements from the air between the hours of seven and eleven in the evening. What

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in 'Four Years of Network Broadcasting,' a report by a committee of the National Advisory Council on Radio in Education and the American Political Science Association, published in *Radio and Education*, 1936.

<sup>8</sup> *Radio Broadcast Magazine*, November 1922.

later developed we shall discover from a review of radio's second phase, to which we may now turn.

#### PHASE 2: 1927-34

This phase comprises (1) the introduction, for the first time, of effective federal control; (2) crisis over advertising; and (3) the extensive development of network broadcasting. The year 1927 thus marks a turning point in radio history. Broadcasting, as a result of the confusion over wave-length allocations and their use, seemed on the verge of collapse. Congress at last recognized the emergency and passed the Radio Act of 1927. Most of the substantive provisions of this Act were embodied, seven years later, in the Communications Act. A Federal Radio Commission was appointed, initially for one year, and was continued in office through 1933.

The FRC is important in view of the precedents it established for later action by the FCC. It never, for instance, doubted its right and duty to concern itself with radio stations' program services. 'Each station,' said Commissioner Caldwell at hearings before a House Committee in 1928, 'occupying a desirable channel should be kept on its toes to produce and present the best possible programs and, if any station slips from that high standard, another station which is putting on programs of a better standard should have the right to contest the first station's position and after hearing the full testimony, to replace it.'<sup>9</sup> By 1929 it had elaborated a broad definition of the over-all content of a well-balanced radio program service (which it incorporated in its third annual report to Congress) and used it as a yardstick in appraising the performance of licensed stations. Several times its decisions in this matter were upheld, on appeal, by the courts.

The radio industry at this time, with memories of chaos very fresh in its mind, did not demur—indeed it publicly and formally

<sup>9</sup> Hearings on Jurisdiction of Radio Commission, House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, 1928, p. 188.

endorsed the point of view that the FRC was guardian of the public's interest in good, balanced program services. As late as 1934 the National Association of Broadcasters volunteered the statement (at hearings before the House Interstate Commerce Commission) that

It is the manifest duty of the licensing authority . . . to determine whether or not the applicant is rendering, or can render an adequate public service. Such service necessarily includes broadcasting of a considerable proportion of programs devoted to education, religion, labor agricultural and similar activities concerned with human betterment. In actual practice over a period of seven years this has been the principal test which the Commission has applied in dealing with broadcast applications.<sup>10</sup>

Congress, too, had views on the subject of program controls. So far from exceeding its powers, the Commission was regarded by some Congressmen as lax in the performance of its duties. Senator Dill, for example, in a Congressional discussion of radio's service to cultural minorities, commented, 'The difficulty probably is in the failure of the present Commission to take the steps that it ought to take to see to it that a larger use is made of radio facilities for educational and religious purposes.'<sup>11</sup>

The second phase also covers the climactic period of controversy over advertising abuses. This subject was among the first to which the Federal Radio Commission gave its attention and on which it enunciated its policy. Though recognizing that advertising had come to stay, it yet insisted that 'The amount and character of advertising must be rigidly confined within the limits consistent with the public service expected of the station. . . *Regulation must be relied upon to prevent the abuse and overuse of the privilege.*'<sup>12</sup> The Commission acted on this principle in 1928 when it refused to renew the license of Station WCRW because 'manifestly this station is one which exists chiefly for the purpose of receiving an income from the sale of

<sup>10</sup> Hearings on H. R. 8307, 74th Congress, p. 117.

<sup>11</sup> 78th Congressional Record 8843.

<sup>12</sup> *In re*: Great Lakes Broadcasting Co., FRC Docket #4900.



advertising of a character which must be objectionable to the listening public.'

But action by the Commission was not drastic enough to suit some tastes and the fateful day arrived, in 1932, when a resolution was introduced into the Senate that seemed to threaten the very existence of our system of broadcasting as it then was.

Whereas, there is growing dissatisfaction with the present use of radio facilities for purposes of commercial advertising: be it resolved that the Federal Radio Commission is hereby authorized and instructed to make a survey and to report to the Senate on the following questions: What information there is available on the possibility of government ownership and operation of broadcasting facilities. . . What plans might be adopted to reduce, to limit, to control and perhaps to eliminate the use of radio facilities for commercial advertising purposes.

Members of the radio industry must have held their breath that day, but the resolution failed of adoption and not until fourteen years later was radio advertising once again seriously challenged in official quarters.<sup>13</sup>

A discussion of network operations, their merits and defects, will be undertaken later. Here we need only identify them chronologically as, with the advent of governmental regulation, the most important development in radio's second phase. The origination of all but one of the four present networks came within this period. The National Broadcasting Company, formed in 1926 by RCA, developed two networks, the Red and the Blue, which continued operating until the forced sale of the Blue in 1942. The Columbia Broadcasting System was formed in 1927, and seven years later, in 1934, the Mutual Broadcasting System came into being.

Network development involved, as we shall see, radical changes both in the system of broadcasting and in the character and quality of programs. Network influence and power over radio's destinies increased steadily. Year by year more inde-

<sup>13</sup> In the FCC's report on 'Public Service Responsibility of Broadcast Licensees.'

pendent local stations ceded part of their independence to enjoy the benefits of network affiliation. Program service likewise tended toward the increasing subordination of locally originated programs to national programs conceived and executed by the networks and carried by their affiliates. The character of advertising also changed and the national advertiser came to dominate the scene as the patron, or 'sponsor,' of programs. This last development involved the mushroom growth of advertising agencies, which now function as middlemen between advertiser and broadcaster and have assumed a commanding position in the choice and production of programs. The public enjoyed the advantage of great forward strides in the scope and quality of programs. But grave problems affecting the public interest arose, and it was these that later provoked the two major conflicts between the radio industry and the Federal Communications Commission.

This brief historical survey reveals how slowly and tentatively thought has crystallized in regard to both the proper means of radio's financing and the true nature of radio's responsibilities to the listening public. It shows also how free competitive enterprise, when competitive zeal runs riot, is sometimes incapable of keeping its house in order. It was the confusion and conflict arising from the free operation of the market that led the entrepreneur to call in the government as arbitrator. It is well to remember and to stress the fact that the initiative in this matter originated with the industry and not with the government.

## THE COMMUNICATIONS ACT OF 1934

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THE student of history knows how profoundly the time factor can affect the spirit and the form of social legislation. We have in the Communications Act what seems like a striking illustration of this fact. The year 1934 found our society in a state vastly different from the one that had existed ten years previously. The great depression was still upon us and the thinking of men, in and out of Congress, was dominated by the shock it caused to our sense of social and economic stability. The rosy confidence of the 'twenties, when the belief in the inevitability of progress and of ever-increasing prosperity reached its height, was over.

The thought and literature of the early 'thirties illustrate the first registering of widespread doubt about the virtues of our economic system. Men looked, as they had never looked before, to government not only as an agency of temporary relief, but as co-author with the men of industry in the drafting of a new chapter in economic history. Many were convinced that the government should have powers and functions that overlapped those of private industry and should evolve some new form of co-operative relationship. A new significance and a new prestige were attached to the concept of the paramountcy of public in-

terest; new public services for the people and new responsibility on the part of industry became identified with the idea. The rights of labor and social insurance are but two of many examples. The notion of what the public interest embraces became greatly enlarged.

It was in such an atmosphere that the Communications Act was passed, an Act unique in that, for the first time in American history, a powerful medium of communication was deliberately reserved for use only in the public interest. Some critics, consequently, have attributed this piece of legislation to 'New Deal' influences, but, paradoxically, the substantive provisions of the Act were lifted bodily from a previous piece of legislation, the Radio Act of 1927, and belong to the boom era of the middle 'twenties. It is indeed extraordinary that at a peak hour of American prosperity, when private enterprise was having its own way, radio should, as some see it, have had the shackles of governmental regulation clamped upon it. Let us now examine some of the specific provisions of the Act that gave us our present system of broadcasting.

The Communications Act established a permanent federal agency, the Federal Communications Commission. Section 1 of the Act defines the Commission's purpose as that of 'regulating interstate and foreign commerce in communication by wire and radio so as to make available so far as possible to all the people of the United States, a rapid, efficient nationwide and worldwide wire and radio communications service with adequate facilities at reasonable charges.' This provision reminds us of the fact, which we may note in passing, that regulation of radio broadcasting is but one of many duties delegated to the Federal Communications Commission. Radio telephony, radio telegraphy, wire telephony, wire telegraphy, television, and facsimile are all comprised within its regulatory responsibility. We shall see later how such a plethora of duties limits and conditions the extent of the FCC's active participation in the field of radio broadcasting.

The FCC was to be composed, as Section 4 provides,

of seven Commissioners appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, one of whom the President shall designate as chairman. Each member of the Commission shall be a citizen of the United States. No member of the Commission or person in its employ shall be financially interested in the manufacture or sale of radio apparatus . . . no more than four Commissioners shall be members of the same political party. The Commissioners . . . shall be appointed for terms of seven years . . . each Commissioner shall receive an annual salary of \$10,000.

Some important principles are evident in these provisions. (1) Radio regulation was to be free of foreign influence. (2) It was to be non-political in character. (3) No one member of the Commission, nor the Commission as a whole, was to enjoy more than temporary power. By means of a cycle of seven years, new blood was to be infused. (4) Impartiality was implied in the provision that no Commissioner have financial interests in radio. (5) The salaries were consistent with the standards obtaining in our civil service. (Whether the public interest is best served by such a scale of salaries is today a matter of increasing concern. Here, as we shall later have frequent occasion to observe, radio illustrates problems of much wider social import. Continuity and efficiency of service by the Commission have in recent years been adversely affected by the resignation of members who either have found it impossible to maintain an adequate standard of life on the salaries offered or have been lured away by the much larger salaries available to them outside government service.)

The next important provision of the Act is Section 301.

It is the purpose of this Act among other things to maintain the control of the United States over all the channels of interstate and foreign radio transmission, and to provide for the use of such channels, but not the ownership thereof, by persons for limited periods of time, under licenses granted by federal authority, and no such license shall be construed to create any right, beyond the terms, conditions, and periods of the license.

Here is the key to the most distinctive, the most controversial, and perhaps the most important aspect of our system of broadcasting. This rather involved governmental language means that the wave lengths of the air are deeded in perpetuity to the people of America. They constitute a public domain to which the broadcaster is given conditional and temporary access, and once admitted into this domain, he may pursue profits for himself. The broadcaster may construct transmitters, studios, and so on, which, of course, are his private property. But they cannot be used except under a license granted by the Commission and subject to conditions we have not yet discussed. Not only can the FCC grant a license, but given cause, it can suspend or revoke it. The conditional and temporary nature of this license is expressly emphasized in the Act. Section 304 reads: 'No station license shall be granted by the Commission until the applicant therefor shall have signed a waiver of any claim to the use of any particular frequency or of the ether as against the regulatory power of the United States because of the previous use of same whether by license or otherwise.' Initially such licenses were granted for periods of only six months, but this system soon proved impracticable and the period was successively extended until it reached the maximum of three years provided for in the Act. Let us examine the conditions under which the licenses are granted and the powers vested in the FCC.

1. The need for the regulation of broadcasting resulted, as we have seen, from the confusion that had arisen over the allocation of frequencies. The first task of the Commission, therefore, as stipulated in Section 303, was a task of engineering, i.e. of mapping out the whole country and allocating frequencies in such a way that listeners everywhere received as many satisfactory signals as were physically possible. The Commission was therefore instructed '(a) to classify radio stations, (b) prescribe the nature of the service to be rendered by each class of licensed station and each station within any class, (c) assign bands of

frequencies to the various classes of stations,' and similar measures.

2. It was to 'study new uses for radio, provide for experimental uses of frequencies and generally encourage the larger and more effective use of radio in the public interest.'

3. It was to 'have authority to prescribe the qualifications of station operators and to make special regulations applicable to radio stations engaged in chain broadcasting.'

4. It was also to have disciplinary powers—power, for instance, to suspend the license of any operator upon proof sufficient to satisfy the Commission that the licensee 'has violated any provision of any act, treaty or convention binding on the United States which the Commission is authorized to administer . . . has transmitted superfluous radio communications or signals or communications containing profane or obscene words, language or meaning.'

5. The Act next makes provision for the conditions under which an applicant may seek a license. Section 308 provides that 'all applicants shall set forth such facts as the Commission by regulation may prescribe as to the citizenship, character and financial, technical and other qualifications of the applicant to operate a station . . . the purposes for which the station is to be used and such other information as (the Commission) may require.' Here, we may notice, some ambiguity arises. What is meant by 'other qualifications of the applicant'? How far do these embrace his attitude to public service and to the type of programs he proposes to broadcast? Is this attitude what is meant by 'the purposes for which the station is to be used' or is this phrase purely technical in its reference?

Clearer and more specific are the negative provisions that exclude certain persons from applying for a license. Section 310 provides that no license shall be granted to or held by '(a) any alien or the representative of any alien, (b) any alien government or the representative thereof, (c) any corporation organized under the laws of any foreign government, (d) any cor-

poration of which any officer or director is an alien or of which more than 1/5 of the capital stock is owned on record or voted by aliens . . . (e) any corporation directly or indirectly controlled by any other corporation of which any officer or more than 1/4 of the directors are aliens. . . ' It further provides that a license, once granted, shall not be transferred by the licensee to anybody else without approval of the FCC. Section 311 directly stipulates that 'the Commission . . . refuse a station license . . . to any person . . . which has been finally adjudged guilty by a federal court of unlawfully monopolizing or attempting to unlawfully monopolize radio communication directly or indirectly through the control of the manufacture or sale of radio apparatus, through exclusive traffic arrangements, or by any other means or to have been using unfair methods of competition.'

The reader is sure to have noticed that, thus far, the Act makes no specific reference, apart from that to obscene language and profanity, to the matter and manner of what is broadcast. Indeed, the entire Act contains only two other specific references to this subject. Section 315 is, in effect, a plea for fair play on the air, as between rival candidates for political office. 'If any licensee shall permit any person who is a legally qualified candidate for any public office to use a broadcasting station, he shall afford equal opportunities to all other such candidates for that office in the use of such broadcasting station . . . no obligation is hereby imposed upon any licensee to allow the use of its station by any such candidate.' The other specific provision falls in Section 316. 'No person shall broadcast . . . any advertising on or information concerning any lottery, gift enterprise, or similar scheme, offering prizes dependent in whole or in part upon lot or chance.'

That the Congress envisaged a hands-off policy by the Commission in regard to the content and nature of individual programs broadcast seems clear not only from this dearth of reference to programming, but from another important section of



the Act (326), which specifically debars the Commission from the power of censorship. 'Nothing in this Act shall be understood or construed to give the Commission the power of censorship over the radio communications or signals transmitted by any radio station and no regulation or condition shall be promulgated or fixed by the Commission which shall interfere with the right of free speech by means of radio communication.' Whether this section debars the Commission from any concern with the over-all character and balance of program services of any given station is one of those matters of dispute that even now divide the Commission and the radio industry and that have not finally and conclusively been tested in the courts.<sup>1</sup>

Least quoted, perhaps, of all the relevant sections of the Act is one bearing indirectly on this very question of the FCC's concern with the nature of the services that broadcasters may be expected to render to the public. A subhead of Section 307 provides that 'the Commission shall study the proposal that Congress by statute allocate fixed percentages of radio broadcasting facilities to particular types or kinds of non-profit radio programs or to persons identified with particular types or kinds of non-profit activities, and shall report to Congress not later than February 1, 1935 its recommendations together with the reasons for the same.'

What in plain language this means is that the Commission was instructed to consider whether all or only part of available frequencies should be allocated to the commercial broadcaster, or whether a fixed percentage of such frequencies (that envisaged was 25 per cent) should be reserved for types of program service that might not be forthcoming in commercial broadcasting. The interests of non-profit organizations, such as churches, schools, and colleges, appear to have aroused the particular interest and concern of Congress. As one reads the discussions at hearings preceding the Act, it is clear that what Congress had in mind

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of censorship see ch. x, 'Freedom of Speech: in Practice.'

was the safeguarding of the interests of cultural minorities, which, by virtue of their numerical inferiority, might be poorly served or not served at all in the competition of commercial broadcasters for the popular mass audiences radio had already brought into being. It is of great interest to realize that, had the Commission approved this suggestion of the Congress, as much as 25 per cent of available frequencies would now be devoted, entirely to the reflection of the interests of these minorities.

But the Commission decided otherwise. 'Commercial stations,' it said, 'are now responsible under the law, to render a public service, and the tendency of the proposal would be to lessen this responsibility. . . In order for non-profit organizations to obtain the maximum service possible, cooperation in good faith by the broadcasters is required. Such cooperation should, therefore, be under the direction and supervision of the Commission.'<sup>2</sup> The FCC believed that, rather than forfeit as much as a quarter of the frequencies available, the commercial broadcaster would undertake the fair reflection of the interests of minorities as part of his contribution to public service. The Commission undertook to see fair play. Congress took no exception to this finding and the FCC has since proceeded on the assumption that in the granting and renewal of licenses, the broadcaster accepted a responsibility, as a result of which cultural minorities would be assured of satisfaction in radio's program output.

The FCC was left without guidance by Congress in regard to programming other than that it should see that all broadcasting conformed to 'the public interest, convenience or necessity.' It was given broad, discretionary powers and liberties, and advisedly so, in that the Congress, recognizing that broadcasting was still in its infancy, was reluctant to put it in a straight jacket, preferring that, as times and circumstances changed, the FCC should act as interpreter of the public interest.

It should be clear by now that the FCC combines functions

<sup>2</sup> Report of the FCC to Congress pursuant to Section 307 (c) of the Communications Act of 1934, 22 January, 1935.

of two kinds. It is first a regulatory agency, concerned with bringing order out of chaos with respect to the engineering problem of frequency allocation. It is also, however, a judicial agency with broad powers to interpret the public interest in terms of the suitability of applicants for either a license or the renewal of an expired license. Its powers of regulation and of judicial decision are not, however, absolute; they are circumscribed within the Act itself. In addition, both the radio industry and the public are safeguarded against arbitrary action by the overriding powers of our courts of law. Decisions of the Commission can be, and frequently have been, appealed to the courts and, in certain cases, overruled.

It is only fair to say, however, that though no one would dispute the constitutional desirability of such recourse, it involves at once great risk and great expenditure for the plaintiff. It has been claimed that many stations have bowed to the will of the Commission (respecting some decision it has made) rather than be involved in the expense of litigation and the further risk of incurring the displeasure of the Commission and its possible refusal thereafter to renew its license. In theory, at least, a strong case can be made against our system of licensing. Radio stations involve considerable outlay. Is it fair that so large an investment should be triennially in jeopardy? Can a businessman operate under such conditions? Will investors risk their money when such a threat hangs constantly over their heads? Whether, in practice, the licensing system works such hardship we can gather only from a study of the actions of the Commission. The next question to be answered is how the FCC has exercised its powers and what justification it has given for a charge either of highhanded and capricious action or of provoking unreasonable anxiety on the part of licensees.

### III

## THE FCC IN ACTION

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THREE considerations limit the power (and readiness) of the Commission to impose its will upon the industry. The first is the delimitation of its powers written into the Communications Act in the terms we have quoted. A second is the pragmatic restriction imposed by the work load the Commission carries and the comparatively small staff at its disposal. As we have seen, broadcasting is only one of the areas of regulatory control with which the FCC is concerned. Thus, much of the time of the Commission as a whole (and most of the time of some of its members) is devoted to business other than that of broadcasting. Considering the number and complexity of problems with which the Commission has to deal, its staff is, and always has been, small. Even today with FM, television, and facsimile clamoring for attention, the reluctance of Congress to concede expansion in this department of government, as in any other, has resulted in appropriations allowing of a total staff of only 1,327 persons.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This is the figure as of September 1949. It shows a decrease, actually, of staff. In 1945, for instance, the staff numbered 1520. Consider, likewise, total FCC appropriations. In 1945 there was appropriated \$6,373,343; in 1948, \$6,717,000; in 1949, \$6,240,000. The recommended appropriation for 1950 is \$6,600,000. (Figures provided by FCC)

step invasion of the phonograph business, in turn, gave RCA entering wedges into the transcription and talent supply business; RCA-Victor artists broadcast over NBC and made RCA transcriptions, while NBC artists recorded for RCA-Victor. The result was to give RCA and its subsidiaries a marked competitive advantage over other broadcasting companies, other radio manufacturers and other phonograph and phonograph record companies. RCA's entry into the motion picture field . . . similarly buttressed RCA's competitive position in other spheres. Today, RCA has a tremendous competitive advantage in occupying such newly opening fields as Frequency Modulation broadcasting and television.<sup>4</sup>

We must also take notice of one other significant aspect of this mammoth company. 'RCA, like many other giant enterprises today is a "management corporation." It has nearly 250,000 stockholders. No one owns as much as half of 1% of its stock. In such circumstances stockholder control is practically non-existent. As a result, the management is essentially self-perpetuating.'<sup>5</sup>

The much briefer history of CBS disclosed similar, though less extensive, octopus development—extension of controls beyond radio broadcasting to include artist bureaus, concert agencies, and phonograph and transcription business. But such matters lay outside the FCC's sphere of responsibility. They merely provided supporting evidence for grave concern over a monopolistic trend in broadcasting itself. With this trend the FCC, as guardian of the public interest, was directly concerned.

Four operating networks existed at the time. Two of these—the Blue and the Red networks of NBC—were owned and controlled by RCA, and the report contended that they were not truly competitive. 'Indeed,' it said, 'in certain respects there is not even the semblance of a distinction between the two networks.' It therefore ordered the dissolution of this empire. RCA was to divest itself of all interest in and control over one of these two networks, and a regulation (#3.107) was drafted to

<sup>4</sup> Report on Chain Broadcasting, pp. 18, 19.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

prevent for all time the recurrence of such a situation. 'No license shall be issued to a standard broadcast station affiliated with a network organization which maintains more than one network.' NBC's Blue network was sold and became the American Broadcasting Company, which is today the lively competitor of NBC and the two other networks.

But it was on the networks' contractual arrangement with their affiliated stations that the report concentrated its main attack. It judged them to be monopolistic in effect and detrimental to the listeners' interests. The reasons merit explanation, for the problem remains with us even today and is not easily resolved.

Network broadcasting essentially involves the power to put a desired number of station 'outlets' at the disposal of a national advertiser. According to the market he wishes to tap, he will want stations available, at an hour of his choice, either in all or in large sections of the country, which he will likewise want to choose. A network will prove attractive to him according as it can provide such coverage. The greater the number and the power of stations a network can offer, the better is its prospect of doing business with national advertisers.

The early history of networks thus constituted a competitive struggle to acquire affiliates strategically located and sufficient in number to attract one of radio's most important clients—the advertiser seeking a national market for his goods. It was only natural that networks should seek to tie up their affiliates in such a way that they would be available, at short notice, in the desired number and in the desired strategic locations. The result was the writing of contracts including provisions that the FCC found to be in conflict with certain vital interests of the listening public. Some knowledge of these provisions is essential if we are to have a sympathetic understanding of the difficulty, under our system, of reconciling a legitimate concern for profits with the many—and often conflicting—interests of listeners.

As we have seen, in radio's early days the broadcaster saw him-

self in the role of a philanthropist. But that idea faded, and today he is first and foremost a businessman, though charged with a responsibility for public service. In seeking larger profits, how far has he subordinated thereto the true interests of the listener and the independence of his affiliated stations? The report on Chain Broadcasting put its finger on factors its authors believed to be contrary, in this double sense, to the public interest. Let us briefly examine each in turn.

We must recognize, at the outset, a difficulty inherent in broadcasting (which even the advent of FM does not seem likely wholly to resolve) that affects the true scope for competition. We commonly speak of the four networks as being fiercely and healthily competitive. This, however, is only partly true. They compete where they can, but even today the urban areas in which all four compete for listeners are limited. In country areas the situation is worse, and the listener's choice of network and other programs is far more limited. In this matter of coverage, NBC and CBS, having entered the field early, acquired a great advantage over their later competitor, the Mutual Broadcasting System. (Mutual has more stations than any other network but most of them are low-powered and therefore limited in coverage.) This physical characteristic of radio transmission has serious consequences for listeners, consequences for which the contractual arrangements between networks and their affiliates have been in part responsible.

#### *A. Exclusive Affiliation*

When the Report on Chain Broadcasting was written, stations were frequently required—in order to get programs from one network—to guarantee that they would not carry even a single program from another network. As a result, listeners in many parts of the country were prevented from hearing many programs that, but for this requirement, might have come to them. For example, in 1939 Mutual carried the World Series. But Mutual had no outlet in many areas, and, because of exclusive affiliation con-

tracts, listeners in these areas were prevented from tuning in to the Series.

### *B. Territorial Exclusivity*

This provision implies that if an affiliate in a certain area decides not to carry a program offered by its network, that program may not be offered to any other station in that area. The combined effect of this and the previous provision is worth illustrating. Take, first, the case of Raymond Swing, who was broadcast over Mutual. Suppose that, at this time, you had been a listener in Portland, Maine. Portland had only two stations, WGAN and WCSH. WGAN could not carry Swing because it had an exclusive contract with CBS. WCSH was similarly handicapped by its contract with NBC. Portland listeners—and those in many other areas too—were thus denied the opportunity to hear Swing. Or consider the American Forum of the Air, then also on Mutual. Mutual's affiliate in Buffalo decided not to carry this program, but an independent station wanted it. Mutual refused to oblige because it was bound to its Buffalo affiliate by the contract of territorial exclusivity. The FCC contended that public interest was here subordinated to the private interest of stations. The chairman of the Commission commented thus on the situation: 'You may say this is a matter of private contract and is none of the business of the Commission. But if you take that position, you forget the listeners. . . The interference with freedom of speech is hidden behind technical, legal verbiage. Only when you cut through that verbiage do you come to the cold, hard fact.'<sup>6</sup>

### *C. Option Time*

To secure nationwide coverage for an advertiser's program, a network must secure that its affiliated stations are not already committed to some local program at the desired time. So con-

<sup>6</sup> Chain Broadcasting Regulations and Free Speech, Federal Communications Commission, Washington, D.C., 1942, p. 17.



tracts were written that gave a network an 'option' on all, or substantially all, of its affiliated stations' time. Affiliates, moreover, were prevented from optioning time to any other network. Thus, whenever the network wanted to schedule a commercial program, the affiliate had to clear the time, cancelling whatever programs it might itself have previously arranged. And it had to do this at unconscionably short notice—28 days. Quite apart from whatever public service the station might have planned, on 'sustaining' time, its prospects of securing business from local advertisers were thus reduced to a minimum. Its independence was seriously affected in terms of its pocketbook. 'Option time puts local advertisers in the position of local merchants who can rent a store on Main Street only subject to the condition that, if a New York chain store comes along, the local merchant must move off Main Street within 28 days.'<sup>7</sup>

#### *D. Duration of Affiliation Time*

These restrictive clauses in contracts were the more onerous because they committed stations for long periods of time. To sign up as an affiliate meant commitment for five years; networks, on the other hand, were committed for only one year!

#### *E. Network Control of Station Rates*

The essentially one-sided character of the agreements is further illustrated by NBC's attempt to protect itself from competition (for time available over its affiliated stations) from any other quarter. By the early thirties the development of transcriptions (recorded matter especially prepared for broadcasting) had made it possible for affiliates to compete for national advertising business by offering programs comparable in popularity to many 'live' network programs. 'Continuing and unrestricted competition,' opines the report, 'between network and outlet for this business will provide the public with steadily improving program

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

service.' But NBC thought otherwise. It therefore wrote a contract providing that if an affiliate sold time to a national advertiser for less than what NBC charged network advertisers, NBC could then lower the station's network rate accordingly.

Again the relation between private contract and public interest was raised. Was such a contract any concern of the FCC? The report justified its intervention by reference to the public consequences of this private deal. "This might properly be considered outside the Commission's concern, if it did not affect listeners adversely. However, listeners are affected. Many programs which might be put on by national advertisers, through transcriptions or otherwise, are banned because network rates must be charged even though the network is not used. Thus listeners are deprived of programs which might otherwise be broadcast.'<sup>8</sup> Under the competitive pressure of television both NBC and CBS, long stalwart champions of the 'no transcriptions' theory, have lifted the ban on their use.

These are the main findings of the Report on Chain Broadcasting. It is superfluous to detail here the regulations introduced by the FCC to remedy the evils it believed it had unearthed. As we have seen, RCA's monopolistic power in radio was broken by the enforced sale of the Blue network. The hold of networks over their affiliates through one-sided contractual arrangements was likewise loosened—at least in theory—by regulations that restored to affiliates an independence of action, which they had forfeited.

How effective have these regulations proved in practice? There is no easy or certain answer. The important point to grasp is that the regulations were, in the main, permissive. Affiliated stations could avail themselves of them in order to assert and maintain their freedom of action—if they wanted to. But no rules can prevent a man's incurring voluntary servitude. In practice, the identity of interests of networks and their affiliated stations was so great—as related to profits—that the regulations have seldom

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

been applied. Exclusive affiliation, territorial exclusivity, option time—all of these persist, not universally but on a wide scale. Many stations continue to move local programs to make room for network commercials almost as regularly as they did before the chain-broadcasting regulations. Most stations, too, still provide in their contracts with local advertisers that the station may move the local program on 28 days' notice, or even less, though the regulations insisted that not less than 56 days' notice should be given.

The Report on Chain Broadcasting came, in a sense, too late to stem a tide that was already moving fast, a tide that swept away certain vital interests of the public on the waves of increasing profits, in pursuit of which networks and affiliates were too identified in interest to contend with one another. Perhaps the greatest benefit it produced among responsible members of the listening public was the increased awareness of monopoly, and of this latest manifestation in an industry still, relatively speaking, in its infancy.

Before leaving the report, we must consider one aspect of it that illustrates a problem far wider in its implications than radio itself. An impressive body of evidence about the trends in radio was here presented. It took time and trouble to dig out the facts. Hearings continued for six months: 97 witnesses were heard; their evidence fills 8713 pages; 707 exhibits were introduced; the testimony and exhibits fill 29 volumes. We must remember, moreover, that this study was made while the Commission and its staff continued their routine duties. The proposed new regulations, based on the Commission's findings of fact, were contested in the courts. NBC and CBS filed suit. The dispute was finally carried to the Supreme Court, which gave its decision in favor of the FCC. From the date when the inquiry was launched to the time of the Supreme Court decision, more than four years elapsed.

We see illustrated here both the virtues and defects of our system of government. The whole procedure was typically

democratic. All who wished to testify were allowed to do so. The proposed regulations, originally ordered to come into effect within 90 days, were deferred, at the request of the networks, for months. Even then the parties who felt themselves aggrieved had access to the courts.

It is such procedures that authoritarian governments contemplate with hilarious contempt. They point to the fantastic 'inefficiency' involved, the time 'wasted,' the distraction of the government from its regular duties. We, however, are proud of the regard paid to a principle we prize even above efficiency—the principle, inherent in our respect for the dignity of individuals, of subjecting no man or group of men to the arbitrary and indisputable decision of a government, however upright and zealous it may be for what it considers the common good. The risk, in terms of efficiency, is certainly great, for time is often of the essence in the redressing of a wrong. While contending parties argue and dispute, the people may suffer. This is the price we pay. The whole procedure is cumbrous and, in these days when the administrative burden loaded on governmental agencies is so heavy and the need for efficiency so urgent, may well result (as some claim it already does) in the machinery of government running permanently in low gear.

We are groping today for some resolution of this dilemma. We have not yet found it. But one thing seems clear—we cannot long persist in the maintenance of attitudes toward government that are self-contradictory. We cannot endow the government with increased responsibilities and at the same time persist in viewing it as a hostile element whose acts and orders we resist 'on principle.' The maintenance of the democratic way involves the abandonment of such paradoxical behavior. We must discover a basis of co-operative endeavor between government and private industry, a joint rather than a rival exploration and resolution of difficulties. The only way, it would seem, to avoid the overloading of government is for the private citizen and organized enterprises of all sorts to subordinate themselves in the conduct of

their business to an ever more sensitive and generous concern with, and conception of, the public interest. Action by government must be a last resort, not a first.

The history of broadcasting and of the Report on Chain Broadcasting, as we have thus far reviewed it, provides an object lesson from which we may learn that the danger, in a democracy, of government's overreaching itself stems in the first instance from the laggard acceptance of social responsibility by parties outside of government. It is only when civilian life breaks down that (as in the great depression) we turn in desperation, and with healthy reluctance, to the government to mediate or to undertake the solution of our problems.

### 3. 'THE BLUE BOOK'

It was not until 1946 that the FCC's next broadside was fired. In that year the FCC issued another report entitled 'Public Service Responsibility of Broadcast Licensees,' commonly referred to as the Blue Book. This time the FCC turned its attention to a matter that constitutes the essence of broadcasting, namely programming. Like its predecessor, this report aroused violent controversy in radio circles and some comment in the press, but has as yet failed to 'stick,' in the sense of being implemented. Despite the positive assertion of the then chairman of the FCC that the Blue Book was here to stay and would not be bleached, neither the letter nor the spirit of its regulatory decisions has since been honored by action on the FCC's part in its license-renewal policy. Like the Report on Chain Broadcasting, its greatest service was the wide publicity it secured and the consequent increased attention on the part of many listeners to some of the more delicate and crucial issues involved in radio's operation.

Again we can offer only the barest summary of its contents. Its first contention was that too many stations had in their performance belied the promises, actual or implied, regarding the program services they proposed, promises that accompanied

their applications for a license. Five hideous examples of such glaring disparity between promise and performance were cited. The report has been attacked on the grounds that these instances were not typical. To test the truth or falsehood of this charge provides a useful field for student research. It would, indeed, be well for broadcasting if in every community there were at least a few listeners sufficiently conscious of the fact that the air waves belong to the people to make regular annual checks on the operations of local stations to see how far they tally with promises made at the time of license application.

The report goes on to complain of the seeming lapse in the extent of service rendered by local stations to their communities. The report insists that the granting of a license involves, first and foremost, service to the community, the reflection of its life and interest, and the use and encouragement of local talent. That such service was not being rendered would seem apparent from the fact that, as the report says, 'In January, 1945 only approximately 19.7% of all the time of standard broadcast stations was devoted to local live and wire service programs;<sup>9</sup> and that during the best listening hours from six to eleven p.m., approximately 15.7% of all the time was devoted to these two classes of programs combined.'<sup>10</sup> Too many stations, the report contends, have chosen to affiliate with networks and to excuse themselves for rendering local service by offering programs admittedly popular but of remote network origin.

The most immediately profitable way to run a station may be to procure a network affiliation, plug into the network line in the morning, and broadcast network programs throughout the day, interrupting the network output only to insert commercial spot announcements, and to substitute spot announcements and phonograph records for

<sup>9</sup> By local live programs is meant programs by living persons in the community. Wire service programs are programs in which material (mostly spot news received by telegraph from news agencies and other sources) is read, as received, at the microphone. Little of this material normally makes reference to life in the locality.

<sup>10</sup> 'Public Service Responsibility of Broadcast Licensees,' Federal Communications Commission, March 1946, Washington, D.C., p. 37.

outstanding network sustaining programs. The record on renewal since April 1945 of standard broadcast stations shows that some stations are approaching perilously close to this extreme. Indeed, it is difficult to see how some stations can do otherwise with the minimal staffs currently employed in programming. For every three writers employed by the 834 broadcasting stations in October 1944, there were four salesmen employed . . . in terms of total compensation paid to writers and salesmen, the station paid \$3.30 for salesmen for every \$1.00 paid for writers. The comparable relationship for 415 local stations is even more unbalanced.<sup>11</sup>

The report goes on to complain of the unhappy fate of the sustaining program, i.e. the program not sponsored by an advertiser. The contention here is not that sponsored programs are by definition bad, but that sustaining programs, in view of the sponsor's normal and natural preoccupation with mammoth popular audiences, provide the only means (until sponsors by and large become more public-spirited) for serving cultural minorities. As we have seen, the Commission undertook to secure the protection of these interests by claiming adequate provision for them from the licensees as a condition of the granting of a license. The general tenor of the report is to the effect that the sustaining program is in a bad way and is in urgent need of salvaging, with respect to both network and local station operations.

The third point of attack is the absence of adequate radio discussion of public issues. There is no complaint of the character or quality of controversial programs on the air, but serious exception is taken to their dearth, which, it is held, is particularly obvious at the local-station level. The report points out that we live in an age in which understanding by the public of the new and complex problems, domestic, national, and international, that affect their lives and destiny is of special urgency. The report pleads for more generous provision, at good listening hours, of many-sided discussions of public issues.

The last and perhaps the most debatable point of attack is

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

concerned with advertising abuses. Facts and figures are given showing the length and frequency of advertising on the air. We might here recall our review of the history of radio's development and notice how the attitude of the industry itself has changed with respect to its duty to the public in this regard. It is difficult to realize that less than twenty years ago the industry had a most circumspect view of the place and propriety of advertising on the air. As we shall see in a later chapter, the attitude of listeners (or at least of the great majority of listeners) has likewise changed. From early aversion, the public has veered around either to reluctant acceptance, or, as with millions, to positive enjoyment of advertising plugs. Some might say that we here see exemplified the truth of Bernard Shaw's dictum, 'Get what you like or you will be forced to like what you get.' The report's overall concern with programming provoked reactions on the part of the radio industry that are likewise in marked contrast with the attitude it maintained not so many years ago.



## IV

### THE RADIO INDUSTRY

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'Capacity for the nobler feelings is in most natures a very tender plant, easily killed, not only by hostile influences, but by mere want of sustenance; and in the majority of young persons it speedily dies away if the occupations to which their position in life has devoted them, and the society into which it has thrown them, are not favorable to keeping the higher capacity in exercise. Men lose their high aspirations as they lose their intellectual tastes, because they have not time or opportunity for indulging them; and they addict themselves to inferior pleasures, not because they deliberately prefer them, but because they are either the only ones to which they have access, or the only ones which they are any longer capable of enjoying.'

—J. S. MILL

THE advent of radio suggested such breathtaking possibilities that it was bound to arouse false hopes. Idealists have showered the industry with counsels of perfection. More sober critics have blamed it for not realizing the opportunities within its grasp. The listening public, as a whole, has thanked it for furnishing the bare room of its existence with many decorative ornaments and some extremely useful household gadgets.

Ours is not a perfect system. As we have seen, it does not function even as its authors intended that it should. All three of its partners (the FCC, the industry, the public) have been, and remain, much at fault in the fulfillment of their respective roles. However, no remedy for what is wrong—and might be right—can

be prescribed that does not take account of the very real difficulties inherent in our system. Even though we seek not perfection but a balance of advantage for society, our search is beset with difficulties all along the way. To recognize these difficulties is the first condition of a sympathetic understanding of the industry's problems and of constructive criticism.

The best way to understand a man's difficulties is to put oneself in his place. Let us imagine, then, that we are applying for a radio license from the FCC. We wish to operate, let us say, in a town of 80,000 where one or two stations have been already established. Suppose we invest ourselves with somewhat unusual powers and a very unusual outlook. We wish to use our station to bring to listeners the widest possible range of experience and enjoyment. Having enjoyed the fruits of a fine education, we are eager that all our listeners should taste them too. We know that many of these fruits are an acquired taste, and we therefore give ourselves time, while arrogating to ourselves exceptional powers of popularization. But like other broadcasters, we propose to make money and to work within the system. By what factors in the situation will the prospect of realizing our ambition be circumscribed? Let us list a few.

1. The first, obvious fact (which, however, is peculiar to our American system) is that we are in business and on a competitive basis. We must make ends meet and also make a profit.

2. We must recognize that we are operating in a restricted market. So limited, until recent times, have been the available frequencies that normally, except for low-powered stations, our only means of entry is to buy out an existing station operator and to obtain his license.<sup>1</sup>

3. We can broadcast the finest programs possible, but the

<sup>1</sup> According to *News from NAB*, 19 September, 1949, the most important single factor governing a station's operating costs and profit margins is volume of revenue. The highest ratios of operating expenses to gross income are found among stations doing less than \$50,000 business a year. Generally speaking, it is only as stations move above the \$125,000 level of income that they experience a positive increase in their 'break-even' point.

consumer will not pay us for them. It is only to advertisers, who are ready to 'sponsor' our programs, that we look for major revenue.

4. The hours during which we can be sure of a really large audience are limited—five of the day's twenty-four. Only between 6 and 11 p.m. can we normally expect to reach the public as a whole.

5. We are in a business that has expanded at a great pace and that is in a process of equally rapid transition. New scientific miracles are constantly cutting the ground from under our feet.

Now let us see how these five factors, singly and in combination, have affected radio's development, how they have influenced program service, and what headaches they have created for the industry.

#### 1. COVERAGE

The FCC's assumption of the power to allocate frequencies was predicated on two desired objectives: (a) the elimination of interference; and (b) the widest possible dissemination of the benefits of radio reception. The result was the classification of stations, with varying power and range and with variant service objectives, under three heads. Low-powered 'local' stations were intended to provide clear signals in large and small townships and to reflect their needs. Medium-powered stations were planned to cover wider areas and to reflect, among other things, regional interests and needs. A limited number of very high-powered stations, covering entire states, were designed to reach more remote, rural areas and to provide at least a limited service to country listeners—a service, incidentally, likewise intended to meet their peculiar needs and interests.

But as broadcasting is commercial and competitive and as broadcasters are dependent for revenue on advertising, our system is not calculated to meet these socially desirable specifications. The inevitable tendency has been for licenses to be snapped up in thickly populated areas and for the more sparsely popu-

lated regions to receive a relatively scant measure of service. Even in cities, problems of interference combine with market considerations of profit to limit reception.

The advertiser's concern with a mass market has likewise affected the type of service provided by the 'clear channel' stations (the giant stations with a coverage embracing entire states). Programs have concentrated on satisfying the tastes of urban listeners, and the special interests and needs of the rural minorities have, on the whole, been poorly met. And yet it was for these minorities that service over 'clear channels' was primarily intended.

## 2. FINANCE

Our hypothetical licensee, while pursuing his extraordinary ambition to bring the best of everything to his listeners, wants to make money. What are his prospects? Radio has for some years earned handsome dividends on its capital investment. The peak year was 1948. His prospects, however, are not as rosy as they at first seem, and his independence of action—if he still wants to pay his way—is limited in ways he had not expected. He finds himself reckoning with considerations such as these:

1. As he reflects on the kind of business he is about to enter, he observes that it has one unique characteristic (to which reference is never made) that makes of it a highly speculative venture. For radio, in one sense, is not an industry at all—at least in the normally accepted sense of the term. Unlike ordinary businesses, it does not earn profits by producing goods or by services paid for by the consumer: the radio consumer pays nothing for the programs to which he listens. Indeed, he is so used to getting something for nothing that he rejects the very notion that he might (conceivably with as much advantage to himself as to radio's economic stability) contribute to the cost.

Radio in practice functions mainly as a middleman, subservient to the interests of advertisers; it is almost exclusively dependent on their patronage for its own revenue. Advertisers, in turn, are

subservient to economic trends. When business is brisk, advertising expands. When times are hard, there is a tendency to curtail advertising budgets,<sup>2</sup> which results in a paradoxical situation. Radio's financial rewards derive not (as in normal industrial undertakings) directly from the quality of its product, but from two chance, extraneous factors—the advertiser's *readiness* to buy time (or, if you will, radio's power to induce listeners to make purchases) and the advertiser's *capacity* to do so, as this is affected by the index of prosperity at any given moment.

Thus radio, in an economic sense, is a fair-weather bird. Its own prosperity is a derivative of the prosperity of others. There is little that it can do on its own account to maintain a stable, assured income. In a depression, the finest programs in the world will avail little, if at all, to attract advertisers. Thus radio's capacity to serve the public is limited by economic factors over which it has absolutely no control.

2. You do not 'horn in' on such an enterprise at no expense to yourself. There is a toll gate at the entry to every road to financial success and the toll is high. Our friend will have to discount a large part of his anticipated profits for the price exacted from him as a new entrant into radio business. Radio has thus far been so restricted a market that the purchase price of a station has included a consideration for good will.

3. He will find that costs have risen. Artists demand high fees, the American Federation of Musicians makes exacting demands; even writers have become organized into a Radio Writers Guild. Radio, admittedly, is still booming. Its gross earnings in 1948 were an all-time high, but net profits were down.<sup>3</sup>

4. During the war years the industry was 'frozen.' Few new licenses were granted. But at the end of the war the FCC began

<sup>2</sup> During the war years, advertising in general and radio advertising in particular boomed despite limited marketing facilities. But this boom was artificial, advertising being used for purposes of tax evasion.

<sup>3</sup> According to a survey conducted by the National Association of Broadcasters (*News from NAB*, 25 August, 1949) the ratio of operating costs to station revenue in 1948 was 82 per cent as compared with 79 per cent in 1947 and 73.5 per cent in 1946.

to dole out licenses at a disconcerting pace and without reference to the economic consequences (for it has no power to concern itself with such). Our friend must reckon with such consequences and, as he scans the figures, he grows alarmed at the mushroom growth of stations. As of 31 December, 1944 there were 943 stations on the air. By 1 August, 1949 the total number of stations authorized and/or in operation had risen to 3039 (2183 AM and 856 FM).

5. He next faces the question of his revenue. In our community of 80,000 there exist, let us say, two newspapers, which are the customary conduits of local advertising. True, some local merchants may be convinced of radio's value as an advertising medium and he can look for their patronage. But programs cost money and local talent is limited and badly in need of grooming before it can prove attractive before a microphone. Live programs require a staff—at least a writer and producer. He can, of course, use transcriptions, which are relatively cheap and, in some lines, popular. But our friend remembers his determination to give his listeners the best of everything and realizes how restricted and parochial are his resources.

But since his two competitors appear to thrive, he investigates their manner of business, and now his education in radio really begins. Both stations, he discovers, are affiliated to a national network. He looks into network broadcasting and finds it to be the keystone of our whole system. How have networks acquired such a dominant position? What has been gained and lost in the process, and how does it affect our friend's original ambition?

### 3. NETWORK OPERATIONS

Networks have been the means of consolidating the radio industry, of transforming the character and quality of programs, and of securing unprecedented sums of advertising revenue. They are immensely important, immensely powerful, and immensely complicated. They have brought incalculable gains to American broadcasting; they have involved the public in some

losses and are themselves involved in the most perplexing problems. Both affiliated and non-affiliated stations have preserved a vigorous and healthy independence, but the fact remains that at hearings before the FCC or Congressional Committees it is the networks that generally bespeak the interests of the radio industry and that command attention.

The advantages that have accrued to listeners since network broadcasting began are almost too obvious to mention. The great stars of the entertainment world are now on the air for most (though, as we have seen, by no means all) listeners to hear. Network news services, including special correspondents the world over, have proved so useful that millions of people rely primarily on radio for information about current events.<sup>4</sup> A number of distinguished programs of a 'public service' character have been regularly broadcast on 'sustaining' time. Networks have transformed radio from a parochial pursuit to a vast and complicated operation on a national and, at times, even a global scale.

But this progress has been achieved at a price—in the twofold sense of having involved huge financial outlay as well as some serious restrictions on the full, free, and diversified use of radio's facilities. The enormous revenue, which alone made feasible such range and quality of service, came from a source on which local, independent stations had been powerless to draw. Realization of the effectiveness of radio as a medium of advertising

<sup>4</sup> Few listeners realize that it was only the consolidated strength networks gave to radio as an industry that, at a late date in its history, emancipated it from the monstrous discrimination exercised against it by the news-gathering agencies of the press. Not until the late 'thirties was radio free to avail itself of news-agency services. It was not, in fact, until CBS threatened to establish a global news-gathering system of its own that the press yielded. In 1934 a grudging and meager concession was made when radio stations were allowed five-minute news summaries, 'timed to follow newspaper editions at 9:30 a.m. and 9 p.m.' Moreover, stations were to 'stay 12 hours back of the news.' Not until 1939 was the Associated Press available to networks as a source of news (see Ernst, *The First Freedom*, Macmillan, p. 153). See also a study of "The Press-Radio War 1933-35" by Giraud Chester in *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Summer 1949, Princeton University Press.

had been growing steadily since the late 'twenties. But it was not until network broadcasting came into its own that this effectiveness was brought home to a new and important client, the national advertiser. Network broadcasting created a new market in which the national advertiser could for the first time flaunt his wares under unique conditions of advantage; he need no longer buy space in a multiplicity of papers and magazines. Radio provided a huge, consolidated audience and threw in for good measure the powerful psychological appeal of the human voice. We cannot intelligently pursue the subject of networks without reference to this new colossus they brought upon the scene.

#### 4. THE NATIONAL ADVERTISER

The role and power of the advertiser in radio differ markedly from those he enjoys in relation to the press. This distinction must be clearly grasped. The advertiser in a newspaper buys 'space' in a going concern. That is, a paper's circulation is determined by the popularity of the news, features, and so on that the paper purveys. The presence of advertising matter, though valued by readers, is as a rule a quite subordinate selling point. Although some powerful advertisers have, on occasion, threatened to withdraw their patronage because of an article or editorial that displeased them, the threat has rarely proved serious, partly because no single advertiser dominates the advertising copy (it is generally diverse) and partly because it is the character of news and features that determines circulation—irrespective of the advertisements.

With radio it is otherwise. The advertiser in radio buys 'time,' as in a newspaper he buys 'space.' But he does not (except in 'spot' announcements) fill his 'time space' (as in a newspaper) entirely with advertising matter; his message is interlarded with a program. For reasons too complicated to enumerate here, the radio advertiser (and more particularly the national advertiser in his dealings with networks) has acquired so dominant a position



that more often than not he prescribes—and actually prepares and produces—the program presented in the time he has bought. In network broadcasting two results must be noted:

1. The network, to the extent that it sells time, is no longer in entire control of program planning.

The basic fact to keep in mind is that the radio advertiser is charged a fixed sum for time, regardless of the size or nature of the audience which his program attracts, and therefore he insists on selecting and managing the program, in order to reach the largest number of listeners. The network in effect loses control of that period of time to someone whose primary interest is not in good radio fare, but in potential customers for his products. It is much as if the editor of a newspaper had to farm out the writing of the news, page by page, to the corporations whose advertisements appeared on those pages.<sup>5</sup>

2. The general character of programs thus becomes affected by the primary concern of the advertiser not with balanced and varied radio fare, but with customers for his product.

If we have learned anything [says the critic quoted above] from our experience with commercial radio, it is that the advertiser is less interested than is the professional radio broadcaster in providing the public with news information, education, or distinguished drama. This does not mean that the advertiser is an inferior order of being; it means simply that his concern with radio is a special one. He wants to sell his products. His interest is in attracting a mass audience. . . This is the major reason for the sameness of much of our present radio fare.<sup>6</sup>

At this point our friend begins to scratch his head and to mutter to himself. 'This,' he comments, 'is awkward. My interest is in providing diversified programs. If I tie myself up with a network so that I can cut in on the rich financial rewards that

<sup>5</sup> An extreme example of the extent to which the advertiser's interests are dissociated from those of listeners is the comment of the President of the American Tobacco Co., cited in the Blue Book, p. 17: 'Taking 100% as the total radio value, we give 90% to commercials to what's said about the product, and we give 10% to the show. . . I don't have the right to spend the stockholders' money just to entertain the public.'

<sup>6</sup> 'Television: There Ought to be a Law,' Bernard B. Smith, *Harpers Magazine*, September 1948, p. 40.

## COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM EVENING PROGRAM SCHEDULE

TIME	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
6:00	Prudential Family Hour	Eric Sevareid	Eric Sevareid
6:15	" " "	You and Magazines	You and Magazines
6:30	Our Miss Brooks	Curt Massey Time	Curt Massey Time
6:45	" " "	Lowell Thomas	Lowell Thomas
7:00	Jack Benny	Beulah	Beulah
7:15	" "	Jack Smith Show	Jack Smith Show
7:30	Amos 'N Andy	Club 15	Club 15
7:45	" "	Edward R. Murrow	Edward R. Murrow
8:00	Edgar Bergen	Inner Sanctum	Mystery Theater
8:15	" "	" "	" "
8:30	Red Skelton	Arthur Godfrey	Mr. & Mrs. North
8:45	" "	" "	" "
9:00	Meet Corliss Archer	Lux Radio Theater	Life With Luigi
9:15	" " "	" " "	" " "
9:30	Horace Heidt Show	" " "	Escape
9:45	" " "	" " "	" "
10:00	Contented Hour	My Friend Irma	Broadway's My Beat
10:15	" "	" "	" "
10:30	We Take Your Word	Bob Hawk Show	Frankie Carle Orch.
10:45	" "	" "	" "
11:00	News	News	News

SUNDAY, 29 JANUARY 1950 — SATURDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 1950

[White spaces indicate sponsored programs; black spaces sustaining programs]

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Eric Sevareid	Eric Sevareid	Eric Sevareid	Griffing Bancroft
You and Magazines	You and Magazines	You and Magazines	CBS Views the Press.
Curt Massey Time	Curt Massey Time	Curt Massey Time	Red Barber's Club House
Lowell Thomas	Lowell Thomas	Lowell Thomas	Larry Lesueur
Beulah	Beulah	Beulah	Young Love
Jack Smith Show	Jack Smith Show	Jack Smith Show	"
Club 15	Club 15	Club 15	Vaughn Monroe Show
Edward R. Murrow	Edward R. Murrow	Edward R. Murrow	" " "
Mr. Chameleon	FBI in Peace and War	The Show Goes On	Gene Autry Show
"	" " "	" "	" " "
Dr. Christian	Mr. Keen	My Favorite Husband	The Goldbergs
"	"	" "	"
Groucho Marx	Suspense	Leave it to Joan	Gang Busters
" "	"	" "	" "
Bing Crosby	Crime Photographer	Broadway's My Beat	Arthur Godfrey Digest
" "	" "	" "	" " "
Burns and Allen Show	Hallmark Playhouse	Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar	Sing It Again
" "	" "	" "	" "
Lum 'N Abner	Skippy Hollywood Theater	Capitol Cloak Room	" "
" "	" " "	" " "	" "
News	News	News	News

network broadcasting brings to its affiliates, I'll have to carry the bulk of these sponsored programs. But then, how can I achieve diversity? What about my local programs and my service to significant minorities?'<sup>7</sup> But he does not yet know, by half, how awkward it all is. He proceeds to probe further. How far has this control of programs gone? He studies the evening program schedule of a large network and finds the situation to be as represented below. (He notes (1) the number of sponsored programs and (2) the character of the programs.)

Our friend now asks himself another question. Who are these sponsors and how many of them are there? He discovers that in 1948 one national advertiser (Proctor & Gamble) bought enough time (19,812 station hours) on the air to fill the entire annual program schedule of more than three stations. Of the advertising business conducted by all networks and stations in the same year, \$239 million (or 60 per cent) was business with national or regional advertisers; \$163 million (or 40 per cent) was with local advertising. Of one great network's total advertising revenue, 35.7 per cent came from six sponsors. Of a total revenue from advertising of some \$400 million, 18.5 per cent derived from only 10 advertisers. Such concentrated power, he comments, surely puts networks in a most disadvantageous bargaining position. With so much of their revenue owed to so few, how far can independence be maintained? What happens to programs that are of general interest but not sufficiently attractive to advertisers to warrant sponsorship? He surveys, rather wryly, the chart printed above and comes to the sad conclusion that minorities of taste appear to receive short shrift.

But he remembers some superb 'documentaries' he has heard and goes to the network that produced them, to praise and to

<sup>7</sup> Despite the inroads of television, the attraction of radio as an advertising medium continues to be great. Thus on 13 September 1949 Mr. Niles Trammell, president of NBC, reported to NBC affiliates that 'NBC goes into the fall season in radio with only 5 evening half hour periods between 8 and 11 p.m. for sale. . . . In the daytime, NBC is sold out solid, Monday through Friday, with the exception of one 15-minute strip.' (Quoted in *Variety*, 14 September 1949.)

thank it, and to ask why more programs of this general order are not offered. He now encounters at first hand some of the problems that networks face in this matter of 'public service.' They all stem, it appears, from the same source—the competitive nature of our system and the networks' dependence on big advertisers. Here are some pertinent considerations to which his attention is drawn.

a. A documentary broadcast costs many thousands of dollars. To pay for it, the network must dig into its own pocket.

b. If (as is usual) it is broadcast at a good evening hour, the network forfeits the sum paid by the sponsor whose program the documentary displaces or, alternatively, the program that might have been successfully sold to a sponsor.

c. Moreover, the network (if it indulges extensively and regularly in public-service broadcasts of this kind) finds itself in an awkward competitive position on at least two counts. It reduces the marketable time available to advertisers and thus provides them with the incentive to turn to more hospitable hosts. Secondly, advertisers, because they seek a mass market, give careful attention not only to the effectiveness of the time they buy and the program they sponsor, but also to the program preceding theirs. They prefer to cash in on an audience already attracted in large numbers to the network of their choice. They tend to look askance at purchasable time, even at a peak listening hour, if the preceding program musters a comparatively small audience.

d. Sustaining programs are not always popular with a network's affiliates. Unsold time is wasted time—at least it means money wasted. The network's prestige is such, however, that most affiliates can generally be prevailed upon to 'carry' outstanding documentaries. Less important 'sustainers' fare less well.<sup>8</sup> Affiliated stations are liable to seize this opportunity either to secure

<sup>8</sup> For examples of the proportion of affiliates not carrying network sustainers, see 'Public Service Responsibility of Broadcast Licensees,' Federal Communications Commission, Washington, D.C., pp. 32-3.

a local sponsor for a program they themselves originate or, more rarely, to substitute a sustaining program of their own as part of their service to the community. Theirs, indeed, is a real dilemma. So heavily are they committed to carrying sponsored network programs that, if they must carry network sustainers too, they can hardly call their souls their own. Network-affiliate relations, in fact, are appallingly complicated.

But our friend remembers reading a suggestion that networks (and presumably all their affiliates) by joint agreement set aside a period, or several periods, of time each evening in which they will cater to listeners who represent various categories of 'minority' tastes. What about it? The network executive smiles, shakes his head, and explains the difficulties. 'In the first place,' he says, 'ours is a competitive system. Such a suggestion is contrary to the spirit of free competition and indeed smacks of socialistic planning. In the second place, networks cannot afford such sacrifice in that narrow span of time when mass audiences of both sexes are available—and when, therefore, advertising rates are highest. And thirdly, our affiliates would never stand for it. Think of the advantage such a plan offers to the non-affiliated, independent stations with which ours are in competition!'

By this time our friend has had enough, and he goes back home to figure it all out and to try to reduce the problem to its essence. He begins by reviewing the five factors listed earlier affecting his desire and power to be a good broadcaster. He finds that the first four factors have already come into play and that the problem seems to work out more or less as follows:

Stations are licensed to serve the public interest and in the process are permitted to compete with one another for profits. Under our system, their only effective source of revenue is advertising. Local advertising does not provide enough revenue for fine, well-rounded program service, nor does the reflection of local talent and local interests amount, of itself, to program service in the public interest. Network broadcasting, however,

provides the extended range and the improved quality of program services desired and, in addition, the much-needed supplementary revenue from which to derive a profit. But such is the power of national advertisers and such is the nature of their interest in radio that programs at reasonable listening hours are dominated by them. This fact is the more inevitable since 'effective' listening hours are distressingly short. Three consequences follow: (a) Advertisers concentrate on programs with a potential mass market to the exclusion (with some rare and honorable exceptions) of programs of wide interest and inherent merit from a public-interest point of view. (b). Networks and their affiliates have allowed themselves to be jockeyed into a position in which they are no longer masters in their own houses. By and large, advertisers, not networks, determine (at least in the main evening hours) the over-all balance of program services offered to the public. Such abdication of control over program planning puts broadcasters 'in queer' with the FCC (should it ever decide to fulfil its statutory responsibility), which holds stations, not advertisers, accountable for program service in the public interest. (c) Programs for audiences to be numbered in the millions, but still short of the mammoth audiences sought by the national advertiser, and service by local stations to their community are inevitably either crowded out altogether or cold-shouldered to an hour unattractive to the advertiser and inconvenient to many listeners.

Thus an inherent conflict appears to be involved between the competitive pursuit of profits and the collective concern of all radio licensees with serving the public interest. Is the conflict really inherent or is it capable of resolution—not in ideal terms but at least in terms of a balance of advantage for listeners burdened with the now pressing task of making democracy work? Our friend decides to defer his answer until he has explored the last of the five factors whose implications he set out to test.

## 5. OBSOLESCENCE

Our friend was much impressed by the seemingly huge profits earned of late years by the average radio station. But as a businessman, he knows that statistics lend themselves to deceptively variant interpretation. We have already mentioned some factors affecting the net gain in prospect for the radio industry—not the least of which is the mushroom growth of stations since the war. But we have yet to introduce our friend to perhaps the most alarming threat to the radio industry's financial stability and the chief drain on its accumulated capital reserves.

In the course of less than sixteen years since our system of broadcasting was stabilized under the Communications Act, the radio industry has had to reckon with two revolutionary developments in radio communication. The first was the advent of FM, or Frequency Modulation. It may be loosely defined (and distinguished from AM, or Amplitude Modulation, the present standard system of radio transmission) as a new means of transmitting radio signals which enjoys three distinct advantages. It eliminates virtually all 'static,' that is, it allows of reception clear of interference, whether from thunderstorms or a neighboring doctor's electrical machinery; it makes possible the transmission of a much wider range of sound frequencies, i.e. musical transmission will be nearly perfect and not, as now, distorted by the elimination of higher frequencies; and it permits the transmission within a given area of many more signals than is now possible in standard broadcasting without serious interference. It suffers from one minor disadvantage in that the range of transmission is limited. But this defect can be remedied by building 'booster' stations that operate automatically, that is, without attendant engineering personnel to regulate them.

Apart from the clearer and finer reception thus offered to listeners, the main effect of FM was to increase the number of



frequencies available and, therefore, the number of stations that, physically at least, could be on the air at the same time. Hopes and fears of the consequences of this revolutionary change were variously expressed. FM was hailed by many as a welcome means of introducing new blood into radio. More stations meant more competition, more scope for experiment, and the testing of the belief of some that radio's larger, neglected minorities would now come into their own.

The radio industry faced the prospect with mixed emotions. On the one hand, FM seemed to dispense with the need for any further FCC control over programs. (It was on the licensee's privileged access to a restricted public domain that the FCC in part based its claim to a concern with his program service.) On the other hand, the industry regarded with some alarm and considerable distaste a technical change that promised little, if anything, by way of increased listener interest (and therefore revenue) while involving considerable expenditure in the adjustment of radio transmitters. Listeners' homes were already near the saturation point. All that was about to happen was that radio's traffic was now to travel to the listener on a 'black top' instead of on a dirt road (though this metaphor does scant justice to the general smoothness of present radio transmission).

Nor did the industry relish the prospect of a flood of new entrants into radio. Radio's cake, consisting almost exclusively of advertiser's dough, was of a certain size; there was little prospect of enlarging it. More stations would mean a smaller slice of cake for everyone, and some broadcasters were reluctant to see their relatively exclusive club converted into a genuine, competitive free-for-all. Initial moves by the FCC, designed to encourage newcomers and program experimentation, were therefore strenuously resisted, and after public hearings the FCC revised its proposed regulations in favor of the industry.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> One of the FCC's proposals was that all applicants for FM licenses who were already operating on AM should guarantee to broadcast, for a few hours a day, original and distinct programs on FM, not simply simultaneous transmissions of their AM programs. This proposal was designed to even

The results are to be deduced from statistics of current FM operation. The transition from AM to FM drags haltingly along, and comparatively few FM stations are operating today. The industry, moreover, has successfully re-established its control of traffic on the new 'black top.' It has acquired a handsome share of the FM frequencies in the most desirable locations and a predominant control of all FM licenses thus far issued. As of 1 August, 1949, there were 739 FM stations actually on the air; of these, 674 or 91 per cent were broadcasters already operating on AM.<sup>10</sup> The financial outlay and the prospect of deferred profit on their investment have proved too much for newcomers to move in in large numbers.

The second revolutionary development is current, and the street fighting is to be observed around us daily. Its outcome, as far as radio is concerned, is still obscure. Whether radio's citadel itself will be stormed we cannot tell; the suburbs and outskirts of the town, however, we must almost certainly concede to the insurgents. Television is here. It is estimated that there will be twenty million television sets within five years. There is rather alarming (but not yet wholly convincing) evidence that many owners of television sets prefer even inferior television programs to their favorite radio programs. There is some evidence, too (but it is likewise insufficient), that a similar desertion of the movies in favor of television is under way. At least the possibility that radio is obsolescent has to be faced. (Perhaps a more decisive factor in this troublesome equation is the seemingly substantiated fact that advertising over television, engaging both eye and ear—and in due course, no doubt, to

out to a small extent the financial outlay both of established broadcasters and of newcomers and also to force the pace of experimentation. It was this regulation that the industry persuaded the FCC to withdraw. In addition, the industry ingeniously and effectively loaded the dice against newcomers (on the principle of squatters' rights) by offering to its AM advertisers simultaneous transmission over FM without extra charge. Newcomers consequently sought in vain for advertisers crazy enough to substitute payment for 'something for nothing.'

<sup>10</sup> Figures provided by the National Association of Broadcasters.

captivate the former with ravishing color—is even more persuasive than in radio.)

When considering such facts as these, the critic of radio is forced to curb his impatience to see the industry plow back some portion of its gargantuan profits into public-service broadcasting. Our friend, the would-be broadcaster, has already become convinced of the complications inherent in radio's present setup; he now sees more clearly for what these profits have in part been earmarked. Hard on the heels of the conversion of AM to FM transmitters comes the liability for television. The major strain is on the networks and more particularly on the two protagonists NBC (backed by its owner, RCA) and CBS, who in 1947 fought one another to a standstill over the issue of black and white or colored television. Huge capital outlay on research, experimentation, and promotion has been involved. The risks are frightening, the issue for radio perplexing and obscure.

With this bird's-eye view of some implications of the last of our five factors, our friend decides that he has probed far enough. To simplify the whole question he reduces it to an elaborate—and loose—metaphor. A few burly and well-padded anglers (the advertisers), using hired rods (radio time), are fishing for very large fish (mass audiences) and throwing small fry (lesser audiences) back into a very small pond (limited listening hours) which stands on private and posted property (the public's wave lengths). The men who hire out the rods (the broadcasters) would like to go fishing themselves, for they at least have licenses and know the man who owns the property. But they are afraid to do so—except at times when the anglers are not around, and when it is either too dark or too early in the day for fish, large or small, to rise—for fear of losing their well-padded customers. There is a game warden (the FCC) on the property, but he seems uncertain of his rights and has been a good deal intimidated by some influential friends (the Congress) of the anglers, who appear to have forgotten that

they owe almost everything in life not to the anglers, but to the man who owns the property.

It is at this point that, for our part, we decide that the complications of radio have unhinged our poor friend's mind and driven him to dizzy flights into metaphorical fantasy. With regret and with an uneasy sense of deserting a fellow in distress, we now leave him, to pursue our own more earthly analysis of a seemingly insoluble problem. The question we now have to ask—and it is the last that we shall couch in terms of metaphor—is whether we can have our cake and eat it too.

### *Profit and Public Service*

We have traced broadcasting from its infancy to its recent coming of age. We have watched it change and develop in the range, character, and quality of its program services and in the structure of its organization. It has acquired an integrated personality and a co-ordinated control over its limbs and muscles, as well as a voice of its own with which it today bespeaks a point of view markedly different from that of earlier days. The 'official' voice of radio is that of the National Association of Broadcasters, a trade association founded in 1923, of which all four networks and 52 per cent of all AM and 64 per cent of all FM stations are now members. In 1948 the NAB made public a guide for the achievement of its purposes, involving subscription by its members to various standards of practice.<sup>11</sup> It opens with a 'broadcasters creed,' part of which is worth quoting:

We believe that American Broadcasting is a living symbol of democracy; a significant and necessary instrument for maintaining freedom of expression. . . . That its influence in the arts, in science, in commerce and upon the public welfare, generally, is of such magnitude that the only proper measure of its responsibility is the common good of the whole people; that it is our obligation to serve the people in such manner as to reflect credit upon our profession and to en-

<sup>11</sup> 'Standards of Practice,' National Association of Broadcasters, Washington, D.C.

courage aspiration toward a better estate for all mankind . . . ; that we should exercise critical and discerning judgment concerning all broadcast operations, to the end that we may, intelligently and sympathetically observe the proprieties and customs of civilized society; respect the rights and sensitivities of all people; . . . enrich the daily life of the people through the factual reporting and analysis of the news, and through education, entertainment and information, by the full and ingenious use of man's store of knowledge, his talents and his skills.

This is surely an unexceptionable statement of belief, and the impressionable reader, moved by the lofty tone of the credo, might be excused for rejoicing that 'God's in his heaven, All's right with the world' of broadcasting. But we know that all is not right—and never can be—and we have wearily to pursue the question of what accounts for the obvious disparities between radio practice and the above pious expression of the radio industry's beliefs.

For the radio industry to bespeak ideals to which it is not in fact primarily devoted and to which its practice only partially conforms profits us as little as for the perfectionist to pester radio to achieve the impossible. Both are red herrings to put us off the scent in our hunt for a practicable, compromise solution of a real and perfectly understandable problem. Our radio system is not perfect, nor are radio's practitioners. They are not even primarily and predominantly devoted, as the credo implies, to public service; our system does not ask them to be so devoted. The radio industry is invited to seek profits, and it is for this reason that its members are in business. (A non-profit system or even a limited-profit system would not be ours, nor would it prove attractive to radio's present practitioners.) The industry is asked simply to plow back some of its profits in order to cater to certain 'lines' of taste and interest that are socially and culturally important but not, under our system, 'profitable.' The propensity of businessmen to become preoccupied with profits to the exclusion sometimes of the consumer's interests is likewise recognized

under our system of broadcasting. Self-discipline, though desirable, is recognized as unlikely to operate without the presence of checks and balances. The radio industry is but one of three partners. It is on the pressures exerted by the other two that our system relies to keep profits and the public interest in more or less stable equilibrium. When we take all aspects of the problem into account, we see that the amount of money available for 'plowing back' is less than the innocent observer of radio's balance sheet may have been led to expect. If we can rid our thinking of all verbal fustian involving the confusion of the ideal and the practicable, and likewise immunize ourselves to such verbal blandishments on the part of others, we shall be in a better position to see radio for what it is and to know where constructive criticism can be usefully applied.

It should be clear by now that under our system radio is limited in specific ways in what it can achieve for society. We must distinguish at the outset between inherent and induced limitations peculiar to our system, for some critics have blamed the industry for defects of service for which it is not itself responsible. For the perfectionist both kinds of limitations involve the curtailment of his hopes of radio; for the realist it is only the latter type that merits further exploration. Inherent limitations are the physical and circumstantial factors we have reviewed above: limited available frequencies and limited effective hours of listening. Induced limitations are such man-made complications as have been superimposed upon the physical. These are of two main kinds: (a) factors adversely affecting the free play of competition and the anticipated advantages to the listeners to be derived therefrom; (b) factors limiting the diversity of programs offered to the public.

The reader should be familiar with some aspects of the problem of the monopolistic trend in radio from our summary of the FCC's Report on Chain Broadcasting. We know, too, that this trend is not confined to radio or even to the mass media of communication as a whole. Some men question whether the ava-

lanche can be kept from rolling on and gathering still more stones along the way. Considering the circumstances of television's advent, we wonder whether we are about to see press, radio, movies, and television consolidated into a single, giant empire, ruled by a few powerful, controlling interests. The question is what, if anything, can be done about it.

The FCC's efforts achieved at least the loosening of RCA's strangle hold on two of the four then existing networks. Our discussion of network-affiliate relations should have indicated why some of the other provisions of the Report on Chain Broadcasting have been more honored in the breach than in the observance. So great is the identity of interests of networks and affiliates that the latter have been prone to accept a voluntary servitude, even though the FCC's regulations gave them a key with which to unlock their handcuffs. A degree of interdependence and mutuality of interest is present in these network-affiliate relations that is altogether absent in most other industries in which the giant fish have (as detailed in the report of the Federal Trade Commission) swallowed the minnows. This fact, however, does not exempt radio from the criticism of perhaps the staunchest upholder of the virtues of true competition and the rights of the small businessman. Morris Ernst indeed regards the mass media of communication as the prime example of the dangers of monopolistic tendencies in industry. A few of his criticisms and proposed remedies may be cited here.<sup>12</sup>

He recommends the complete divorce, by legislative fiat, of ownership of radio stations and newspapers, and a like severance of NBC's tie to its parent organization, RCA. He is against multiple ownership of stations. He proposes a degree of tax exemption favoring the small-station owner, the lowering of line charges (to reduce the financial burden of affiliated stations' having to contribute to the heavy costs of wire connections between their station and the network program's point of origin), and some limitation on profits. He also recommends Congress-

<sup>12</sup> Ernst, Morris, *The First Freedom*, Macmillan, New York, 1946.

sional investigation of patent ownership and its crippling effects on small-business operations in and out of radio. Whether the reader agrees or disagrees with such proposals, he must decide where he stands on the monopoly issue and equip himself to take an intelligent stand on the controversy that is bound to continue on this subject.<sup>13</sup>

What next, of factors limiting the diversity of programs offered to the public? Clearly, nothing can be done about the inherent limitation resulting from the paucity of hours during which the public as a whole can listen. But there can be little doubt that a greater variety of programs is possible—and indeed desirable—than now obtains. A man-made limitation, and a paradoxical one, prevents it. The authors of the Communications Act were undoubtedly aware of the problem of limited, effective, listening hours. It was hoped, however, that this limiting factor might be offset to a considerable extent by diversity of service resulting from competition between stations. It is true that the scope for such competition is affected, except in a few large cities, by the limited number of frequencies available, but our present difficulties result from further man-made limitations superimposed upon the physical. Although we have discussed some of them, we may here recapitulate, with reference to the question of diversity.

1. According to the FCC's Blue Book local stations have, with rare exceptions, done little to groom and use local talent or, with or without such talent, to foster local pride and interest in community affairs.

2. Affiliated stations, again according to the Blue Book, have tended to act as mere transmitting agencies of networks' more popular entertainment programs while electing, by contrast, not to carry some of the better network sustaining programs aimed at minorities of taste.

3. Networks' dependence for revenue on national advertisers

<sup>13</sup> For another list of recommended reforms see White, Llewelyn, *The American Radio*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1947.



(aggravated by the undue bargaining power of a few heavy investors in radio time) has led to the latter's acquiring the whip hand in determining what programs should be offered to the public, especially in the evening listening hours, and to an excessive concentration on entertainment programs. Competition in this restricted field has in turn led to such abuses (as many consider them) as the give-away programs and other enticements to listen, apart from the inherent interest of the entertainment offered. Thus the theory of diversity through competition, which operates with considerable measure of success in ordinary commerce, has in radio tended to work in reverse because of the peculiar nature of radio advertisers' interest.

4. The prospect of increased competition seemed assured by the advent of FM. But we have seen how, for perfectly understandable (though, from the public's point of view, regrettable) reasons, the industry insured itself against any considerable influx of new blood into radio. Here again we have to ask ourselves among how many stations, particularly now with television's rival claims to take into account, the available advertising dollar can be divided and still leave room for profit.

5. Effective radio coverage for listeners everywhere (though no great, universal choice of programs) is physically feasible and is provided for under the FCC's system of frequency allocation. But again hopes have been confounded, and again for understandable reasons. Broadcasters have concentrated in thickly populated areas, and listeners in more sparsely populated areas have had to take a back seat, because advertisers, with some obvious exceptions, have relatively small interest in rural listeners as a market for their wares. This situation is part of the price we pay for a system in which the advertiser calls the tune; it is a problem that is less acute under other systems.<sup>14</sup> There is little that can be done about it. It is difficult to see

<sup>14</sup> See references to this matter in the discussion of British and Canadian broadcasting in Ch. vii.

how commercial broadcasters can be forced to operate other than in areas of their choice. Operators of clear-channel stations might conceivably be made to carry a specified percentage of programs especially designed to meet such listeners' distinctive needs. The FCC might be empowered to make such a requirement. Can it, however, specify (without being arbitrary) what such distinctive needs are?

This admitted defect in our system might be mitigated to some extent by the resourceful operation of FM stations in a band of frequencies reserved by the FCC for use on a non-profit basis by educational institutions. But few such have as yet decided to take up their option, presumably on grounds of the expense involved.<sup>15</sup>

The reader must not judge whether or not a fair case has been presented for the contention (advanced, we hope, dispassionately and without rancor) that there is, in practice, some degree of conflict between the industry's pursuit of profit and its service of the public interest until he has taken account of two considerations:

1. There is, of course, legitimate and inevitable difference of opinion as to what extent and kind of service of the public interest is desirable. Special personal or group interests will color each individual's conception of the ideal station's balance of program services, but everyone should at least have a point of view on the subject. A useful exercise is to compile a list of desirable program services and to plot these in what seems fair proportion at appropriate times of day over a week of hypothetical broadcasting. The comparison of this program schedule with the current programs of the reader's particular local station (or,

<sup>15</sup> It is perhaps significant of the temper of the radio industry that efforts to establish a state-wide system of such educational stations—in California—were strenuously resisted and finally scotched and that among the objections raised was that of 'unfair competition.' Believers in education can snatch at least one chestnut of consolation from this fire by realizing that educational broadcasts are deemed by some members of the industry to constitute serious competition to commercial broadcasting.

for that matter, with any or all of the network schedules) will provide the measure of his legitimate approval of what radio now offers.<sup>16</sup>

2. It is only fair to record that the radio industry itself disputes the contention that conflict of any kind exists. It justifies present practices by claiming that radio 'gives the public what it wants.' Listeners, it claims, are well-satisfied with radio. Moreover, it is argued, this must be so, for the advertiser's only chance of recovering his financial outlay on radio time and talent is the listener's satisfaction. Radio, indeed, is but one of many working illustrations of the principle, tested by time and experience, that free, competitive enterprise and the pursuit of private profits are synonymous with public welfare and the people's satisfaction. Some venture even further and identify the principle with the concept of democracy itself. (It is in this sense, presumably, that the NAB's credo sees radio as 'a symbol of democracy.')

The reader should examine each of these claims fairly and carefully. He will be repaid by a fuller understanding not only of the mind of the radio industry but of a conflict of views in the broader field of industry-government relations which threatens a dangerous schism in our society and a hopeless confusion over the meaning and import of our democratic faith. For instance, is it here implied that any system of broadcasting other than ours (government-controlled radio, for example) is undemocratic, and if so, in what sense? The reader should further and more particularly ask himself what validity is attached to the view that any attack on private enterprise, any suggestion that it must yield some of its independence and subordinate its primary objective—profits—to broader considerations of public interest constitutes an attack on democracy. He may even wonder whether an American citizen who believes that socialistic

<sup>16</sup> For a sample of desirable program services that might be expected from any station claiming to serve the public interest, see Siepmann, Charles A., *Radio's Second Chance*, Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1946.

planning and the nationalization of certain key industries is desirable is disloyal to the American concept of democratic life. Before reaching a conclusion he might recall Walter Lippmann's warning of the danger of the 'either or' mentality.

## V

### RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF THE LISTENER

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'Get what you want, or you will be forced to like what you get.'

—BERNARD SHAW

Our system of broadcasting is frequently described and justified as being democratic. If this is the fact, the broadcaster is accountable to the public and the public should have the final voice in radio's operation. How far is this true in practice?

We have previously described the system as one of free, competitive enterprise within a framework of governmental regulation. But this is inadequate as a definition since it omits, except by implication, any reference to the public. We might better describe our system as involving a triangular relationship comprising the industry, the FCC, and the listening public.<sup>1</sup> The public constitutes the base of the triangle.

That our system was intended by its authors to be democratic, in theory, at any rate, is borne out by some of the facts already reviewed. The air waves belong to the people. Broadcasters have only temporary and conditional access to them. The primary condition of such access has reference to public interest. Both the extent and the limitations of the FCC's powers like-

<sup>1</sup> The advertiser, too, has acquired such power that he warrants inclusion among the 'forces' at work. But our system does not officially acknowledge his role. He is, or should be, like the 'expert,' of whom someone has said that he should be on tap but never on top.

wise relate to considerations of public interest. Obviously the listener was meant to be 'on top.' But though the Communications Act puts him there, it unfortunately gives him no directions how to stay there, and he suffers from the further disadvantage of being, like the Hydra, a many-headed monster provoking the question how so many heads rising from a single trunk can think and talk in unison. In radio, as throughout the whole field of democratic life and action, the problem is one of securing for the conglomerate public an effective and practicable way of voicing its collective will.

In a situation so inherently complex as the voicing of a hundred million wills it is futile to look for a simple or a single solution to the problem. But we might recognize at the outset two inescapable realities in the situation: (1) Where expression of the collective will is concerned, it is unlikely that anyone will get his way entirely. We must be prepared for compromise. (2) If none or comparatively few of us exert ourselves to maintain our rights and to express our wishes, our rights will be forfeited and our wishes flouted. The blessings conferred by democracy must be earned. For, even though radio itself seems to delude us to the contrary, we never get something for nothing. Our system of broadcasting will not be democratic until listeners exemplify, in their concern over its destiny and in their action, the three conditions of all democratic living. They must know about it, they must care about it—as one cares about something one believes in—and they must participate in its direction and control. How far does the listener measure up to these elementary tests?

Late in 1945 and again in 1947, the National Association of Broadcasters financed a nationwide investigation of the public's attitude toward broadcasting, which gives us some answer to this question.<sup>2</sup> The following facts were revealed:

<sup>2</sup> The figures and quotations below are from the two studies which were later published: *The People Look at Radio* by Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Harry Field, Chapel Hill, 1946; and *Radio Listening in America* by Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Patricia R. Kendall, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1948.

### 1. KNOWLEDGE

Only 50 per cent of a representative cross section of the listening public were aware that government has anything to do with the operations of radio stations; 16 per cent actually denied that it had; 34 per cent did not know. Only 22 per cent knew that Britain has a different system. Indeed, 'in the case of the organization of radio, people do not even seem to know that any other alternative way of running radio actually exists.'

### 2. CONCERN

Radio caters to a variety of tastes, though in unequal measure. It touches on delicate issues. Questions of fair play and equitable service arise constantly and inevitably, for everyone cannot be pleased at once and there are always those who can never be pleased at all.

It would seem therefore that concern about radio would be widespread and, in some quarters, intense, but this is far from true. Of those asked whether they ever felt like criticizing when they listened to the radio, 36 per cent answered 'no.' This uncritical attitude varies, of course, among the social strata, but even among the college-educated people tested, 23 per cent were never critical. As we go down the socio-economic scale, the proportion of the uncritical increases. Among high-school graduates 31 per cent and among grade-school-educated listeners 49 per cent are never critical. Such figures speak volumes about radio and about democracy, and their implications are worth pondering.

### 3. PARTICIPATION

On the extent to which listeners are active in influencing the policy of networks and stations, or in support of (or opposition to) the FCC, the report gives us only indirect clues. No questions were asked on this important subject. But it is clear that

if only half of the listeners are aware that government has anything to do with broadcasting, the FCC can hope for little information or advice from the public regarding the performance of some 3000 stations which, without such help, it cannot hope to police. The suspicion that few listeners are in any sense active about radio is confirmed by the paucity of independent Radio Listener's Councils in existence. Correspondence, or rather the absence of it, would seem to suggest that those most critical of radio give vent to their spleen in private conversation or in convention resolutions rather than in constructive criticism addressed to the proper quarter—the radio stations and networks. All in all, one has the impression that listeners are vastly ignorant about our system of broadcasting and, with rare exceptions, are as uncritical of its performance as they are unaware of its unrealized potentialities.

It is true, of course, that we cannot all be actively concerned over all the issues that affect our individual fortunes and our democratic way of life. Life is too short and the modern world too complex. Is radio, then, one of those matters that we can relegate to a secondary level of significance in the over-all functioning of our society? Let us suppose that it is of first importance and ask ourselves how, then, the listening public can make itself effectively felt and cease to be the sleeping partner who, as things are now, has a big share of responsibility for whatever is wrong with broadcasting.

There are at least six ways in which the public can be aroused to a greater concern about broadcasting and become a more active partner in its affairs. No one of them is wholly satisfactory of itself. Indeed, all of them together constitute only a remote approximation to the ideal. This, however, should not discourage us, for such crude approximation is the lot of man. Many of us would be much happier and much saner if we ceased crying for the moon and disciplined ourselves to understand the truth about ideals. Ideals are goals to be pursued. It is arrogant for man (as the artist or the saint, whose life is devoted



to the pursuit of the ideal, will tell you) to hope that he will attain them. We are entitled, and indeed must be committed, to a healthy discontent with most things as they are, ourselves included. But we destroy ourselves if we insist on nothing but the best. That is too much to hope for. The satisfaction and inspiration of living derives from journeying in the direction of our heart's desire, *not* from reaching journey's end.

1. The listener can exercise his franchise in radio most simply and conveniently—and, in the long run, most effectively—by listening. The size of an audience is at least a crude index of a program's popularity, and, though this should not be the sole criterion for determining what programs should be offered, it is an important one. Radio, after all, is mass communication. The manifold claims upon its service are such that it cannot properly afford (especially in our commercial system) to cater to a mere handful of listeners. Like a railroad system, radio has main lines and branch lines of service. Service on branch lines is likely to be less regular and less efficient than on the main line—until the listener population on the branch line grows. If the population decreases, the branch-line service is likely to be closed down. Voting by listening is thus an important means of determining the direction and extent of radio's services.

2. Not only can we ourselves listen (and thus register our individual vote) but, as in politics, we can canvass others to vote with us and thus support our program candidate. Such canvassing occurs, in an unorganized, haphazard fashion, in people's casual exchange of comment on programs they have heard. Audience-building of a more organized kind holds out possibilities that as yet have scarcely been tapped.

Here is a weapon of peculiar value to those who represent minority tastes. Indeed, the canvassing of others is the only way in which minorities of any kind can ever hope to escape from their 'inferior' status. Respect for minorities is a graceful token of the recognition by majorities that they, despite their numbers, may be mistaken. But they will not wait forever to be

persuaded. Minorities must bestir themselves. By and large (and obvious exceptions will occur) they must increase their following or go under.

All of us can and should canvass in this fashion. The opportunity to do so is greatest when our private interest coincides with a group interest, such as that of church members or trade unionists. Probably the most potentially powerful group in our society is the teaching profession. An intelligent and sympathetic influence on the program choices of children might produce within a generation a transformation of radio's program structure.

3. Not only can we listen but we can write. It is important to do so. The available means for measuring 'listener load' are far from accurate. Radio's meter, the rating system, is unreliable at best. To count up letters is admittedly no substitute, for this is an even less reliable test of the size of audiences. But the purpose and the usefulness of correspondence are in terms of human rather than scientific values. It is a means of resolving a curious paradox about radio, which is surely the most human and, at the same time, the most impersonal of all modes of communication. Its hold on our emotions, as we shall see in the next chapter, is peculiarly strong. Radio personalities, together with screen stars, are modern objects of idolatry, a fact that when you come to think of it, is strange. For the voice we hear on the air is a disembodied voice; the strains of music in our living room come to us distilled from the air, not from the strings of violins. Thus, when we write letters we remind ourselves that there are human beings 'at the other end.' It is a salutary exercise by which we may partly recover that sense of belonging of which the machine age has so disastrously deprived us.

Correspondence has the simultaneous advantage of reminding broadcasters that listeners too are human and not merely figures on a statistical chart. Mass communication tends, almost inevitably, to reduce people to cyphers. You cannot 'know'—still less can you 'like'—a crowd, a fact that accounts, perhaps, for

the insincerity and cynical contempt for their clients of some who cater to mass appetites. Such considerations make it clearer not only why we should correspond but with whom we should do so.

a. Correspondence is probably most important with your local station. In the first place, it is yours. It operates on a wave length that constitutes your 'private line.' Indeed, the local station's first responsibility, as the FCC has repeatedly insisted, is service to, and reflection of, the life and interests of local listeners. The local station is likely to be your most responsive court of appeal, for it is directly and exclusively dependent on your good will. Moreover, if your interests are local, it is the only agency that can serve your need. At the local-station level there still survives that comparative intimacy of relations that the term 'community spirit' betokens. The virtues that stem from its survival need tender nurturing.

To discount the value of your influence as a single correspondent (and thus to bespeak the false and dangerous humility implicit in the plea 'Who am I to comment?') is to sell your democratic heritage for a mess of potage. For such non-participation is the bane, and ultimately spells the death, of democratic life. Moreover, lone correspondence is not your only weapon. Just as listening can be organized, so can correspondence. This is an age of collective bargaining, of group pressure. You can supplement or substitute your private correspondence by letters to which your friends or members of your group append their signatures. Such correspondence all but forces acknowledgment, consideration, and perhaps even action.

b. Correspondence with a network may seem, at first glance, to be no more than the doubtful privilege of cranks and busy-bodies. For here, we might think, the individual voice is surely lost in the simultaneous, undifferentiated tumult of the millions. In fact, however, though we may count for less in one sense, we count here for more in another. Our discouragement stems partly from a misconception, an illusion, in regard to what a

network is. The illusion is the result, in radio as in other references, of the 'modern, impersonal, remote, and mammoth structure of operating enterprises. (In this connection, we might offer the psychologist an intriguing field of research. What, for the average man, would be the mental picture evoked by the word Standard Oil, or RCA, or, for that matter, NBC? Would it be a man, a building, a diagram, or a chart? Whatever it is, one might hazard the guess that the image is *not* likely to be personal.)

If our guess is right, it is likely that the ordinary listener conceives of a network as a great, monolithic structure impervious to the weather of public opinion, proof even against earthquakes of listener agitation. This conception is illusion, for it obscures the fact that networks are not in fact monolithic but are composed essentially of innumerable human bricks. Apart from their personnel, they are nothing. It is equally illusory to assume that this personnel is all of one mind. In every network are contending factions, conflicting interests. Correspondence is a means—and, if organized, a most effective means—of influencing a network's internal balance of power. It is testimony to be used by our friends within a network in an atmosphere where 'money talks'—but where the currency takes the form of listener preferences. There have been instances (and there could be many more) in which programs have been saved from discontinuance by listeners' correspondence. We have, at any rate, no right to declare our impotence until we have tested every available avenue of influence.

c. It would appear to be ignorance of the FCC's existence, rather than objections to it, that accounts for the meager correspondence addressed to it by listeners. The surveys already quoted show that a significant percentage of listeners look to government as a desirable protector of their interests on the air. Thirty per cent desire that the government insure that news is accurate; 23 per cent that it insure that controversial discussion is fairly balanced; 21 per cent that a reasonable amount of edu-

ational broadcasting take place over all stations.<sup>3</sup> Yet rarely have such views been communicated direct to the FCC, which has been left to act on behalf of listeners without encouragement and largely without criticism. This situation is disastrous to the effective operation of our system, which depends on the interlocking directorate of the three partners.

The best time for correspondence with the FCC is just prior to the date on which a station's license comes up for renewal, i.e. every three years. If the renewal of licenses is to be other than perfunctory (as it now is, except in rare instances), the Commission needs considered judgment of a station's stewardship by responsible members of the community. This judgment should come preferably from groups representative of various interests in the community, for the Commission cannot act on the whim of individual listeners.

It has been suggested that the FCC would do well to hold hearings on license renewal in the community itself, rather than in Washington. The hearings would thus become a local event to which the local press would give publicity, and witnesses would be spared the expense and inconvenience of a journey to the Capital. Whether by this or some other means, the need to associate listeners actively with the Commission's licensing activities is urgent. For the effective representation of radio's senior partner is at present even more farcical than that of the majority of shareholders at the annual meetings of our large corporations.

4. The Radio Listener's Council is an entity of which probably not one listener in a thousand has ever heard. This fact is not surprising, for few of these councils are in existence. It is, however, important to know about them since they represent probably the most promising means of educating radio's audience to its responsibilities. The cynic is likely to claim that democracy—even in the limited sense in which it as yet exists at all—survives in spite of, not because of, the people, and only

<sup>3</sup> Lazarsfeld & Kendall, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

through the almost superhuman efforts of a mere handful of devotees. (Most of us, alas, are idiots in the original, Greek meaning of that term—people who attend to their private affairs and let public affairs go hang.) This is altogether too true of radio, and the Listener's Council is one of the rare exceptions proving (i.e. testing) the rule.

Great, but as yet unrealized, possibilities for making radio truly a people's platform are available in the Radio Listener's Council. The idea of such councils is the federation of interest in radio of all social groups in a given community—independent of influence or financial support by radio stations. The functions of such a council may be thus summarized:

1. To collect and publicize essential facts on the present state of broadcasting.
2. To facilitate and encourage discriminative listening to worth-while programs.
3. To bring pressure on stations to eliminate abuses.
4. To voice the needs of the community by preparing blueprints of worth-while programs to be executed by a station.
5. To provide listeners with opportunity to meet and to discuss their interests in radio.
6. By means of bulletins and circulars to alert listeners to important developments in radio.
7. To carry its members' views to the Federal Communications Commission, whether with reference to matters of policy raised in public hearings before the FCC or to the renewal of a given station's license.
8. To influence not only radio but the press by correspondence and prepared articles on radio as a social force.

Three such independent councils, two of long standing, offer precedents for all to emulate: The Radio Council of Greater Cleveland, The Wisconsin Association for Better Radio Listening, and The Radio Listeners of Northern California. All three have been through their growing pains and have a wealth of information to offer on the know-how of organizing and holding the interest of members. All of them issue bulletins and guides

to their members, steering them to programs of proved value, keeping them informed on current happenings, and garnering the needs and opinions of individual members. All of them are watchdogs for the listener, ready and able to protest the abuse of air time and to promote its better use.

The growth of such councils is important. It is a community's best safeguard against the exploitation of the people's wave lengths and the surest guarantee of the consideration of its needs by radio stations. Nothing, perhaps, will more affect the future of broadcasting than knowledge by a station that, when its license comes up for renewal, there will be included in the docket an accurate and critical appraisal of its services, compiled by the community and presented by a Listener's Council in evidence before the FCC.<sup>4</sup>

It is quixotic to hope that the ordinary listener will become informed and active in the ways thus far enumerated other than over a long period of time. Nor is he likely to progress far by his own unaided effort. It is for this reason that we have stressed the importance of action in association with others. Two means remain to be noted by which his progressive understanding of radio's importance may be naturally and easily enhanced.

5. The first is the development of a responsible corps of radio critics and the parallel development of significant research. The critic is, among other things, the retail agent of research. He is also publicist (of programs available) and, in his own right, a commentator. He can set up signposts, for the listener to follow along the road to more discriminating choice and enjoyment of programs and to a broader appreciation of what is at stake in broadcasting.

The problem posed for him—by the amount and evanescence of all that goes out over the air—is not as serious as it seems at first sight. In the first place, the 'sameness,' the stereotyped

<sup>4</sup> This section on Listener's Councils is reproduced from *The Radio Listener's Bill of Rights* by Charles A. Siepmann, Freedom Pamphlet Series, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, New York, 1949.

character of much that is broadcast, reduces to manageable proportions the amount of matter calling for distinctive comment. (Up to a point the stereotype is inevitable. You cannot be original, and still less distinguished, for sixteen hours a day the whole year round.) In the second place, the publicizing and criticism of programs are only part of the critic's duties. He has wider fields to conquer, for radio (as we have seen) illustrates, in convenient miniature, many major problems and controversies of our time. Thus the intelligent radio critic is at once a student of political and social science, a psychologist, an educator, and a philosopher. In an age that compels us more and more to draw on others for knowledge and understanding, he can assume a leadership in the market place of thought that may prove epoch-making. For in radio a vast audience awaits him. Radio is everybody's business, a subject pre-eminent, perhaps, in the commonality of its interest.

The hostility of the press to radio as a dangerous competitor is slowly yielding to recognition of what has long since been demonstrated—that radio supplements rather than substitutes the function of the press and is in fact a recruiting ground for newspaper readers by increasing the number of those who are news-minded.<sup>5</sup> As this perennial hostility decreases, there should be room for more radio columnists dispensing useful criticism rather than mere chitchat. The popularity of such a responsible and intelligent columnist as John Crosby shows the possibilities for the extended reader-interest that radio provides. It is a pity that he has few peers, even in New York, and scarcely a colleague of even approximate calibre outside the city. Radio badly needs critics.

6. Last but not least is the role radio itself might play in educating listeners. The shocking ignorance about our system revealed in the studies sponsored by the National Association of Broadcasters shows the need. Radio bristles with controversy

<sup>5</sup> For confirmation see Lazarsfeld, Paul F., *Radio and the Printed Page*, Duell, Sloan, & Pearce, New York, 1940.



and lends itself to many-sided discussion. True, the Blue Book was discussed on at least one network, but against what background of familiarity with the facts and issues? In 1948 hearings on the FCC's 'Mayflower decision' raised the vital question of freedom of speech. Yet few listeners were acquainted by radio even that hearings were taking place, to say nothing of the variant points of view expressed. In the same year the National Association of Broadcasters finally completed a Code of Ethics governing the conduct of its members in broadcasting. More than a year was required to compile it, yet the listening public was never consulted. These examples show that much must be achieved before the industry's insistent claim that it relies on listeners for guidance can be accepted. Radio's confidence and clear conscience regarding its service to listeners will be demonstrated when networks and stations admit regular critics of radio to the air, thus fostering constructive interest in better programs.

## VI

### THE LISTENER IN AMERICA

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'The average person is surrounded today by ready made intellectual goods as he is by ready made foods, articles, and all kinds of gadgets. He has not the personal share in making either intellectual or material goods that his pioneer ancestors had. Consequently they knew better what they themselves were about, though they knew infinitely less concerning what the world at large was doing.'

—JOHN DEWEY

LEISURE is important, particularly today when for millions work is unrewarding other than in terms of dollars. It is in our leisure hours that we have opportunity to discover ourselves and to increase our stature as civilized people. Indeed, we might say that the measure of a given civilization is the amount of leisure it offers and the use to which this is put. It is the latter that is crucial.

Here in America radio is our main pastime. More than 90 per cent of American homes have at least one receiving set. Millions have several. The average man and woman spend more leisure hours in listening to the radio than in anything else—except sleeping. The poorer and the less educated we are, the more we listen—and naturally so. For radio—cheap, accessible, and generous in its provision for popular tastes—has come to be the poor man's library, his 'legitimate' theater, his vaudeville, his newspaper, and his club. Never before has he met so many

famous and interesting people, and never have these people been at once so friendly and so attentive to his wishes. Even a President has repeatedly addressed him as a friend!

'The proper study of mankind is man,' and such is the main object of our study in this book—man, primarily, in America. Radio's ubiquity, its variety of services, man-in-America's avid and almost universal use of them, and the extensive research of these uses provide us with unusual opportunities. We can use radio as a mirror in which to study the reflected face of John Q. Public.

To speak of the 'public,' except in a very rough and ready sense, however, is a snare and a delusion. People have almost nothing in common except their primal instincts. Even though radio can boast of a fairly full house (in terms of homes equipped with a receiving set), the house is never actually full. This is the first essential fact that the student of radio must grasp. A few simple illustrations may help.

1. 'Everybody' never listens at the same time.

2. While millions listen to the same program, millions of others are listening, by choice, to something else or, because they do not have a satisfactory choice, are not listening at all. (Under competitive pressure from television, radio has begun, belatedly, to study the habitual non-listener.)

3. Despite network operations, the range of choice varies for different listeners. Many are 'earthbound' in quite a narrow sense. Rural listeners are particularly limited in what they may choose to hear.

4. The time of day and other occupations condition the number of people who can listen, even if they want to, at a given hour. Daytime listening is a prerogative mostly of women, as late-nighttime listening is of insomniacs and night watchmen. Thus, radio's public is never whole. But outward circumstances are as nothing, in terms of their fragmentation of the listening public, as compared with tastes. There is broad agreement on a few points, marked disagreement on most.

## I. SHARED ATTITUDES

### 1. RADIO IN GENERAL

Listeners, by and large, think well of radio: 80 per cent believe that it is doing either an 'excellent' or a 'good' job.<sup>1</sup> This, alas, is somewhat less flattering than it sounds if we remember that 35 per cent never feel like criticizing when they listen. The public, apparently, is not exacting. Radio is such a boon that listeners hesitate to look the gift horse in the mouth. This throws interesting light on the poverty of many people's lives before the advent of radio; their resources for relaxation and enjoyment were meager.

### 2. NEWS

The majority of listeners regard radio as a reliable and convenient source of news; 76 per cent like to listen to the news in evening hours; 44 per cent use radio, rather than newspapers, as their main source of news.<sup>2</sup>

The listener's main criticism of radio news is that it is too brief and lacks detail, and that there is a scarcity of local news. (Listeners who are in this sense critical, though they are comparatively few, thus support the FCC's contention in its Blue Book that local stations are not adequately serving their community.) Regarding local news, 36 per cent of those with an opinion (in 1945) were critical. How radio can meet such criticism and still satisfy the public's voracious appetite for other types of programs is a nice point. In competitive broadcasting, which precludes concerted planning of programs on different wave lengths, the dilemma is particularly marked.

<sup>1</sup> These and the following statistics are from Lazarsfeld and Field, *The Listener Looks at Radio*, Chapel Hill, 1946, and/or Lazarsfeld and Kendall, *Radio Listening in America*, Prentice-Hall, New York, 1948.

<sup>2</sup> In the first NAB survey, in 1945, 61 per cent was the figure. Dr. Lazarsfeld thus accounts for the change: 'Now that the war is over, it is possible that news has become less vital to the average citizen or that he is likely to think so; therefore, we can expect the relative importance of radio to have declined somewhat.' Lazarsfeld and Kendall, *op. cit.*, pp. 34, 35.

### 3. COMEDY

In addition to news, only one other program category has an equally general appeal—comedy and variety. Some critics complain that programs of this type are stereotyped and dull—in the sense that they employ routine formulas, vary little over the years, and pull out only a few stops in the register of entertainment. We should notice, however, that, valid as this criticism may be, it is as much a reflection on listeners as on radio, for in this field of service especially radio is highly responsive to public opinion. Here is a good example of how easily we seem to grow to like what we get, of how we tend to adapt to, rather than control, environmental influences.

News has one other near rival for the crown of popularity, and that is music; 76 per cent of listeners like some kind of music on the air. But here tastes differ widely, and as a category music is too broad to be informative; we shall, therefore, revert to the subject when we consider differential preferences.

### 4. ADVERTISING

We referred in Chapter 1 to the interesting history of public attitudes toward advertising, perhaps the most striking of all examples of public adjustment. Opinion in this matter has veered from north to south, from active dislike to ready tolerance and even to positive enjoyment: 32 per cent, apparently, are in favor of programs with advertising, 35 per cent 'don't particularly mind them,' and only 31 per cent either do not like them (22 per cent) or would eliminate them (9 per cent).

How far can an industry dependent for its livelihood on advertising afford to be complacent over the evident resentment of almost a third of its customers? This question is the more pointed for the fact that 'opponents of advertising feel so very strongly and are so articulate in promulgating their opinions. On the other hand, the defenders of commercials make mild, friendly statements when questioned directly. . . . But the main

danger is yet to be mentioned. . . —attitudes toward advertising color what people feel about radio as a whole. The more irritated people are toward commercials the less likely they are to react favorably to radio as a whole.’<sup>3</sup> The problem, however, is not insurmountable. Very few (9 per cent) desire the destruction of our system of broadcasting by taking all advertising off the air. Reform is possible if radio is prepared to take account of the main causes of criticism. Complaint, where it exists, is that commercials are too long and too frequent, that they are boring, that unwarranted claims are made, that social taboos are violated, and that unpleasant devices are employed to get our attention.

These facts and figures are the results of personal interviews with a carefully selected, representative cross section of ‘the public.’ They are subject to qualification on a number of counts, but there is no reason to doubt their approximate accuracy. They pose several questions: What accounts for these shared attitudes? On what evidence or experience do they rest? What, from a social point of view, does all this amount to? Would a similar survey conducted in some other country, with a different system of broadcasting, produce similar results, and if not, why not?

However, there is even more evidence (far more than we can here cite), resulting from similar, as well as variant, interview techniques. One such variant allows of a much fuller and more intensive exploration of the minds of the persons interviewed. They are not asked predetermined questions (which inevitably circumscribe and reduce the spontaneity of the response) but are encouraged to describe their experiences in their own way. Only thereafter are prescribed questions introduced. It is to an inquiry of this kind that we now turn for more light on the public’s state of mind as once more revealed in the context of radio—though not as confined to radio or even, necessarily, deriving from its influence alone. We have always to remember

<sup>3</sup> Lazarsfeld & Field, *op. cit.*, pp. 24, 25.

that our predispositions antedate radio; it is *our* image it reflects, though at times with such hilarious or grotesque distortion as occurs in the hall of mirrors at a fun fair.

On 21 September 1943 a beloved star of radio, Kate Smith, did and achieved something unprecedented.<sup>4</sup> Between 8 o'clock in the morning and 2 a.m. the next day, she broadcast, on 65 successive occasions, an impassioned appeal to the public to buy War Bonds. The response was phenomenal. By the time her broken and exhausted voice was heard for the last time, thirty-nine million dollars' worth of bond pledges had been registered by listeners. A sample of her audience was subsequently interviewed by men and women trained in psychology and sociology. We summarize below some of their main findings and hypothetical interpretations, selected for their bearing on the subject we set out to probe in this book—the state of mind of our society and its relevance to the operation of broadcasting.

One of the major discoveries of this inquiry was that the success of Kate Smith's radio marathon was due not simply to well-chosen propaganda stimuli (i.e. to persuasive reasons given for buying War Bonds now) but to two factors in listeners' attitudes stemming from a much wider social context. 'Listeners responded differently in terms of their constructions of "what Kate Smith was really like." Other responses clearly involved reference to the "kind of world in which we live".' It is with the first of these two factors that we are here concerned.

<sup>4</sup> This summary account is culled from the pages of Merton, Robert, *Mass Persuasion*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1946. Unlike the study previously cited, the sample chosen for this inquiry was unfortunately not nationwide. The cost proved prohibitive. The study comprised 100 intensive interviews and a briefer polling interview with 978 New Yorkers. For this and other reasons the extent to which the conclusions are 'representative' remains a matter for surmise. That they are very broadly so, however, would seem to be established by the corroborative evidence of other studies in and out of the field of radio.

## 5. INTEGRITY

Many respondents attached enormous importance to what they considered Kate Smith's integrity. What grounds had they for this belief? Here was a person unknown except as a radio performer, a disembodied voice, invested by listeners with the aura almost of saintliness. What occasioned this 'projection'? The investigators' interpretation of this extraordinary phenomenon is suggestive.

The enormous importance ascribed to her integrity reflected our subjects' conviction, partly based on experience and magnified by consequent anxiety, that they are often the objects of exploitation, manipulation and control by others who have their own private interests at heart. The emphasis on this theme reflects a social disorder. . . . It is a product of a society in which "salesmanship"—in the sense of selling through deft pretense of concern with the other fellow—has run riot. Only against this background of skepticism and distrust stemming from a prevalently manipulative society were we able to interpret our subjects' magnified "will to believe" in a public figure who is thought to incarnate the virtues of sincerity, integrity, good fellowship and altruism. . . . The very same society that produces this sense of alienation and estrangement generates in many a craving for reassurance, an acute need to believe, a flight into faith. For her adherents, Smith has become the object of their faith. She is seen as genuine by those who seek redemption from the spurious.<sup>5</sup>

We have no proof that this is one of those shared attitudes we are now engaged in listing. But if it is a valid description of a cause-effect relationship,<sup>6</sup> we have ample means—through radio and other media of mass communication—of testing the danger of its becoming such an attitude, as revealed in the prevalence of manipulative techniques. Individuals, according to our creed, are ends in themselves; to use them as instruments is to belie that creed.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 143.

<sup>6</sup> A similar interpretation of the effects of a manipulative, money-centered society is to be found in Mannheim, Karl, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*, Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1940.



Should we assume, however, that such a social disorder is widespread, it might be argued that this is refuted by our previous evidence that commercial advertising is widely popular. But the contradiction is less real than apparent. For it to be real, we should have to assume that all, or most, radio advertising is unscrupulously manipulative—which it is not. Moreover, the more deep-seated the people's belief that they are constant victims of commercial duplicity, the greater is their desire (and therefore their tendency) to invest those who betray them with that virtue that people wish them to possess. It is thus that the human psyche, when uncontrolled by reason, ties the noose by which to hang itself.

Kate Smith is here a case in point. People invested her with virtues that they had no valid reason to believe she possessed. She may have meant every word she said, but there was nothing in the circumstances to justify belief that she did so. The realities of the situation were simply these: a famous radio star took a script, conceived and written by others, and gave it the impassioned rendering of an accomplished actress. The situation was essentially contrived, as the product was, on the face of it, synthetic. And before we hasten to condemn Kate Smith—should she *not* have been personally identified with all the words she spoke—let us remember that some of the inducements dangled before the listener to buy bonds were themselves spurious and that the true purpose of the drive—to prevent inflation—was sedulously concealed.

## 6. THE SENSE OF BELONGING

We shall have frequent occasion to refer to the decreased 'sense of belonging' that modern conditions of life have produced; it is part of 'the curse of bigness.' It is already a far cry to the days of the town meeting and to times when men felt themselves personally involved in the direction of public affairs. It is not, therefore, surprising that one of the compelling factors in the Kate Smith campaign was the welcome feeling it induced

among individual listeners of joining with others in a common effort. 'It provided surcease from individuated, self-centered activity and from the sense that the war was too big for the individual's effort to count.'

We need no statistics to prove the almost universal desire for such significant participation. Radio here simply offers a convenient example of a shared attitude. But it is also a powerful, integrating influence in this regard.

A striking example of how radio can evoke a sense of significant participation is its use of the 'documentary' technique, by means of which listeners are made aware of important aspects of our life that present problems for solution through intelligent social participation. Blame for the fact that these programs do not as yet command mammoth audiences or actually result in widespread participation cannot be laid primarily at radio's door. Radio, it would appear, is still too new for us to have learned to harness it successfully to the wagon of co-operative social action. It remains, and more's the pity, an 'outrider.' One of the major problems of our time is not merely the control of the mass media of communication, but their effective use and integration with other educational resources directed at restoring that sense of significant participation that so many people appear to have lost.

#### 7. SERVICE AT A PRICE

Some claim that ours is a 'money culture,' that the 'almighty dollar' provides our main motivating force, and that altruism is conspicuous by its absence. That some among us are thus motivated brooks no denial. To what extent 'dollar preoccupation' constitutes a shared attitude is not, as yet, susceptible to proof. But a rich society, like a rich man, has always to ask itself how far the inducement of high monetary reward takes precedence over more weighty considerations in matters of vital decision.

How far, for example, is the reluctance to enter, or to stay in, government service influenced by the greater monetary inducements offered by private industry? Or, to take two examples

from radio itself, is it fair to claim that the radio industry has subordinated public service to a consideration of pure profit? What is the general effect on listeners of radio's 'give away' programs? To what extent does the 'pot of gold' psychology distort our general sense of values?

Social statistics are not of primary importance here. The question is most pertinent and most capable of being accurately answered as we apply it to ourselves. It is primarily a private question but with important public implications. It raises the abiding problem of the extent to which we are dominated by, rather than ourselves determining, social mores.

The Kate Smith study throws some light on this question. One of the prevailing convictions among her listeners, which contributed to their strong attachment to her, was that she was not paid for her all-day broadcasts. 'This readiness, in our commercial civilization, to serve without pay was taken as the very touchstone of sincerity and disinterestedness. The swift astonishment with which informants looked upon this disinterested act only expresses their belief in its rarity . . . and since she was unremunerated, reasoned our informants, it follows that what she had to say was genuine, heartfelt and true.'<sup>7</sup>

#### 8. CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

Through decades during which ours was still an expanding economy and the frontier was still 'open,' the success of the private-enterprise system was instrumental in creating a shared attitude peculiar to America. Even the poorest and most recent immigrant believed that here, at any rate, the ladder of opportunity was available for all to climb. This belief was reflected in social relations that were—and to some degree remain—more free from condescension and manifestations of social 'hauteur' than in most European countries. (Kate Smith is in this sense a 'regular guy.' 'She's not high hat, nor stuck up. She mingles with everyone.')<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Merton, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-5.

It was not until the great depression that large numbers of Americans came to realize that 'vertical mobility' in our society had become markedly reduced and that, as Robert and Helen Lynd showed in their study of Middletown, the ladder of opportunity had lost some of its lower rungs. What had once been a tangible prospect became for many 'the stuff that dreams are made on.' But the myth that social classes do not exist in America persisted and continues, even now, to be fostered, as in advertisement appeals to the virtues of rugged individualism in this land of golden opportunity.<sup>8</sup> Despite this, class consciousness has grown and is reflected to a significant degree in the attitudes of those interviewed in the Kate Smith survey.

It is of some interest that forty-one of our hundred informants spontaneously alluded to their own or Smith's class position in discussing their response to her bond drive. . . It is within such a social context, apparently, that Smith takes on special significance for her following. . . She is viewed as a prototype of the American saga: an individual who has climbed from the lower reaches of the economic ladder virtually to the topmost rung. . . Not only does Smith's career testify to rapid mobility in what might otherwise be experienced as a world of contracting opportunity, but informants manifest a vicarious pride in her achievements. . . Reflected glory becomes a source, however indirect and tenuous it may seem to the observer, of personal gratification. . . And these devoted followers seize upon every testimonial to their vicariously experienced success. The celebrated Smith, we are told, is free to move among the great. Even the most lofty in station acknowledge her attainments. "You know, I heard from what you really call reliable sources, that President Roosevelt doesn't miss her programs on Friday. . . She was a guest there, you know, when Queen what's-a-name was there."<sup>9</sup>

Here are three matters of great interest to reflect upon: (1) How far may we identify this aspect of Smith-idolatry with the tendency we have already mentioned to equate the notion of success in life with moneymaking? And what do we de-

<sup>8</sup> Dr. Gallup in his book, *The Pulse of America*, records that when asked what social class they belong to, most respondents describe themselves as 'middle class.'

<sup>9</sup> Merton, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-5.

duce therefrom respecting social values and social education? (2) What light does this study throw upon modern American idolatry in general? Who is the modern hero? In what role is he cast and in what garb is he clothed as compared with the heroes of past generations? What does the change connote and how does it affect the means of influencing people?<sup>10</sup> What is today the decisive frame of personal reference, if we seek to involve men's loyalty? And, as we venture into the larger world of international communications, how will these native patterns of outlook serve us in the organized persuasion of other countries that ours is the preferable way of life? (3) How, finally, are we to evaluate the social and psychological significance of this seemingly widespread indulgence in vicarious emotions of all sorts? The opportunity for its exercise has been enormously increased and deliberately encouraged—by both radio and the films. Here is a phenomenon distinctively modern—life experienced, and joys, consolations, pride indulged in, at a level of pure fantasy. What does it mean and what does it forebode? This is not a question to be answered 'off the top of one's head' or to be summarily dismissed with an impatient comment on the public's morbid frame of mind. For it is a nice question, not easily to be settled, whether the health of our society at

<sup>10</sup> For some light on this subject see Frank Luther Mott's study of the history of bestsellers, *Golden Multitudes*, Macmillan, 1948. See also 'Biographies in Popular Magazines,' a study by Dr. Leo Lowenthal in *Radio Research 1942-3* by Lazarsfeld and Stanton, Duell Sloan and Pearce, 1943, which notes a shift during the present century from interest in the 'idols of production' to the 'idols of consumption' as reflected by the distribution of the subjects of biographical sketches in popular magazines. Not only was there an increase in entertainers at the expense of politicians and business magnates, but the entertainers themselves were drawn less and less from the serious arts. 'The first quarter of the century cherishes biography in terms of our openminded, liberal society which really wants to know something about its own leading figures on the decisive social, commercial and cultural fronts. . . Today the hero selection corresponds to needs quite different from those of genuine information. They seem to lead to a dream world of the masses who no longer are capable or willing to conceive of biographies primarily as a means of orientation and education. . . The leisure time period seems to be the new social riddle on which extensive reading and studying has to be done.' (pp. 512-13, 517-18.)

this specific point of time (judgment *sub specie aeternitatis* would be quite different) is thereby served or seriously impaired.

Thus, for instance, it is possible that though the motives of those who deliberately cater to this propensity may be purely selfish and, as such, unworthy, the social consequences may not always be as harmful as would appear—may, indeed, correspond to the momentary relief, deriving from administration of a drug, experienced by a patient whose final and total cure involves long treatment.

The importance of myths in the growth of all societies cannot be overlooked. Man has always had myths—indeed, he has tended to discard them only when the contradictions between appearance and reality became too painfully obvious. But this has in general merely led to the invention of new myths. Myths will persist as long as ‘we look before and after, and pine for what is not.’ Our modern myths are of this order—an effort to dispose of the painful disparity between things as they are and things as we would have them be.

Now the sophisticated are always impatient to dispense with myths, having themselves no use for them. For those still in thrall, however, any such abrupt breaking of the spell may prove disastrous. Myths are better not exploded until some more secure and solid substitute has been provided. The right time and the right pace are crucial considerations. Thus the indulgence, through radio, films, and other outlets, of vicarious experience *may* be a means of smoothing men’s paths over the difficult terrain of rapid transition and wholesale adaptation which we are now traversing.

However, those who provide scope for such indulgence must know what they are doing. Their practice must conform to such standards of professional integrity as those of the modern medical profession. The men of radio are in a sense doctors of the human soul. They must so conduct themselves, with modern skill and selfless devotion—not as the medicine men of a primitive tribe. Moreover, they must offer these indulgences in such gradu-

ated doses as slowly to attenuate the myth, not to consolidate its hold over men's minds. To do otherwise is to precipitate the crisis—and that disintegration of human personality—which comes when men suddenly discover that they are thinking in one world while living in quite another.

## II. DIFFERENTIATED ATTITUDES

We are neither as individual nor as independent in our judgments as we like to think. We said earlier that we have little in common except our primal instincts, and this is true, if 'we' is intended to mean all of us—the whole nation or mankind. But assemble us in smaller and more carefully designated groups, and we display, in a surprising number of respects, an embarrassingly united front. We conform to type. Environmental and other influences cling to us as ivy to a tree, and with the same suffocating effect. As the 'ivy' gets a grip on us, our individuality is proportionately diminished. It takes a very tough, upstanding tree to survive in full bloom.

Sociologists have long known this fact. To them we are specimens, each with a group label on which the known characteristics of the group are neatly tabulated. A few samples of influences tending toward the creation of group attitudes may serve as a prelude to our study of their exemplification in radio. People tend to differentiated group attitudes according to (1) the place or region in which they live; (2) their education and economic status; (3) their age; and (4) their sex.<sup>11</sup>

Such factors, either singly or in combination, account to a large extent for variant program preferences expressed by different listeners. Some of the differences are minor, some are striking and of great social significance.

<sup>11</sup> For striking evidence of the effects of these four factors on political outlook see Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, *The People's Choice*, *op. cit.*

## 1. LOCALE

The accident of place affects us in innumerable ways. The way we speak, for instance, betrays our place of origin. A skilled student of regional and local speech patterns can tell, by listening to us, not only where we were born and raised but where we have since sojourned. Inhabitants of different regions tend also to be differentiated in their outlook. The Middle West, we say, is isolationist; we speak of the solid South and know what we mean thereby; Vermont votes Republican. Another marked distinction is that between town and country dwellers. The whole tempo and rhythm of their life varies; their main pre-occupations and pastimes are different.

Radio and films have proved great levelers, but we are not yet all cut from the same cloth. Thus radio's comedy and variety programs have less appeal to farmers and to people in small towns than to city listeners. Rural dwellers display slightly less interest in popular music than do townfolk. Religious programs, on the other hand, are more popular in small towns and rural districts; 46 per cent of country dwellers express a preference for radio plays as compared with 60 per cent of listeners in large cities.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC STATUS

We have already mentioned the growth of class distinctions and class consciousness and its effect on people's values and outlook. This is a subject with wide ramifications. The amount of money we possess and the extent of education that we get tend, unfortunately, to coincide. From this fact we derive two broad generalizations about radio listening so consistent and so nearly universal as almost to constitute scientific laws: (1) the poorer and less educated the listener, the more he listens—but

<sup>12</sup> These facts are culled from Lazarsfeld & Kendall, *Radio Listening in America*, *op. cit.*



(2) the less he listens to radio's more serious programs.<sup>13</sup> In no category of group attitudes, except that of sex, are such marked distinctions of preference to be found. We may list some examples:

a. While virtually all listeners tune into the news at some time, the least educated rely most on radio as their main source of information; 62 per cent of those with a grammar-school education do so, as compared with only 39 per cent among the college-educated.

b. About two thirds of those who have gone to college and who live in a big city (here two factors—education and locale—combine) enjoy classical music. Only about one tenth of those with a grammar-school education and with homes in the country or small towns do so.

c. Preference for popular music, curiously, occurs on middle ground. It is the high-school graduate who here piles in the largest vote—49 per cent, as compared with only 34 per cent among grammar-school, and 40 per cent among college-educated adults.

d. There is, as we have already seen, widespread ignorance at all social levels about our system of broadcasting. It is hardly surprising that it should be greatest among the least educated. Knowledge that government has anything to do with 'the operation of radio stations' (the term operation, as here used, is admittedly obscure and liable to misunderstanding) exists among 70 per cent of those with at least a high-school education but among only 44 per cent of those with less.

e. We may mention, finally, a class characteristic, which relates only indirectly to radio itself, but which emerges clearly from that study of radio listeners—the Kate Smith survey—from which we have previously quoted. Readers of Philip Wylie's *Generation of Vipers* will remember how mercilessly he scored the peculiarly American phenomenon that he describes as 'mom worship.' The

<sup>13</sup> For a fuller treatment of this subject, see Lazarsfeld, *Radio and the Printed Page*, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-47.

powerful hold on our imagination of the 'mother image' is well known to psychologists. It is curious (and perhaps a revealing instance of the power of the disembodied voice of radio to superimpose appearance on reality) that Kate Smith should have evoked that image so strongly, for she is unmarried. Yet a significant proportion of respondents spontaneously commented on her motherliness. What is socially interesting is the popular connotation of the term. It appears to be associated with a character 'clean' and without blemish and typifying traditional virtues. 'You never hear anything wrong with her. I think she's the old fashioned kind of girl like they used to have in the 1890's.' Associated with this unsullied character, according to Merton, is the role of guide or mentor. 'In extreme instances, she is endowed with omniscience and understanding. Now, what is here of peculiar interest is that this mother image occurs more frequently among the poor—irrespective of their educational attainments. One may hazard the hypothesis that low income is more likely to produce a sense of dependence and need for the kind of sympathetic solicitude represented by the maternal figure. . . In the modern Pantheon, Kate Smith is the goddess of the household.<sup>14</sup> To the significance of such dependence we shall allude in Chapter IX when we discuss modern propaganda.

### 3. AGE AND YOUTH

'Life,' said Samuel Butler, 'is one long process of growing tired.' How far this process colors the outlook of those of us who must admit to getting elderly is anybody's guess. But there can be no doubt that there are marked differences between the tastes and opinions of old and young. It used to be safe (and sound) to claim that a youngster who was not a radical must have something wrong with him. Youth, it was held, was impetuous, impatient, and reformist, vitally interested in affairs and eager for change. It is less safe to say so nowadays and, at least with reference to public affairs, apparently not so sound.

<sup>14</sup> Merton, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-151.

Radio is fortunately too young to be cited as evidence in the dreary but persistent argument that our youth is not what it used to be. Radio is, however, an illuminating source of evidence that, as between old and young, tastes differ markedly. What, apart from varying degrees of vitality, accounts for this difference is worthy of careful thought. Following are some distinctions between the radio preferences of old and young, and because young people are more important (and sometimes more lovable), we shall concentrate our attention on them.

a. Popular Music

We have already seen that in this instance education seems to condition preferences, but age is the more predominant factor. The pleasure of 72 per cent of listeners under 30 in popular music is shared by only 22 per cent of those over 50 years of age. On the other hand, 'old, familiar music' is more popular with older listeners.

b. Religion

Of the decline in the influence of religion we shall have more to say in Chapter IX. Here we must realize the striking fact that the older and the less educated a population group is, the more will they be likely to listen to religious programs. The young—and more particularly the 'better' educated among them—care little for religion on the air.<sup>15</sup>

c. Public Affairs

Here youth had better take note. The younger people in this country are less concerned with public affairs than the older. This is so disconcerting a finding that we are tempted to question its validity. But it is corroborated by independent research findings. Thus, in an intensive study (of reaction to the propaganda flow in the presidential campaign of 1940) in Erie

<sup>15</sup> But from this fact we cannot legitimately deduce that youth is 'irreligious.' *Fortune* magazine, in December 1948, asked a representative sample of the public, 'Do you think there is a God who rewards and punishes after death?' Of respondents 18-25 years old, 74 per cent said 'yes.' Grade-school-educated respondents numbered 78 per cent in their affirmative reply, and 69 per cent of college-educated youth gave similar replies.

County, Ohio, it was discovered that 'on each educational level the older people are more interested in the election than the younger ones. This is a result which should not be passed by lightly. . . The difference between American and European experience in this regard is clear; in pre-war Europe political movements on the part of youth were very active.'<sup>16</sup>

The examples thus far given have been of subjects in which young and old alike might be expected to have a common, though variant, degree of interest. But no study of the listener in America would be complete that did not consider youth in its own right—and the feverish concern of the mass media of communication to exploit this market of distinctive tastes and interests.

We are all aware of the enormous output—and consumption—of printed matter labeled 'For Youth Only.' Radio and films have had less opportunity to play variations on the theme of youth's more specialized interests,<sup>17</sup> and children have therefore tended to encroach on the preserves of their elders, their own parents included. (Some critics claim that this has been made all the easier by the generally infantile fare served up for adults.) It may be the embarrassed recognition that they are themselves (as co-listeners and movie-goers with their children) to this extent 'accessories before the fact' that accounts in part for the violence with which some parents have condemned radio and films as corrupters of our youth.

There is certainly room for criticism and even, perhaps, for very serious concern, but we have to await the findings of far more careful and extensive research than is yet available before we can be sure. Condemnation, unsupported by evidence, creates more heat than light. But this is no reason why, in the meantime,

<sup>16</sup> Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, *The People's Choice*, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-5.

<sup>17</sup> Perhaps films should not here be bracketed with radio, for movie-going is pre-eminently a youthful avocation. Nineteen-year-olds are the most devoted movie-goers. The passion continues throughout the twenties but after 30 diminishes markedly and progressively. More people over 35 never attend a movie than ever go to one.

sound criticism should be withheld. The perennial controversy, now waxing, now waning, persists—with scant evidence adduced and an embarrassing division of opinion. Thus the Harvard Report on the Training of English Teachers speaks with concern (but without proof) about the debasing influence on youth of the mass media; a child psychiatrist of distinction, Dr. Loretta Bender, claims (with the support of some, but not all, of her associates) that comic books and radio thrillers—and even gangster films—provide, on the whole, a healthy and harmless outlet for children's aggressive instincts.

But there are some students of the problem who are in less of a hurry to jump to conclusions. Their research throws some interesting light on the question with which we are here concerned—the habits and preferences of young listeners. A comparatively recent study<sup>18</sup> of high-school students in New York tells us something of what we here want to know. But before we survey its findings, let us explore the ground for ourselves and advance some tentative hypotheses.

Despite the prophets of the doom of youth, who in each succeeding generation depress us with their moans, it would appear that young people, like people in general, do not differ greatly as 'time marches on.' The youth of all time appears to be prone to romance, adventure, hero worship, and exciting incidents; youth likes to laugh and loves mischief. What varies with time is the raw material from which youth extracts these precious ores. Until our day the main source material (apart from what the young got from fun among themselves) was the book and the magazine. Now radio and films and television are added. What are the consequent main differences as they affect youth's habits and preferences?

1. In books (as with the more modern adjuncts) what will vary with time in the *mise en scène*, the plot, the characters, which will tend to take on local color, to draw on the contem-

<sup>18</sup> Sterner, Alice P., *Radio, Motion Picture and Reading Interests*, Bureau of Publications, Columbia University, New York, 1947.

porary world. (Consider the influence of the railway engine on books for younger children.)

2. A second variation will have reference to what we might call the 'center of gravity of emotional emphasis.' In Victorian times it was moralistic and sentimental. In our day it is—but let the reader judge for himself.

3. The third, and by far the most important, difference is accessibility. Our grandparents had little that was readily accessible, and those who look back with tender longings on the past are wont to say that they were thus healthily thrown back on their own personal resources. It is with respect to accessibility that modern youth is most sharply to be differentiated in his circumstances. For youth today has, as the French say, *un embarras de richesse*. We are far from knowing the actual consequences of this situation, but we can speculate, at least, on some possibilities.

The deluge of print, pictures, and sound may well result in (a) a disproportionate (and possibly a wasteful) absorption of youth's time and (b), because of certain peculiar characteristics of both films and radio, a disproportionate absorption and excitation of the emotions. The combination of these two (coupled with the example of parents) may conceivably result in (c) the acquisition of habits of mind and patterns of emotional responsiveness that make of youth not builders of a brave new world, but limp and emasculated exemplars of that propensity to fantasy and myth that we have earlier noted as characteristic of some of their elders. (d) Youth is particularly vulnerable to one danger in all mass communication—the standardization of the product and the development of stereotypes. (Our evaluation of mass communication must here be clearly differentiated from that of other forms of mass production. Standardization of material goods is, up to a point, a convenience. Standardization of ideas and of patterns of enjoyment involves a price, paid in the reduced scope for individual self-expression and self-discovery, that is too high for some of its admitted advantages.) Youth is

entitled to, and dependent for its full flowering on, the widest possible exposure to the varieties of intellectual and emotional experience. It is less the demoralization that may conceivably result from steady addiction to 'The Lone Ranger' and 'Superman' and their film equivalents than the limitation of experience involved in such total immersion that is the true bone of contention.

Let us now observe youth in action and see how relevant are these considerations. If a group of New York high-school students may be regarded as not atypical of their contemporaries in Dallas, Texas or Portland, Maine, it would seem that the 'menace' of the modern media is at least not that generally ascribed to them. The menace is there, but some loud-voiced critics, hot on the trail of radio, films, and comic books, appear to be barking up the wrong tree. For apparently 'to adolescents print, radio, still pictures or motion pictures are not so attractive in themselves as for the material that they present.'<sup>19</sup> In other words, the attraction among *interests* is greater than the attraction among *media*. 'It is the theme, not the medium, which is important to young people.'

And what are the favorite themes? 'Of the three popular themes—adventure, humor and love—adventure is the favorite with adolescents, humor is a close second, and the love theme is very popular with high school girls; but a close relationship exists among themes.'

But, as we have by now learned, youth is only one of many factors conditioning tastes and attitudes. Education and wealth (or lack of either) and sex operate on us simultaneously, and youth is not exempt from their differentiating influence. How do these factors differentiate our New York high-school students? The answer is—virtually not at all.

Radio tastes of high school pupils are, it appears, quite homogeneous. In fact . . . there is a greater degree of similarity in the choice of radio programs than in the choice of titles in most of the

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

other media. . . There are few sex differences in the choice of the fifteen (most popular) programs. . . The differences in listening patterns are only slightly influenced by intelligence and socio-economic status. . . Dull pupils are not the only ones who listen to the radio a great deal: bright adolescents listen just as much. Youth from good homes do not go to the movies any oftener or less often than youth from poor homes. Boys do not read more comic strips than girls. In the earlier high school years both dull and bright pupils read the same number of funny books. The pupils who make good marks in school do not read any more books for pleasure than do the pupils who make poor marks.<sup>20</sup>

Among our tentative hypotheses was the suggestion that the easy accessibility of radio and films involved the danger of a disproportionate absorption of youth's time through habitual radio-listening or movie-going. Though by no means typical, the following account of two adolescents' movie life shows the consequence of a habit indulged by many adolescents.

An interesting aspect of the problem of too frequent attention at motion pictures on the part of many adolescents is presented by the cinema pattern of two pupils. Rose, a senior of seventeen with average intelligence and fair grades, lived in a good home. . . During the week of the diary record, she went to the movies three times with boy friends. . . Apparently Rose was willing to see any film, although she was capable of careful discrimination among them. Chester, a sophomore of sixteen with high intelligence and an honor roll average, came from a fair home. Like Rose, he saw many movies, almost twice as many as the mean of the group. . . Chester was very discriminating in his rating of films. Although he invariably rated romantic pictures as very poor, he saw them all. Apparently a very poor film was more attractive to him than a good product in any other medium. These two pupils preferred to see any picture, no matter what it was, rather than spend time on other media.<sup>21</sup>

These are extraordinary and in some ways disturbing revelations. They present a devastating picture of a stereotype, a human robot conditioned in its habits and divested of all semblance of individuality.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 35, 36, 65.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.



#### 4. SEX

In discussing sex differentials we propose to concentrate on women, partly because they are more numerous than men, partly because their attitudes to radio (and their general attitudes, as revealed through radio) have been more thoroughly studied; partly, too, because, as we shall see, some of their attitudes are vitally related to our central theme—the well-being of democracy. From a democratic point of view, it appears (if we are to trust the statisticians) that women are a serious liability, and from a psychological and social point of view, they constitute a major problem. We men are tardily and imperfectly beginning to realize what we have done to women; the understanding of this situation should provide some clue of what we must do next.

a. If ignorance and indifference to public affairs are threats to the successful functioning of democracy, women, as compared with men, are a menace. Their unconcern with politics is more marked than that of men.<sup>22</sup> This is reflected in their likes and dislikes of radio programs. Only 26 per cent of women express a liking for evening talks or discussions about public issues; in the daytime greater preference is expressed for ten other program categories, with only 17 per cent of women favoring public issues. When it comes to knowledge of our system of broadcasting, women again lag behind the men, woefully misinformed as are many of the latter; the question of government's concern with radio's operations is answered correctly by 70 per cent of men but by only 44 per cent of women with a high-school or college education.

<sup>22</sup> In the Erie County study referred to earlier, 33 per cent of the men but only 23 per cent of the women expressed great interest in the 1940 presidential election. "Not only is it true that women feel no compulsion to vote, but some actually consider aloofness a virtue. Remarks such as these were not infrequent. "I don't care to vote. Voting is for the men." "I think men should do the voting and the women should stay home and take care of their work". . . Changes in the mores have lagged behind changes in legislation." Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

b. A far more important sex distinction is that relating to the role of the emotions as they determine attitudes and conduct. This is too complex a subject to examine exhaustively but there is one aspect of it that is particularly pertinent to radio and that is important enough to warrant somewhat lengthy treatment. It has to do with what the psychologist calls 'identification.'

We have seen how (and why) Kate Smith's public (which contained more women than men) 'identified' itself with her. Her case is not unique. 'Identification' is a characteristic of crowd psychology which mass communication has made widely prevalent, and we shall more fully appreciate its social significance if we understand its psychological origins. 'The common factor in all such identification publics is the release of frustrated attitudes and feelings of inferiority. . . The idol generally epitomizes the frustrated aims and ambitions of the individual.'<sup>23</sup>

We have already observed how much there is in modern life to occasion personal frustration. Women, as compared with men, are peculiarly subject to this strain, and this fact raises the important and pressing question of their status and role in modern society. Their propensity to identification, or what Mannheim terms 'mass ecstasy,' is manifested early; it begins in their teens.

A striking example of it, which has provoked much comment, is the idolatry by teen-agers of the radio and screen star, Frank Sinatra. In 1947 it was estimated that he had 40 million fans, most of them girls in their middle teens. 'Sinatra Clubs,' with an average membership of 200, numbered about 2000; his fan mail ran to some 5000 letters a week. These fervent (and sometimes hysterical) devotees appear to have been dazzled by his way of life, wishing that they could share it. They rationalized the glaring and obvious distinction between his lot and theirs by persuading themselves that he was, if not in his wealth, at least in his family relations much like themselves. 'I think you

<sup>23</sup> Katz, Daniel, and Shanek, Richard L., *Social Psychology*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1938.

are the most average family in the United States,' wrote one admirer, 'and therein lies your greatness.'

As with Kate Smith, his 'sincerity' was greatly prized, particularly as expressed in his interest and concern for adolescents, because teen-age girls, it appears, suffer from a great sense of neglect. In a 'Why I Like Frank Sinatra' contest conducted by a radio station one competitor wrote: 'I think he is one of the greatest things that ever happened to Teen Age America. We were the kids that never got much attention, but he's made us feel like we're something. . . Most adults think we don't need any consideration. . . He gives us sincerity in return for our faithfulness.'

Like Kate Smith, again, 'The Voice' is (or was) regarded as guide and mentor and endowed with virtual omniscience. Teenagers submitted their problems for his solution; they patterned their conduct on his. His campaigns for interracial tolerance were enthusiastically supported, and the fact that he backed President Roosevelt seemed good enough reason for them to sport campaign buttons marked 'Frankie's for F.D.R. and so are we.'

Like Kate Smith's bond-drive effort Sinatra's active interest and participation in public affairs had the persuasive effect of 'propaganda of the deed.' Here was a film star who took action and thus deserved favorable comparison with another idol of the screen (who shall be nameless) who 'hasn't done a darn thing for anybody except sit around and look cute.'

If 'Sinatra-worship' were exceptional, it might be attributed to war-time conditions, but many parallel and current manifestations will occur to the reader. Nor is such identification peculiar to youth. Hollywood fan magazines, before and since the war, have provided similar opportunities for the indulgence of mass ecstasy by women mature, at least, in age. Current readers (almost exclusively women) are estimated at some 25 millions. The content of these magazines has been thus described: 'Fan magazines are distilled as stimulants of the most exhilarating

kind. Everything is superlative, surprising, exciting. Everybody is always having a wonderful time or else recounting details of a desperate early struggle. Nothing ever stands still; nothing ever rests, least of all the sentences.'<sup>24</sup> It is, indeed, the wide incidence of this phenomenon that makes it socially significant. Radio itself provides one of its most publicized examples and perhaps the most striking of all instances of the subjection of a mass female audience to a common spell.

The daytime serial, or 'soap opera,' is too well-known to require description.<sup>25</sup> In this chapter we are concerned not with its merits or defects, as these bear on radio and public policy, but with its exemplification of the differential sex factor we are now examining. It is less the fact than the nature and occasion of women's addiction that is here of interest.

The facts are easily summarized. Some 20 million women regularly tune in to daytime serials; as many as eight or ten such dramas may be followed daily. These listeners are not in any way 'odd' or eccentric; they appear to be undifferentiated, as psychological types, from non-listeners. Women in all social strata and of all degrees of education listen, but women with little formal education are more addicted than those who are better educated. Perhaps because of the narrower range of choice available to them, women in rural districts listen more than those in cities.

For some listeners these programs are simply a means of emotional release; they provide 'a chance to cry.' More common is the chance offered for wishful thinking. Even more significant is the fact that women cull from these dramas precepts for life and specific advice on how to conduct themselves. Here again

<sup>24</sup> Thorp, Margaret, *America at the Movies*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1939, p. 40.

<sup>25</sup> We are entitled to speak of the daytime serial as a whole, for, as research shows, 'what programs have in common outweighs individual particularities to such an extent that whenever a serial author undertakes to accomplish his task in a personal way, the result stands out as an obvious exception to the rule.' 'The World of the daytime serial,' by Rudolf Arnheim, in *Radio Research 1942-3*, Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, New York, 1944, p. 35.

we see the tendency to regard stars of radio and screen as guides and mentors expressed in an even more bizarre form—for these are fictional episodes and fictitious characters who are thus endowed with authority.<sup>26</sup>

The type of mind that thus daily yields itself to the unreal world of the 'soap opera' may be deduced from the 'psychological formula' that students of the subject have evolved for this type of broadcasting.

Radio serials attract the listener by offering her a portrait of her own shortcomings, which lead to constant trouble, and of her inability to help herself. In spite of the unpleasantness of this picture, resonance can be enjoyed because identification is drawn away from it and transferred to an ideal type of the perfect, efficient woman who possesses power and prestige and who has to suffer not by her own fault but by the fault of others.<sup>27</sup>

However, it is only by first-hand study of these dramas that we can become familiar with the specific areas of preoccupation, the obsessive factors of frustration, the thwarted hopes and private resentments of this audience, which comprises almost one seventh of our population.

We here conclude our survey of the listener in America. We have gone into some detail for reasons that should be obvious. The radio practitioner, whether his dominant motive is commercial or more altruistic, cannot succeed for long without some such general knowledge of factors that condition tastes and attitudes. The lay reader, too, should be convinced by now that radio is not merely interesting in itself but, with other mass media, a unique vantage point from which to survey the

<sup>26</sup> The validity and adequacy of the advice and help thus given, or rather taken, are discussed fully in the article cited above. (See particularly pp. 29-32.) The typical radio serial situation is therein compared 'to a stagnant lake which is troubled by a stone thrown into it. The attitude of the serial characters is essentially passive and conservative, possibly a reflection of the role which the average serial listener plays in the community.' *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

strengths and shortcomings of our society and to appraise the health of our democracy.

In this chapter we have at last reached high ground. We can now look back and see, in truer perspective, the nature of the problems to which radio gives rise; we can appraise, more dispassionately and with a greater sense of concern, the responsibilities of those who direct broadcasting and the complementary duties of the listener. We can also anticipate to some extent the kind of problems we shall face when we discuss such matters as propaganda, free speech, and education.

It would be of absorbing interest were we able to compare the listener in America with listeners abroad. Is radio's influence uniform throughout the world? If not, what accounts for the differences? In what respects is our condition similar to that of others? Unfortunately there is no other country in which comparable data and an equivalent amount of radio research are available, but we can at least acquaint ourselves with other systems of broadcasting. It is to this source of a broader understanding of what radio means today that we must now turn.

## VII

### BRITISH, CANADIAN, AND OTHER SYSTEMS

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MUCH has been made recently of listeners' general satisfaction with radio's over-all performance in this country. It has been argued that we need no further proof than this of the soundness of our system and of its superiority over all others. This pseudo-democratic fallacy dies hard, and for those who fail to see its inherent absurdity, one glimpse abroad—at other systems—may help to clear up the confusion. For if the merit or superiority of a broadcast system is to be determined solely by the apparent satisfaction it offers to its listeners (whether we judge this by the percentage of listener homes or by the average daily 'listening load'), then all systems are sound and superior to all other systems—which is absurd.

For, though listening to the radio is nowhere compulsory, yet almost everywhere<sup>1</sup>—at least in industrially advanced countries—radio's auditorium is filled almost to capacity. This is true, for instance, of Britain, Sweden, and Denmark where the percentage of listener homes and the average daily listening load are nearly as high as ours, despite the fact that all three have

<sup>1</sup> The only exceptions are countries like India and China where many of the people are too poor to buy receiving sets or where coverage is still inadequate to bring radio within the reach of all. In neither case is the system the cause of the trouble.

systems of broadcasting different from ours and each different from the other.

The reasons for this popularity are obvious. No radio service is so bad that it alienates the majority of its potential listeners. The drabness and poverty of most people's lives and circumstances (or, if you will, their inability to amuse themselves) are such that even a mediocre service of broadcasting is to them an enrichment of their experience. We might say that listening to anything is for the average citizen anywhere better than not listening at all. Most people's inner resources of interest and amusement are meager and rapidly exhausted. Moreover, lacking knowledge of any other system, the listener everywhere tends to adapt himself to what he hears.

The radio industry in America has done its best to promote the theory that programs should be broadcast in rough proportion to their popularity. The theory has a certain specious and superficial attractiveness, and, if it were practiced the world over, broadcasting would be very different from what it is. For it appears that the general preferences of the majority of listeners are, with some few exceptions, little differentiated between one country and another, if we except authoritarian countries where tastes and predilections tend to assume the character of a conditioned reflex.

Thus if we examine the program preferences of listeners in the United States, in Britain, and in Sweden, we discover marked similarities between them, despite the known differences in the history, traditions, and culture of the three countries. The extent of the similarity of taste is indicated in the chart below, which is based on soundings of representative cross sections of the people in each of the three countries.

But when we examine the program logs of these three countries, what strikes us is not their similarity but the marked contrasts between them in the fare offered to the listeners. Evidently, other countries do not conform to our theory; they have,



presumably, other objects in mind, and to achieve these different ends systems different from ours were devised.

To anyone interested in broadcasting, knowledge of what other systems are doing, how far their practices resemble ours, and how far they differ is extremely important. We may discover in other systems practices and techniques that we might emulate. Radio comprises many services; it is unlikely that even we have achieved perfection in all of them. Thus, we stand to learn something from services rendered by other systems, even if we disapprove of the over-all methods.

#### LISTENERS' PROGRAM PREFERENCES IN THREE COUNTRIES<sup>2</sup>

<i>United States</i>	<i>Great Britain</i>	<i>Sweden</i>
News (76%)	(News not included in list for listener's decision)	
Radio plays (54%)	Radio plays	Dance music (old style)
Comedy programs (54%)	Feature programs	Light music
Quiz programs (53%)	Variety	Plays
Old familiar music (47%)	Light music	Discussions
Popular and dance music (42%)	Talks	Sports
<i>Talks or discussions on</i>		
Public issues (40%)	Discussions	Homemaking
Classical music (32%)	Short stories	Dance music (modern)
Sports (27%)	Religious services	Farming talks
Religious broadcasts (20%)	Symphony concerts	Classical music
	Dance music	

Radio abroad, moreover, like radio here at home, is interesting not only in itself but in its revelation of problems and characteristics of the people it serves. Systems of broadcasting are almost as varied as the countries in which they obtain. A man betrays his character and his origin by his behavior; so do nations. Systems of all kinds represent patterns of behavior characteristic of a nation, and these patterns have origins in history and tradition. They tell us something of where power resides in a given society—who is influential in making decisions and successful in obtaining power. Nations are more, or less, alike, and their likeness or difference is generally reflected in

<sup>2</sup> The comparison is obviously crude. The respondents were not subjected to identical forms of question, nor are the subject categories always clear. Thus plays may mean anything. Notice, too, that news is not included in the list for Britain or Sweden.

their institutions. This fact is exemplified in radio. Indeed, if you want to understand a foreign country and have no time to study it exhaustively, you could hardly do better than to look at its broadcasting service—its organization and operation and effects. Of all the many facets of a country's mode of living and outlook, perhaps none is more extensively revealing than radio.

Men tend to assume that what is familiar to them in their environment is normal. Study of radio systems abroad should prove a salutary shock to those who make this complacent, parochial assumption. For when we look abroad, we realize first that our own system of broadcasting, so familiar and so normal to us, is the exception rather than the rule. Secondly, we see that all systems of broadcasting have in common the fact that they are subject to some degree of supervisory control by government, and here our own system is no exception.

The basic difference between the systems is the extent of the control by government. At one end of the scale are countries like Russia and other totalitarian states where radio is under the complete control of government. There are democratic countries also, like Denmark, where state control obtains. Sweden exemplifies a democratic country where government participates in but does not control the operation of a radio monopoly, with which business interests are also associated. Britain and France illustrate countries where radio is monopolistic but where government has only a reserve power—that is, it does not normally concern itself either with the over-all determination of policy or with day-to-day operations. We in America are at the other end of the scale where private enterprise operates competitively within a loose framework of governmental regulation. Canada, Australia, and New Zealand represent countries where a public corporation operates together with commercial radio as we know it in America.<sup>3</sup>

We propose to concern ourselves with two variant systems—

<sup>3</sup> For fuller information about broadcasting systems abroad, see Appendix III.

the British Broadcasting Corporation and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. The BBC is chosen because of the distinction as well as the distinctiveness (particularly from our point of view) of its achievements. The CBC is chosen because of its attempt, through compromise, to achieve the best of both worlds and to avail itself of the advantages exemplified in British and American radio philosophy and practice. With the operation of radio in totalitarian regimes we hardly feel called upon to deal, even if an adequate body of knowledge about them were available. Other systems than these are of minor interest in that they represent derivatives of either our system or that of Britain, or a combination of the two.

Before we proceed to the study of our two case histories, let us disabuse ourselves of the idea that the question to which we seek an answer is whether either of the two systems we are about to examine is desirable as an alternative to the system we have in the United States. As we have said, systems of broadcasting have their roots deep in the soil of the countries in which they obtain. Both the strength and the weaknesses of British broadcasting, as of our system here in the United States, derive from national characteristics, national traditions, and national emphases of value, which are not transferable. There is no question of adopting the BBC system here in America even if, in the light of its achievements, we concluded that this was desirable. We are as incapable of conducting a BBC as the British would be of operating our system of broadcasting. We speak of the British as our cousins; we should have to speak of them as our identical twin if we were to adopt and successfully emulate their system of operation in radio.

American radio and the BBC have much to learn from each other. That there has not been more mutual exchange of practice and techniques is, I believe, due largely to the fact that these two great princes in radio's kingdom have stood over against one another in attitudes of such uncompromising and stubborn pride that neither has been willing to claim less than

total virtue and perfection for the domain over which he holds sway. The consequence has been a mutual loss of advantage deriving from an all-or-nothing attitude on either side.

America and Great Britain have indulged over the years in mutual recriminations and vilifications of each other's systems of broadcasting to an extent that has made intelligent appraisal of the merits and defects of either well-nigh impossible. The history of mutual recrimination is one of long standing. It reached one of its peaks in 1933 when in this country the National University Extension Association selected for debating purposes the admittedly silly question whether the United States should adopt the essential features of the British system of radio operation and control. The self-confidence of the American radio industry then, as since, seems to have been remarkably slight, in that such was its alarm over the very notion of the debate that the National Association of Broadcasters rushed into print a handbook to provide debaters with so-called facts in support of the American point of view on broadcasting.

This handbook<sup>4</sup> is perhaps a supreme example of how to muddy the waters of clear and honest thinking. Our radio industry, in those days at least, seemed unprepared to stand on its record alone and found it necessary to support its case by blatant misstatements of fact and specious half truths about the British Broadcasting Corporation. To students eager for ammunition in the great debate such pearls of wisdom as the following were dished up. 'Under a system such as that of Great Britain, radio becomes one of two things. An instrument of government propaganda or an utterly colorless and wasteful means of communication.' Contributing to the same handbook, Mr. William Hard had at least the courage to sign his name to the following definitive judgment: 'Every foreign radio system instead of expanding free speech diminishes it.'

The same jingoistic nonsense has been touted in this country

<sup>4</sup> *Broadcasting in the United States*, National Association of Broadcasters, 1932.

down the years, voicing a petulant parochialism and bespeaking a code of manners that hardly stands us in good stead in the modern currency of international communication. As late as 1947, the president of the National Association of Broadcasters, Mr. Justin Miller, again bespoke our contempt for foreigners and for all their ways in a broadcast (for which on 25 April the Columbia Broadcasting System offered its facilities) in which he wrote off the radio of the world outside America as 'dull, lifeless dishwater . . . and great doses of propaganda.' The prejudices and misconceptions resulting from such malicious propaganda make necessary a somewhat extensive survey of the growth and the development of broadcasting in Britain, to which we shall append some critical comments deriving from the facts rather than from furious fancy.

## 1. BROADCASTING IN BRITAIN

### *Origins of British Radio*

In Britain, as in the United States, broadcasting originated as a commercial enterprise; there, as here, it was the manufacturer of radio receiving sets and parts who was interested in its development. After protracted negotiations with the British Post Office, agreement was reached for the formation of a private commercial company, The British Broadcasting Company, which was registered on 15 December, 1922. Six manufacturing companies subscribed the bulk of the original capital. Revenue was to be derived from royalties on the sale of sets and from a portion (50 per cent) of a license fee that, by agreement with the Post Office (which in Britain has been the agency of government concerned with broadcasting), was to be exacted from every one who purchased a receiving set in Britain. Likewise by agreement with the Post Office, advertising on the air was barred from the outset. It is interesting, however, that sponsorship of programs, i.e. the financing of the cost of a broadcast program and the bare mention of the sponsor's name, was not

originally barred. In early days, in fact, a few such sponsored programs were actually broadcast. The details of the operation of this original company need not be mentioned here, for within five years, after extensive hearings by a committee appointed by the government, it was decided to buy out the shareholders in the company and to create a public corporation.

Thus on 1 January 1927 the British Broadcasting Corporation was created under a Royal Charter extending its life over a ten-year period.<sup>5</sup> In 1937 the charter was renewed substantially unchanged; in 1947 it was renewed for only five years 'in order to span the period of transition' occasioned by the total disruption of life in Britain during World War II.

It is important to emphasize that the structure and operation of this public corporation are to be understood only in British terms. As we describe these, the reader is certain to react in terms of a mode of thinking that in all fairness he must recognize as deriving from and as therefore peculiar to our American way of life. We propose, therefore, to interject in the course of our description comments that, at the risk of proving a distraction, may save the reader from drawing false conclusions and applying irrelevant criteria of judgment.

### *Is the British Broadcasting Corporation Government Controlled?*

We have to deal at the outset with a misconception about the character of British broadcasting that has been sedulously—and, one is forced to believe, at times maliciously—propagated in this country. The BBC is a monopoly, but it is *not* government controlled. The government in Britain does not operate the radio. There is admittedly considerable excuse for assuming that it does, for the Royal Charter, which is the BBC's constitution, provides among other things that the Postmaster General may 'require the corporation to refrain from sending any broadcast matter (either part or general)' that he deems improper. More-

<sup>5</sup> For extracts from the BBC charter see Appendix II.

over, any government department may demand of the BBC the transmission of matters it considers of interest or importance to the public. It is admittedly difficult not to interpret such provisions as involving at least a very considerable degree of government control and the right of complete censorship by a minister of state, the Postmaster General. To draw any other conclusion would seem to be to deny meaning to the English language. To us, habituated as we are to written constitutions and the interpretation of functions deriving from what is thus written down, there is the particular temptation to assume that people mean what they say. But this is not the way with the British. Britain has no written constitution, and the British are temperamentally allergic to the strict and literal interpretation of verbal instructions. It is their custom and their preference to observe the spirit rather than the letter of the law.

Although the situation may bewilder us, we have nevertheless to reckon with the fact that these provisions do not mean exactly what they say. These instructions are intended to invest the government with a reserve power in the event of the unwarrantable abuse of the monopoly's powers. Indeed, on only one occasion in the whole history of the BBC has the Postmaster General availed himself of his power to prevent the inclusion of a program originally contemplated by the BBC. It is amusing and paradoxical that he should have used his power on this single occasion over a question of minor importance—whether in 1932 a German submarine commander of World War I should or should not be allowed to broadcast in company with a British officer whom he had taken prisoner fifteen years before. What we must remember is that the BBC has in practice functioned, with this one exception, without direct interference from the State. It is operated on the basis of a gentlemen's agreement, a term peculiar to the British in terms of its observance.

*BBC Policy Makers*

The BBC consists of a Board of Governors whose employees, the Director General and staff, are hired and fired at the Board's discretion and operate as executors of its decisions. According to the charter, the governors shall not be more than seven in number, each appointed for a period of not more than five years. Formally, they are appointed by the King, but in practice, they are appointed by the Prime Minister. However, they are not, in our sense, political appointees. Britain has no spoils system, and the BBC's governors derive their powers not from their past services or value to the political party in power at the time, but from their character as men or women of integrity imbued with a proper sense of public service. They are not (as are the members of our own FCC) even kept in political balance nor are they expected to serve their party's ends. Their bias, in so far as they have any, is likely to derive not from political affiliation, but from a consideration that those unacquainted with the history and structure of British society will find difficulty in appreciating, namely their social background and upbringing. The governors of the BBC, though they have included members of the British aristocracy, have been and even today, in a Labour government, still are predominantly the products of Britain's public schools (in our terms, private schools) and of its system of selective education. While less so today than in the past, it yet remains true in some large degree that products of the British public-school system share a common background of education and a common understanding of what being educated means. It is this peculiar concept of the meaning of education that constitutes the major element of bias that can be fairly ascribed to the BBC's Board of Governors.

The relation of the Board of Governors to the government is that of independent men to whom full discretion and authority has been delegated, and it constitutes a degree of independence as complete as that of any other broadcasting system. We do



not mean to say that the board has never been influenced by government; it frequently has. But can our own independent broadcasters in this country deny that they have ever trimmed their sails to the prevailing winds of political or commercial expediency? Thus, reserving for later judgment the virtues or defects of the BBC as these derive from its enjoyment of monopoly, let us dismiss once and for all the notion that the BBC is evil because it is a pawn in a game of governmental chess.

### *Finance*

Every owner of a radio set in Britain has to take out an annual license, which today costs him one pound. Licenses are issued by the Post Office, and after deduction of a small service charge, 85 per cent of the revenue derived therefrom is passed to the BBC for operating costs. The BBC has never found it possible to operate on this revenue alone. It has therefore been driven to seek supplementary revenue, the bulk of which comes from the sale of the *Radio Times*, a weekly publication providing details of all programs broadcast, with descriptive news and accompanying articles of a popular character. Because readers of this journal turn to it daily as a means of identifying programs of their choice, it has become perhaps the outstanding medium of commercial advertising in the country. In 1948 the circulation of this journal ran to over 7 million copies<sup>6</sup> (the equivalent of some 21 million copies in this country). The revenue from this and other subsidiary publications amounted to 1,047,253 pounds, some 10 per cent of the total revenue for broadcasting and television in Great Britain which amounted to approximately 10 million pounds.

It will be remembered that advertising revenue in our country is more than ten times this figure. The disparity between these figures would seem to suggest that the BBC is badly in need of funds for effective radio operations. But this calculation is subject to a double discount. Radio in Britain operates without ad-

<sup>6</sup> BBC Annual Report, 1948.

vertising on the air; competitive advertising in this country has unquestionably raised the price of programming and artists. It cannot be concluded, therefore, that comparable talent is unavailable to British broadcasting; all the talent there is becomes available for programming by the BBC. A further discount must be made on the ground of the disparity between the extent of programming that goes on in Great Britain and in the United States.

### *Frequencies Available*

Broadcasting in all countries is conditioned partly by physical factors—the size and conformation of the country and its contiguity to other countries, for example. Britain suffers from the disadvantage of being contiguous to the continent of Europe, where a number of relatively small sovereign powers bid against one another for available frequencies. In Europe, to a far greater extent even than here, interference constitutes a major technical headache for broadcasters. Such is the congestion that under an allocation system based on international agreement Great Britain has access to frequencies that permit of only two alternative programs with nationwide coverage throughout the day and night. One is called the 'Light Program,' the other the 'Home Program.' Since the end of World War II it has been found possible to introduce a third program, but only between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and midnight and with coverage restricted to an estimated 50 per cent of the total population. Thus, technical considerations have precluded that diversity of choice enjoyed by residents in at least the major cities of the United States.<sup>7</sup> In terms of services available, the average Briton is in much the same position as the American farmer in a remote rural district. A compensating advantage is the fact that, though limited to two

<sup>7</sup> As we shall later see, more local broadcasting is in fact technically feasible but has been artificially restricted by the BBC's concern to preserve its monopoly. The advent of FM likewise makes variant program services more feasible, but postwar shortages of construction materials are reported to have postponed FM development.

wave lengths, effective coverage is secured for an estimated 95 per cent of the total population. In this respect, Britain has outdone us in securing that at least a minimum of choice is made available to the total population.

### *Programming*

We come next to the all-important question of programs and of the policies behind them. It should be clear by now that such are the differences between the two systems, particularly with respect to the frequencies available, that any true comparison of program services in Britain and in America is, if not odious, at least well-nigh impossible. Nevertheless, the question of the comparative experiences that British and American broadcasting make available for ordinary listeners is of the highest interest and importance. A possible, though crude, basis of comparison would be to take the two major networks in this country and to compare their offerings with those on Britain's two main program services. In the chart that appears below, programs are listed as they were broadcast on the same day by the National Broadcasting Corporation and the Columbia Broadcasting System and the 'Home' and 'Light' program services in Britain. The reader is invited to make his own analysis of the resemblances and differences between them, taking for purposes of argument the two programs in the respective countries as representing the national services of the two systems. (Regional self-expression is provided for in Britain through five regional stations which at their own discretion may substitute their own regionally originated programs for any offered in the BBC's 'Home' programs.) It will be seen at once that British broadcasting differs most markedly from ours in terms of the higher proportion of programs of a 'cultural character.' There are more talks, more educational programs, more classical music, more serious drama. By American standards the British listener thirsting for entertainment gets shorter shrift. What accounts for this disparity?

PROGRAMS BROADCAST ON WEDNESDAY, 6 APRIL, 1949  
OVER THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, COLUMBIA BROADCASTING  
SYSTEM, AND THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Time	NBC		British Broadcasting Corporation	
	NBC	CBS	Home Program	Light Program
10:00 am.	Fred Waring Show (light music, vocalists)	Music for You (light music, vocalists)	Classical music	Music in Your Home (light music)
10:15	" " "	" " "	Religious service	" " "
10:30	Road of Life (serial drama)	Arthur Godfrey Show (variety)	Music While You Work (light sextet)	Science and Everyday Life (talk)
10:45	The Brighter Day (serial drama)	" " "	" " "	At the Console (theater organ)
11:00	Dr. Paul (serial drama)	" " "	Morning Prom (light-concert orchestra)	" " "
1:15	We Love and Learn (serial drama)	" " "	" " "	Mid-Morning Story (reading)
11:30	Jack Berch Show (variety)	Grand Slam (Audience par- ticipation)	" " "	Time for Music (light orchestra)
11:45	Lora Lawton (serial drama)	Rosemary (serial drama)	A High Wind in Jamaica (reading)	" " "
12:00	" " "	Wendy Warren (serial drama)	Break for Music	" " "
12:15	The Playboys (musical trio)	Aunt Jenny (serial drama)	" " "	Yesterday in Parliament (talk)
12:30	Luncheon with Lopez (light music)	Romance of Helen Trent (serial drama)	Works Wonders (from a textile factory)	Concert Hour (classical music)
12:45	" " "	Our Gal Sunday (serial drama)	" " "	" " "
12:55	" " "	" " "	Weather report	" " "
1:00	Echoes from the Tropics	Big Sister (serial drama)	News	" " " "
1:10	Echoes from the Tropics (contd.)	Big Sister (contd.)	The Eye Witness (reports from Britain & Over- seas)	Concert Hour (contd.)
1:15	Hometowners (musical)	Ma Perkins (serial drama)	From My Post Bag (theater organ)	Vic Lewis and His Orchestra

PROGRAMS BROADCAST ON WEDNESDAY, 6 APRIL, 1949  
 OVER THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, COLUMBIA BROADCASTING  
 SYSTEM, AND THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION (Continued)

Time	NBC	CBS	British Broadcasting Corporation Home Program	Light Program
1:30	News	Young Dr. Malone (serial drama)	From My Post Bag (theater organ)	Vic Lewis and His Orchestra
1:45	Here's Jack Kilty (songs and stories)	The Guiding Light (serial drama)	" " "	" " "
2:00	Double or Nothing (audience participation)	The Second Mrs. Burton (serial drama)	The Man in Black (story reading)	Woman's hour (incl. book review, profile of woman in news, reading from Jane Austen)
2:15	" " "	Perry Mason (serial drama)	" " "	" " "
2:30	Today's Children (serial drama)	This is Nora Drake (serial drama)	Harry Gold (light music)	" " "
2:45	Light of the World (serial drama)	What Makes You Tick (audience participation)	" " "	" " "
3:00	Life Can Be Beautiful (serial drama)	David Harum (serial drama)	" " "	Melody Hour (light music)
3:15	Oxydol's Own Ma Perkins (serial drama)	Hilltop House (serial drama)	Stories from the Ballet	" " "
3:30	Pepper Young's Family (serial drama)	Robert Q. Lewis Show (variety)	" " "	Music While You Work (military band)
3:45	Right to Happiness (serial drama)	" " "	" " "	" " "
4:00	Backstage Wife (serial drama)	Hint Hunt (quiz show)	Wednesday Matinee (Play by Vincent Benet)	Mrs. Dale's Diary
4:15	Stella Dallas (serial drama)	" " "	" " "	Music of the Masters
4:25	" " "	News	" " "	" " "
4:30	Lorenzo Jones (serial drama)	Winner Take All (audience participation)	The Wedding (a Chekhov farce)	" " "
4:45	Young Widder Brown (serial drama)	Beat the Clock (audience participation)	" " "	" " "

PROGRAMS BROADCAST ON WEDNESDAY, 6 APRIL, 1949  
OVER THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, COLUMBIA BROADCASTING  
SYSTEM, AND THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION (Continued)

Time	NBC	CBS	British Broadcasting Corporation Home Program	Corporation Light Program
5:00	When a Girl Marries (serial drama)	Treasury Bandstand (audience participation)	Children's Hour	Music of the Masters
5:15	Portia Faces Life (serial drama)	" " "	" " "	Accordian Club (Accordian Band)
5:30	Just Plain Bill (serial drama)	The Chicagoans (light music)	" " "	Tip Top Tunes (dance orchestra)
5:45	Front Page Farrell (serial drama)	Herb Shriner Time (variety)	" " "	" " "
6:00	News	Eric Sevareid and the News	News	Frederick Bayeo (theater organ)
6:15	Clem McCarthy (sports news)	You and Fashions (talk)	" " "	" " "
6:20	Sketches in Melody	" " "	Chopin Rondo in E Flat	" " "
6:30	" " "	Herb Shriner Time (variety)	Western European Commentary	Military Band
6:40	" " "	" " "	This Week's Composer—Debussy	" " "
6:45	News and Commentary	Lowell Thomas (news)	" " "	" " "
7:00	Chesterfield Supper Club (light music and songs)	Beulah Show (serial comedy)	Take It from Here (light musical revue)	News and Radio Newsreel
7:15	News	Jack Smith Show (variety)	" " "	" " "
7:30	The Dardanelle Trio (light music)	Club 15 (light music)	In Britain Now (current happenings)	Waterlogged Spa (Glee Club and dance orchestra)
7:45	H. V. Kaltenborn Edits the News	Edward R. Murrow with the News	" " "	" " "
8:00	Blondie (Comedy)	Mr. Chameleon (mystery)	Dvorak's Rusaelka	Curtain Up (radio play)
8:30	The Great Gildersleeve (comedy)	Dr. Christian (radio play)	" " "	" " "

PROGRAMS BROADCAST ON WEDNESDAY, 6 APRIL, 1949  
OVER THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, COLUMBIA BROADCASTING  
SYSTEM, AND THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION (Continued)

Time	NBC	CBS	British Broadcasting Corporation Home Program	Corporation Light Program
9:00	Duffy's Tavern (comedy)	County Fair (variety)	News	Curtain Up (radio play)
9:15	" " "	" " "	Budget talk by Chancellor of Exchequer	" " "
9:30	Mr. District Attorney (mystery)	The Goal is Freedom (public-service program)	Rusaelka (contd.)	Wilfred Pickles in Have a Go (Quiz)
10:00	The Big Story (drama)	Beat the Clock (quiz show)	" " "	News
10:15	" " "	" " "	" " "	Out of Doors (talk)
10:30 to 11:00	Curtain Time (drama)	Capital Cloak Room (talks—public-service program)	" " "	Harry Roy (dance band)

### *BBC Program Policy*

The reason for the disparity is policy. Our system, as we have seen, is competitive, and the theory that competition would produce diversity is only partly borne out in practice. British broadcasting is non-competitive. It is, if you will, authoritarian, however enlightened we may conceive or concede the authority to be. The policy on which British Broadcasting rests is thus described by its Director General, Sir William Haley:

It rests on the conception of the community as a broadly based cultural pyramid slowly aspiring upwards. This pyramid is served by three main programs, differentiated by broadly over-lapping in levels and interest, each program leading on to the other, the listener being induced through the years increasingly to discriminate in favor of the things that are more worthwhile. Each program at any given moment

must be ahead of its public, but not so much as to lose their confidence. The listener must be led from good to better by curiosity, liking, and a growth of understanding. As the standards of the education and culture of the community rise so should the program pyramid rise as a whole.<sup>8</sup>

This concept of a controlled cultural experiment executed through broadcasting is at once so novel, so strange, and so challenging to us, accustomed as we are in broadcasting (as in our culture generally) to the operation of free commercial enterprise, that it merits special attention. As we pursue this inquiry, the question at issue is not whether we ourselves might do well to operate on a similar principle but rather how far such a principle of operation functions effectively in Britain. We may concede the theory to be sound, but we have yet to ask ourselves whether it is effective.

The theory would seem to imply that, by graduated doses, the listener in Britain can over the years be brought to a fuller appreciation of those programs that the Corporation deems to have the highest cultural value. How valid is the argument and how far has the BBC succeeded in proving its case over the twenty-three years in which this controlled experiment in what we might call cultural uplift has been allowed to develop?<sup>9</sup> There are two ways of answering the question. One is pragmatic: we may ask the BBC for evidence that the expected transfer of interest from frivolous to more serious subjects has taken place. A second way of answering it would be more theoretical: we might ask whether in principle the theory holds water. Let us now seek to answer the question in both ways in turn.

It matters little for our present purpose whether we conceive of the notion of the complete cultural transformation of a people (which appears to be the clear purpose of the BBC's Director

<sup>8</sup> 'The Responsibilities of Broadcasting,' The Lewis Fry Memorial Lectures delivered in the University of Bristol, 11, 12 May, 1948.

<sup>9</sup> The theory, admittedly, was only recently propounded by the BBC's present Director General, but it bespeaks the general hopes and intentions of the corporation over many years past. Novel only is the designed distribution of function among the BBC's three alternative programs.



General) as a noble dream or the delusion of grandeur. If we are to apply the pragmatic test, the only question at issue is whether the dream has come true. In all fairness we must concede that twenty-three years is too short a span within which to estimate the prospects of success. The BBC takes a long view; it is in no hurry. (Here again we might notice in passing a characteristic difference of temperament and outlook between ourselves and the British. Under the spur of competition we tend in most things to precipitate action. The British by contrast are more preoccupied with laying sound foundations than with building at a pace.) Nevertheless, even in twenty-three years some evidence should be available of the fruits of an endeavor pursued with such consistent and persistent purpose.

Men so preoccupied with the cultural advance of the great social family over whose destiny they preside with such paternalistic devotion would, we might assume, be watching daily for signs of better deportment and more refined manners. It is the more surprising, therefore, to discover that it was not until 1936, in the tenth year of its operation, that the BBC so much as instituted a tentative system of listener research. Up to that time not a shred of evidence was available to them to prove or disprove the practical utility of their philosophy of broadcasting. Such unconcern with facts and figures may be attributed to various causes. Some will claim that such an attitude is typical of the monopolist. This at least can be said with certainty—that it was the monopoly he enjoyed that in effect enabled the BBC's first Director General to pursue for ten years a policy of cultural paternalism unembarrassed by competition from any other source and immune to such public criticism (little as there was) as was expressed.

Monopoly alone, however, would not have molded British radio into its present shape. Historically speaking, it is the personality of one man that accounts for broadcasting in Britain as it is today. Sir John Reith was so certain he was right that no research seemed necessary. Regardless of its actual effects, for

him his policy stood self-justified. Secure in his personal conviction of what was right and wrong, he imposed upon a nation the imprint of his personality. 'The form, content and influence,' writes one of his earliest lieutenants, 'of the broadcasting service as we know it today is the product of one dominant man. It represents one man's conception of the role of broadcasting in a modern democracy. No one who is serving or who has served the BBC had an influence in any way comparable with that exercised by its first chief executive.'<sup>10</sup>

This blithe assumption of infallibility is partly responsible for depriving us of ten years of cultural history-making by broadcasting. But from the facts and figures since assembled, we may gather some evidence of the actual effects of British broadcasting policy. Current available statistics give us some clues: they provide a basis for surmise though not, alas, for confident judgment.

If broadcasting in Britain is to be judged (as broadcasters tend to judge it here) by the number of those who listen, British radio must be considered phenomenally popular: 93 per cent of the homes in Great Britain have radio sets. The extent of daily listening approximates that in the United States, averaging three and a half hours. Two out of every three Britons listen to some program every evening.

Although these figures by no means prove the validity or, for that matter, the popularity of British broadcasting policies, they at least make it plain that these policies are no deterrent to listening. The most popular programs appear to muster audiences far in excess of those of top-ranking entertainment programs here in the United States. For example, a Music Hall program broadcast on Saturdays has an audience of 11 millions (equivalent to roughly 33 million listeners in America). The BBC's most popular personality, a Mr. Pickles, musters an audience of 19 millions (or 57 millions in our terms). But here we

<sup>10</sup> Eckersley, P. P., *The Power Behind the Microphone*, Jonathan Cape, Ltd., London, 1941, p. 55.

must reckon with the fact that all listening is concentrated on two programs that alone are available to the bulk of listeners.

But the relatively huge audience for programs in Britain constitutes no proof as yet of the effectiveness of its policy of weaning listeners from lower to higher things. More startling and more corroborative are figures that indicate the size of audiences for programs that over here would interest a mere handful of listeners. For example, a series of talks on atomic energy, which made no concession whatever to popularity, were broadcast on eight consecutive evenings. The audience never dropped below 7 millions (21 millions in United States terms) and on three occasions exceeded 8 millions (24 millions in our terms). A performance of *Antony and Cleopatra* was heard by 6 million listeners (18 millions in our terms). 'Today in Parliament,' a regular review of proceedings in the House of Commons, musters a like audience. 'During the past year, moreover,' says Sir William Haley, 'we have reduced the amount of variety entertainment within the Light Program by a quarter and increased its total audience.'<sup>11</sup> If we had statistics of listening audiences in radio's earlier days, such facts and figures might be proof of the effectiveness of BBC policy. Were British tastes and preferences always of this order, or is this a true measure of a cultural advance through broadcasting? We cannot say. But at least the facts support the BBC in its offering of programs of this type, and we must concede that such programs do not fall upon deaf ears.

There is another characteristic of the listener in Britain that appears to differentiate him from his cousin overseas. Research in the United States suggests that many listeners tune in to a station and, either from lethargy or some other cause, continue listening irrespective of the sequent broadcasts. British listening is markedly different in that it appears to be predominantly selective. The BBC here enjoys an advantage of an accidental nature: as the island is small and broadcast services are limited

<sup>11</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 11.

to two main programs, the BBC's journal, the *Radio Times*, giving full details of all programs, can circulate widely. By virtue of our different circumstance, with respect both to our geography and to our radio setup, nothing comparable is possible in the United States. The *Radio Times* is subscribed to by over 7 million listeners. Unquestionably, more see it and consult it than subscribe to it, because 51 per cent of listeners in Britain say they choose what they listen to by reference to this journal. This, then, would seem to be corroborative evidence that the large audiences for programs (which we would think of as catering to minorities of taste) are predominantly composed of people who listen by choice rather than by accident or lethargy.

Further corroboration of the relatively high interest in cultural subjects is the circulation of another journal of the BBC, *The Listener*, in which radio talks are reprinted and made available to the public. The quality of this publication may be judged from the Table of Contents, which appears below. It is surely extraordinary that 150 thousand listeners should subscribe to a publication of this type. The comparable figure in the United States would be 450 thousand, which exceeds by a comfortable margin the joint circulation of *Harpers Magazine* and *The Atlantic Monthly*.

*THE LISTENER*. Vol. XLII. No. 1070. Thursday, 28 July 1949  
Contents

- Greece after Nine Years of War (Kenneth Lindsay)
- Party Political Broadcast (Rt. Hon. Anthony Eden)
- New Frontiers in Science (N. F. Mott)

*The World Today:*

- France and Europe's Economic Future (Thomas Cadett)
- Arab Refugees and the Future of Israel (Albert Hourant)
- The Colonial Dilemma: The Challenge of Education  
(W. F. Ward)
- Power and Democracy (Alex Comfort)

*The Listener:*

- For Men of Taste
- What They are Saying (foreign broadcasts)
- Did You Hear That? (microphone miscellany)

*Art:*

Titian and Rubens: Two Success Stories (Philip Henty)  
 Ruskin's *Modern Painters* (Geoffrey Grigson)

News Diary and Photographs of the Week

*Letters to the Editor:*

From Dr. Alex Comfort, William Bliss, A. Gunner, R. S.  
 Lambert, Thomas MacGreevy, B. J. Wiltshire, D. Hugh  
 Ottaway, and J. S. Chapman

*Literature:*

The Art of the Short Story (Sean O'Failain)  
 Shelley at Boscombe (Rosalie Glynn Grylls)  
 Shakespeare and his World: The Poet's Imagery  
 (Una Ellis-Fermor)  
 The Listener's Book Chronicle  
 New Novels (P. H. Newby)

*Poem:*

Fairground (Sam Harrison)

*Critic on the Hearth:*

Television (Harold Hobson)  
 Broadcast Drama (Philip Hope-Wallace)  
 The Spoken Word (Martin Armstrong)  
 Broadcast Music (Dyneley Hussey)

*Music:*

The Later Bartok (John S. Weissmann)  
 For the Housewife: Ideas for Picnic Meals  
 Crossword No. 1,009

*The 'Third' Program*

The chart on pp. 124-7 offers only a crude index of the characteristics of British broadcasting, but at least it serves to indicate a few salient features that differentiate the British system from that here in America. Perhaps the worst defect of the chart is that it excludes a facet of British broadcasting that has provoked more derision and more praise, both here and in Great Britain, than any other aspect of its service. I refer to the Third Program, which is a postwar innovation. Consideration of this program assumes peculiar importance because, according to Sir William Haley, it represents that peak of listener enjoyment to which the BBC hopes that listeners will eventually climb.

Between the hours of six and midnight there is available to British listeners a Third Program, devoted almost exclusively to the 'highbrow' listener. Again an exhibit will serve better than any verbal description to illustrate the type of program services here offered. Listed below are two samples of broadcasting on the BBC's Third Program.

*Thursday, 3 February 1949:*

- 6:00 Contemporary Chamber Music
- 7:00 The Art of Plainsong. 'Place and Value of Plainsong Today' by Father Bernard McElligott. Last of four talks on the aesthetics of Gregorian Chant.
- 7:30 The Writing of History-I. 'The Character of Charles I.' Script by Jenifer Wayne.
- 8:30 Orchestral Concert
- 9:25 Medieval Latin Poetry. The Development in the New Verse.
- 9:45 Orchestral Concert (continued)
- 10:25 From our own Correspondent. A weekly talk on international affairs given by a BBC staff correspondent.
- 10:40 Interlude
- 10:45 'Purcell.' Margaret Ritchie (soprano) Rene Soames (tenor), etc.
- 11:25 Poetry Reading. Selections from the works of Auden, Lewis, MacNeice, etc.
- 11:55 Close down

(Prose readings in interludes between programs this week have been selected by Maryvonne Butcher from the letters of John Keats.)

*Friday, 4 February 1949*

- 6:00 'The Shooting of Constable Slugger' read by Sir Stephen Tallents (recording of Wednesday's program).
- 6:15 Brahms. String Sextet in G, Op. 36.
- 6:55 Interlude
- 7:00 'Montesquieu and the English' by William McCausland Stewart (review of Montesquieu's work).
- 7:20 'Palestrina' Motet and Mass. O admirabile commercium, sung by BBC Midland Chorus.
- 7:55 Interlude
- 8:00 'Pariah' by August Strindberg (recording of Wednesday's broadcast)
- 8:30 Commentary by Francis Williams (current affairs)
- 8:45 The Boyd Neel Orchestra

- 10:10 The Broadcast Psalter. Talk by Reverend Eric Heaton on principles underlying this revision of Matthew Coverdale's version.
- 10:40 Dvorak. Gypsy Songs, Op. 55.
- 11:30 The Soviet View. Reports on the Soviet point of view.
- 12:00 Close down

Only a superficial glance is necessary for one to conclude that most of the fare here provided is caviar to the general, and the BBC will readily concede that this is so. Indeed, this Third Program constitutes the BBC's climactic achievement in furthering its planned diet for the British listener. The merits and defects of this Third Program warrant separate discussion, for we must realize that it is an integral part of BBC policy and therefore not properly to be considered out of context.

The critic is likely to grant this program praise or blame according to his point of view; an American listener whose interests and tastes are 'high-brow' is likely to have his mouth water at sight of this banquet table of rich, exotic food and drink. Certainly no broadcasting system on earth provides comparable fare. On the other hand, a listener in Britain, already fretted by being limited to a choice of only two programs, might complain that it is unjust and unreasonable thus to squander so significant a part of Britain's available frequencies on so small a minority of the potential listening public. The pragmatist, willing perhaps to concede the fact that the counting of heads is not an adequate criterion for the allocation of program services, will, nevertheless, ask how the rendering of such service works out in practice.

In search of an answer to his question, he will run foul of a characteristic of the BBC's behavior to which many, in this context as in others, have taken strong exception—its secrecy. The listener in Britain, or the student of broadcasting, or even a people's representative in Parliament is unable to obtain from the BBC facts that might be considered of legitimate interest to the public. The BBC knows, through listener research, how

many listeners there are for the Third Program, but it will not tell you. Rumor has it that, at the start, the Third Program mustered some million listeners. Later reports suggest that listening has fallen off considerably, to less than 300,000. If this is the true figure, the pragmatist is likely to join forces with the critic who complains of air time squandered on an already over-privileged minority.

But even those inclined to favor the project and not to question it on principle raise serious objections in terms of execution. Perhaps the most damaging criticism advanced from this quarter is that the Third Program too often disregards the inexorable laws of broadcasting as a distinctive medium of communication. For instance, it is known that *all* listeners are subject to the strain of 'listening blind.' The concentration of attention here involved, unaided by the visual stimuli that accompany the physical presence of a speaker or the stage enactment of a play, conditions the length of any broadcast program. Thus a radio play lasting three hours (as on the Third Program some do) or a straight talk lasting an hour imposes an unreasonable strain upon the listener. It is likewise argued that the radio talk is a distinctive art and that a good radio script and its delivery are essentially different from matter written for the page and/or spoken before an audience. It follows, therefore, that to invite a speaker who has delivered a successful series of public lectures simply to re-read these at the microphone is to belie the art of broadcasting and to cheat the listener of that consideration of his case that every sensitive and imaginative broadcaster concedes implicitly in the careful and distinctive preparation and delivery of his manuscript. Others complain that too many programs unearth from the past music and poetry and prose whose resurrection hardly seems justified other than on antiquarian grounds.

These, however, are criticisms of the current—and alterable—judgment and taste of those who plan programs. It is more questionable whether the Third Program can be defended



against a charge that, in the view of many, probes nearer to the heart of the matter.

The BBC has always viewed the listener with the benevolent eye of a schoolmaster selflessly devoted to the spiritual and intellectual advancement of his young and inexperienced charges. From wisecracks, from sentimental reverie, from childlike ignorance, unconcern, and irresponsibility, the listener is to graduate to the mature exercise of refined and quickened faculties, to the adult capacity to see life steadily and see it whole. To this end he has been provided with a road map on which his course is clearly plotted, and from which, because they might distract him, many diversionary side roads have been eliminated. The BBC's three program services constitute this listener's road map.

As he sets out on the journey, he finds it easy going through familiar landscape. As he progresses, the gradient steepens and he comes upon unfamiliar sights and sounds. But roadhouses still abound along the way where he may rest his weary limbs and momentarily relax. Advancing further, he finds himself negotiating mountain country and headed for the heights. The dull, flat terrain of the Light Program and even the richer and more luxuriant landscape of the Home Program are now far behind. Immediately ahead is the mountain peak of the Third Program, which for the listener, is journey's end. He has arrived.

If such is the figurative thinking of the BBC, what is wrong with it? Leaving aside the question (which we have seen to be as yet unanswered—and perhaps unanswerable) whether provision of a road map can and does of itself induce a man to set out on a journey and stay the course, let us ask a more fundamental question. Having reached journey's end, i.e. having acquired a preference for Third-Program fare, has the listener reached a worth-while destination, or, to put it in another way, has British broadcasting, by inducing such a preference, best served society and exploited to the best advantage the unique resources of the medium? At this point in human history, does

listening to the Third Program equip a man to see life steadily and see it whole?

To answer these questions we must first picture the type of man or woman represented by the Third Program listener. To what kind of knowledge and discrimination will he have graduated? We can answer this with approximate accuracy by reference to the over-all content of the Third Program, which consists predominantly of music, literature, and drama, both ancient and modern, all or most of it of high excellence. But does a sensitive and discriminating appreciation of the arts constitute, of itself and of this hour, the peak of cultural achievement?

If we are to avoid hopeless confusion, we must be clear as to the nature of the problem raised by this question. We are *not* asking whether literature and music and the enjoyment thereof are in themselves important; we assume that they are. Art represents the finest flowering of human genius. Those of us who cannot be artists can enter vicariously into the experience of the poet, the painter, the composer, and thereby enlarge the dimensions of our living and increase our stature. Thus, our question is directed not at the merits and significance of art *per se*, but at the *relative* significance to be attached to the enjoyment of art at this particular moment in history. Is the cultivation of artistic sensibility the most pressing need of our time?

The critic, whose thinking we are now trying to represent, will answer no. Art, he is likely to say, unassailable as a manifestation of human genius, is yet subject to certain inexorable laws relating to man's nature and temporal estate. The creation and the enjoyment of works of art are predicated in large measure on the prior existence of certain conditions in society. The social structure must itself be stable. There must be some degree of wealth, whether possessed by the many or the few. There must be leisure and a marked degree of freedom from preoccupation, whether with the mere business of getting and spending or the more crucial business of survival.

Such conditions do not obtain in Britain today. Like its neighbors on the Continent, it is a country ravished and impoverished by war and caught up in the throes of a world revolution. Is it reasonable that at such a time the main efforts of a national broadcasting system be concentrated on the cultivation of good taste? Is not the BBC in much the same position as a man whose house is on fire and who, instead of manning the pumps, gathers feverishly into his arms some rare limited editions from the shelves of his library on the top floor? Should not a corporation charged with such high responsibility be more contemporary in its conception of what is relevant to present cultural development? Have not the people themselves indicated in part on what their preoccupation centers and where, therefore, lies their deepest sense of need? Are not the figures earlier cited with reference to the series of talks on atomic energy significant? Is it not equally significant that such aspects of the modern world as science in its larger dimension, the problem of education for one world, the new vistas of insight into human behavior disclosed by modern psychiatry, the tangled and still unraveled skein of economics, the concept of liberty itself—that these and other topics of immense contemporary importance comprise (in so far as they are represented at all) subordinate components of the Third Program's exploration of the dictionary of human knowledge and achievement?

So extraordinary and paradoxical, in fact, is the philosophy of broadcasting here exemplified that we wonder how it has come about. The dominant influence in British radio's formative years was, as we have seen, the towering personality of its first Director General, Sir John Reith. Yet it remains incredible that one man should have succeeded in stamping the imprint of his personality on such a vast organization without the willing support of others. Members of his staff must have been, and indeed were, accessories before the fact.

Perhaps here we touch on something that illuminates not merely the BBC but an aspect of Britain's social structure even

today under a Labour government. The fact is that the majority of those who conceive and direct not only the Third Program but the whole range of the BBC's program services are graduates of Oxford or Cambridge Universities, and they exemplify both the strength and weaknesses of their alma mater. For even today Oxford and Cambridge represent a tradition of education and a concept of culture more nearly suited to the social structure of Great Britain in the late eighteenth century than to that of 1950. This cultural concept is typified by the term once applied to the finished product of Britain's selective system of education: he was a scholar and a gentleman.

It is in this sense that the character of British broadcasting would seem to some to represent both an outmoded concept of culture and a misplaced emphasis on the qualities of mind and character that men are presently called upon to display. Is there not something nostalgic about the concept of culture implicit in the Third Program's fare? Britain's landed aristocracy is gone; the BBC functions as though Britain's intellectual aristocracy were seeking, ostrich-like, to deny the crude necessities of a revolutionary age in which there has indeed been a cultural backsliding but in which, for that very reason, peculiar urgency attaches to a more rudimentary development of human faculties.

This, in a word, would seem to be the fact that British broadcasting has overlooked. Our critic may conceivably concede to Sir John Reith and to the present incumbent of his office, Sir William Haley, that broadcasting should give people not what they want but what they need. But he will go on to insist, and vehemently, that their true need is not at present being met. Well-intentioned in purpose, the corporation appears to be ill-advised in its definition of the goal to whose attainment it has set itself with such persistence and devotion.

### *The Question of Monopoly*

We have yet to discuss the merits and defects of the BBC system as these relate to its enjoyment of monopoly. The arguments in favor of Britain's monopolistic system have not changed essentially in twenty years. They were first voiced by Mr. J. C. W. Reith in 1926 when, as General Manager of what was then a private commercial company, he pleaded for the creation of a public corporation. They were reiterated in the Government White Paper (Cmd. 6852.1946) which recommended extension for five years of the BBC's existing license. This White Paper said that it was 'satisfied with the present system as the best suited to the circumstances of the United Kingdom'; that, in view of the limited wave-lengths available, 'an integrated system operated by a public corporation is . . . the only satisfactory means of insuring that wave-lengths available are used in the best interests of the community'; that 'co-ordination and planned application of resources is likely to lead to the greatest advances both in techniques and programs'; and finally that the BBC's record of service justified its continued existence. But in the eyes of the BBC itself considerations of efficiency and co-ordination are quite subordinate to the all-important consideration of program monopoly. For it believes that without monopoly it cannot achieve its ends.

Very early in its history it had to face an embarrassing challenge to its privileged position; for in the early 'thirties there developed in Britain what threatened to become an alternative system of broadcasting. A number of private companies were formed to operate what were called 'relay exchanges.' These in effect constituted a system by which private companies set up receiving stations, picked up programs out of the air, and relayed these over land wires to subscribers in whose homes only a loud speaker was installed. From the subscriber's point of view there were eminent advantages in this method of reception. The loud speaker thus installed was simpler to operate

than a receiving set. Many poor listeners found it cheaper to pay a modest subscription fee to the relay exchange than to buy and maintain a receiving set. Moreover, in many areas where fading and interference obtained, subscribers to relay exchanges could hear programs much more clearly. But perhaps the crowning advantage was that the listener was enabled to hear not only programs broadcast by the BBC but also programs in English picked up from foreign stations (notably Luxembourg, Radio Normandy, and so on), which sought deliberately to invade the BBC's private preserve in Britain. The listener was thus exempted from that restriction of his choice of programs imposed on him by the BBC.

It is significant that the early popularity of these relay exchanges stemmed in large measure from dissatisfaction on the part of many listeners with at least one aspect of BBC program policy. From its inception in 1927 through the early 'thirties the BBC, under the influence of its first Director General, imposed upon listeners a concept of the Sabbath that proved most unwelcome to many. In deference to churchgoers no programs were broadcast on Sunday before 3:00 p.m. Even thereafter, variety programs, jazz bands, and other forms of light entertainment were rigidly excluded as inconsistent with a reverend observance of the Lord's Day. On week days the relay exchanges, in so far as they exploited the program resources of stations on the Continent broadcasting in the English language, made little headway in weaning listeners away from the BBC. But on Sunday listeners shifted in droves to continental programs until this source of listening became a serious threat.

The BBC became alarmed. Already in 1933 it was complaining that

there are according to recent figures, over 100 exchanges and subscribers exceed 50,000 and are steadily increasing. . . The system contains within it forces which, if uncontrolled, might be disruptive of the spirit and intentions of the BBC's charter. The persons in charge of wireless exchanges have power, by replacing selected items

of the corporation's programs with transmissions from abroad, to alter entirely the general drift of the BBC's program policy. They can transmit amusing items from the British programs and replace talks and other matter of informative and experimental value by amusing items in programs from abroad and so *debase their programs to a level of amusement interest only*. . . With the small exchanges of the past no great danger could be foreseen. The matter assumes a different complexion, however, when exchanges controlled by large companies with heavy capital are already allowed 'for the present' 100,000 subscribers each. Each exchange may increase to the stature of a BBC in miniature and furthermore the possibility must be visualized of several enlarged exchanges being merged under a single financial control. . . The growth of wireless exchanges upon present lines must be viewed with concern by all who realize the power of broadcasting and who value the policy and achievements of the BBC.<sup>12</sup>

The BBC worked feverishly to scotch this new danger. It was natural and logical that it should do so. Having been conceded a monopoly, it was entitled to defend it and to be consistent in doing so. It attempted, therefore, to secure international agreement on the Continent of Europe to a policy that would preclude a broadcaster in one country from transmitting programs intended for listeners in another and addressed to them in their native language. This effort failed. The BBC failed also to secure agreement from the government that it should operate relay exchanges. But it persuaded the British Post Office to enact restrictive regulations to curb the power of the relay exchanges to offer listeners alternative program fare.

In April 1930 the British Post Office announced a license system for relay exchanges, which prevented, among other things, the relay exchange from originating programs of its own. Thus if a relay exchange wanted to broadcast a concert or some like activity in its locality, it was forbidden to do so. This license, moreover, was to continue for only two years and was renewable thereafter on an annual basis only. The license further provided that the Postmaster General might 'by no less than

<sup>12</sup> *BBC Yearbook*, 1933, pp. 71-2.

three calendar months previous notice in writing to the licensee, require him to sell to him on the date of termination . . . such portions of the plant and apparatus forming the station and wires and other plant used by the licensee for the purpose of connecting the premises of subscribers with the stations or installed by him at the premises as the Postmaster General shall specify.' In other words the relay-exchange operator was liable to be bought out at any moment at the discretion of the Postmaster General.

It is hardly surprising that under these conditions relay exchanges did not thrive. As of 31 December 1935, their subscribers numbered 233,554. Four years later at the outbreak of World War II they had not reached 300,000, and the number of exchanges had dropped from 343 to 324. Such was the prestige of the BBC at this time that it is likely that its single voice would have prevailed with the Post Office. But in its battle with the relay exchanges it had the support of two strong allies—the radio manufacturers, who, though they may not have favored BBC program policies, feared the exchanges because they tended to reduce the purchase of receiving sets; and the British press, which feared the inroads of competition from British advertisers, who themselves sponsored many of the programs broadcast to Britain from continental stations. The general support accorded to the BBC in the British press undoubtedly derived in large part from the latter's fear of the competitive danger of advertising on the air. We in America know from practical experience that such fear is unwarranted. Nevertheless its existence has been one operative factor in influencing decision on the BBC's charter during the 23 years of its existence.

We stress this aspect of the problem because it illustrates so well the disparity in action between the combined power of vested interests of different kinds and that of the unorganized consumer in influencing decisions of great public moment. For it appears that while the BBC, the radio manufacturers, and the press, each with its own interests in mind, bespoke one policy,



the people bespoke another. A poll conducted in 1946 showed a significant percentage of the British public favoring the institution of a system of broadcasting in which the BBC would continue but would compete with commercial broadcasting. Asked whether they favored continuance of the BBC monopoly, respondents voted 47 per cent in favor; 40 per cent voted for continuance of the BBC in parallel with commercial broadcasting, and 13 per cent were undecided.<sup>13</sup> Significantly, a very high percentage of the less educated and the less well-to-do voted against the continuance of the BBC alone.

This story of the BBC's strenuous efforts to maintain its monopoly is of particular interest because in 1952 its charter again comes up for renewal. It is surely to the credit of the British and a tribute to their open-mindedness that, from the start, they have been unwilling to concede broadcasting rights in perpetuity even to a corporation that has rendered such conspicuous service. There exists now a committee of inquiry to consider afresh and without prejudice the future system of broadcasting in Great Britain. For the reasons that have been given, various vested interests are likely to support further continuance of the BBC's monopoly. But each time that its charter has come up for renewal, there has been a tendency for criticism to be more vocal. In Britain, as in the United States, public interest is still not aroused to the enormous importance of broadcasting. Yet its critics increase in number, and it is most desirable that their contentions should be fairly weighed by the commission that the British government has appointed to draft recommendations for consideration by the British Parliament. What are the main arguments advanced against the continuance of broadcasting monopoly in Britain?<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> British Institute of Public Opinion, 1946.

<sup>14</sup> Of some interest as bearing on the future of the BBC are answers to a question put to a cross section of the British public in 1949 by the British Institute of Public Opinion. Asked 'should the BBC continue with its monopoly of radio in this country or should we also have commercial broadcasting paid for by advertisers?' 33 per cent favored commercial

Some of the conventional and *a priori* objections to monopoly *per se* may, in the light of experience, be brushed aside. It is commonly contended that monopolies tend inevitably toward cumbrous inefficiency and lack of initiative. These are not fair criticisms of the BBC in action. In many fields it has led the world in its resourceful exploitation of radio's resources. Until the war forced it to suspend activities entirely, it was notably ahead of all countries, the United States included, in its experimental use of television. The radio documentary originated in Britain and has been more fully and variously exploited there than in America. In school broadcasting the BBC has consistently maintained a lead, and a big one, over every other broadcasting system in the world. The BBC staff are not sluggish; they may be misguided in their conceptions of what broadcasting is here to do, but they are not complacent. The charge of inefficiency is likewise misplaced, for the BBC's operations run smoothly and its engineering staff have earned an enviable reputation. There is little, in terms of the BBC's practice, to support such grounds for objections to its enjoyment of monopoly.

But a purely theoretical discussion of monopoly resolves nothing. Let us address ourselves to the specific issue at hand. The BBC claims that it requires monopoly to achieve the goals that, after careful thought, it has defined as the most desirable for broadcasting in Great Britain. Let us assume for a moment (despite all that has been said) that these goals are actually worth achieving and ask ourselves what is wrong with the BBC's contention that it needs monopoly to achieve them.

Our first objection might be that this is an illogical contention, for the controlled direction of the public's taste by radio alone is not enough to achieve the desired end. As with the ra-

broadcasting in addition to the BBC, 51 per cent favored continued BBC monopoly, 16 per cent didn't know. Striking class differences of attitude, however, are concealed by these over-all figures. Of respondents in the 'upper middle class' 67 per cent favored BBC monopoly, as compared with 48 per cent and 41 per cent respectively among the 'working class' and the 'very poor.'

tioning of food, so with the rationing of people's tastes, controls must be comprehensive; there must be no loophole for operators in the black market. Thus in strict logic the BBC's theory demands simultaneous, co-ordinated control over the films people see and the newspapers and the books they read. This is not a strong argument, for logic is an intellectual's prerogative and rarely determines public action.

A second objection would be of a pragmatic order. Even within the realm of radio itself, is there assurance that listeners can be prevented from escaping from the net the BBC has cast about them? Is it not obvious that with the fantastic pace of technological invention and development—and more particularly with the perfection of techniques for international short-wave radio communication—the time is not far off when most listeners will be able to tune in to stations other than those of the BBC and thus escape from the circumscribed area hitherto imposed upon them? Is it not indeed paradoxical that the BBC should be seeking at the same time to restrict listening at home and to extend audiences abroad for its own short-wave transmissions? If the voice of Britain is to be heard round the world, must not the British listeners reciprocate by listening to the voices of other countries, whether transmitted by commercial- or government-controlled broadcasting services?

A third and graver objection is surely that, in seeking a privileged position to achieve its ends, the BBC fundamentally misconceives the nature of cultural growth in any social organism. We have referred to the BBC staff as consisting predominantly of a cultural elite. Can it not be said that in their eager and generous desire to make available to everyone those insights into which they themselves, through privileged and restricted opportunity, have been initiated, they have overlooked a crucial factor in the process of their own cultural development? The kind of 'taste' the BBC appears to seek to cultivate is the result of a prolonged course of intensive education for which the services of broadcasting (at least as at present executed) provide

no adequate short-cut substitute. In the second place, such 'taste' is also the result of a social milieu (and to some degree of a status of comparative economic well-being) in which the cultivation of such taste is native and traditional—in the home as well as in the schools and universities. Neither the home circumstances nor the family traditions nor the abbreviated education of the ordinary listener is conducive in any comparable sense to the development of culture in the sense in which the BBC conceives it.

Thus, even if we continue to concede the validity of the type of culture the BBC seeks to inculcate, it is adopting the wrong methods for doing so. In its Third Program, and to a lesser degree in other programs, it appears to be operating on the principle that if great literature and great music are made available to listeners, they will in due course come to enjoy them. This overlooks the fact, familiar to every educator, that there are intermediate stages involved in the development of mature taste and judgment. Radio's most fascinating, most perplexing, and most important task is to discover ways appropriate to itself in which refinement of insight can be popularly (as against vulgarly) interpreted.

But perhaps the most decisive objection is to the BBC's unwarranted fear of competition. Such fear is misplaced on two main grounds, both of which reveal the dangers inherent in the enjoyment of monopoly. If the goals of the BBC cannot be attained in a free market place of thought, either the goals themselves are not worth reaching or else the public does not merit that faith in its capacity to grow in intellectual and emotional stature on which the BBC's own policy is presumably predicated. Sir William Haley himself quotes a passage from John Stuart Mill that expresses the essential truth of the whole matter.

Men lose their high aspirations, as they lose their intellectual tastes, because they have no time or opportunity for indulging them; and they addict themselves to inferior pleasures, not because they deliberately prefer them but because they are either the only ones to

which they have access or the only ones which they are no longer capable of enjoying. It may be questioned whether anyone who has remained equally susceptible to both classes of pleasures, ever knowingly and calmly preferred the lowly; many in all ages have broken down in an ineffectual attempt to combine both.

It is to the credit of the BBC that, at least within the limits of its own concepts of culture, it has made available to listeners a rich variety of choice. It is the *presence* of good fare, not the *absence* of inferior matter, that constitutes its proudest achievement. If Mill is right, no amount of competition from quarters bent on pandering to vulgar tastes would jeopardize the BBC's achievement of its goals—as long as it itself raises, in the words of George Washington, 'a standard to which the wise and the honest can repair.' The main evil of our system of broadcasting is not so much the currency of cheap or insignificant material as it is the absence of any counterweight of excellence. In insisting on monopoly, the BBC seems to bespeak unwittingly a lack of confidence in the true merit of its cultural ideals—and it does something worse. It arrogates to itself that infallibility which, in his essay on Liberty, Mill designated as one of the prime dangers of a restriction on the free market place of thought.

We have thus far conceded, for purposes of argument, the validity of the BBC's cultural policy. In deference to Mill, we are now forced to question it. It may be wrong. In view of this, the very zeal of the BBC in its concern for the public interest should make it the more eager for any and every safeguard against the possibility of its being itself in error. The logic of such thinking suggests that it should seek rather than avoid competition from others. For it has no right to assume that all its competitors will of necessity be inferior in their conceptions of the public's need.

The BBC should also realize that some notable advantages in monopoly are offset by serious disadvantages. These are inherent in monopoly and have little or nothing to do with the intentions or aspirations of those in charge of BBC policy. In-

deed, the BBC's staff may be the unwilling victims of the situation in which they find themselves, for the BBC, because it is a monopoly, is precluded from, or at least severely limited in, the performance of certain services that have come to be recognized as distinctive of broadcasting.

It is significant, for instance, that for years the BBC had no regular, named news commentators, no interpreter of current economic problems, no film critic. Although it once had a commentator on international affairs and also a film critic, both were discarded. It was felt that under a monopoly an individual critic was invested with a dangerous degree of power to influence opinion and (as in the case of a film critic) to affect the economic interests of a major industry.<sup>15</sup> On one occasion Mr. Churchill himself was debarred from access to the microphone. The BBC was in fact amply justified in its action, given the circumstances of the case and the monopoly of broadcasting then and since enjoyed. Were there, however, alternative competing outlets available for broadcasting, commentators, film critics, and individuals of distinction like Mr. Churchill would have much fuller opportunity to voice opinion without being subject to the charge of wielding excessive power. Because it is monopolistic, the BBC cannot provide the freedom of choice that would be available in a competitive system even with the restricted channels of communication available to Britain. As a former Director General of the BBC has said, 'Freedom is choice and monopoly of broadcasting is inevitably the negation of freedom, no matter how efficiently it is run. It denies freedom of choice to listeners. It denies freedom of employment, to speakers, musicians, writers, actors and all who seek their chance on the air.'<sup>16</sup>

Another example of the consequences of monopoly is the fact

<sup>15</sup> In fairness it must be said that the commentator and film critic have again returned to the British air waves. But, under the BBC's monopoly, they remain subject to the charge of being over-privileged in their uncompetitive influence on the formation of opinion.

<sup>16</sup> Sir Frederick Ogilvie, in a letter to the *London Times*, 26 June, 1947.

that the major political parties in Britain have come to a gentlemen's agreement with the BBC whereby, while legislative measures are in process of debate in Parliament, the BBC voluntarily relinquishes its right to air these issues controversially by radio. Thus, at the very moment when the enlistment of public interest would seem to be most vital, i.e. when measures with conceivably momentous consequences for the public are near the point of legislative enactment, the wave lengths of Britain are discreetly silent. For instance, while the Labour government's plans to nationalize transportation and the coal and steel industries were being debated, British radio permitted no citizen to hear the opposed points of view on these questions. It is almost inconceivable that, under a competitive system, such an agreement could ever have been reached.

Thus in its strenuous fight to ward off the competition of the relay exchanges, the BBC appears to have put shackles on itself in terms of an inevitable and surely undesirable delimitation of its scope for public service. This situation is the paradox of monopoly. For the more conscientious and sensitive the monopolist is about the power he holds, the more cautious he will be in its exercise. The result is a tendency toward the innocuous and an avoidance of the danger zones of lively controversy.

Finally, we might notice a tendency that, though not peculiar to, is yet peculiarly dangerous in, monopoly. Every institution vested with great power will seek to perpetuate itself. This is natural but not desirable. In the case of the BBC, the danger is that the more convinced it becomes of the virtue of its policies, the less capable it will be of appraising fairly the virtue of alternatives. Sir William Haley has spoken publicly of the necessity 'for those responsible for the conduct of broadcasting continuously to be examining their bases of decision.' But we could hardly expect him and his associates to remain so open-minded as to be ready to reconsider (and if necessary to discard) the basic tenets of their philosophy. He and the BBC, by the very strength of their convictions, are committed to self-perpetua-

tion, and it is only natural that they should, therefore, conform to practices that reduce the risk of the appletart's being upset.

Hence, perhaps, that marked characteristic of the BBC—its secrecy about matters that many would consider to be of public interest. We have seen that its listener-research findings are not open to the public. Its annual financial statements are likewise models of obscurity. No one knows, because the BBC will not tell, about the details of its expenditures. A fog of mystery also enshrouds the technical aspects of radio's development. These are difficult in any case for the layman to understand, but intelligent consideration and discussion are doubly difficult when, because of monopoly, the only source of expert knowledge is the BBC's own engineering staff. It can at least be questioned (if not proved) whether the BBC's engineers have been as active in the public interest as they might have been in exploring and promoting alternative methods for the transmission of programs that would make competition and multiple sources of program supply possible. It is not in the BBC's interest that such should be known or discussed.

What then is the conclusion of the whole matter? The true answer is, of course, that there is none. The BBC cannot achieve perfection because it operates in an imperfect world. Like every other broadcasting system, it can do no more than seek a balance of advantage. If the tenor of our argument can be at all sustained, the BBC can pursue its noble experiment if it will make a few concessions to fundamental principle and to pragmatic realities. It appears to be unduly concerned with the preservation of its monopoly. This, we contend, is unsound in principle and unnecessary in practice. If its policies are sound, they will survive even with competition. What form the competition should take is, of course, a matter for expert decision and involves the maintenance of safeguards against the undue corruption of the medium as a vehicle of thought and values. Once faced with competition, the BBC not only will survive but will thereafter be immune to the fatal charge that it has donned the



mantle of infallibility. Its concept of broadcasting may be right. But what if it is wrong? The BBC's service, once choice is offered to the listener through competition, would be free from restrictions that now hamper its operation and perhaps drive it in the direction of that over-narrow concept of what constitutes culture, which provokes no violent criticism just because it touches no one at the quick of selfish interest or of immediate moment.

Apart from its adherence to monopoly, the BBC, as we have seen, is at least open to the charge (which no one, of course, can actually prove) that it has misconceived radio's cultural role and opportunity. It was at the beginning of World War I that Britain's foreign minister made the prophetic statement that all over Europe the lights were going out. Contemplating the darkness that has deepened, the world over, since the end of World War II, British radio has set itself the heroic task of keeping a few lights glimmering in Britain. But is not this the very error of its insight? It is not the lights that matter but what they illuminate and the power of human eyes to contemplate with wisdom and forbearance the ever-changing scene of human destiny. In its Third Program, the BBC seeks to preserve a long and great tradition of literature. The danger here is that, through such preoccupation, it loses sight of radio's more distinctive task, the creation of a new literature, or perhaps better, a skilful adaptation of the old, so that communication shall constitute at long last 'winged words,' as Homer put it, and find new means of touching men's hearts and quickening their intelligence. Culture, like history, is something to be drawn upon, not leaned upon.

In conclusion, and after much criticism, we must pay a final tribute to the BBC. Despite what some consider a questionable means to a questionable end, it has honored in larger measure than any other system radio's first imperative—the provision to the listening public of a generous diversity of choice. Coddled and favored as Britain's cultural elite may seem to some, in terms

of the over-all balance of British broadcast services, a generous and broad diversity of choice at least is there. In view of this positive achievement, much may be forgiven in terms of its sins of omission. The BBC has not abdicated its responsibility, nor is it guilty of a cynical concession, through a desire for profits, to the selfishness of vested interests, the sovereignty of ignorance, or the tyranny of mass desires. It has honored, if unduly, its cultural minorities and thus has honored a fundamental principle of democratic life.

Throughout this chapter we have avoided all comparisons, but we might now venture one tentative comparative conclusion. Ours is a system of broadcasting that on the evidence appears to work a great deal worse than it ought to do. Its theory is better than its practice. The BBC exemplifies a system that, if our arguments are valid, functions a good deal better than it has any business to do. In neither system do we find perfection, but with evidence of both before him, the reader is perhaps better equipped to work out his own solution.

## 2. BROADCASTING IN CANADA

Systems and institutions, we have said, are always native in character and origin. They reflect and serve the needs, circumstances, and outlook of a people. Canada's broadcasting system illustrates this fact. To understand it, you must understand Canada, a country so near and in many ways so like our own that many Americans fail to appreciate its marked differences—and the desire of the Canadian people to be different, to be themselves.

As in the United States and in Britain, Canadian broadcasting in its early days was commercial—a venture of private enterprise. It is now only partly and subordinately so. To explain the changes, we must examine a few characteristics of Canada itself.

1. Canada, like the United States, is a young country; it belongs to the 'New World.' But, unlike the United States, it has

never wholly severed its ties to the mother country—Britain. It has shed its colonial status and become an independent, sovereign power; but it remains a member of the British Commonwealth, owes allegiance to the Crown, and still recognizes the British Privy Council as its final court of appeal in all matters other than criminal law. In custom and tradition (and in trade) young Canada remains closely linked to old Britain.

2. But by no means all Canadians are of British stock. Canada was first settled by Frenchmen, and French Canadians, concentrated mainly in the province of Quebec, today comprise an important and powerful social and political block. They have preserved their own language, their Catholic religion, and customs and traditions stemming from France. Over a third of Canada today is French Canadian. Canada, like the United States, has been a melting pot, and its population includes the descendants of immigrants from all over Europe and, on the west coast, from China and Japan. One of its major problems has been, and remains, the uniting of such diverse and disparate social elements.

3. The achievement of unity is complicated by the fact that Canada's small population (some 13 millions) is spread over a country greater in its geographical extent than the United States, and by the persistence of provincial autonomy. The powers of the federal government are jealously delimited.

4. Canada's desire to be herself has involved a twofold struggle. With her successful efforts to shed her dependent, colonial status to Britain most Americans are familiar. But few appreciate the influence on Canadian thought and policy of the fact that its immediate neighbor is the rich and powerful United States. Eighty per cent of the people of Canada live within 100 miles of the United States border. As one Canadian has put it, 'Our minds are being constantly pulled to the south.' The cultural influence of the United States is strong, and even stronger and more disturbing is the United States' financial grip. A high proportion of all invested capital in Canada is in American

hands. The fear of dependence on or even of absorption by the United States is ever-present. Canadians, incidentally, are not flattered to be taken for Americans.

Split down the middle in terms of its predominantly French and British stock, weaned only recently from its dependent status as a colony, constantly under the shadow of the United States and thus standing, as it were, between two worlds, and with its people scattered over a vast territory, Canada has had a hard time maintaining its distinctive entity and achieving a cohesive social and cultural solidarity. A visitor, indeed, marvels that a country coping with so many centrifugal forces manages to hold together at all.

All these factors have influenced the thinking that developed broadcasting as it is in Canada today. But the decisive factor was the concern to foster and develop a distinctive Canadian culture to save Canada from being in thrall—culturally as well as economically—to the United States.

Broadcasting in Canada was at first exclusively commercial. In 1922 thirty-three stations were licensed by the Department of Marine, but no spawning of new stations, here, there, and everywhere, as in the United States, was to follow. Expansion was at a snail's pace—for two main reasons. Revenue was not forthcoming to cover costs except in a few big cities, and competition from United States stations, which early blanketed most of the thickly populated areas of Canada, proved too powerful. When United States networks developed, a large number of Canadian stations consequently became affiliated to them. The United States cultural invasion was on, wearing the seven-league boots of radio's wave lengths.

Concern over this 'invasion' and over the continued limitation of radio's services to urban listeners<sup>17</sup> was so great in 1928 that a commission (headed by Sir John Aird) was appointed to in-

<sup>17</sup> Even as late as 1931 the total power of all Canadian stations was only 33,000 watts, half of which were concentrated in Montreal and Toronto (see the *Canadian Radio League*, 1931, p. 28).

quire into the matter. In its report, issued on 11 September, 1929, it recommended the creation of a national broadcasting service with 'status and duties corresponding to those of a public utility,' which would take over all private stations, replacing them with seven 50,000-watt stations and four smaller units at an estimated cost of \$3,250,000. A license fee for radio-set ownership, together with a Dominion subsidy of \$1,000,000 for the first ten years, would, it was hoped, cover the costs.

These recommendations were never adopted. The idea of a centralized national-broadcasting service was at once challenged, on constitutional grounds, by several provinces (it was not until 1932 that the British Privy Council, supporting the Canadian Supreme Court, rejected this view), and the depression years that followed ruled out the possibility of securing revenue along the lines proposed.

But public pressure for an effective service continued. People wanted nationwide coverage and more distinctive Canadian programs.<sup>18</sup> A special parliamentary committee, appointed in 1932, repeated the main recommendation of the Aird Committee—for a central, public-service radio system—while compromising on finance and the pace of reconstruction. A Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission was created in November 1932 and was replaced four years later by the present Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, which derives its constitution and powers from the Canadian Broadcasting Act of 1936.

### *What is the CBC?*

Broadcasting in Canada constitutes a compromise, a hybrid version of British and American radio practices. It is, like the BBC, a public-service corporation consisting of a Board of Governors, nine in number, each appointed for three years. (The

<sup>18</sup> In 1932 an analysis, based on Department of Marine figures, disclosed that outside Montreal and Toronto only two fifths of the Canadian population could hear Canadian programs—and that these consisted chiefly of phonograph records!

chairman is paid; other members are not.) Its primary revenue derives (as in Britain) from license fees (\$2.50 annually)<sup>19</sup> paid by owners of receiving sets. In the fiscal year 1948-9 this revenue amounted to \$5,135,375. When we compare this figure with the \$400,000,000 derived from advertising on the air in the United States, we see the measure of the Canadian problem. Revenue is insufficient either for effective programming or for the construction of sufficient stations to provide nationwide coverage. And when we realize that Canada's resources of talent for entertainment are modest, it is clear that necessity becomes the mother of peculiar invention.

It is at this point, therefore, that Canada departs from British precedent and begins to draw on American. To supplement the few high-powered stations it could afford to construct, the CBC has enlisted the services of existing, private, commercial stations in key places as affiliated outlets for its network services. The Aird Commission of 1928 had envisaged that private stations would be bought out and absorbed into the national system. The reverse has taken place. Not only have private stations then in operation persisted, but a considerable number of new, privately owned stations have been licensed: 67 additional stations have been licensed and 80 have been granted increase in power since 1936.

CBC owns and operates 18 radio stations, of which 9 are high-powered (two at 10 kilowatts and seven at 50 kilowatts). These, supplemented by privately owned affiliated stations,<sup>20</sup> provide network services to the Canadian public. The Trans-Canada

<sup>19</sup> This is small as compared with license fees in other countries: e.g., Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Union of South Africa, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia. CBC is currently claiming that unless the license fee is doubled, present services will have to be curtailed and that the Corporation faces a dark and even a dangerous financial future.

<sup>20</sup> Of the 123 private stations 40 have power in excess of 1,000 watts; 41 operate at 1,000 watts, and the rest are small stations of 100, 250, and 500 watts; 26 per cent of these 123 stations are owned by or associated with newspapers. Gross revenue for all private stations in Canada, less agency commissions, was \$13,746,228 in 1948. Compare this with CBC's income, from all sources, of \$7,553,214.

network, on the air 16 hours a day, is composed of 14 CBC and 26 privately owned stations. The Dominion network, transmitting programs 5½ hours each evening, is made up of one CBC and 37 private stations. Three CBC and eight private stations constitute the French network, serving French-speaking listeners in Quebec province. All these affiliated private stations revert to local broadcasting when not transmitting network services.

To supplement Canada's resources of entertainment, CBC draws also on the United States and carries many of our more popular sponsored programs which both enrich its native program services where they are weakest and supplement its income. In its first ten years CBC 'received a total of \$29,869,000 in radio license fees. \$10,210,000 was received from commercial operations and sundry sources.'<sup>21</sup> In the fiscal year 1948-9, revenue from advertising was \$2,217,130 or about 30 per cent of total income.

But the proportion of sustaining (non-commercial) programs, as compared with the United States, is far higher, amounting to approximately 81 per cent of all broadcasts. Moreover, many more sustaining programs are heard regularly at convenient evening hours. CBC studies the needs and meets the claims of its minorities.

CBC does not try to obtain a mass audience all the time. We recognize the existence of minority groups whose tastes must be taken into account. The easy and profitable way of doing this is to put programs that are not supposed to be big audience builders into periods outside peak listening time. This we have resolutely refused to do. If you care to check our program schedules, you will find what are often supposed to be selected audience programs occupying the very best listening periods. Discussion groups, symphony concerts, recitals of Bach's organ music or cantatas, the drama of ideas—all of these you will find scheduled in some of the very best and commercially profitable broadcasting hours. As a matter of fact many people are inclined to underestimate the general standards of public taste.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *This is the CBC, op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>22</sup> E. L. Bushnell of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation before a Parliamentary Committee in 1946.

CBC has had to make a little go a long way. When we consider the difficulties, its achievements are remarkable. It has realized its two main tasks—to provide, as nearly as possible, universal coverage and to give self-expression to Canadian culture. It has brought 96 per cent of all Canadian families within hearing distance of its main network services. (The enormity of this achievement—and the expense involved—may be proved by the fact that line charges absorb some 20 per cent of the Corporation's total revenue.) More than 80 per cent of the total hours of network programs are of Canadian origin. It has rendered a signal service to Canada's large rural population: its 'National Farm Radio Forum' has brought into being one of the largest listening-group projects in the world.

It has, moreover, offered its listeners some of the best of American entertainment without sacrificing minorities of interest. It provides a steady fare of fine music (to the delight of music lovers in the United States all along the Canadian border from Maine to Washington), first-rate service to farmers, a competent school broadcasting service, and many varied public-service programs. (CBC has for several years received a remarkably high proportion of awards at the annual Ohio State Institute on Radio Education.) In addition to programs from America, broadcasts from Britain and France are also regularly heard.

Lack of funds has prevented that detailed and systematic analysis of the size of audiences for different programs with which we are familiar in America. This situation is disturbing in that it precludes any measurement of progress. Is the audience for CBC programs greater or smaller than it was, or than that for Canada's commercial stations? And how many Canadian listeners tune in to stations in the United States? Continued ignorance about such questions deprives the CBC of the healthy and necessary stimulus of competition and makes an important national enterprise more speculative than it should be.

Responsible opinion is, thus far, favorable to the CBC. A series of parliamentary committees have consistently endorsed the



service. But CBC, as we shall see, has critics and ambitious rivals. A definitive answer to the question whether it has won and held the loyalty of a substantial segment of the audience available cannot be much longer deferred. Public funds and a national interest are at stake.

### *CBC Relation to Private Stations*

We have yet to consider an important and much-debated function of the CBC, which, from its title, one would hardly assume that it possessed. CBC is not only a broadcasting system but a regulatory agency, having powers very similar to those of our Federal Communications Commission. In matters relating to programming and to all network operations, it makes regulations for all broadcasting stations in Canada. So far as licensing of stations is concerned, the Minister named in the Broadcasting Act is the licensing authority, with CBC acting as the recommending or advisory body.

Thus, CBC's powers extend beyond its own operations to cover those of all private stations. It is on the advice of CBC that private stations secure their licenses. CBC, moreover, has the power not only to give but to take away. Under Section 11 of the Broadcasting Act of 1936, it can buy out or, if necessary, expropriate any private station whose service it regards as redundant. It can suspend a private station's license for three months for failure to comply with any of its regulations, and it reviews annually the claims of private stations to renewal of their license. It can claim time for relays of its network services on any private station, and it can also prescribe the nature and limitations of the programs locally and independently originated. In some respects its regulations go far beyond those of the FCC and include directions to private stations in regard to the amount and character of advertising matter and 'the proportion of time which may be devoted to political broadcasts.'<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Section 22 of the Act reads in part, 'The Corporation may make regulations . . . to prescribe the periods to be reserved periodically by any

The most jealously guarded of its rights is that of absolute control over network broadcasting. 'No private station,' says the Act (Section 21), 'shall operate in Canada as a part of a chain or network of stations except with the permission of, and in accordance with the regulations made by, the Corporation.' In practice, network broadcasting in Canada is run by CBC, and local-station operations are almost exclusively in private, commercial hands. There is thus a broad division of function. National program services are provided by CBC over its networks. Community service is delegated in the main to local, privately owned stations under the supervisory control of CBC.

Compared with its achievements in actual broadcasting, CBC as a regulatory agency has performed less well. As with the FCC, its supervision and enforcement of regulations have been superficial, though for different reasons. It has remained unaffected by commercial radio's lobbyists (who, though active, are less powerful than here in the United States), and it has not been constantly harried by members of the Parliament, which has confined itself to an annual review of broadcast operations. The Canadian Parliament, in the British tradition, believes in a broad and full delegation of power to its public servants. CBC's perfunctory enforcement of its rulings (only one private station has ever suffered cancellation of its license) is due primarily to an inadequate staff and lack of funds—and also to the difficulty of prescribing the precise requisites of effective public-service broadcasting. Like the FCC, its main function is to maintain a rearguard action against flagrant abuse of a public trust on the part of private stations. Positive service is difficult to achieve by regulatory fiat.

Despite this fact, the CBC has not been free from criticism. Indeed, over the years a mounting chorus of protest and

private station for the broadcasting of programs by the Corporation; to control the character of any or all programs broadcast by the corporation *or* private station; to determine the proportion of time which may be devoted to advertising in any programs broadcast by the stations of the corporation *or* by private stations, and to control the character of such advertising.'

resentment has been heard from private stations. This reached its peak at hearings before a Parliamentary committee in 1946, when two main pleas were advanced: (1) It was argued by private stations that it was unreasonable and unfair that they should be subject to regulation by an agency that was, in effect, in competition with them for the advertising dollar. CBC should be shorn of its regulatory powers, which should be transferred to an 'impartial' agency of government. (2) Private stations requested the right to engage, independently of CBC, in network broadcasting. Confidence was expressed in the capacity of private stations to finance such operations, and much was made of the iniquity of present curbs on the free scope for private enterprise.

These two pleas (for which a convincing prima-facie case can certainly be made) are worthy of examination for the light they throw on the formation of public policy. Conclusions concerning their validity will depend on the relevance (to the public interest) of the premises from which they derive. In simple terms of theory it seems fantastic that regulatory powers should be combined with broadcasting functions that are 'competitive.' The question arises, however, whether the relation of CBC, as broadcaster, to private stations is in any true sense that of a competitor. The answer depends on one's interpretation both of the letter and spirit of the Broadcasting Act and of the recommendations of the commissions and committees that led to its enactment.

The intent of the Aird Commission of 1928 is clear. It proposed the immediate and complete nationalization of radio and the elimination, at once, of *all* commercial broadcasting. As we have seen, circumstances prevented enactment of its proposals.

The special Parliamentary committee of 1932 likewise envisaged a centralized, public-service system of broadcasting, but it proposed more gradual methods for the liquidation or absorption of private stations. The Act itself makes provision for such a step but, naturally, does not prescribe its being taken at a given time.

Seen in this light, the present, angry claim of private stations

to be relieved of 'unfair competition' appears open to question. For it is a claim based, in essence, on squatters' rights. Private stations (according to the thinking of all the commissions and committees that have studied Canada's radio needs) are vestigial organs, like the human appendix, surviving from a past era in which neither of Canada's paramount requirements of radio—that it should be widespread and predominantly native in its cultural accent and emphasis—was satisfactorily met.

This is not to say that private stations serve no useful purpose today. Emphatically they do. They are a necessary adjunct of the national service both as local outlets for network broadcasts and as servants of the needs and interests of local communities. They do, however, constitute a compromise solution of the problem created by the lack of federal funds either to buy them up or to substitute for them public-service stations at a local level. The spirit and intent of the Act of 1936 are that they subserve, not rival, the purposes and activities of CBC. Their function is supplementary, not alternative or still less substitutional. The growth in the number and power of private stations since 1936 might seem to disprove this line of argument. But if we assume that CBC has always acted in pursuance of its mandate, this is not really so. Where private enterprise has shown the will and the capacity to venture further afield, the granting of a concession by CBC (having regard to the strait economics of Canadian broadcasting) is justified—if the national interest is thereby served.

The bitter pill that the private entrepreneur in Canada must swallow is that in broadcasting he enjoys only the status of a tenant farmer or, (dare one say it?) perhaps more accurately, that of a sharecropper. In terms of the theory of free enterprise, this is plain heresy and hogwash. In pragmatic terms, which take account of what are felt to be overriding considerations of national need, it makes (as compromise and inconsistency so often do) tolerably good sense. It is not perfection; it is a crude approximation to the best that hard circumstances allow.

The private stations' plea to be allowed to invade the network field must be considered along similar lines. Whose interests would this step best serve? The private stations are confident that they can succeed. We can assume, therefore, that, not being altruists, they look forward to advancement of their private interests. But what of the listener and what of the national interest of Canada—as viewed by responsible opinion in this context? We can only speculate on the outcome on the basis of present evidence and past precedent.

What of the current operation of private stations?<sup>24</sup> Is it distinguished, varied, socially responsible? Is local talent adequately represented and are local interests and needs generally provided for? Many say not. Is it popular? Unquestionably. If they are nothing else, profits are an index of popularity, and most private stations claim to be well-padded.<sup>25</sup> But if we stick to the path Canada has cut out for itself, i.e., to the criteria by which effective use of radio is to be judged, the prospect of network broadcasting by private stations is probably not rosy. For these criteria have primary reference neither to the prosperity of private entrepreneurs nor to the mass popularity of programs. They have reference rather (1) to the high importance of cultural growth and solidarity in Canada, and (2) to the great danger of its subordination to cultural influences from the United States. There is at present no evidence that private stations are either eager or competent to advance the former, and a vivid imagination is required to suppose that they will resist the temptation to accentuate the latter by accepting lucrative affiliation with one or other of the four American networks. Independent network broadcasting by private stations would,

<sup>24</sup> At present, approximately 75% of all private stations benefit financially from CBC network operations in one way or another. The corporation forwards to them annually approximately \$1,200,000 for time bought by sponsors (on CBC networks). Statement by the Chairman of the Board of Governors before the Parliamentary Committee on Radio in 1946.

<sup>25</sup> Total gross revenue, for 1948, of the 104 privately owned stations reporting to the Department of Transport amounted to \$13,355,206.

moreover, almost certainly result in their desertion of CBC's network operations, and CBC in effect would be without outlets for its network services. Alternative stations would have to be constructed for which public funds are not available. Thus the national interest, as presently conceived, would seem to be at variance with the ambitions of the private stations. It was not for nothing that there was written, expressly, into the Broadcasting Act the provision that 'no private station shall operate in Canada as a part of a chain or network of stations except with the permission of, and in accordance with the regulations made by, the Corporation.'<sup>26</sup>

And so, as in our previous discussions of American and British broadcasting, we come again to the consideration of the tangle of seemingly conflicting interests that those concerned with establishing a system of broadcasting must try to unravel. Here in America—despite, and not by virtue of, the system we have adopted—we are, by and large, content to please the people. Canada, like Britain (though for quite different reasons and in the face of vastly different circumstances), wants to please but still more to serve the best interests of its people.

The problem raised by the private stations' claim to a place in the sun is in some ways similar to that discussed with reference to the BBC and the relay exchanges. Would a commercial network, broadcasting concurrently with the CBC, wean listeners away from the latter? Would Gresham's law apply? This is a question of human horticulture, to which no one has a certain answer. What clearance of the weeds in the garden of the mind is necessary for the full flowering of an individual's (or a nation's) personality and powers? We suggested that in Britain the risk of weeds might be worth taking, that short-term concessions to popularity would not jeopardize the long-term cultivation of eclectic tastes and more sophisticated interests.

In Canada the risk involved is fraught with much greater

<sup>26</sup> Section 21 of the Canadian Broadcasting Act, 1936.

hazards. Canada is not, like Britain, 'an island entire of itself.' It is a country in which centrifugal forces prompt great and most natural centripetal anxieties. It is not for the stranger without the gates to pronounce such fears unwarranted.

## PART II

### VIII

## PROPAGANDA AND PUBLIC OPINION

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'In proportion as the structure of government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion shall be enlightened.'

—GEORGE WASHINGTON *in his Farewell Address*

#### 1. THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF PROPAGANDA

ALL of us can recall the mixed feelings with which we reacted to the outbreak of war—the overwhelming anguish, our momentary possession by that insight, which in peace we so readily discard, the tragic sense of life; and, withal, the strange exhilaration (acknowledged only between intimates), the relief from tension, as of men alerted, at last, for action. The issue, we said, was clear and simple; minor differences were forgotten in our dedication to the common cause; certainty triumphed over doubt, and 'carking cares' yielded to one dominant preoccupation.

War, in a sense, is tonic. It purges our emotions; it clears (or seems to clear) our minds—and therein lies its danger. It oversimplifies the issue, foreshortens sight, distorts perspective, offers through action a convenient alibi for thought. To repine, in retrospect, over the lost virtues of wartime—the united front at home, the camaraderie and heroism of the battlefield—is to



indulge a disreputable sentiment and to misread war's real lesson, which is that the only proper place for men to contend with one another is the free market place of thought, and that the only sure weapon is the appeal to reason and to conscience.

We speak of war as being a last resort. Yet the increasing frequency with which modern man has availed himself of it would seem to argue a nervous instability, a moral laxity (for we now say war is unthinkable), and a total disregard for two prime conditions of civilized living—patience and tolerance. (Our moral and intellectual confusion, indeed, is such that in this matter at least we have become, paradoxically, aware of the disparity between what we say and what we do. We have become verbal realists in appraising our present state and have pushed the word 'peace' to the edge of our vocabulary. The historian of A.D. 5000 is sure to record the distinction we make not between peace and war, but between wars hot and cold.) By such confusion we daily risk another war, which we shall fight on spurious grounds through failure to grasp the true nature of the struggle in which we are involved—a struggle no fighting war can settle.

A proper understanding of our present subject requires some further probing of what exactly we are committed to when we say that we are legionaries of the democratic creed. In this modern scientific age we tend to stress differences between ourselves and our forebears. What we must now grasp is the essential continuity of history as it affects us, the intensification, not the alteration, of an age-old conflict.

The true crisis of our time is the struggle for the allegiance of men's minds to conflicting views of what 'freedom' means and of how the individual best attains it. The battleground is the mind of man. At the political level the struggle may take, in its intermediate phases, the traditional forms of maneuver, the seizure and occupation of territory, dispute over waterways, economic warfare, and so on. But these are only moves in the game, the intermediate means to the one end—the forceful domination or

peaceful persuasion of men's minds. Any war that breaks out in our lifetime will, in this respect, differ radically from practically all past wars, in which territorial aggrandizement and economic advantage were the avowed or actual objectives.

But this reference to politics is unfortunate, for our preoccupation today is already too political. Crisis on this front constitutes but one aspect of the larger crisis of freedom and the means of its achievement. The two contending parties, though they have gone by different names, have always been the same. We might call them the champions, respectively, of the aristocratic and the democratic point of view. With the former, despite differences between them, we must associate modern authoritarianism in all its forms.

In politics (that is, with reference to the organization of society) the aristocratic view is typified by Plato, the democratic by Aristotle; in religion, by Roman Catholics and Protestants respectively. Whatever the context, the conflict is over the means by which and the pace at which men become acquainted with the truth. In matters of religion the Catholic affirms, the Protestant rejects the mediation of the Church between man's conscience and his God. In matters political, the aristocrat affirms, the democrat rejects the distillation of political wisdom for the people by an 'elite.' In education, the distinction is between selective and universal education. The democratic view rests on a belief in man's rational powers and in his right to exercise them without either the supervision or sanction of any intermediary. Its emphasis is on the individual rather than on the group. Thus the distinction, phrased another way, is between emphasis on conformity and nonconformity.

The very fact of the continuance of the struggle would seem to argue (if we believe in man's rational bent) that neither side has had a monopoly on truth. It has been a dialectic of part truths which, through conflict, have brought to light a truth more whole. It is the scale and depth of thinking in which we are

now involved in this latest and most complex phase of the struggle that occasion the profound disturbance of our mind.

As we take notice of these distinctions, we realize how bold and hazardous is the experiment in living (for it is still essentially emergent) that we call the democratic way of life. Democracy, indeed, is the hardest as well as the noblest of all ways in which to choose to live with one another. Washington saw this fact and defined its prime condition of success. 'It is essential that public opinion shall be enlightened.' But enlightened as to what? To the nature, surely, of man's continual crisis and his own limitations in meeting it.

These limitations (and they are most serious in a democracy) have to do in part with the element of time—with the speed at which the masses, who in a democracy are masters, achieve the enlightenment necessary to save them from fatal errors of conduct and decision. Authoritarian regimes refuse to take the risk here involved; they assume the responsibility that in a democracy devolves on the people. (It is this that no doubt accounts for the astonishing insistence on conformity not merely in political thinking and writing but in literature, art, and music that obtains in Soviet Russia today.) We hold them to be wrong. But we shall be equally wrong if in our haste and zeal to exemplify our creed, we fail to take proper measures to offset intermediately and to eliminate as rapidly as possible the dangers involved in a partial or deficient degree of public enlightenment. These dangers are the greater in view of the confusion introduced by the speed of change that has taken place in our lifetime.

There are two conditions necessary to satisfactory living: a stable environment (that is, a social and economic structure functioning competently to meet man's material needs) and inward peace of mind. Most of us are aware of how rapidly changing, and therefore how unstable, is man's environment today. But perhaps we have failed as yet to give due weight to another component of the modern dilemma—the breakdown of organized religion and of ethical standards in general. This is a

consequence of the speed at which our mode of life has been transformed. No satisfactory reinterpretation of religious truths, no adjustment of our moral code conforming to the needs of a new world have taken place. Religion has lost touch with reality; traditional forms and practices have lingered on into an age in which their symbolic significance has ceased to have deep meaning for us. Moral precepts, appropriate to the circumstances of life in a bygone age, have likewise lost their hold on our loyalty. In deference to custom, we pay them conventional lip service while recognizing that they are no longer practicable.

In terms of its consequences, it matters little whether such a view is true or false. If it is widely held, it is enough to destroy peace of mind. Our spiritual anchorage is gone, and consequently 'The individual is lost in an invisible society, and is too weak to invent new norms for himself. The result is a moral chaos in which religious standards, family traditions and neighborly ethics are losing ground without being replaced by other principles.'<sup>1</sup>

Let us summarize the argument thus far. Ours is an age of acute and culminating crisis. The nature of the crisis is obscured for us by two considerations: (1) Political events appear to conform to the traditional pattern of the rivalry of nations for territorial and economic power. This is illusion. Such rivalry is but the byplay in a major struggle for the minds of men, for their loyalty to one of two opposed philosophies of freedom, and for the means by which men, in organized society, attain to it. The one philosophy seems to subordinate individual to group existence. It is authoritarian in that it prescribes and delineates the form of group existence and demands conformity thereto as the condition of individual freedom and happiness. The other is democratic or libertarian in that it seeks to fashion group institutions so as to leave fullest scope for individual liberty.

<sup>1</sup> Mannheim, Karl, *Diagnosis of Our Time*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1944, p. 85.

It is nonconformist, in that it aims at the greatest diversity of individual self-expression compatible with social stability.

(2) The struggle for men's minds is the more fraught with danger because the speed at which modern life has been transformed has undermined our sense of security, both with respect to our material environment and to our inward peace of mind as this stems from safe anchorage in religious faith and acceptable ethical norms. We are consequently fear-ridden and confused.

The danger is greatest for democratic societies because, at a time of universal moral and intellectual confusion, it is the masses, not a carefully nurtured elite, who are called upon to rise to their full intellectual and moral height. The question arises how far they are capable of doing so (within the exacting time schedule set by the crisis, as it moves rapidly to its climax), and how far environmental factors aid or impede such maturation. The battleground is the mind of man. Its extent is global. The chief weapon used is propaganda. It is only as we thus grasp the high stakes involved that we can appreciate the real significance of this weapon whose use and abuse we are now to study.

## 2. WHAT IS PROPAGANDA?

The word propaganda has fallen on evil days. As far as popular usage is concerned, its reputation by now is probably lost irretrievably, for its connotation is almost invariably sinister or evil. This is a pity, for in the struggle for men's minds it is a weapon of great potential value. Indeed, in the race against time that we are running, its constructive use is indispensable. But even though its popular reputation is thus sullied, the student of propaganda must know it for what it is—a term honorable in origin and, even today, neutral in tone.

Though propaganda has been practiced ever since man learned to communicate through verbal symbols, the term itself was first commonly used in the early seventeenth century when (in 1622) Pope Gregory XV created a *collegium de propaganda fide*, an

institute for the propagation of the faith. Propaganda has been variously defined. In essence it is 'organized persuasion.' Its evil reputation, particularly in America, has probably been acquired in the last thirty years. The unsavory revelations after World War I of some propaganda devices used during the war years (particularly by Lord Northcliffe and the British to speed American participation) created widespread revulsion in this country. The 1920's were in any case a period of disillusion and skepticism. This was the era of 'debunking' and the time when students in our schools and colleges were exhorted (often with indiscriminating zeal) to question every statement and claim for which 'evidence' was not adduced. It was as though we suffered from a bad inferiority complex and tried to compensate for it by serving aggressive notice on all and sundry that we were no longer a people to be 'played for suckers.'

Hardly had we recovered from the shock of this violent anti-virus injection, when Nazism gave us history's most flagrant example of the unscrupulous and vicious use of organized persuasion, and one of the great masters of the art of propaganda. Dr. Goebbels has probably achieved inglorious immortality through the association of his name with the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda. He was unique, at once in the degraded methods he employed and even more so in that, for the first time in history, a man set about the conquest of the globe by declaration of a war of words. Direct or indirect acquaintance with German propaganda (short-wave radio, agents of the Bund, and the too-trusting hospitality of some Americans enabled it to invade thousands of our homes) probably set the seal of doom upon the word. Its unscrupulous misuse by some commercial advertisers here at home has since provided, as we shall see, a counter-signature (if one was needed) to its death warrant.

Nevertheless, the term is, strictly speaking, neutral. Propaganda is 'good' or 'bad,' according to our judgment of the virtue (a) of the end to which it seeks to persuade us and (b) of the methods it employs. Nazi propaganda was evil on both counts. Some

propaganda uses unscrupulous methods to persuade us to ends we judge to be honorable, or the opposite may occur. On the other hand, honorable ends may be propagated by honorable means, and we may yet quarrel with the propriety of the propagandist's being vested with such power over us. Later in our discussion we shall have two examples in this category to consider: Is it proper or in the public interest that a radio station—and, more particularly, a network—should have such powers of advocacy? Is it proper that government should be thus clothed with power, either at home or in the organized persuasion of other nations? These are nice problems and not easily resolved.

Conditions in the modern world account for the peculiar importance of propaganda today.

1. Perhaps the most obvious condition is the extended reach of propaganda that modern media of communication have made possible. Radio is the outstanding example. But the efficiency of modern distribution methods gives to films, and even to books and periodicals, an unprecedented currency. All are potential, and some of them actual, vehicles of propaganda, the more dangerous because they are often ingeniously concealed behind a mask of seeming editorial neutrality.

2. All these media share a characteristic the importance of which is often overlooked. They constitute one-way traffic. The voice goes out over the air, but the listener can nowhere respond or interrupt. We cannot talk to a moving-picture reproduction of a film star. We can discuss books or periodicals but we cannot address their authors except through correspondence where immediacy of contact is forfeited. Lewis Mumford detected the danger implicit in this situation: "The secondary personal contact with voice and image may increase the amount of mass regimentation, all the more because the opportunity for individual members reacting directly upon the leader himself, as in a local meeting, becomes farther and farther removed."

3. Mass media inevitably lend themselves to the false flattery of the masses, to the excitation of mob emotions and mass

hysteria. In a society that cherishes individuality and at a time when, through lack of educational opportunity, the majority are still intellectually semi-literate, such propaganda can imperil the whole movement toward cultural enlightenment. The virtues of individuality become obscured as suspicion attaches to those insights of the privileged minority that were in many instances defective only in that they were not available to all. The temptation is ever-present to treat mass audiences as group entities rather than as individuals, each claiming a respect and due regard for his distinctive and separate personality.

4. The modern trend toward an ever-increasing concentration of control in the ownership or in the effective determination of what goes out over the mass media presents dangers we have already mentioned. Whether it be government control or private monopolistic control, special safeguards appropriate to the particular situation are required if we are to exorcise the ghost of authoritarianism that stalks across the modern world. The very existence of mass media of communication places the public in the continuous danger of exploitation. The hands of the few are strengthened against the many.

5. Radio and films, the two truly modern media of communication, exert a peculiar hold over the mind and imagination of their audiences. What this hold is and how it obtains its effect has never been satisfactorily explained. It partakes of the character of spellbinding and appears to achieve, on occasion, a quite abnormal absorption on the part of both radio listeners and viewers of the film. The disembodied voice of radio exerts a peculiar fascination and a degree of identification (as in soap operas, where the actor has been literally identified by thousands of listeners with the role in which he is cast) that is quite unusual. It is said that Hitler, in his hour-long radio harangues, achieved a mastery of his audience unmatched even by his hold over the mass meetings he addressed.

In this respect the influence of the film is perhaps even more powerful than that of radio. We have only to observe the crowd



pouring out from a movie house—or, better still, to observe ourselves—to be conscious of this peculiar phenomenon. It is as though our emergence from darkness into light were not merely physical but also psychological, an abrupt transference from one plane of experience to another. (Admittedly the nature of the plot affects our reaction, but the almost universal unreality of life as depicted on the screen provides a fairly stable factor in the equation.) It is significant that the picture's unreality imposes itself with such force that it sometimes takes us as much as an hour to shake off the spell and adjust ourselves to normality. It is like the slow and sometimes painful recovery of consciousness after subjection to twilight sleep.

How far this phenomenon derives from our own disordered state of mind is hard to say. It seems probable, however, that both radio and films, like all forms of communication, have distinctive, inherent powers of influencing us and that this spell-binding effect is one of them. (The element of strain involved in both radio listening and movie-seeing may have something to do with it.) Of the potency of the effect there can be no question.<sup>2</sup> The exploitation of such powers for propaganda purposes holds obvious dangers. Habitual indulgence in twilight sleep is no occupation for a generation called to such active exertion of

<sup>2</sup> It is remarkable that this phenomenon (as also the bearing on the question of our disordered frame of mind) should have been observed at the very birth of the film. Maxim Gorky thus commented in 1899 on the first showing in Russia of one of Lumière's pictures: 'Without fear of exaggeration, a wide use can be predicted for this invention. . . . But how great are its results compared with the expenditure of nervous energy that it requires? Is it possible for it to be applied usefully enough to compensate for the nervous strain it produces in the spectator? A yet more important problem is that our nerves are getting weaker and less reliable, we are growing more and more unstrung, we are reacting less to natural sensations of our daily life, and thirst more eagerly for new, strong sensations. The cinematograph gives you all these—cultivating the nerves on the one hand and dulling them on the other. The thirst for such strange, fantastic sensations as it gives will grow even greater, and we will be increasingly less able and less willing to grasp the everyday impressions of ordinary life. The thirst for the strange and the new can lead us far, very far.' (Quoted in 'Prologue to the Russian Film,' by Jay Leyda in *Hollywood Quarterly*, October 1946.)

intelligence as is ours. Thus the ambivalent potentialities of modern media of communication are seen again in high relief.

6. We adapt ourselves so readily to our environment that we tend to lose the sense of wonder in a context that is familiar. (This accounts in part for the fact that our adjustments are frequently more apparent than real.) But for this fact, we might well stand aghast at one distinctive phenomenon of mass communications especially characteristic of radio, namely that the minds and wills of men unknown to us and far removed in space are seeking to play on our emotions and to direct our thinking. Their purposes are varied, ranging from political indoctrination to the persuasions of the advertiser or the efforts of a radio entertainer to maintain our interest in his patter as against that of his rival on another program. We must be conscious of this fact to be proof against manipulation, conscious as was Hamlet of the designs Rosencranz and Guildenstern had on him. 'You would play upon me, you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass; and there is much music, excellent voice in this little organ; yet you cannot make it speak.'

This eerie sense of manipulation by remote control would disturb us the more were we aware of the number of precise and delicate instruments with which modern psychological research has equipped the would-be propagandist. Our minds and emotions are being picked over, day in and day out, by operators often as up-to-date and skilful as the modern brain surgeon. Their purposes, however, are not always as selfless and humane, or their methods as merciful. It is in this sense, above all others, that the hands of the few are today strengthened, potentially, against the many.

Modern psychology has stripped us naked. Our suggestibility is common knowledge, likewise the working of unconscious memory. Through diligent research, men have compiled a compendious, classified, and up-to-date directory of our desires, our

fears, and our frustrations. Public-opinion polls purport to tell us our attitudes to everyone and everything. The roll of the emotions, as they inform our purposes and direct (or misdirect) what we are innocently pleased to call our thinking, is daily becoming better understood. Secrets, unacknowledged even to ourselves, have been openly divulged—among them the loneliness of modern man 'lost in an invisible society' and seeking, by an exaggerated display of social affability, to mask the latent fear that lurks in each of us in our contacts with one another. It would require an entire book to enumerate the manifold components of the human psyche that have been thus dissected. It is sufficient here to emphasize that all this is new, another sample of the ambivalence of our modern resources, matter for terror or for exaltation, according as we appraise the prospects of their use.

7. Modern psychology has also revealed the wide prevalence of mental disorders among us. We are not here thinking of the inmates of asylums but of those 'ambulatory' cases that are far more numerous—men and women going about their daily business, functioning as employees with fair efficiency, but suffering in varying degree from different forms of psychological disorder.

The strains of war are both more exacting than, and in some vital respects different from, the strains of peace, yet millions adjust to them. It is the more striking, therefore, that, despite an improvised and imperfect system of screening, the number of men in the United States rejected (for psychiatric reasons) for combat service amounted to some 1,850,000.

This represented 12% of the approximate 16,000,000 men examined and 37% of the approximate 5,000,000 rejected for unfitness. . . . During the period 1942-6 inclusive the number of men discharged for psychiatric and other personality reasons from all branches of the service exceeded 680,000. Approximately 380,000 army and 77,000 navy personnel were discharged because of psychiatric illnesses. Another 137,000 in the army, and 92,000 in the navy were released because they could not adjust themselves to military life.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Rennie, Thomas A. C., and Woodward, Luther E., *Mental Health in Modern Society*, Commonwealth Fund, New York, 1948. pp. 4, 13.

Such facts and figures are most relevant to our theme, for propaganda is certain to expand in times of mental and emotional disturbance. It prefers, indeed, to fish in troubled waters.

Propaganda itself may well be a contributory cause of our condition, for reasons we have examined. Headlines (the newspaper's propaganda to persuade us to a purchase) invite a high and constant degree of tension, frequently intensified by their studied sensationalism. Movies and radio, by organized promotional persuasion, seek to direct our interests into financially profitable channels. 'We are reacting less to natural sensations of our daily life, and thirst more eagerly for new, strong sensations. The cinematograph gives you all these—cultivating the nerves on the one hand and dulling them on the other.' Moreover, we pay the price for the free flow of information and ideas we have established, and which mass communication has so enlarged, in the overwhelming burden of bewildering choice among the wares displayed. It is not only that millions have been brought within easy access of the market, but that the buyer's interest is sought for an unprecedented range of purchases and of competing 'lines' within each commodity group.

The reader should be familiar with some characteristics of our state from what was said in Chapter VI. Escapism, credulity, dependence, and a vague awareness of being manipulated—these, we recall, are widely prevalent. Such symptoms of psychiatric disorder provide the propagandist with his opportunity, and our predisposition offers the point of entry for his opening wedge. It is hardly surprising, then, that some have yielded to the temptation to exploit such weaknesses for their own advantage and have availed themselves, with little regard for the ultimate consequences as these affect the health of our society, of the techniques of propaganda to which we must now turn our attention.

### 3. PROPAGANDA TECHNIQUES

Aristotle, in his treatise on Rhetoric (Book I, Chapter 2), tells us where to look if we seek to identify and to distinguish between propagandists true and false, good and bad. 'Of the modes of persuasion provided by the spoken word there are three kinds. The first kind depends on the personal character of the speaker, the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind, the third on the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech themselves.' In other words, honest propaganda (and we must here insist again that honest propaganda is not only possible but peculiarly urgent today) demands integrity in the propagandist, a reverence for the integrity of those whom he addresses, and valid argument substantiated as far as possible by evidence. As the propagandist is usually unknown to us, we are driven to assessing his integrity either by reference to his general reputation or, more certainly, by observing his approach to us and his use, or manipulation, of language. His resources here are manifold. Among the many available tricks of the trade we select the following, partly because they are so frequently exemplified in practice (and therefore can be checked) and partly because they bear on those traits of character and outlook that we have identified as widely prevalent among us. The following are pitfalls for the unwary.

#### 1. *Repetition*

If we want to register an impression, we must use repetition. The mere currency of a statement lends it credibility. Even a lie can often thus be made to 'stick.' (Hitler insolently claimed and, alas, demonstrated that the bigger the lie, the better it could sometimes be made to register.) Our readiness to accept at its face value what is commonly asserted by others is a pathetic manifestation not merely or even primarily of our lack of independent judgment, but of the narrow limits of what we know (or can know) by firsthand experience. Most of what we know

must be accepted on the authority of others. It is thus that a child 'grows in knowledge.' From childhood we carry into adult life this habit of unquestioning acceptance of what is commonly asserted. It is a dangerous habit.<sup>4</sup>

The most familiar example of the use of repetition is commercial advertising. The sponsor of a radio program buys time, if he can, in large chunks. Thirteen weeks is a frequent minimum. Apart from the persuasive frills of the advertising copy, his objective is generally to register a brand name with the public. Each 'plug,' therefore, contains repeated reference to his product, and the plugs continue, with only minor variations, over the whole period of his sponsorship. 'Sponsor-identification recall' is his clue to the success or failure of his campaign.

## 2. *Insistent Exaggeration*

Exaggeration, too, is most commonly exemplified in commercial advertising. The reason is worthy of examination. No one can question the importance and usefulness of commercial advertising; it lubricates, as it were, the machinery of commerce. But there are two kinds of advertising, the one legitimate and useful, the other, as frequently employed, illegitimate and harmful. The first consists of straight publicity—the announcement of the availability of goods and of relevant facts (price, size, where available, and so on) about them. A good example is the Sears Roebuck catalogue which tells you where you can get what, and at what price.

The second consists of competitive bidding for the consumer's patronage. At issue here is the availability not simply of goods but of competing brands of the same goods; not soap or cigarettes but different kinds of soap and cigarettes. Advertising of this kind is peculiar to the private-enterprise system. It, too, is legitimate—unless and until the advertiser allows his competitive zeal to master his integrity and his respect for the integrity of the

<sup>4</sup> For a brilliant elaboration of this theme see Lippmann, Walter, *Public Opinion*, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1922.

consumer. The more highly competitive a society (the more predominantly it is 'a nation of shopkeepers'), the greater the danger of abuse in advertising of this nature. In his eagerness to outbid his competitor the advertiser proceeds to advance fantastic or unsubstantiated claims for his product. It is 'better' (the Federal Trade Commission forbids him to complete the sentence and specifically name his rivals), or it is 'best.' Persistent exaggeration permeates his claims (and in radio creeps into the very tone of voice of the announcer) to such an extent that language and reality itself become confounded. We are invited to live in a world where almost everything is 'best,'—which is, of course a contradiction in terms. And yet many accept the invitation, as one radio listener reveals in her comment, 'I think all the soap ads are good. I used to buy a different kind every day when I could get it.'<sup>5</sup> All of us enjoy the best and want to possess it. It is on this impulse that the unscrupulous propagandist can play effectively.

### 3. Identification

We are hardly persuaded by a stranger. We are easily impressed by those with whom we are familiar and with whom we feel closely identified. This fact presents the propagandist who uses modern media of communication (which operate by 'remote control') with a problem. How is he to overcome the twofold obstacle of being generally unknown to the listeners as well as physically remote? Paradoxically, radio, at least (by virtue of that mysterious alchemy to which we have referred), converts this seeming liability into an asset, lending itself to the creation of a sense of intimacy that can be as real as it is often false. Perhaps because the broadcaster can convey his personality, not only by style (i.e. his choice of language) but also by the tone and inflections of his voice, the discriminating listener can gather a fuller and fairer impression of him than can the reader of the author of a book or article. Thus the personal integrity

<sup>5</sup> Lazarsfeld, *The People Look at Radio*, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

of such commentators as Raymond Swing, Edward Murrow, and Howard K. Smith seems clearly established—and quite independently of the validity of what they say. They may be ‘wrong’ but they cannot, we say, be false. Now, personal integrity cannot be assumed, as we dress ourselves with clothes. Therefore, it is not strictly speaking, a ‘technique.’ Yet integrity remains the hallmark of wholesome and useful propaganda, just as its opposite constitutes propaganda’s most insidious and vicious attribute.

There are several contributory ways of achieving identification. (a) The most obvious is to clothe our thoughts in the language—even the jargon and local idiom—of those we seek to persuade. (All wartime propaganda did so. The German short-wave radio, concentrating on the Middle West, advisedly employed a man with a distinct Iowan accent.) (b) Another is to exhibit familiarity with the listener’s (or reader’s) environment, to use ‘local incidents’ to illustrate our point. To be concrete and not abstract is, indeed, a cardinal point in all effective propaganda. (c) The subtlest way, the hardest—and, in its spurious form, the most contemptible—is to identify ourselves sympathetically with the true interests, perplexities, fears, and hopes of those we address and to relate these to our propaganda objective. It is in this regard that good and bad propaganda are to be most sharply differentiated, and that we can identify bad propaganda as specifically undemocratic in that it exploits innocence and credulity and violates the dignity and integrity of the individual.

A wartime example of abuse was the propaganda to Britain of Lord Haw Haw, whose subversive arguments were the more highly charged for stemming from an intimate knowledge and perverted understanding of disaffected elements among the British public. Fortunately for all of us, this renegade was out-rivaled by another propagandist—Winston Churchill—whose more comprehensive and sympathetic understanding of the British character secured him a truer and more compelling identification with the people.



But we have our own wartime<sup>6</sup> and peacetime examples in the widespread abuse of privilege by commercial advertisers. Perhaps in no particular is the abuse more flagrant than in this matter of spurious identification—the more sickening in radio for the hired propagandist's tonal implications of false devotion (either to the listener or to the product or to both) associated with the script. 'Radio announcers and featured stars repeatedly assert their enthusiasm for the products of their sponsors; they are said (by some listeners) to exhibit a warm personal interest in people they neither know nor take pains to know.'<sup>7</sup>

Some of the social and psychological consequences of such practices have been discussed in Chapter vi. Here we need only take notice of the bearing of such propaganda on the main theme of this chapter—the struggle for men's minds. If, irrespective of the context, such abuse is widely prevalent, what, we must ask, is its cumulative effect? To what extent is the very understanding of what intimacy means affected? Is the regard for it in personal relations reduced by such travesty in public? Does invasion of our privacy in such terms drain us, for very lassitude under such constant bludgeoning, of the desire, even, to be private and by a kind of mass mesmerism habituate us to indulge in those forms of 'mass ecstasy' Karl Mannheim believes to be characteristic of our age? And if so, whether it be in major or minor degree, is not the very citadel we claim to be defending in process of being at once undermined and progressively deserted? How can we now claim to be the champions of freedom of the person and of institutions dedicated to its growth? And what, finally, of that

<sup>6</sup> A general executive of one of the largest advertising firms in the country sums up the situation since Pearl Harbor: 'Copy written on war themes has not been generally thoughtful or inspiring. "Almost as a pattern," writes a distinguished advertising man, "it features glamorous, colorful, schoolboy pictures of zooming American bombers winning the war thanks to Zilch's Bolts & Nuts. . . *The chance to swing on the trapeze of war emotion has also been grasped by unworthy hands.* Many a cheap circular or advertisement in a low grade paper has urged the public to hoard, through variations of the 'Buy Now' and 'Only 50 left in stock,' appeals.'" Quoted in Merton, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

hallmark of healthy propaganda—the integrity of a sincere person? For how many (of those, for instance, who have read *The Hucksters*) can the word sincerity be any longer used without an accompanying sense of nausea or at least an awareness of the practice and tolerance of its opposite?

#### 4. *The Appeal to Authority*

As already mentioned, most of what we know has to be accepted on the authority of others. As the amount of what we need to know for life in the modern world increases, so does our dependence on outside authority. A corollary consequence is that increased prestige tends to attach to the channels through which knowledge of all kinds comes to us. A sensational example of this truth is the famous Orson Welles broadcast, 'The Invasion from Mars' (an ironical example, incidentally, of unwitting 'organized persuasion!'). Among the many contributory causes of the panic this program precipitated, perhaps the most decisive was the listener's belief in the authenticity of radio. For millions, radio speaks with the voice of authority.<sup>8</sup>

This almost inevitable 'deference' on our part easily lends itself to exploitation—both good and bad—by propagandists. Proper substantiation of an argument, as Aristotle said, requires the citing of evidence, the appeal to authority. Improper substantiation aids and abets an indiscriminating and credulous subservience, tractable *mass-mindedness*, not an exacting, critical, and individual awareness.

Here, too, commercial advertising is a convenient and accessible source of evidence, providing ample proof of the effectiveness of this technique and examples both of its legitimate and of its more questionable uses. The reader is urged to identify samples of both kinds. In the process, he will discover interesting clues to where, in popular estimation, authority nowadays resides.

<sup>8</sup> For analysis of the fear, presuppositions, and susceptibilities that occasioned the Martian panic see Cantrill, Hadley, *The Invasion from Mars*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1940.

Commonly found are appeals, both valid and invalid, to statistics, science, and so-called 'experts,' sometimes identified but often not. Whatever the reference, the wary listener or reader is advised always to ask himself two questions: (1) Is the appeal to authority strictly relevant to the claim made? (2) Can the authority quoted be checked? Thus, if statistics are cited, are we told or can we discover their origin? If a personal authority is given, is he named? Is it, for instance, adequate to claim that 'many doctors' or 'medical experts' vouch for this or that?

### 5. *False Association*

In our daily intercourse we meet and deal with one another seemingly in the light of day. But our true life flows underground; it is a subterranean stream. Were we to 'unearth' this stream of consciousness, we should discover it to be composed of currents and eddies, distinct in origin but converging, in due course, and running into one another. In their totality they constitute the uneven flow of our life's passage.

Much that has meaning for us (things and persons cared for, remembered incidents), our reaction to and behavior in a given situation, our hates and fears, our envy and sense of guilt—all have origins. All stem from these once-distinct currents and eddies of our past. Though mostly unremembered at the conscious level, facets of our experience are thus linked in an intricate web of inextricable threads. This is what is meant by association.

It is by subconscious association of ideas far more than by reason (which is a disciplined and cultivated faculty) that many of us come by our value judgments. It follows, therefore, that we are peculiarly susceptible to associations of ideas suggested to us and are the less prone to subject them to reasoned scrutiny. Because we are moved, we 'feel' justified and do not pause to ask if we are being rational. Indeed we sometimes fortify ourselves against reason by clothing our emotional attitudes

with a seeming rationale, which we achieve by a process of false reasoning known as 'rationalization.' This is instinctual man's grudging concession to the faculty of reason.

Much of the beauty and ambivalent power of language is concerned with its associative significance. Certain words become highly charged by virtue of their associations. The skilful propagandist knows how to exploit the use of such words and thus to tap sources of deep feeling in us and to attach them, as it were, to attitudes or actions he seeks to promote. For instance, we have seen how Kate Smith used the associative value of patriotic symbols. Sex and religion (and their verbal and pictorial symbols) are other sources of evocative association. We have only to turn the pages of any popular magazine to observe the false associations connected with sex. A subtle example of religious association, the more insidious for relying only on its stylistic overtones of association with Biblical writing, is an advertisement that appeared some years ago in *Life* magazine. It was in the early years of the war. A full-page illustration depicted a man prostrate in an armchair in his living room, the floor littered with newspapers, all of them with war headlines. In the man's limp hand was one such paper bearing the banner headline INVASION. Under the picture, in modest type, was this caption: 'In times of conflict there is Peace in beer. In these bewildered times where shall a man turn to replenish the wells of his courage, to repair the walls of his faith?'

Wartime admittedly provided unusual opportunity for such insensitive and false association of ideas.

During the war, imagination triumphed over conscience among advertisers who 'ingeniously' related their products to the war effort. Radio commercials were not immune from this technique. A commercial dentist, for example, suggests that a victory smile helps boost morale and that we can have that smile by purchasing our dentures from him. So, too, a clothing manufacturer reminds listeners that morale is a precious asset in time of war and that smart clothes, more particularly Selfridge Lane Clothes, give a man confidence, and courage . . . and a manufacturer of cosmetics becomes solicitous

about the imbalance in the sex ratio resulting from the war. 'Fewer men around because of war? Competition keen? Keep your skin smooth. Keep attractive for the boys in the service when they come marching home.'<sup>9</sup>

The public's romantic sentiments associated with stars of radio and screen likewise result in strange distortions of logical thinking. Whatever the obscure and complex origins in our disorganized and troubled psyche of this form of 'mass ecstasy,' its associative value is too well-known to be overlooked. Even the government now pays obsequious court to these modern idols of the public in the hope that they will 'associate' their personality—and voice or face—with the furtherance of some public appeal. The war years provided countless examples. But in peace, too, all manner of actions and attitudes are thus canvassed. We are influenced to 'transfer' (irrationally) our admiration, for instance, for a radio star to an admiration of all he says. That he should say something becomes of itself the guarantee of its validity. The inherent logic, or lack of logic, of what he says escapes us. This is the height of unreason.

The use of words with a low boiling point of emotional association is one of the great dangers of current propaganda. It is a ready means of smearing decent people and of short-circuiting true evidence of guilt. To the anti-Semite the word 'Jew' is sufficient in itself to condemn those to whom it is applied. In Russia the word 'capitalist' and with us 'communist' have become 'umbrella' terms by which to arouse general prejudice and antagonisms—ahead of or even without specific evidence. For this reason propaganda is particularly dangerous in times of strain and tension. We are emotionally 'trigger happy' and tend to the prejudgment of issues. Fire a shot, and the whole herd starts off in panic.

The many ramifications of false association defy detailed analysis. Again the reader is urged to unearth his own examples and

<sup>9</sup> *Broadcasting the War*, Office of Radio Research, Bureau of Intelligence, Office of War Information, 1943, p. 37.

to ponder their implications. How have we come to be this way? How can we safeguard our independence, the freedom of our personality? How does all this bear on our chances for victory in the struggle for men's minds?

### 6. *Herd Instinct*

We may mention one final example of propaganda techniques, which is in some respects related to false association. Clyde Miller calls it the 'Band Wagon' device and thus defines it:

. . . a technique to make us follow the crowd, to accept the propagandist's program *en masse*. Here the theme is: 'Everybody's doing it.' . . . Because he wants us to follow the crowd in masses, the propagandist directs his appeal to groups held together by common ties of religion, race, environment, sex, vocation, nationality. . . All the artifices of flattery are used to harness the fears and hatreds, prejudices and biases, convictions and ideals common to the group; thus emotion is made to push and pull the group on to the Band Wagon.<sup>10</sup>

The appeal to the herd instinct has obvious virtues and equally obvious defects. How we differentiate these depends on our attitude to the nature and destiny of man. Is he, as we believe, individual, distinct, to be revered in his own right? Or is he, as in collectivist societies, merely significant and only to be tolerated as he functions as a member of the group or mass? The answer, of course, is that he is neither—in his entirety. Man is individual and he is also a social animal. Our own view of life, however, stresses the former and aspires to a system of society that provides the fullest scope for individuality compatible with the overriding needs of the collective group.

Many kinds of conformity are necessary and desirable. But we must be clear in each instance why they are so. There is nothing virtuous, *per se*, in climbing on the bandwagon; we need to be there only when we must go places together. But because we are all in a degree lonely and diffident and often uncertain of our purpose, the temptation is great to save our-

<sup>10</sup> Miller, Clyde R., 'What Everybody Should Know about Propaganda,' Commission for Propaganda Analysis, New York, 25¢, p. 19.

selves the effort of individual decision and go with the crowd. Some are even fearful of standing out from the herd—even when strongly motivated to do so. It often takes courage to be different. As a nation we are, on the whole, rather markedly conformist. We tend to look askance at the eccentric, the man who is 'off center.' How and why we are so, as compared with some other nations, merits considerable thought. It is a characteristic to beware of, lest we unwittingly convert it into an unreasonable and restrictive tyranny over the individual's right to be himself.

The pressure to conform is today greater, in some respects, than it used to be, because of exploitation of the herd instinct by means of the mass media of communication. It thus behooves us all the more to subject such appeals to the question 'What for?' To stimulate further inquiry, a few examples may be cited: (1) Is the fact that many equate success in life with making money sufficient reason for us to do likewise? Much advertising suggests that it is. There are those, even, who equate it with the American way of life. (2) Is the fact that 'more people' smoke a certain brand of cigarette reasonable grounds for us to follow their example? (3) Because some fashion designer lowers the skirt line three inches, is it necessary or expedient (it may be—but we should be clear why!) for women to restock their wardrobe? The accumulation of further instances will serve to clarify not only the variety of false assumptions implicit in such appeals, but the extent to which we are nowadays subjected to appeals, warnings, and guidance by people and agencies both truly and falsely solicitous for our welfare. Never were there so many anglers for men's souls, men's purses, men's political allegiance.

We have thus far stressed the ubiquitous reach and the refined techniques of modern propaganda and the peculiar degree of our susceptibility to its appeals. But we shall have misled the reader if we have induced the thought that we are consequently as straws in the wind, helplessly blown about by the gusts of organized persuasion. For this is not so. Paradoxically, indeed,

the very psychology that renders us susceptible under certain conditions makes us almost obstinately resistant under others. What are the variant conditions that produce such antithetical results?

The reader is advised to refer back at this point to what was said in Chapter VI about our undifferentiated attitudes. The essential fact to grasp is that propaganda is effective only when its seeds are dropped on fertile soil. *Susceptibility must precede response*. No propagandist, good or bad, who fails to understand this point and to adapt his techniques accordingly can hope to succeed. Propaganda is not magic but manipulation.

Consider three examples that prove this point. Hitler and Goebbels could not have succeeded had not the German people desired in some sense to hear the lies and half-truths that were told them. A complex of prior factors in the German situation created predispositions without which Nazism could not have triumphed. Or consider, by way of contrast, the 1948 Presidential election here in the United States. Despite a formidable barrage of largely one-sided propaganda, the people stood their ground and appeared impervious to organized persuasion. Consider, likewise, the growth and ultimate triumph at the polls of the Labour party in Great Britain, achieved over many years with relatively meager campaign funds and in face of an almost consistently hostile press. These and similar examples should rid us of the notion that even in an age of mass communication men are mere driftwood. Indeed, we are in some respects less open to conviction than we ought to be. What, then, is the true conclusion to be drawn about the power of propaganda?

We might say, for a start, that men are not easily budged when deep convictions (whether rational or irrational) or what they feel to be their primary interests are involved. We might go on to claim that where habits of thought or ways of life are solidly entrenched, resistance to propaganda will be strong. Habit, indeed, is frequently more powerful than thought as an influence on attitude or action. We might add, too, that men



will be more independent, and therefore less susceptible, where propaganda has reference to circumstances or issues with which they have first hand acquaintance. They will be more susceptible where the issues are such as they themselves cannot verify.

The last Presidential election offers a case in point. The main issues, which were domestic, were clear to the people and touched off deep convictions and clear needs from which the great majority of citizens could not, therefore, be distracted. On the other hand, if the main issue had had reference to Russia, for instance, their susceptibility would have been greater, for few had firsthand evidence on Russia. Thus, propaganda will be the more effective—and the more dangerous—as it relates to matters beyond people's immediate ken, though seemingly relevant to their main interests or convictions. Here the propagandist will have the advantage of being able to manipulate facts that people cannot check, while playing upon sentiments all too easily aroused.

Destructive propaganda has this advantage: it can manipulate habitual attitudes by unscrupulously playing on people's ill-developed powers of discrimination. It can associate true needs with false or irrelevant ends. Much commercial advertising is of this kind. Constructive propaganda, where it involves appeal to reason or the subordination of self-centered interests, is likely to run foul of habitual and selfish modes of outlook and the dominance of these over reason. All social reform involves the breaking of adhesions of the mind and the loosening of the hold of habit on our outlook. Thus with respect to organized persuasion, it is, on one side at least, less our susceptibility than our accumulated powers of resistance of which we should become aware. Conservatism resists conquest.

#### 4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

We have advanced the theory that our political, social, and personal decisions depend on (1) the breadth of our perspective (we must see the *entire* modern picture) and (2) our insight

into the true nature of the adjustments required of us by new factors in the modern equation. The reader is urged to accept nothing we have said at its face value. Neither, however, should he reject anything simply because it proves unpalatable, for we are all too prone to dismiss as false what we would prefer to be other than it is. With this double warning let us revert to our main theme.

We are engaged today, on a world scale, in the latest and most critical phase of an age-old dispute over the nature of personal freedom and the institutional means by which its development may best be fostered. Neither party to the dispute has a total monopoly of 'the truth.' We shall, indeed, weaken our own cause and misdirect our strategy if we deny any virtue whatsoever to the claims of our competitor to men's allegiance.

We, for our part, are dedicated to a view of life that holds individual integrity as the paramount consideration. We wish to march toward our goal, which is still distant, on our own feet (though in the company of others), not under escort. Our task, therefore, is twofold: (1) We must so refashion our social and political institutions that they contribute as far as possible to the individual's pursuit of freedom. (2) We must also remodel our own thinking in regard to the kind of freedom conditions in the modern world permit. The hard school of necessity is teaching us that this freedom corresponds more nearly than we had supposed to the Christian idea that a man finds himself (becomes free) by losing himself in the service of others. We are the butt of Marxian abuse for equating freedom with selfishness and privilege. The majority, they say, have been economically enslaved and have been inured to their unhappy lot by that 'opiate of the masses,' religious consolation. The charge is both true and false. Its main error is in its failure to recognize that man does not live by bread alone.

Two factors complicate our task and are likely to influence the outcome of the global struggle. The first is circumstantial.

The havoc of two destructive wars has brought about conditions that invest the bid of our competitor for the allegiance of men's minds with a spurious attraction. Abroad, if not here at home (and here we remind ourselves again that we are an exceptional oasis in the world), men are once more preoccupied with primitive needs—the getting of food and shelter and the repair of broken social machinery. Refinements of life are remote and secondary considerations. The clock of civilization has been set back many hours. Such has been the disruption of social and spiritual life that the prospect of barbarism is potentially as close ahead as, before the wars, it had seemed far behind us. There are facts with which to reckon. They are hard for us to grasp because of our own comparative immunity from war's destructive material and moral consequences.

The second factor is that of pace, which is operative with respect to both our spiritual and socio-political adjustments to the modern world. In our eager haste to emancipate ourselves from 'superstition' we have torn down old signposts (deeming them to be misdirections) but have as yet set up no new ones. The result is that all but a few people have lost their way. The breakdown of the hold of religion, largely under the influence of modern scientific thought, is here a pre-eminent example. Some see salvation (though many dispute it) in those insights about human nature that modern psychology has offered. Man, they say, through self-knowledge is at last in prospect of being the master of his fate. But these insights are neither complete enough nor as yet sufficiently widely disseminated to meet immediate needs. The result is a deep and widespread sickness of the soul.

Circumstances have made us peculiarly conscious of the unfinished business of democracy. We know that defects in our way of life are no longer matters of purely parochial, but of global, import, and again we are inclined to force the pace. The dilemma here is real, for time is running out on us. The competition for men's minds is keen, and world conditions are

not such as to make the long (and probably the right) view palatable. But if, for entirely virtuous reasons, we force the pace of social and political reform too hard, we risk reaction. Societies, like individuals, are given to fixed ways. We are not easily educated to change unless the need for it is evident in immediate and tangible form. *Festina lente* (hurry slowly) is probably a sound maxim for us to observe in so far as circumstances permit.

In this matter of acknowledging the facts of modern life, the importance of organized persuasion is obvious, and the availability of modern media of mass communication seems, at first sight, like an answer to our prayer. Such, indeed, it is—if we reckon with the latent dangers in the situation and with the inescapable conditions of propaganda's effective use.

There are two main dangers. The first is our vulnerability. (a) We are ignorant and easily suggestible. (b) Our intellectual and moral confusion make us the less capable (or even desirous) of distinguishing between propaganda good and bad, true and false. (c) The increased skills of the propagandist make him a more formidable enemy—if such he chooses to be. (d) The pervasiveness of propaganda, our constant exposure to it at different levels and in different forms, tends to undermine belief in our capacity to be ourselves. (e) The widespread abuse of propaganda raises doubts about the integrity of others, induces a fear of manipulation, and weakens our own moral fiber.

The second danger is in our bent—in the habits of mind and behavior we have acquired. We seem, in some respects, headed in the opposite direction from the one leading toward increasing distinctive individuality. We have examined our use of leisure, our addiction to various forms of 'mass ecstasy,' the increasing ascendancy of the mass mind in determining accepted standards of excellence. We have cited the warning that 'too rapid an expansion of culture may lead to an inadequate assimilation of

its contents, to superficiality and a rapid decline of established standards.'

But to claim, as some do, that these two dangers involve an inevitable trend toward subservience and a consequent drift toward authoritarianism and regimentation is both to misinterpret the facts and to withdraw in cowardice from the struggle in which we are engaged. It is useless, self-indulgent, and sentimental simply to bemoan either the vices of mass-communicated propaganda or the weaknesses in our society that permit their indulgence. (This is an attitude that marks the disability of some intellectuals to contribute to the solution of the modern dilemma. Disgusted with radio, films, or press, they retire into a privacy, to which as members of modern society they are not entitled, and dissociate themselves from any concern with remedying admitted defects. The consequence is socially disastrous, for a most important component of the social group thus counts itself out from the influencing of events.) The proper course is, through knowledge of the dangers, to arrive at a right conclusion as to how to offset them.

Because the dangers of false propaganda are great, we have illustrated them at length—perhaps at such length as to confirm the popular impression that all propaganda is bad. This, as we have insisted, is not the case. To make this clear and to provide scaffolding on which to build the conditions of its effective use, we must now define what—apart from the use of illegitimate techniques of persuasion—distinguishes good and bad propaganda.

Bad propaganda is distinguished by a disregard for the welfare of those at whom it is directed. Such disregard either derives from or eventually results in a lack of proper reverence for individuality, for the private person and our relation to him. For 'man' is substituted 'mass,' and the mass is manipulated for selfish purposes. Even when the propagandist (as with the reformist authoritarian) believes he is acting unselfishly and 'in the interest' of the masses, this same fundamental disregard of per-

sonal integrity is involved. Its final outcome is always the same—a contempt for people.

Perhaps the supreme example of the degradation of outlook here involved is Hitler's definition of the means and ends of Nazi propaganda. 'Mental confusion, contradiction of feeling, indecision, panic—these are our weapons.' Muddy the waters of the mind, play upon men's conflicting emotions and loyalties, undermine their faith and sense of purpose, and you get the crazed, lost, troubled soul in petrified search and desire of a savior. We know of no more diabolical prescription for the disintegration of human personality. Here sounds the death knell of freedom of personality. Many, in our time, have thus been disintegrated—and carried to the cemetery; and the grave digger is still at work.

Good propaganda can be defined by reversing all of the directions in Hitler's prescription. It is rooted in reverence and concern for the individual. Its effect, if not its immediate or exclusive aim, should be to help clear the mind; to substitute straight for crooked thinking; to arouse the emotions in such a way as to induce harmony and to eliminate conflict; to create faith and a sense of purpose by raising 'a standard to which the honest can repair'; to engender self-reliance and a confidence in others that subsequent experience will not prove to have been misplaced.

Good propaganda involves the deliberate avoidance of all casuistry and of the illegitimate devices we have illustrated. No end, however virtuous, can truly justify their use. In so far as good propaganda operates upon us at the level of our weakness or disability, its intent must be to contribute a cure, not a sedative; inspiration, not an opiate; enlightenment, not accentuation of the darkness of our ignorance. The observance of such principles offers the propagandist no guarantee of immediate success. It may, indeed, involve retarded acceptance by the public. It insures only that we shall continue exempt from that degrada-

tion that comes upon the individual in a manipulated society. No short-term gain can outweigh this ultimate advantage.

Such, then, are the conditions of effective propaganda. Their implications are both clear and urgent. They involve the acceptance by all who have privileged access to the media of mass communication, which are now the 'common carriers' of organized persuasion, of exacting standards and a peculiar degree of social responsibility. It matters comparatively little what order of importance attaches to the message—whether it be the broadcast appeal of a political leader or a billboard advertisement. Every propagandist is operating on the bloodstream of our society. Our study should make it plain that we must appraise *all* environmental influences that we are in a position to control.

Peculiar responsibility, of course, rests upon those whose power is greatest. This is true, however, less because of their range of influence than because of the danger of abuse inherent in all power. The temptations, conflicts, and moral decisions associated with such use of power have been thus forcefully described:

The sense of power that accrues to manipulators of mass opinion, it would appear, does not always compensate for the correlative sense of guilt. The conflict may lead them to a flight into cynicism. Or it may lead to uneasy efforts to exonerate themselves from moral responsibility for use of manipulative techniques by helplessly declaring to themselves and to all who listen, that 'Unfortunately that's the way the world is. People are moved by emotions, by fear and hope and anxiety, and not by information and knowledge.' Or it may be pointed out that complex situations must be simplified for mass publics and, in the course of simplification, much that is relevant must be omitted. . . Like most half truths, the notion that leaders of mass opinion must traffic in sentiment has a specious cogency. Values *are* rooted in sentiment, and values *are* ineluctably linked with action. But the whole truth extends beyond this observation. Appeals to sentiment within the relevant context of relevant information and knowledge are basically different from appeals to sentiment which blur and obscure this knowledge. Mass persuasion is not manipulative when it provides access to the pertinent facts; it is manipulative when

the appeal to sentiment is used to the exclusion of pertinent information. The technician, then, must decide whether or not to use certain techniques which, though possibly 'effective', violate his own sentiments and moral codes. He must decide whether or not he should devise techniques for exploiting mass anxieties, for using sentimental appeals in the place of information, for masking private purpose in the guise of common purpose. He faces the moral problem of choosing not only among social ends but also among propaganda means.<sup>11</sup>

But to place the burden of responsibility wholly on others is too facile a way of disposing of our problem. It is a common means of excusing ourselves from that degree of personal participation that is part of the price freedom exacts from us. Helpless as we may be in some ways, we are yet individuals capable, within recognized limits, of independent choice and decision. Our predispositions, which offer the propagandist his chance to drive his entering wedge, are at least in some degree within our power to control. A more diligent exercise of the faculties we possess, however undeveloped they may be, must be added to the list of those conditions that alone can rid us of the dangers of organized persuasion.

<sup>11</sup> Merton, *op. cit.*, p. 186-7.



## IX

### FREEDOM OF SPEECH: IN THEORY

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'The essence of our political theory in this country is that a man's conscience shall be a private, not a public affair, and that only his deeds and words shall be open to survey, to censure and to punishment. The idea is a decent one, and it works. . . One need only watch totalitarians at work to see that once men gain power over other men's minds, that power is never used sparingly and wisely, but lavishly and brutally and with unspeakable results. If I must declare today that I am not a Communist, tomorrow I shall have to testify that I am not a Unitarian. And the day after, that I have never belonged to a dahlia club. It is not a crime to believe anything at all in America.'

—E. B. WHITE, in the *New York Herald Tribune*, 2 December, 1947

#### THE DANGER OF DOGMA

FREEDOM, like democracy, is a word so mutilated by reiterated mouthing that it threatens to become as shapeless and as devoid of flavor as a piece of chewed gum. This is due partly to the general debasement of language in our time, and partly to the vogue of patenting one's own, private concept of freedom and foisting it on everybody else. We lend ourselves the more readily to this fashion for its being characteristic of human kind.

The disposition of mankind, whether as rulers or as fellow citizens, to impose their own opinions and inclinations as a rule of conduct on others, is so energetically supported by some of the best and by

some of the worst feelings incident to human nature, that it is hardly ever kept under restraint by anything but want of power; and as the power is not declining, but growing, unless a strong barrier of moral conviction can be raised against the mischief, we must expect, in the present circumstances of the world, to see it increase.<sup>1</sup>

How strong a 'barrier of moral conviction' have you and I to raise against the 'mischief,' and in what discipline of serious reflection does it find validity and strength?

We are so accustomed to freedom that we are inclined to take it for granted. And therein lies the danger both to our own clear perception of its worth and to the survival of freedom itself among us. For as intelligent, reflecting human beings we are not, properly speaking, entitled to any freedom the right to which we have not thought through for ourselves. Nor shall we long retain it, for we shall lose the zest for it. No man is whole or free who lives on borrowed judgments that have not passed the censorship of his own critical appraisal. No belief is secure that the believer accepts as a mere dogma—the dogma becoming a mere formal profession, inefficacious for good, but cumbering the ground and preventing the growth of any real and heartfelt conviction from reason or personal experience.<sup>2</sup>

The more sacred or heartfelt our belief, the more we must subject it to close and constant scrutiny (to be sure we hold to it with understanding and not 'in the manner of a prejudice') and to the test of challenging opinion (lest we have overlooked in it some fault more patent to another eye). And of all the freedoms we value, none should be more constantly subjected to review, more steadily laid open to general inspection, than liberty of thought and expression. On the true interpretation of the boundaries of this prime liberty depend the prospect of our growth to a full and mature stature as individuals and the survival of the collective way of life we call democracy. It is the outstanding merit of a true democracy that in it, as compared

<sup>1</sup> Mill, J. S., *Essay on Liberty*, Everyman's Library, p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

with other systems of organized society, the liberty of thought and expression permissible to individuals is, in all significant respects, almost identical with the society's needs for its own healthy growth. Before we discuss the reasons for this fact, let us ask a fundamental question: *Why* do we want to be free to speak our minds without fear of interference or of penalty?

### WHY FREEDOM?

Our craving for free speech begins as a deeply felt, if inchoate, personal need, a need that must be met through society and that, once met, will contribute to society. In other words, our first vague thought in this context tends to be 'reactionary,' a hitting out against some ill-defined but vividly sensed source of danger. It is the assertion of the paramountcy of the 'I' in us, our instinctive unwillingness to be bent or molded to another's will. (It is significant that among the first words an infant learns is 'No,' signifying at once self-assertion and defiance.) We think of liberty of speech in this sense as something God-given (Milton, for instance, thought of it as a 'natural' right). It is our passkey to self-expression and to self-discovery. Our claim to it is a manifestation of our claim on life, the claim to influence, and the claim to learn from others. In this sense it is the measure of our hold on life, our grasp of what human as opposed to animal existence can mean. If we have no convictions to express, no curiosity to know and understand, we shall have small use for free speech. Its currency will be superfluous. This is why those prize freedom of speech most who most prize and best appraise life's options.

Free speech, then, is first and foremost the condition of more than animal existence for each one of us. It is a matter of great personal and private moment. If we are deprived of it, we lose some part of our right to enter into our human heritage. Our effort to be rid of restraints on free speech is thus, on one side, an affirmative assertion of our will to be, an implicit expression of our private aspirations.

The highest expression of this right we term the right of conscience, and throughout history individuals have been prepared to forfeit good will, property, privilege, and even life itself rather than forego the right to express their beliefs. Thus, there is a point beyond which some men will not yield to others. In the last analysis the 'I' comes first.

This 'self' assertion is not, however, a universal trait of man. The Orient has thus far seen little of its manifestation. Concern with what we term the dignity and worth of the individual is, rather, a characteristic of 'Western' thought. Though repressed and thwarted, it has yet persisted through centuries and can be traced back to Greek and Hebraic culture in the pre-Christian era. "Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend with thee. But, Sir, so what *I* say is just." Thus even before God himself, this protestant of the Old Testament proclaimed his right to plead his case. This heritage and this tradition of 'free speech' thus appear to be the peculiar property of western man. Part of the ferment of the modern world derives from its spread to the Orient, now waking in this connection abruptly and violently from the sleep of centuries.

#### FREEDOM FROM

The long struggle for the right to individual free speech has been a struggle for the removal of restraints imposed by men or institutions vested with power. Thus Socrates was condemned by an Athenian court as a blasphemer and a corrupter of youth. Christ called men to another way of life and he was crucified. The freedom he sought, the means of individual man's salvation, involved the rendering to God of loyalties Caesar thought were due only to him. Galileo probed the secrets of the universe and was forced to a recantation of his 'heresies.' The freedom he sought, which was the freedom of pure science, threatened a powerful, vested interest—the temporal authority of the Church. Milton, in the broad interests of 'truth's' emergence, protested

the censorship of books, but the government of England refused to hear his plea.

The two chief agencies of this kind of restraint have, throughout history, been either an established religion, or a governor or government. The struggle for free speech would never have existed if individuals or groups had not arrogated to themselves the power over others. You cannot stop me from thinking. You *can* stop me from saying what I think and from trying to persuade others to think as I do. The measure of your ability to do so is your power over me. The greater your power, the more you will be tempted to exert it, not merely because the exercise of power is tempting in itself (the greater the power, the greater the temptation), but because its possession constitutes a vested interest. Few men having power are eager or even willing to surrender it. Power, like passion, feeds upon itself. On the other hand, the measure of your desire to restrain me is your fear of what I have to say. Fear and power provide the ingredients of restraint.

Thus we may identify what it is that has prompted men with power to restrain free expression on the part of others. Why were the claims made by the champions of free speech, whose record of personal disaster we have cited, regarded as dangerous? Because they challenged either a cherished belief or a vested interest associated with such belief, or both of these. The attack in each case was on an 'established order,' an accepted currency of thought or pattern of behavior favorable to persons in a position of power. Tolerance of free speech has always obtained unless the power or prestige of a person or group was questioned.

#### THE OCCASION OF RESTRAINT

From this we may learn a lesson of history. Societies in which the power of the rulers has been greatest have (with the exception of a few enlightened tyrannies) been those in which free speech has been most circumscribed. Absolute power (or near

approximations to it) having been the rule throughout most of human history, freedom of speech, in any widely operative sense, is a comparatively modern notion and even with us only a partly realized ideal. Any broad concern about it is historically coincident with concern for what we now regard as the democratic way of life. Only as men have ceased to submit to government by others and have come to participate to some degree in government themselves have they become actively concerned about free speech. Thus even in the West the struggle achieved momentum only in comparatively modern times, gathering popular support only in the late eighteenth century.

Yet if restraint on free speech derived only from the vested interests of powerful groups, there should be good prospect of its removal by the simple imposition of appropriate controls upon these power groups themselves. Our own Constitution provides for such curbs on the power of government, yet free speech is not thereby assured to us. The trouble, alas, lies deeper. Indeed we shall delude ourselves dangerously if we attribute the impulse to exert restraint only to those who have the organized or constitutional power to do so. Such agencies of power as Church and Government exemplify interests and attitudes latent, if not always active, in us all. It is for this reason that free speech is never safe until we have exorcised the germs of subservience, lethargy, prejudice, and fear that, in one context or another, lurk in each of us. For if we are candid with ourselves, we come to recognize that fear of free speech is in a sense native and natural to us all.

Speech is the instrument of thought, and thought is dangerous, subversive—and painful. Its danger is to settled ways of outlook and behavior, to dogma of all kinds, to assumptions and traditions readily accepted but rarely scrutinized. We are prone to illusion and are often reluctant to face facts. 'We look before and after and pine for what is not.' Thought is dangerous, above all, to our peace of mind, challenging us to use our eyes and to take in what we see.

O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall  
 Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap  
 May who ne'er hung there.

Thought is subversive, challenging the established order, inviting experiment, championing new rights and claims. It drives administrators, preoccupied with stability and the maintenance of a 'going concern,' to exasperation. Caesar, himself no mean administrator, recognized it.

Let me have men about me that are fat.  
 Yon Cassius hath a lean and hungry look.  
 He thinks too much.

And thought is painful—not only as in the exercise of muscles rarely used, but in its pitiless exposure of the limits of our knowledge ('The further one travels, the less one knows,' Lao Tsu) and of the surrounding darkness of our ignorance and our perplexity. The poets have seen this fact. 'When but to think is to be full of sorrow and leaden eyed despairs,' said Keats, and Housman commented,

Could men be drunk for ever with women wine or fights,  
 Lief would I rise at mornings and lief lie down at nights.  
 But men at whiles are sober and think by fits and starts  
 And when they think they fasten their hands upon their hearts.

A modern cynic puts it in more prosaic terms. '5% of the people think. 15% of the people think they think. But 80% would sooner die than think.'

Thought involves effort and we are lazy. It raises doubts and we crave certainty. It asks reconsideration of our acts and attitudes, and we are habit-ridden and wedded to our ways. It commits us (or at least invites us) to change, and all of us are in some part conservative, yearning for stability. Such is the paradox of man, as noted by the French philosopher Sorel, that he is at once aspirant and retrogressive, lethargic and energetic, headed both backward and forward, and conscious of the discomfort and anomaly of his two-way direction.

Yet thought, despite its danger, subversiveness, and pain, is irrepressible and, as exercised by a few (to whom, once dead and safely sterilized and distanced by time, we pay obsequious homage), has survived unpopularity, restraint, and persecution. For, once out of Eden, as Sartre has put it, we are 'condemned to freedom.' What thought propounds, we disregard at our own peril.

Thus far, then, we have two hypotheses: (1) The struggle for free speech is in one sense a psychological form of self-assertion, an instinctive objection to being pushed around by others, a reflex action often (though by no means always) without a clear or positive rationale. (2) Such self-assertion has, throughout history, been subjected to restraint by men or institutions vested with power. This imposition of restraint can be, and many times has been, capricious and purely selfish in motive—the mere assertion of authority. On the other hand, it can have reference to principle—to some interest whose importance transcends the claims of the protesting individual. In all the classic instances we have cited, it was a transcendent interest that was attacked by counsel for the prosecution. This fact leaves us in the dark regarding any valid definition of the appropriate dividing line between what we may call private and public, or vested, interests. Is there such a line? If so, did God delineate it, or is it to be drawn with reference to time and circumstance?

#### FREEDOM FOR WHAT?

Mere self-assertion, for self-assertion's sake, has neither reason nor cause to support it. The impulse may be there, but it lacks justification. In other words, the individual cannot claim that he is always right and the restrainer always wrong. The very assertion of a private right is, in one sense, without meaning, as it is only in society (in the company and context of other people) that we need that right. Robinson Crusoe on his desert island felt no concern about free speech—for there was no one to restrain him. But neither did he have any use for it, for (at



least until he met Friday) he had no one with whom to communicate. Free speech, then, is not mere license. We can claim it legitimately or illegitimately, and the context is always that of society. Thus, we come to the question 'Freedom for what?'

The one certain principle is that to be permissible at all, our claims must at least be compatible with the good of society and the wishes of others. They are inalienable (as contrasted with permissible) only as they serve society. Mill claimed that we should be free this side of hurt to others. Professor Chafee in his book, *Free Speech in the United States*, gives a nice example of the limitation here implied. He tells the story of a man arrested for swinging his arm in a public place and hitting another man on the nose. With some indignation the man asked the judge if he did not have the right to swing his arm in a free country. 'Your right to swing your arm,' rejoined the judge, 'ends just where the other man's nose begins.'

In this light, however, it might be held that the champions of free speech to whom we have referred were properly subject to restraint in that they *did* upset the social appletart—at least as the rulers of the time conceived it. Socrates did blaspheme; Christ (on a technical count at least—if, as today we are again assuming, words and thoughts are treasonable) *was* subversive. Galileo most certainly challenged the authority of the Church as the interpreter of truth.

The challenge of the rebels, however, was not so much to the voices of authority, as these bespoke a time-bound concept of truth or value, as it was to their right to impose their concept of the truth, or of the best interests of society, on others. Each of our rebels bespoke that principle of organized society that in the preceding chapter we described as democratic as distinguished from aristocratic or authoritarian. This attitude, rather than the views they propounded, was their offense. They argued from a premise that could not, at the time, be accepted.

In the aristocratic concept of society, limitations on the exercise of free speech are at once logical, necessary, and appropriate.

Outside the charmed circle of authority—of those who rule—there is no need in such societies for the free exercise of speech. And where the need is absent, the concession of the right might properly be termed gratuitous and even foolish. For when any group or institution arrogates to itself the right or the responsibility to determine, on behalf of others, what is good, right, or expedient, it automatically denies that right to others, except on terms; and it is the group or institution that defines the terms. Thus, whether it be Athens or Rome or, in the modern world, the Roman Catholic Church or the Soviet Union that we have in mind, the logic of restraint in matters of free speech is inescapable. Indeed the exercise of such restraint becomes mandatory by virtue of the prior assumption of responsibility for others. To argue otherwise is to argue from a false—or at least an irrelevant—premise.

#### FREE SPEECH IN DEMOCRACY

It is only in terms of democratic life that we can sensibly pursue the question of the proper limits of free speech. There still will be limits, but that the frontiers will be pushed nearer the edge of the horizon is inherent in the democratic process. Why is this so?

The case for free speech in a democracy can be stated in terms both negative and positive. The democratic mind insists that no man or group of men can either properly or with assurance be conceded full and unchallengeable power to decide matters of public or private moment on behalf of others. It insists, secondly, that where the people rule and where public policy depends (ultimately if not always immediately) upon popular decision, people's capacity to develop mature powers of responsible decision will never be realized without the fullest exercise of free speech. Free speech, in other words, is the condition of responsible decision in a democracy, a necessity, not a luxury or a magnanimous concession. The nature of the society demands it.

The boundaries or limits of this market place are defined by the public interest. Within the market place our right to free speech is inalienable in that it serves the public interest. Outside it are permissive rights—rights that as private persons we may enjoy, but which we must be prepared to cede. Thus here our private right to free speech is provisional—to be enjoyed as long as it is judged to be compatible with the collective interests of society. The principle of the ‘other man’s nose’ holds good. That the First Amendment, for instance, does not imply private license in the exercise of free speech is to be inferred from the existence of laws precluding libel, obscenity, deceit (see the provisions of the Pure Food and Drugs Act), incitement to riot, and so on.

Existing laws, moreover, do not define the proper limits of restriction. Any hurt to others, if it can be substantiated and if it is ‘affected with a public interest,’ may properly be limited. Thus if, for instance, radio soap operas, mysteries, or cliff-hanger dramas for children could be proved to have serious, demoralizing consequences (if it were shown, e.g., that they led directly to acts of delinquency), restrictive legislation would be in order. There is, in fact, no such proof or any likelihood thereof. But should psychiatry develop into a science as exact as the one whose findings made possible the passage of the Pure Food and Drugs Act, and should it prove the existence of damage of the kind suggested above, similar restrictive legislation would be required. Private would yield to public interest, and free speech as an inalienable right would in this instance go by the board.

Since the claim to the rights of free speech and free press rests on duty of a man to his thought and to his social existence, when this duty is ignored or rejected—as it is rejected when the issuer is a liar, an editorial prostitute whose political judgments can be bought, a malicious inflamer of unjust hatred—the ground for his claim of right is abandoned.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Hocking, William Ernest, *Freedom of the Press*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1947, p. 109.

By contrast, our inalienable rights are those that serve democracy in a constructive and necessary manner—those forms of self-expression that feed the bloodstream of society with the vitamins and proteins necessary for the exercise of its collective task. These 'forms of self-expression' that serve democracy 'in a constructive and necessary manner' comprise, surely, that area of unrestricted speech we described earlier as providing the necessary passkey to self-discovery and self-expression.

Given freedom to express ourselves, we can communicate, first, what we know or what we discover—facts. And secondly, we can communicate ideas. By ideas we intend meaning or significance. Ideas are interpretations whether of meaning or of value. The communication of what we have called facts and ideas serves two basic impulses in man: his impulse to explore and to exploit, and his impulse to inform his world with significance. An example of man's impulse to explore facts is pure science. Applied science and technology exemplify his impulse to exploit facts he has explored. His urge to inform life with significance is illustrated by such value judgments as those relating to things beautiful (aesthetic judgment), to things good (moral judgment), and to things true (religious and philosophical judgments). Man is distinguished from the beast primarily as he pursues these twofold impulses.<sup>4</sup>

To curb a man in a democracy in his pursuit of these two impulses is to impoverish not only him but the society in which he lives. The glory of the democratic way of life derives precisely from the fact that, as collective members of society, we commit ourselves to face all facts and to entertain (if not to accept) all ideas that may be canvassed. And this is the glory not of mere magnanimity but rather of social necessity. We *have* to do so in the best interests of our society, for the more perfect union of our collective power wisely to steer the ship of State. Because

<sup>4</sup> 'It is because human beings are *not* born free that they live under the increasing ambition to become so; freedom acquires an intense psychological contrast value. What the growing person comes to appreciate is that, as he is more or less free, he is more or less human.' *Ibid.*, p. 57.

we govern ourselves we must have that full and unrestricted access to all facts and all ideas from which the wise decision of the governors alone can derive.

It may be argued that to require this quality of us all is to require what few of us are ready to concede. This may be so. But it only proves our incapacity to live up to the responsibilities of democratic life and to the logic of our situation. For the assumption of self-government involves the assumption of this obligation—because it is necessary to clear, untrammelled judgment. ‘The principle of the freedom of speech springs from the necessities of the program of self-government. It is not a Law of Nature or of Reason in the abstract. It is a deduction from the basic American argument that public issues shall be decided by universal suffrage.’<sup>5</sup>

Democracy, as we have earlier suggested, is the most dangerous of all social experiments because it ‘condemns’ us to make decisions in full knowledge of all available facts and ideas. ‘This is the blight that man was born for.’ Only in a democracy are we all able to assume, both individually and collectively, the burden God put upon us when he cast us out of Eden for the sin of disobedience—the claim to knowledge and to free thought and action based thereon.

Now let us deal with another and more common objection. Is it our inalienable right—and duty—to entertain *all* ideas? What of subversive ideas that challenge our dearest convictions and seek to bring them into contempt? Are these also to be tolerated? Is a man to be permitted to impugn democracy itself, or should not this be regarded as deliberate incitement to disloyalty and revolution? One of our greatest jurists, the late Justice Holmes, answered this question in no uncertain terms.

Every idea is an incitement. It offers itself for belief and, if believed, it is acted on unless some other belief outweighs it. . . . If in the long run the beliefs expressed in proletarian dictatorship are destined

<sup>5</sup> Meiklejohn, Alexander, *Free Speech*, Harper Bros., New York, 1948, pp. 26-7.

to be accepted by the dominant forces of the community, the only meaning of free speech is that they should be given their chance and have their way.<sup>6</sup>

In other words it is the very essence of reasoned belief that, even being finite and fallible, it be held provisionally—as are the laws of science. John Stuart Mill, an even more ardent defender of the faith, put it in more extreme terms. 'Complete liberty of contradicting and disproving our opinion is the very condition which justifies us in assuming its truth for purposes of action; and on no other terms can a being with human faculties have any rational assurance of being right.' From this fact he concludes that 'if all mankind minus one were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind.'<sup>7</sup>

And yet it was Mr. Justice Holmes who, on another occasion, wrote a decision that appears to contradict or at least modify this principle. During World War I certain persons issued circulars strongly condemning provisions of the Conscription Act. They were arrested and condemned for obstructing the draft. The Supreme Court upheld the ruling of the lower court, and Mr. Justice Holmes wrote the decision:

The question in every case is whether the words used are used in such circumstances and are of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent. It is a question of proximity and degree. When a nation is at war many things that might be said in time of peace are such a hindrance to its effort that their utterance will not be endured.

There are those who question whether, even in time of war, a democratic people can wisely suspend the operation of a principle embodying so unique and distinctive a characteristic of its way of life. We face here the age-old question whether

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in *Selected Supreme Court Decisions*, Myer Cohen, Harper Bros., New York, 1937, p. 15-16.

<sup>7</sup> *Essay on Liberty*, p. 79, 81.

discretion is not sometimes the better part of valor—whether true wisdom dictates, or not, that we do what seems expedient rather than what we believe to be right. Politicians, plying the ‘art of the possible,’ are in this sense discreet. On the other hand, the defenders of what in democratic terms seems to them the only right and proper course invoke the Constitution in this issue against Mr. Justice Holmes. ‘In the judgment of the constitution some preventions are more evil than are the evils from which they would save us.’ To punish men, they say, for the expression of ideas, however unpopular or dangerous, is not only to circumscribe their private liberty but to deprive society itself of a healthy and even necessary challenge to the ideas it entertains and of that exercise of tolerance to which in its own best interests a democracy is committed.

Even if we concede that war involves a necessary suspension of the democratic process (an army is by definition an undemocratic institution, and in modern total war, the nation is in a true sense an army), the extension into peacetime of the precedents and practices of war involves the gravest risks. The mischief, as some believe, of Mr. Holmes’ decision is that it has created an unhappy precedent for subsequent peacetime decisions in our courts and (despite warnings such as that of Mr. Justice Brandeis that it be most narrowly interpreted<sup>8</sup>) has lent itself to an ever more elastic interpretation of what constitutes ‘clear and present danger.’ The First Amendment is categoric and inflexible in its command. Mr. Holmes, it is held, has made it conveniently plastic.

<sup>8</sup> ‘To courageous, self-reliant men, with confidence in the power of free and fearless reasoning applied through the processes of popular government, no danger flowing from free speech can be deemed clear and present, unless the incidence of the evil apprehended is so imminent that it may befall before there is opportunity for free discussion. If there be time to expose through discussion the falsehood and fallacies, to avert the evil by the processes of education, the remedy to be applied is more free speech, not enforced silence. Only an emergency can justify suppression.’ Quoted in Chaffee, Zechariah, *Free Speech in the United States*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1946, p. 349.

One of our difficulties today is that the cold war to which we have become committed prolongs indefinitely the period in which we sanction the application of measures of expediency appropriate (if they are ever such) only in times of extreme emergency. The immediate advantages of this plastic interpretation of straight principle are the more seductive in that it provides scapegoats for minds poisoned and crazed by mutual projections of fear and prejudice. The permanent and perhaps irreparable damage done over a long period in which vital principles are subordinated to expediency can never be anticipated. But the real nature of the danger may be seen if we consider how tenuous, at the best of times, is our grasp of the true principles of democratic living and how readily it is relaxed when fear or passion masters us. One virtue, perhaps, of a written constitution is that it codifies principles of action that under stress and strain we shall be tempted to belie. The greatness of the institution of Law is that it confines us to that straight and narrow path that we are too often inclined to desert.

Now we must gather up the threads of a long argument. The issue of free speech centers on the danger, subversiveness, and pain of thought. As human beings we are 'condemned' to thought and to its consequences in life, and there is that in us that wishes it were otherwise. Throughout history men have been divided on this issue, some (whether from sloth or ignorance or in true humility) seeking or consenting to defer to others in matters of decision arising from the exercise of thought. Hence aristocratic or authoritarian governments and institutions have arisen in which, once responsibility has been thus assumed, concession of free speech is discretionary. Others, accepting their fate, have taken upon themselves, both individually and collectively, the awful responsibility of working out the consequences of thought's exercise. Hence we have democratic societies and institutions in which the pursuit of fact and the exploration of ideas benefit both the individual and the society. In a self-governing society the pursuit of these two ends constitutes for



individuals inalienable rights, because their collective exercise is the prime condition of clear thought and sober judgment; and on thought and judgment of this order democracy itself depends. The self-restraint here involved on the part of powerful majorities, as of all who exercise official power, is the one discipline distinguishing the democratic from the authoritarian or aristocratic process.

The pursuit of the two ends described above defines the limits of the free market place of thought. As we pursue these ends, we are inalienably free, and we must be so. Beyond this market place is a wide area of discretionary freedom, of alienable rights whose private exercise is to be determined by consideration of the public interest. Our individual and private right to free speech is here only permissive. To recognize ideas as dangerous—and to face the danger—is the mark of a free man and of a free society. The rest, in their degree, are all authoritarians.

## FREEDOM OF SPEECH: IN PRACTICE

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How do the principles we have discussed apply to radio? Who is free to say what over the air? Practical questions are best answered with reference to practical situations, so let us now examine some actual incidents in which this question of free speech has arisen. For convenience let us divide the question into two parts, discussing (1) the proper freedom of the licensee and (2) the freedom of private citizens or groups to secure access to a microphone and, once there, to say what they think fit.

### 1. FREEDOM OF THE LICENSEE

The major controversy that has arisen has reference to the right of radio licensees to 'editorialize' over the air—that is, to use their facilities to plead for causes or bespeak a point of view as does a newspaper in its editorial columns. This brings us to our first exhibit—the FCC's famous 'Mayflower Decision' issued in 1941.<sup>1</sup>

#### *The Mayflower Decision*

For some years prior to 1941 a station in Boston (WAAB) owned by the Mayflower Broadcasting Corporation had been

<sup>1</sup> For excerpts from the Commission's revised ruling on its previous Mayflower Decision and for the dissenting opinion of Commissioner Hennock, see Appendix iv.

using its facilities to support various causes and to advance the chances of political candidates whom it happened to favor. Like facilities were not conceded to people of a different persuasion. There were complaints to the FCC. After full investigation, the FCC issued a decision that said, in effect, that a licensee, by virtue of his privileged access to a public domain, was not justified in using it as though it were his private property. Only balanced controversy could be held to be in the public interest and, therefore, a 'licensee shall not be advocate.'

It has never been clear whether it was intended that a licensee could editorialize only if he allowed other points of view to be expressed as well, or that he could not 'be advocate' in any circumstances. In radio circles the decision was interpreted in the latter sense, and, though few stations at the time were in fact editorializing (at any rate openly), there was wide resentment. When Mr. Justin Miller became president of the National Association of Broadcasters, abolition of the Mayflower Decision became a major plank in a broader campaign for abolition of all FCC concern with program content. In March 1948 the FCC instituted public hearings on the subject and after fifteen months issued a revised ruling (in June 1949) that empowered radio licensees to editorialize—as long as the 'other side' of questions thus treated was also given.

What exactly is expected of licensees under the revised ruling is far from clear, for manifestly the problem is not so simply solved. There are not just two but many sides to most debatable questions—as witness innumerable recent decisions of the Supreme Court on each of which several separate, dissenting opinions were entered. Is equivalent time at an equivalent hour to be given to all major dissenters for every station 'editorial'? Or will it suffice if, as CBS proposed at the hearings, dissenting listeners' opinions (as expressed in correspondence) are at some later date regularly summarized? Nobody seems to know, for no clear regulatory principle has been enunciated. For argu-

ments derived from principle we must, therefore, return to the hearings.

The broadcasters' case was based on two main contentions. It was argued, first, that regulation by the FCC had originally been imposed because of the shortage of frequencies available and the consequently privileged position of the licensee in securing access to the air. With the advent of FM and the FCC's liberal postwar extension of AM facilities, shortage of frequencies was virtually over. Broadcasting stations, authorized and/or on the air, were in excess of 3000, exceeding by a comfortable margin the 1500 odd daily newspapers which enjoyed full freedom of expression. The case for regulation on the score of privilege was therefore anachronistic.

It was argued, secondly (and far more strongly), that limitation of the licensee's right to editorialize was an infringement of the First Amendment—as also of section 326 of the Communications Act, which denies to the Commission the power of censorship. Several witnesses, basing their case on these two points, attacked not only the Mayflower Decision but the whole principle of regulation, claiming for radio a freedom identical with that of the press.

But in perhaps the ablest case presented by the broadcasters, the licensee's right to editorialize was predicated on the assumption that he *would* assume responsibility, consonant with his duty to the public, not to exclude other points of view. This assumption sharply distinguished radio from the press with respect to the legal status of the licensee.

To suggest that a licensee could present one side of an issue and have the right in the name of freedom of speech and press to exclude another side of the same issue defies logic and reason. . . . We submit that, in view of the public duty of the licensee, the Commission goes as far as it is warranted under the Constitution and the Communications Act if it merely lays down the standard that substantial views should not be excluded. . . . We do not mean to say that in any case where it is conclusively proven that a licensee intentionally excluded a side of a public issue that the licensee knew, or should have known, to

be of substance, the Commission should not call the licensee to task for the violation of his duty to the public.<sup>2</sup>

Support of the Mayflower Decision came primarily from private citizens and civic groups and constituted an expression of concern over the present irresponsibility of radio and of fear of its aggravation should the Mayflower ruling be rescinded. The prevailing sentiment on this side appeared to be that radio's consolidated strength and corporate point of view on many matters were such as to constitute a public danger unless kept within reasonable bounds by regulation. Radio, it was argued, was a Juggernaut too powerful in its reach and influence to be allowed to roam abroad at will. The main preoccupation here was with the listeners' freedom (to hear the widest possible diversity of views) rather than with the licensee's right to untrammelled self-expression.

On the other side, two main contentions were advanced. It was argued, first, that radio, under the Act, constituted a public domain and that consequently the rights of those with privileged access to it were circumscribed by the conditions attached to the granting of a license. (Radio, on this account, was to be differentiated from the press.) From this premise two conclusions were drawn: (1) that the functions of the licensee are properly subject to advance prescription in the public interest<sup>3</sup>; and (2) that he shall not enjoy preferred status over other members of the public in his use of radio's facilities. Given the right to editorialize, he would enjoy such preferred status.

A second pragmatic argument had reference to radio's past and present abuse of its powers even within the limitation of the Mayflower Decision. With freedom from all restraint, wider

<sup>2</sup> In the matter of editorialization by broadcast licensees, FCC Docket #8516, statement by W. Theodore Pierson.

<sup>3</sup> See a Supreme Court decision bearing on this point. 'Freedom of utterance is abridged to many who wish to use the limited facilities of radio. Unlike other modes of self-expression, radio is inherently not available to all. . . The right of free speech does not include the right to use the facilities of radio without a license.' *National Broadcasting Company v. U. S.*, 319 U. S. 190, 213, 63 Supreme Court 997, 1008.

and even more irresponsible abuse could be expected. Diversity in the ownership of stations, it was held, was purely theoretical and in fact illusory where the expression of opinion was concerned. Radio, by and large, represented the corporate outlook of moneyed interests and, if allowed to editorialize, would duplicate the generally conservative opinion of most newspaper editorials.

The sincerity of the two contending parties was beyond all question. Clearly, then, their differences were attributable either to confusion of thought or to adherence to divergent principles. The major point of confusion was, in fact, that two separate questions were being discussed: (1) Was the FCC's Mayflower Decision consistent with the regulatory powers conferred on the FCC by the Communications Act? (2) Is our system of broadcasting itself, in so far as it involves concern with program content by a regulatory agency, a violation of the First Amendment? Let us ourselves avoid confusion by discussing these two questions separately.

If we assume, for the moment, that the Communications Act is constitutional, radio is clearly differentiated from the press and movies in the rights and freedom accorded to the licensee. Radio is a public domain to which licensees have only conditional and temporary access. Its 'landlord' is the public. Licensees are 'tenant farmers.' The public's 'factor' is the FCC. As you enter this public domain, therefore, you assume a public role and responsibility and in the process forfeit some of your rightful liberties as a private citizen.

This is a familiar situation. Teachers, for instance, are bound by the responsibilities, as by the privilege, of their position. Their private freedom is circumscribed by the nature of their public task. Beyond an attestation of loyalty (required in 25 states) they are subject to no legal limitations. But they subscribe in practice to something equivalent to the doctor's Hippocratic oath, the moral hold of which is as binding as that of law. (Laws, indeed, are necessary only where acceptance of moral obligations

cannot be generally relied upon.) Members of our civil service are in a like position, forfeiting, among other things (if they are residents of the District of Columbia), the citizen's fundamental right to vote. Policemen, as Mr. Justice Holmes pointed out, are not as free as you or I. But no one forced them to be policemen. They voluntarily submitted to the circumscription of their liberties involved.

The concession to a radio licensee of power and responsibility beyond what he enjoys as a private citizen likewise involves the forfeiture of certain private rights. His access to a public domain should not and (as supporters of the Mayflower Decision contend) does not empower him to advance his private interests and convictions in ways that put him at an advantage over other citizens. It is difficult, therefore, to see why licensees should claim such privilege. A man, within limits, may do what he will with his own property. Public property is something else. The licensee's 'rights' might be compared with those of a restaurateur granted a concession in a national park. He is given the means of advancing his private financial interests but is subject to regulation (regarding, for instance, the location and conduct of his business) from which the private restaurateur is wholly exempt.

In the light of this discussion it is hard to understand why the FCC in 1949 reversed (or at least modified) its previous decision. Conceivably it had in mind the ease with which the Mayflower ruling could be evaded by use of independent speakers as unofficial mouthpieces of the licensee. Thus, though, in principle, no action of the sort seems to have been called for, in practice some good may come of it. The editorial bias of a licensee may now be overt, not covert, and will, moreover, have to be counter-balanced by opposing points of view. It remains a question, however, how the FCC proposes to enforce its ruling. For to do so involves that detailed scrutiny of broadcast programs that, as we have seen, has been for fifteen years conspicuous by its absence in Commission practice. Proper enforcement involves

the FCC in more than that rearguard action against extreme abuses of the public interest that we suggested was, perhaps, the limit—in practice—of what might be expected of it.

What of the argument that the Mayflower Decision constituted censorship? What, we must ask, *is* censorship? It is generally interpreted as what the great jurist Blackstone defined as 'prior restraint'—the prevention, before the event, of the publication or enunciation of some fact or view. At first glance the Mayflower Decision appears to be precisely that—prior restraint on the licensee's freedom of expression. The 'no censorship' clause must, however, be read together with that other provision of the Communications Act that imposes on the Commission the duty to prescribe, in broad terms, the nature of the flow of radio communication in the public interest. How can these two seemingly contradictory provisions be reconciled?

'No censorship' has been interpreted as having reference to FCC concern with specific matter in specific radio scripts, and not to the broader definition of desirable and undesirable categories of broadcast service.<sup>4</sup> The Mayflower Decision, it was held, constitutes such a broad policy decision and comprises one of the limitations a licensee accepts as the condition of his entry into radio's domain. Its validity is contingent on its true reflection of the public interest. Rightly or wrongly the Commission conceived such public interest as comprising (1) the necessity for balanced controversy, i.e. many-sided (never one-sided) discussion of controversial questions; and (2) the necessity to preclude exceptional advantage to the licensee by virtue of

<sup>4</sup> How else are we to account for the repeated support of FCC decisions based on program service by courts of law? See, for instance *KFKB Broadcasting Association Inc. v. Federal Radio Commission* 47 F(2) 670, (1931) where license renewal was denied because a program 'Medical Question Box' was regarded as dangerous to public health; and *Trinity Methodist Church South v. Federal Radio Commission* 62 F(2) 850, (1932) where license renewal was again denied because of unbridled attacks on Catholicism, Jewry, and public persons and organizations? It must be recorded, however, that legal counsel for some broadcasting stations dispute the validity of these court decisions. See statement by W. Theodore Pierson cited earlier.



his privileged access to a public domain. The first of these necessities is still met by the terms of the Commission's revised ruling. The second has been sacrificed.

Now we turn to the more fundamental question raised at the hearings in regard to the constitutionality (under the First Amendment) of the Commission's concern with program service at all.

The claim advanced by the radio industry is that the meaning and intent of the First Amendment, in its reference to the press, embraces radio. The fact is, however, that the Supreme Court has not yet passed clear judgment on this point. In the NBC case it confirmed the power of the FCC to concern itself with program service.<sup>5</sup> But this argument was predicated on the shortage of available frequencies and the consequent necessity to choose between two applicants. At the Mayflower hearings the radio industry advanced reasonable arguments to show that, for all practical purposes, serious shortage of frequencies (outside a few areas) was a thing of the past. Access to radio is still limited by frequencies available, but opportunity to start a newspaper is also limited. The difference in the occasion for this limitation—the huge capital outlay involved in starting a modern newspaper—is immaterial as it affects an individual's liberty. More men can get into radio's domain today, and at far cheaper cost, than into the newspaper world.

In another decision<sup>6</sup> the Supreme Court made passing reference to radio as equal under law with press and films in its claim to protection under the First Amendment. Whether or not this was a definitive judgment is, perhaps, open to question. Even, however, if we assume it to be such, we have still to consider the circumstances that gave rise to the drafting of the First Amendment and the assumptions on which it rests. Are

<sup>5</sup> For excerpts from the Supreme Court decision re the Report on Chain Broadcasting, see Appendix v.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. v. Paramount Pictures et al., 3 May, 1948.

the circumstances the same today and are its basic assumptions still justified?<sup>7</sup>

In the late eighteenth century government restraints on individual liberties were still numerous. Prior restraint on the press in terms of licensing and censorship had been removed, but the American colonists still smarted under subsequent restraints (as effective in their way as censorship) through such devices as special taxes on publications. It was to militant, recalcitrant journalists of the day that colonial America owed much of the spread of the revolutionary spirit, and it was largely to such proven services to the cause of liberty by the colonial press—and to the hatred of a repressive, alien government—that the drafting of the First Amendment was due.<sup>8</sup> But what if such are not the characteristic services of the press today? Does not the whole case for freedom then crumble? It is disturbing that today so many thinking people question the services of both press and radio to freedom of expression.

Responsibility is the condition of liberty's concession.<sup>9</sup> It is, as we have suggested, no more than a permissive right, other than as it serves society by the exploration of facts and ideas.

<sup>7</sup> We make no apology for reconsidering, in modern terms, the spirit and intent of the First Amendment. For as Professor Hocking says in his fine work on freedom of the press, 'all axioms are dubious; their fixity is their sterility; and this holds, be it observed, for the axioms of "the rights of man," as well as the assumed fixities of morality and religion. Each society must recapture for itself, on its own terms, and by its own individual explorers, the beliefs it needs to live by.' Hocking, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> It was on the score of open war against governmental malpractices that a free press was justified, e.g., in a letter to the citizens of Quebec sent by the Continental Congress: 'The importance of this (freedom) consists, besides the advancement of truth, science, morality and arts in general, in its diffusion of liberal sentiment on the administration of government, its ready communication of thoughts between subjects and its consequential promotion of union among them, whereby oppressive officials are shamed or intimidated into more honorable or just modes of conducting affairs.' *Journal of the Continental Congress*, Ed., 1800, 1, p. 57.

<sup>9</sup> 'Freedom of the press is not freedom from responsibility for its exercise. That there was such legal liability was so taken for granted by the framers of the 1st amendment that it was not spelled out. Responsibility for its abuse was imbedded in the law.' Mr. Justice Frankfurter in *Pennekamp v. State of Florida*, 66 S.Ct. 1029 (1946), quoted in Chaffee. *op. cit.*, p. 317.

The freedom safeguarded by the First Amendment is not the license of a vested interest, but the freedom to serve. To appeal to the First Amendment on other grounds than this is to lay claim to something that is not due. As we have argued, our only inalienable right is to use our private freedom of expression for the further advantage of the electorate in a democracy. Thus radio's claim to protection under the First Amendment is no more than an appeal to the letter of the law—unless, thus protected, it shows itself capable of 'yielding the proper fruits.'

Freedom of the press under the First Amendment also was predicated on the theory of diversity, of safety in numbers with respect to the expression of divergent opinion. (The press was not secured against abridgment in order that it might itself abridge freedom of expression.) The case against the Mayflower Decision was argued also on the ground that 3000 independent stations would, of themselves, proffer a wider diversity of expressed opinion than any to be attained through regulation and prescription by the FCC. Bias in one instance would be balanced by counterbias in another.

The error of the licensee is almost certain to be corrected for the public by the fact that we have many licensees in most communities making separate judgments on the same matter of choice and selection of programs. . . . The error committed by a licensee in the exercise of his public duty not to exclude any substantial sides could not be nearly so disastrous or harmful in its effect upon the public as the Commission's deciding on a nationwide basis what in any given instance amount to 'all substantial sides' of an issue.<sup>10</sup>

Many question the existence today of such diversity in the press (and radio) as that with which the authors of the First Amendment were familiar. Publication of a newspaper was then within the means of virtually anyone who had the desire to undertake it. Moreover, newspapers were primarily organs of opinion and the opinion was that of the publisher editor. The modern press (which we here speak of as including radio) is

<sup>10</sup> Statement of W. Theodore Pierson in the matter of editorialization by broadcast licensees.

something altogether different. It has been transformed by mass circulation. Opinion is a subordinate and (in terms of newspaper readership) an insignificant component of its total output. Publishers, nowadays, are rarely editors. Chain development and absentee ownership have been largely substituted for independent publication.<sup>11</sup> The modern press is a branch of business and, as such, is naturally concerned primarily with profits. The satisfaction of a varied assortment of interests, not the canvassing of opinion, is its primary goal. These are marked changes which take the modern press (in terms of its contents) largely outside that area within which protection of individual free speech is (as we argued earlier) paramount rather than permissive—the pursuit of facts and of ideas as these subserve the needs of an intelligent electorate.

Not only has the character of the press changed radically but so has the outlook of a public that (whether rightly or wrongly) today sees its interests menaced less by government than by the growth of 'big business' and semi-monopolistic corporate power. Characteristic of our day is an increasing (though of course far from universal) concern over protection of the public interest, of the consumer as opposed to the producer, and an increasing willingness to look to government as the source of such protection. The one-time belief that uncontrolled private enterprise results automatically in its operation to the advantage of the public seems to be on the wane.

Thus, as we have seen, even with respect to radio itself (with which a vast majority of listeners appear to be satisfied) significant percentages of a cross section of the public believe government should see to it, e.g. that not too much advertising is broadcast (13 per cent); that radio's profits are not too high (27 per cent); that stations regularly carry programs giving both sides of public issues (23 per cent); that each station broadcasts

<sup>11</sup> For an example of absentee ownership and its implications, see the discussion of the AVCO case in *Radio's Second Chance* by Charles A. Siepmann, Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1946, pp. 167-83.

a certain number of educational programs (21 per cent); that news broadcasts are accurate (30 per cent). This implies action and interference far beyond anything hitherto attempted by the FCC. Even more indicative of concern for protection of the public's interest (whether by government or some other source) is the fact that on three of these five issues 90 per cent, and on the other two 75 per cent favored some kind of control.<sup>12</sup>

Public concern for protection of its interests (in radio for what has been described as the freedom to hear, as against the freedom of the licensee to speak) may be due in part to the anxiety aroused by the ubiquitous range and power of radio. Radio confers on any individual who broadcasts (and even more on those who determine who shall broadcast) a power and a range of influence far beyond anything he could achieve by other means. A cubit is added to his stature and, in terms of his potential influence, he becomes a giant in a pygmy world of listeners. There are those who contend that this fact alone warrants a limitation of his freedom of speech. In the light of the principles we have discussed, is such a view justified? Should the measure of a man's power to help or hurt us be the measure also of the freedom we accord him?

Awareness of the potential consequences of radio's inherent powers is here likely to 'make cowards of us all' and to confuse our judgment. Radio, with its vast range and reach, is not unique. Press, magazines, and films are in a similar sense mass media. The virtue of the principle on which our view of the paramount importance of free speech is based—that facts and ideas shall freely circulate—is in no way vitiated, but rather potentially advantaged by the wider spread of what is said. Radio, like other mass media, represents that higher, ambivalent potentiality of modern communication to which we have earlier referred. Wisdom and integrity are at a higher premium, as folly and irresponsibility are more disastrous in their consequences than

<sup>12</sup> See Lazarsfeld and Kendall, *Radio Listening in America*, *op. cit.*, pp. 89, 90.

they have ever been. If, then, a man is to be limited with respect to free speech on the air, other grounds must be advanced than those of the possible havoc he may wreak by virtue of his huge potential audience.

But it is time to summarize. In doing so, it is not our purpose to define in arbitrary terms the rights and wrongs of the two issues we have discussed but to suggest the logical consequences of the variant premises on which argument in the debate has rested.

The original Mayflower Decision bespoke two distinct principles. It denied the right of advocacy to a licensee and it insisted that, in broadcasting, controversy shall be many-sided. Both principles were dictated by consideration of the public interest. Its denial of advocacy to the licensee would seem justified if it is held that licensees are not entitled to any special privilege by virtue of their managerial control, for the present, over a frequency belonging to the people.

Its insistence on many-sided controversy is likewise validated if it is held that in a public domain the listener's right to be exposed to all substantial sides of an argument is paramount. This is no more than a logical extension of the principle propounded in the Communications Act regarding candidates for public office. It is the principle of fair play as it has reference to public knowledge and enlightenment.

The articulation together with the enforcement of these principles is predicated on the right of the Commission to prescribe, in terms of general practice (though not with reference to details of a broadcast script), what constitutes the public interest. Such articulation is not arbitrary or absolute as it is subject to review and to correction in the Courts. The execution of the Commission's general design is delegated to licensees who, within the terms prescribed, have absolute freedom as well as unfettered opportunity to benefit themselves financially.

The Commission's right to issue the Mayflower Decision (as also its entire concern with programming) has been challenged

by the radio industry as a breach of the First Amendment to the Constitution. This right has never been subjected to the final test of judicial review by the Supreme Court. Lacking such review, the layman must answer the question for himself.

In our review we have tried to clarify several considerations that bear on the relevance and the validity today of the protection accorded by the First Amendment. Thus (1) the thinking that went into its formulation had reference to many circumstances and conditions that no longer obtain. The character, composition, and primary concern of the press (including radio, magazines, and films) have changed radically.

(2) If the theory of free speech (propounded in Chapter ix)—as a right inalienable only as it serves the needs of the electorate in its exploration of facts and of ideas—is valid, then much (if not most) of the subject matter of modern mass communication falls outside the application of this principle. Freedom of speech in this context survives but is only permissive and is subject (under due process of law) to forfeiture. The criterion of such forfeiture would, as suggested in Chapter ix, be substantiated proof of serious damage to some aspect of the public interest.

(3) Whether, despite changed circumstances, the First Amendment still applies—to radio, press, magazines, and films—is a matter not of the letter of the law<sup>13</sup> but rather of the public's judgment of the observance by mass media of the first condition of all liberty, responsibility in its exercise. Freedom is not license. It is opportunity conceded for the achievement of goals consonant with society's collective needs. Private and public interests, we have suggested, are identical only with respect to the unfettered exploration of facts and ideas.

<sup>13</sup> Chief Justice White once aptly commented, "There is great danger, it seems to me, to arise from the constant habit which prevails, when anything is opposed or objected to, of referring, without rhyme or reason, to the Constitution as a means of preventing its accomplishment, thus creating the impression that the Constitution is but a barrier to progress instead of being the broad highway through which alone true progress may be enjoyed."

(4) Public attitudes, like the press, have changed. Protection of the public interest, as against that of private interests, is a matter of growing concern. Fear of government has yielded to fear of corporate power outside government. The high percentage of those favoring (in radio) safeguards of some kind for specific facets of the public interest (and the significant though relatively small percentage favoring protection by the government) is the measure not of a waning faith in the validity of the First Amendment, but of the concern over the irresponsibility of those whose freedom to show themselves responsible it was designed to protect. Abuse of freedom leads to freedom's forfeiture.

Latent, therefore, in the plea that the FCC be shorn of all power to protect the public interest (as this is affected by the flow of radio communication) is a twofold danger. (1) It invites reconsideration, on a comprehensive scale, of the First Amendment—as it applies not only to radio but to the press as well—in the light of contemporary abuses of its spirit and intent. (2) It likewise invites us to reconsider whether the delegated power to serve the public interest conceded, under our present system, to private parties should not be either withdrawn or supplemented by a broadcast service dedicated to the rendering of such service as private broadcasters are either unable or unwilling to provide in satisfactory measure. Such total reservation of some part of the radio spectrum (as for use by the police, Coast Guard, and so on) for rendering public service could not be held unconstitutional. There can be no abridgment of a right that has not been conceded. It should be emphasized that even supplementary radio service by the government is sought today by only an insignificant percentage of the public. Such service would constitute a radical departure from traditional practice and would be accepted reluctantly. It is noteworthy that *laissez faire* as applied to radio is, in the public mind, an outworn concept. Self-regulation by the industry is the preferred means for safeguarding the public interest. Without such self-control, reluctant transfer to the hands of government might follow because of the



changed circumstances of our time and the shift in the pre-occupation of the public from private to collective interests.

This appraisal of the present situation and of prospects ahead seems to derive logically from such considerations relevant to modern, mass communication as we have earlier reviewed. Significantly, it also corresponds fairly closely to the conclusions of the most searching and responsible modern inquiry into the subject—that of the Commission on the Freedom of the Press.<sup>14</sup> The same concern over present press practices and the same reluctance to resort to governmental interference are voiced. The report, however, also suggests means by which we may escape from the unhappy choice between two equally unacceptable alternatives—pure *laissez faire* and absolute governmental control.

In the democratic process the final arbiter of 'what shall be done about it' is the public. But a public ignorant of true facts and relevant issues in the current operations of both press and radio is incapable of just arbitrament. It is in the position of a jury called on to decide a case without presentation of the evidence. The Commission recommends a permanent, non-profit agency that would scrutinize the flow of mass communication and subject it to regular critical analysis. Distortion of fact, suppression of vital news, and similar disservices to public information and enlightenment would be exposed. The mass media in fact would be subjected to a periodic audit (in terms of a content analysis), which would be published (it could be made mandatory for press and radio to supplement such publication), and could be the basis for Congressional debate and public discussion. The Pure Food and Drugs Act provides for similar scrutiny of all advertising matter, whether printed or broadcast—a task that is enormous, but it has been achieved. Is it unreasonable to claim that our minds and emotions stand in like need with our bodies of uncontaminated food and of drugs that are sedative, not lethal in their effects?

<sup>14</sup> See its summary report *A Free and Responsible Press*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1947.

### *The Case of Station KMPC*

Public hearings on the Mayflower Decision had hardly begun when there appeared in *Billboard* under banner headlines a story that infused a note of drama and great topical interest into the proceedings. A former newswriter and editor on the staff of Station KMPC in Los Angeles (one of the few powerful clear-channel stations in the country) charged that G. A. Richards, the station's president,

ordered that news be slanted in a manner that would be derogatory to President Truman, Henry Wallace, David Lilienthal, Howard Hughes and the Jews. . . 'I was ordered to emphasize statements critical of Lilienthal and to play down or not use at all in newscasts statements or incidents favorable to Lilienthal. I was ordered to play up his religion and his foreign extraction. . . I was given the flat order to ridicule on all possible occasions Henry Wallace, to tie up at every possible opportunity stories involving Wallace with the Russians and Communism. I was ordered to give prominence in newscasts to the scandal involving General Bennet Meyers, emphasizing the fact that he was a Jew.'<sup>15</sup>

The FCC, on receipt of a complaint embodying these charges from the 'Radio News Club,' conducted an investigation 'tending to substantiate the information' and decided to hold public hearings 'to determine, in the light of any facts adduced under the foregoing issues, whether further proceedings under the Communications Act . . . are warranted with respect to the licenses of radio stations KMPC, WJR, and WGAR or any of them.'<sup>16</sup> (Mr. Richards also had a controlling interest in the other two clear-channel stations here referred to.) The FCC, it will be seen, moved slowly and cautiously. The hearings have, at the time of writing (December 1949), not even begun and the public remains ignorant of any decision in the case. Assuming (what yet remains to be proved) that these charges can be

<sup>15</sup> *The Billboard*, 13 March, 1948, Vol. 60, No. 11, pp. 1, 8.

<sup>16</sup> FCC Docket #9193.

substantiated, what has happened here, and what can anybody, given our concepts of liberty, do about it?

First, we must try to interpret what has happened. (a) This incident is not, technically, a breach of the Mayflower Decision. It was not open advocacy. It was something worse—a concerted form of wilful deceit and deliberate distortion.<sup>17</sup> (b) News, as we have seen, is an area of communication that a great majority of listeners want kept clear of pollution. Where men 'argue for victory' we expect, alas, occasional blows below the belt, but in news reporting we claim accuracy and objectivity. We abhor the poison pen wherever it touches paper. In newswriting we regard its use as an outrage. (c) But not only has a poison pen been used, but it has been thrust into the hands of others. The integrity of a staff of newswriters has been impugned; they have been made to work under duress and in defiance not merely of the dictates of their private consciences but of accepted standards of professional journalistic ethics.<sup>18</sup> Freedom has been exploited to abridge freedom—an action that we have argued was outside the intent of the First Amendment. (d) We have in this case a deliberate incitement to prejudice and hatred. In our discussion of 'permissive' freedom, we suggested that it was subject to forfeiture (under due process of law) as and when substantiated hurt to the public interest was involved. Is or is not the promotion of anti-Semitism such substantiated hurt? Have we or have we not enough solid evidence to demolish the validity of the contention that 'Jews' (or 'Negroes') are proper subjects of invective? Is it feasible today to add the expression of such views to that list of indulgences (indulgence in obscenity,

<sup>17</sup> Juxtaposition of unrelated news items (so that one takes 'unnatural' color from the other) and repetition are familiar propaganda devices.

<sup>18</sup> 'A journalist who uses his power for any selfish or otherwise unworthy purpose is faithless to a high trust. . . Sound practice makes clear distinction between news reports and expressions of opinion. News reports should be free from opinion or bias of any kind.' Quoted from the *Canons of Journalism* of the American Society of Newspaper Editors in *Your Newspaper* by Nine Niemann Fellows, Macmillan, New York, 1947, pp. 195-6.

for instance) that we regard as exempt from protection under the First Amendment?

Now, what should be done about the situation? (1) The means preferred by the majority of listeners for protection of the public interest is self-regulation by the industry. Not once, however, since this incident occurred has either a spokesman for the National Association of Broadcasters or any prominent spokesman for the radio industry uttered a public word to dissociate himself from such practices. Nor, curiously, was the event considered news for listeners in radio newscasts. (The writer has yet to identify one newscast reporting in any detail the facts of the case.) Nor, as we have earlier seen, has the NAB the power to impose sanctions on any of its members for breaches of its code. The machinery of collective self-regulation remains to this day inoperative and incomplete.

(2) If we concede that our system of broadcasting is not a violation of the First Amendment, we may look to the FCC to 'do something about it.' Its concern in this case will be not with the particular content of a particular broadcast (such concern would be censorship) but with evidence of persistent violation of a principle. The reader should be able to determine the nature of this principle by reference to (and/or modification of) our earlier tentative description of 'what happened.' He must, in effect, ask himself what kind of behavior we want in broadcasting, as characterizing the good manners of communication. He may, under our system, then look to the FCC to pass judicial opinion on the observance of such good manners—and to act accordingly. If, like the radio industry, we dispute the right of the FCC to concern itself judicially with program service, then Mr. Richards and his kind are exempt from such action.

At this point we might mention an important distinction between radio and press, affecting the *nature* of the freedom enjoyed and the consequent uses of such freedom. In radio the freedom (and the responsibility involved) is individual; in the press it is collective. Every radio licensee is accountable for

his own action and his case stands or falls on what he, personally, does or fails to do. In the press an individual newspaper owner may freely and persistently indulge in abuses of his responsibility while finding shelter and protection under the general good behavior of his colleagues. In radio, we might say, evil is (or can be) scotched wherever it raises its ugly head; in the press we take the good with the bad for fear of losing the baby with the bath water.<sup>19</sup>

(3) If, then, the radio industry should have its way, we may look for a like 'collective security' among broadcasters and a far broader scope for license and abuse. Individual accountability will be gone, and only the public will be able to remedy the situation. Public apathy is widespread; we have demonstrated at least one reason to account for it. It is not that people are careless about these issues but that the manner in which they are exemplified in practice is not persistently made clear to them. In the absence of a regular and public audit of the performance of radio and press, public inaction will persist because of ignorance, not indifference, about the state of the account. People don't know (because they have no ready means of finding out) whether, in reference to the press today, it still is 'better to leave a few of its noxious branches to their luxuriant growth than, by pruning them away, to injure the vigor of those yielding the proper fruits.'<sup>20</sup>

The controversy over our system of broadcasting might, then, be expressed in some such terms as these: There are those who

<sup>19</sup> As Madison put it, 'Some degree of abuse is inseparable from the proper use of everything, and in no instance is this more true than in the press. It has accordingly been decided by practice of the States, that it is better to leave a few of its noxious branches to their luxuriant growth than, by pruning them away, to injure the vigor of those yielding the proper fruits.' Report on The Virginia Resolutions, in *Madison's Works*, Vol. iv., p. 544.

<sup>20</sup> Expressed in other terms, the findings of social science and research and the relatively new science of 'content analysis' are still far short of general acceptance as a reliable basis for public policy and action. We know, in this as in so many other fields, much more than we are ready to apply in practice.

see the Communications Act as an experiment in controlled communication, the setting of a course that steers between the Scylla of pure economic *laissez faire* and the Charybdis of government operation. One channel of communication—broadcasting—has been set aside for (1) the achievement of certain positive, socially desirable ends (including specific service to cultural minorities); (2) the protection of the public against abuses incident to the pursuit of purely selfish and personal ends; and (3) the general advancement of the good manners of communication. The private entrepreneur has been invited on board as navigator and provided with a chart on which the destination is marked together with the shoals and reefs to be avoided on the way. The experiment is predicated on the belief that these are special times calling for special measures, and that the paramount consideration is protection of the public interest. In an era of rapid transition and of adjustment on a vast scale, this project is a matter of discretionary interpretation based on sensitive and informed appraisal of the public will and subject to review by courts of law. The essence of the plan is the individual accountability of those participating in it.

Others believe that nothing in our circumstances and nothing in the changed character, scope, and motivation of modern mass communication warrants a modified interpretation of the First Amendment or reduces in any way the danger inherent in the assumption of new powers by government. Above all, they deny that economic factors conditioning the manner and content of mass communication militate against responsible and satisfactory service to public needs. Even if this were not so, the evils stemming from any government concern with any form of communication are likely to be greater than those incident to present practice. Over a continent as vast as ours no sensitive and apt interpretation of local and regional needs can be expected, even with reference to broad principles affecting the good manners of communication, from a centralized bureaucracy. Three thousand broadcasters are bound to be less subject to error in the aggre-

gate of their decisions than seven men, however wise, in Washington. The debate continues.

## 2. ACCESS TO THE MICROPHONE

No individual has a right to broadcast. A broadcast station (except under presidential powers in a national emergency) is not a common carrier like the telephone or telegraph. The licensee has absolute discretion (subject to considerations of the public interest) in his choice of those to whom he concedes access to a microphone. The only individual who has a legal right is a contestant for public office—and then only if equal time has been conceded to a rival candidate.

In practice an individual—and still more often a public official or public body—can generally secure air time for a rebuttal of patently false or unfair charges made against him or his office in a broadcast.<sup>21</sup> But here more than individual rights is involved. The concession is made in the public interest and for fear of subsequent action by the FCC having reference to renewal of the station's license.

'Non-profit organizations' have a right to a reasonable provision of air time, though not to specific hours. Final, overall interpretation of what constitutes a 'Non-profit organization' and 'reasonable air time' rests with the FCC, which, however, has for fifteen years left the picture uninterpreted. For the rest, the broadcaster has the discretion and the responsibility to interpret, as best he may, what kind of access to the microphone seems consonant with public interest.

In general the practice (which seems sensible) is to invite

<sup>21</sup> In February 1947 Fulton Lewis, Jr. attacked the co-operative movement, which in turn secured time (though not an equivalent hour) from the Mutual Broadcasting System on three morning programs to answer back. Likewise Mr. Wilson Wyatt, the National Housing Administrator, secured one broadcast in 1947 to refute statements made by Mr. Lewis in a series of broadcasts attacking the government housing program. For details see 'What Constitutes Irresponsibility on the Air' by Giraud Chester, in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 1, Princeton University Press. For further discussion of private rights see 'The Case of Harold Scott' below.

only experts to talk on subjects deemed to be of interest to the public. Artists and entertainers, likewise, tend to be chosen for their outstanding excellence or talent. (An exception is the give-away program for which anyone, apparently, will do!) Authority and talent are thus the normal conditions of selection, but occasionally, particularly over local stations, time is given to spokesmen (not always expert or talented) of community groups whose activities are of interest to listeners in the area. The rest of us stay modestly where we belong—at the receiving end. But from time to time an individual asserts a 'right' to air time, and we now offer such an instance as worthy of discussion for the pertinent points of decision involved in his claim.

### *The Case of Mr. Robert Harold Scott*

The month of March, which in 1945, came in like a lion, was not made lamblike for the seven FCC Commissioners by receipt of a letter from sunny California. From concern with kilocycles their attention was rudely diverted by a Mr. Harold Scott, who posed a problem in metaphysics. Who, asked Mr. Scott, is God? The Commissioners thought hard for 16 months and then came up not with an answer, but with a finding that is both a tribute to their versatility and a curio in the Commission's somewhat desiccated files.

Mr. Scott was angry and he wanted action. He submitted a petition 'requesting that the commission revoke the licenses of radio stations KQW, San Jose, California, and KPO and KFRC, both of San Francisco, California.' His grounds were 'That these stations have refused to make any time available to him, by sale or otherwise, for the broadcasting of talks on the subject of atheism, while they have permitted the use of their facilities for direct statements and arguments against atheism; as well as for indirect arguments, such as church services, prayers, Bible readings and other kinds of religious programs.' He went on to say, 'I do not throw stones at church windows. I do not mock at people kneeling in prayer. I respect every man's right



to have and to express any religious beliefs whatsoever. But I abhor and denounce those who, while asserting this right, seek, in one way or another, to prevent others from expressing contrary views.'<sup>22</sup>

The reader may be smiling, concluding that this chapter has reached a point at which a little light relief is in order. But before we dismiss Mr. Scott as an amiable eccentric, let us reflect a moment on the problem he raised and consider that the Commission took his petition seriously enough to issue a five-page reply. In its search for an answer, the FCC consulted the 'accused' as to their views on the petition.

Station KFRC expressed its 'firm belief that it would not be in the public interest to lend our facilities for dissemination and propagation of atheism.' Station KPO asserted that 'it is difficult to imagine that a controversial public issue exists, in the usual sense of that phrase, on the subject of the existence of a God merely because of the non-belief of a relatively few.' Station KQW straddled the views of the other two stations, arguing that atheistic talks would not be in the public interest and that, in any event, 'if a public controversial question was tendered, it was not of sufficient public moment . . . to justify its broadcast in the public interest with consequent displacement of an existing programme.' It added, rather brusquely, that what it did was none of the Commission's business anyway.

Counsel for the defense thus presents us with three matters for consideration: (1) What is the public interest? (2) What are the claims to air time of those who, in their adherence to a point of view, are 'relatively few'? (3) What makes a controversial issue of 'sufficient public moment' to warrant its being broadcast?

If the broadcasters were candid, they probably would admit that their decision in this case was based on a consideration far more practical than that implied by their formal statements.

<sup>22</sup> In re petition of Robert Harold Scott, FCC #96050. For fuller excerpts from the FCC's 'Memorandum Opinion and Order' see Appendix VI.

They were frightened of the torrent of protesting correspondence likely to pour in after the event. The concern is natural, part of the price of our system which associates public service with the pursuit of private gain. Fear of offense has gone far in conditioning the thought and practice of the broadcaster, vitiating in some degree that virtue of our system that seeks, through diversity of ownership, to secure diversity of policy and therefore of service offered to the public.<sup>23</sup> This fear is the inverse side of the coin that enjoys such widespread currency in radio circles—the preoccupation with head-counting as the one, valid criterion of service rendered. But if the concern is natural, is it relevant, other than to the commercial broadcaster's concern over delivering to sponsors the largest audience possible? Or is self-interest in conflict, here, with public interest? What makes of unvituperative talks on atheism something 'not in the public interest'?

The FCC thought it had an answer. Unembarrassed by the broadcasters' very natural and material concern over a loss of good will, it went in search of principles and came back with two that should ring bells of association after our discussion in the previous chapter:

Freedom of religious belief necessarily carries with it freedom to disbelieve, and freedom of speech means freedom to express disbeliefs as well as beliefs. If freedom of speech is to have meaning, it cannot be predicated on the mere popularity or public acceptance of the ideas sought to be advanced. It must be extended as readily to ideas which we disapprove or abhor as to ideas which we approve.

Mere popularity, then, is no criterion, because of that principle J. S. Mill bespoke and to which we have earlier referred—namely, that the more sacred or heartfelt our belief, the more we must subject it to close and constant scrutiny, lest belief come to be held 'in the manner of a prejudice.' As the FCC put it,

<sup>23</sup> It has been expressed in its extreme form by one of radio's most powerful advertisers (The American Tobacco Company) which once declared that its policy was 'never to offend a single listener.'

Underlying the conception of freedom of speech is not only the recognition of the importance of the free flow of ideas and information to the effective functioning of democratic forms of government and ways of life, but also belief that immunity from criticism is dangerous—dangerous to the institution or belief to which the immunity is granted as well as to the freedom of the people generally. Sound and vital ideas and institutions become strong and develop with criticism so long as they themselves have full opportunity for expression. It is dangerous that the unsound be permitted to flourish for want of criticism.

In other words, interest interpreted in terms of popularity is not necessarily synonymous with the public interest. Broadcasters, in serving the public interest, must therefore on occasion, and on significant grounds, risk courting the displeasure of some listeners. No listener—not even a powerful church—has veto powers on the observance of a principle that is part of the fabric of our way of life. Much of the give and take of our society derives from the interplay of rival pressure groups. But pressure becomes anarchic and a mere form of power politics (in which victory goes to the strong) unless it is contained within a principle that gives to none, by simple virtue of the power and pressure he can mobilize, the right to silence or abridge the free speech of another. To yield to simple pressure is to forego principle; to forego principle is to betray society.

But if numbers are not enough to refute Mr. Scott's plea for air time, what about the overwhelming weight of precedent and of tradition? Belief in the deity is, surely, part and parcel of the American credo. Our coins bear the inscription 'In God We Trust.' Is this public affirmation of our faith to be questioned and dragged into the public arena of common disputation? Is a subject that convention makes taboo in our daily intercourse to be bruited abroad over the air? The question here is how far, and for what reasons, broadcasters may—or should—flout social conventions and taboos in courageous adherence to their duty to serve the public interest.

Adherents to Mill's view would answer that no conflict exists

here. We may trust in God—but not in such a manner that we distrust the solid foundation of our faith to resist the shock of challenge and sober questioning. The FCC, moreover, introduced another argument, embarrassing in its disclosure of the gaps in the ‘solid front’ of the faithful to whose united interests the broadcasters implicitly appealed. ‘It is true that in this country an overwhelming majority of the people profess belief in the existence of a Divine Being. But the conception of the nature of the Divine Being is as varied as religious denominations and sects and even differs with the individuals belonging to the same denominations or sects. . . . So diverse are these conceptions that it may be fairly said, even as to professed believers, that the God of one man does not exist for another.’ Thus the very concept of atheism may vary not only between believer and unbeliever, but also between one believer and another. ‘Atheism,’ as the FCC discovered, as its researches reached into the 14th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, ‘is a term of varying application and significance. Its meaning is dependent upon the particular “theism” with which at the moment it is being contrasted.’

Thus far, then, we have reached three negative conclusions: (1) If we adhere to principle, we are forced to admit that counting heads is no criterion, of itself alone, for the abridgment of a minority’s free speech. Not even an overwhelming body of supporting opinions would justify such action. For if freedom of speech means anything, it means that majorities, too, must abide by the principle that it shall be free. (2) Still less is the prestige or pressure power of any group a proper factor in decision. (3) Social conventions and taboos must be reckoned with. Broadcasters are businessmen. They must be practical. But when principle is at stake, a man must make a choice between self-interest and duty. What is the operating principle at stake in this case? As station KQW put it, if a public controversial question was tendered, was it of ‘sufficient moment’ to ‘justify displacement of an existing programme?’

We must here tread warily, lest we fall into unwitting error. We do not intend to suggest that in the interests of free speech, radio should be accessible to every Tom, Dick, and Harry. As the FCC points out, 'in making a selection with fairness, the licensee must, of course, *consider* the extent of the interest of the people in his service area on a particular subject to be discussed. Every idea does not rise to the dignity of a "public controversy," and every organization, regardless of membership or the seriousness of its purposes, is not per se entitled to time on the air.'

What, then, raises this matter of atheism 'to the dignity of a public controversy'? A minor, incidental fact dignified this particular case. Mr. Scott was able to prove that direct attacks on atheism had been broadcast. 'I do not throw stones,' he said. But he claimed stones had been thrown at him. And the FCC, recognizing that fact, concluded that 'an organization or idea may be projected into the realm of controversy by virtue of being attacked. The holders of a belief should not be denied the right to answer attacks upon them or their belief, solely because they are few in number.'

But, if we have argued rightly, a more important principle than the right of reply is at stake, which must be clarified if we are to dispose, with a clear conscience, of Tom, Dick, and Harry. Provision for many-sided discussion must have reference to the importance to the people of the subject to be discussed. If matters of belief are of no consequence, there is no issue. If belief is important, then, in its own interests, it must be open to challenge. This does not mean that every broadcast by a religious body must be matched by a broadcast on atheism. (The question of the extent of interest here properly influences the decision.) It would, however, seem to mean that a total ban on atheism is contrary to the public interest.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> The BBC in Britain, generally regarded here as over-cautious, handles this matter with more sense than we do. It finds appropriate occasion from time to time to ventilate this question of belief. Thus, early in 1949, a series of six broadcasts (Clearing the Ground) was given, in which a

But if an indignant atheist hardly seems to merit the space we have devoted to discussion of his case, consider the implications of the principles involved in a context that is more pertinent today. Consider the Communist. Like the atheist, he represents 'relatively few' among us. He is constantly abused on the air. (Let us, however, by-pass the question of his right of reply.) To bespeak his point of view is socially taboo. He is, however, differentiated from the atheist in one curious way. Atheism, said Station KQW, is not 'of sufficient moment' to warrant discussion. Communism, on the other hand, is of such moment as to be 'too hot to touch.' It does not need to 'rise to the dignity of a public controversy.' It is already there, shorn of dignity, but controversial in the extreme.

The Communist is likely to claim that on the radio he is the victim of a conspiracy of silence.<sup>25</sup> He may publish the *Daily Worker*, but he may not get on the air. Is it because radio is a public domain that he is debarred from access to it, and if so, why?

The practical answer is simple. Don't ask quixotic courage of a broadcaster! Any station that gave a Communist air time would, more than likely, lose both sponsors and listeners and go out of business. (Even 'pink' stations have found it difficult to get sponsors.) But if we absolve the broadcaster from 'blame' and transfer responsibility either to sponsors or to the public, have we disposed of the problem?

Disciples of Mill would answer 'no.' They would point to consequences of the practice that, they would claim, are disastrous to the public interest. They would argue that, in banning all but one-sided discussion, we have done ourselves a great disservice. We have belied a principle bespoken in the Bill of churchman and an unbeliever discussed 'Can Christianity satisfy the need of modern man for a faith to live by?' Quite frequently in series on people's social and political opinions, speakers have predicated their convictions on disbelief in a deity.

<sup>25</sup> For the 'conspiratorial' view of radio in an even broader sense, see 'The American Communications Conspiracy' by Eugene Konecky, People's Radio Foundation, New York, \$1.00, 1949.

Rights, gone over to the enemy, adopted his techniques of suppression, and put a cordon of silence around one section of the free market place of thought. We have thus deprived ourselves of the opportunity both of learning whether there is any wheat among the chaff of communist theory and of testing the unassailable rightness of our own point of view. 'All silencing of discussion is an assumption of infallibility.'<sup>26</sup>

The merit of discussion—in this case as in the case of religion—is that it forces us to scrutinize more carefully the validity of our contentions. Faith needs exercise. A living faith is like a baseball game in which the skill and prowess of the batter are exhibited (and perfected) only as they are tested by the curving onslaught of the pitcher. One of the constant dangers to a free society (as Mill himself insisted) is the tendency of the majority, finding strength and comfort in numbers, to impose on the dissenter a tyranny that is as cruel to the victim as it is demoralizing to the tyrant.

In the process we have distorted language, and we are beginning to discover, to our chagrin, how far from academic are the consequences. The term 'communist' in its currency today is little better than a verbal reflex of fear, hatred, and suspicion, a vulgar term of abuse, a weapon of character assassination.<sup>27</sup> (Our courts have elevated it to the doubtful dignity of libel.) Its misuse has done grievous hurt to innocent individuals. The consequences are serious.

Important distinctions of meaning have, as always happens when words are thus bandied about, been wholly lost from

<sup>26</sup> 'Though the silenced opinion be an error, it may, and very commonly does, contain a portion of truth, and since the general or prevailing opinion on any subject is rarely or never the whole truth, it is only by the collision of adverse opinions that the remainder of the truth has any chance of being supplied.' J. S. Mill, *Essay on Liberty*, *op. cit.*

<sup>27</sup> In February 1947 *Newsweek* sold space for a full-page advertisement of *The New Industrial Dictionary*; 11th revised edition. Sample definitions of this work included: *Communist*: one who puts loyalty to a foreign idea [sic] ahead of loyalty to his country; *Communism*: dictatorship, loss of personal freedom, bringing all down to level of least competent; *Fascist*: same as communist.

sight. Few, for instance, recognize any longer the differences between Marx's theory of communism; Leninist-Marxism; Leninist-Trotskyist-Marxism; Leninist-Stalinist-Marxism; or the fundamental difference between two phases of the last named. The ideological as well as the historical distinctions here involved are interesting and important, but they are lost in the accumulated rubbish piled up by the muckraker. This is a pity, for a simple rule of straight and honest thinking, as of military strategy, is to know your enemy—his strength and his weakness.

Such argument does not imply that we should have on the air, regular commentators of a communist persuasion, or that every time capitalism is mentioned, it should be accompanied by a recital of the Communist Manifesto. It does imply that, as with atheism, a complete ban is unsound in principle and unnecessary in practice. It suggests that we should take communism (in any and all of its historical meanings) in our stride. The danger of communism (in any of its ideological forms) is no chimera. But fear of its mention or of its examination is an affront to our faith in ourselves and in our own way of life. It might even be said that the Communist (either the home or the foreign variety) has only two assets—his industry and his fanatical devotion to his faith. Only a comparable industry and a like devotion are needed to sustain our cause and to enable us to ask, with Milton, 'who ever knew truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter?' In the war of words, at least, this is a respectable banner to which to rally. Cockroaches come out at night. Switch on the light and they run for it, or you can squelch them underfoot. It is much the same with 'dangerous thoughts.'

### *The Problem of the News Commentator*

Freedom to hear is perhaps nowhere more important than with reference to public issues and events on which the electorate is required to pass informed, intelligent, and sober judgments. Essential to such judgment is (a) a responsible, (b) a contin-



uous, and (c) a diverse flow of informed opinion and interpretation. In radio it is the task of the commentators to meet these three specifications. How is it possible to meet the FCC's requirement that a reasonable balance of representative opinion be maintained?<sup>28</sup>

Radio in America is competitive. There can, therefore, be no 'gentlemen's agreement'—between stations in a given service area or between networks—so to regulate the flow of commentators that NBC, for instance, goes 'right' while ABC goes 'left' in the commentators they employ, thus achieving a crude kind of balance between the views expressed. Broadcasting, under our system, is a matter of individual responsibility. Each licensee, whether network president or local station owner, must solve for himself the riddle of what constitutes fair play.

To date no over-all solution of this perplexing problem has been sought or found by radio, except negatively by CBS, which, in theory, precludes editorial comment, while shutting its eye to a good deal of overt and covert comment on affairs by individual members of its team of commentators. Men like Edward Murrow and Eric Sevareid, for instance, are too intelligent and socially responsible to forego an occasional stab at interpretation of events. They recognize how all but invisible is the line dividing 'objective' explanation from 'subjective' interpretation.

In the absence of a policy, what, we must ask, happens to fair play? How does a game played without rules come out? What is the bias, or political slant, of any individual commentator, and—what is more important—what is the over-all balance of views expressed in this total universe of discourse? What do we know about the situation? The answer, alas, is—virtually nothing.

Is this as it should be? Or is our ignorance disquieting? Is public opinion being manipulated, either consciously or un-

<sup>28</sup> For fuller discussion of this problem, see Siepmann, *Radio's Second Chance*, *op. cit.*, ch. 4.

consciously, on the air? It is estimated that forty million listeners tune in with some regularity to network news commentators—to say nothing of commentators over local stations. How does the world of events, as seen through the eyes of their radio mentors, look to these listeners? How great is their diversity of choice in the matters of opinion and appraisal? At present, we do not know. Monographs dissecting the work of this or that commentator occasionally appear in learned journals. A recent example is a study of Fulton Lewis, Jr. in the *Public Opinion Quarterly*<sup>29</sup> which was given wider circulation through quotation in John Crosby's syndicated column. But the rest is silence.

Here, then, in one small but crucial segment of radio's output, we see illustrated the total lack of evidence presented before the jury of a hundred million listeners—a jury that is supposed to be the arbiter of radio's destiny and the voice that is finally and properly decisive in determining the flow of radio's communication. Here we see theory and practice falling disastrously apart and the whole fabric of democratic practice (supposedly composed of solid brick) fluttering to the ground like a pack of cards. Where, then, is the flaw? Is it not in absence of mortar for the bricks—the wherewithal of intelligent appraisal and decision available to listeners?

In search of mortar we revert, therefore, to the proposal of the Commission on the Freedom of the Press that radio (and press) be subject to regular, exhaustive audit and thereby offer some mortar for the bricks of this theoretical structure. Such an audit is feasible. The science of content analysis is already reasonably exact. It has its luminaries and they have their disciples and devotees. The manpower, in other words, for 'operation scrutiny' is there. Only the funds and the public support that would make funds available are lacking. Those fearful of bias in a centralized audit bureau can banish their fear.

<sup>29</sup> 'What Constitutes Irresponsibility on the Air?' by Giraud Chester, in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 1.

The work need not and should not be centralized. It can be farmed out to research units in a dozen universities already fully conversant with content-analysis techniques. Only the correlation of their work and the summary audit report need be centralized.

A sane society alert to the latent danger in modern mass communication would seek such buttressing of its resources of necessary knowledge. American society, being essentially sane and receptive to the practical application of new scientific techniques, may come to some such decision. But it takes time for new ideas to percolate. Those vexed over the dilemma in which we find ourselves—the seeming choice between the unacceptable alternatives of continuing press irresponsibility and of government control—may find solace and hope (albeit deferred) in such a prospect. Science, as in so many other fields, here offers us a new tool. On how soon and how effectively we use it hinges, perhaps, the continued freedom of our press and, even more important, the freedom of the listener and reader to make fair sense of the world in which they live. We have, here, at least, an opportunity to redeem in some measure the present lopsided relation between the producer and the consumer of facts and ideas.

## XI

### RADIO AND EDUCATION

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'Man is a gregarious animal, and much more so in his mind than in his body. He may like to go alone for a walk. But he hates to stand alone in his opinion.'

—SANTAYANA

#### EDUCATION IN GENERAL

FOR those who go far with it education is, on one side, a lonely business. For to be eminent in mind or in imagination is, as with all eminence, to stand alone and apart. Education is also awful, for it leads us inexorably beyond the known to the unknowable—so that, like Socrates, we end with the recognition that we know nothing. Consequently, the chief attributes of a truly educated man are humility<sup>1</sup> and a certain suspension of judgment (not to be confused with skepticism) in recognition, always, of 'that reserve of truth beyond what the mind reaches but still knows to be behind.' This quality of mind is common both to great scientists and to great men of faith.

<sup>1</sup> Not the false humility of sanctimonious self-depreciation, but rather the courageous insight that refuses to see or seek simple answers to complicated questions, the dissatisfaction, always, with attainment as measured by the most exalted standard, a great love of excellence, and that recognition of the partial nature of all 'truth' which, as A. N. Whitehead beautifully puts it, 'leaves the surrounding darkness unobscured.'

Education, moreover, requires courage—more and more courage as we attain to its upper reaches. It is by nature and of necessity selective, and no mere spreading of its ‘facilities’ will make it otherwise. From higher education, in its proper sense, most should be warned away, for they will not have the stomach—to say nothing of the mind—for it. Education (in terms, at least, of intellectual attainment) is the one realm in which an ‘aristocracy’ has natural and inalienable rights. Only the fool or the sentimentalist will find this incompatible with democratic principles. ‘The mind is its own place.’

To most of us these are unfamiliar as well as, perhaps, uncomfortable thoughts. For few of us have ventured in education beyond its chartered territory or have ever, like Cortez’ men when they stared for the first time at the Pacific, ‘looked at each other with a wild surmise—silent, upon a peak in Darien.’ To teachers, in particular, such thoughts may prove a stumbling block, making necessary a distinction, often overlooked, between teaching and scholarship. What has been said applies pre-eminently to scholarship—and to the teacher *in so far* as he is scholar also. Scholars<sup>2</sup> are trailblazers. Teachers are road-builders, ‘making the rough places smooth’ for millions to follow where the few have led. (The distinction, though necessary, is, in a sense, artificial, for the good teacher is part scholar also. There is—or should be—no clear, dividing line.)

Yet it is true of both teaching and scholarship that as we withdraw our gaze from the horizon, we lose direction even in the early, intermediate stages of our road-making. To ‘make the rough places smooth,’ to make education easy going is only part—a subordinate part—of teaching. We shall have done disservice to

<sup>2</sup> Scholarship is too confining a term. The full fruits of education are to be seen in a person whose mind, imagination, and *character* have been developed and disciplined in the broadest possible field of available experience. It is the breadth of perspective, the depth of knowledge, and the refinement of human insight and sympathy that are here intended as relevant criteria. With the scholar we include the poet, the artist, and the whole company of those who go on journeys of the mind and the imagination.

our charges should we conceal from them how long and hazardous is the road on which they have set out. It is a false security that we implant (which life itself will all too soon unmask) that seeks to conceal this fact. The true security, which honest teaching offers, is that which helps us to be, as St. Paul said, 'perplexed, but not unto despair.' Finite man may not look for more than this of comfort as he explores the infinite.

Education, then, being the progressive enlargement of man's view of himself and of the universe about him, is everybody's business. Somewhat inconsequentially, however (considering how inherently complex a task it is) everyone regards himself as an authority on the subject. In so far as it bespeaks concern and interest, the attitude is healthy. It is salutary, too, as it recognizes—what is true—that we learn more, in the long run, from life's experiences than from formal education. Anything from which we learn something is, in a broad sense, educational. But 'education' and 'learning' lose any vestige of meaning when interpreted too broadly. We reach the farcical, for instance, when (as actually happened in radio's early days) a network offered, as evidence of its educational endeavor, a live performance by Amos and Andy before the Federal Radio Commission! If this is education, so is the braying of an ass. Clearly, to keep our discussion of education within manageable bounds we must somehow circumscribe its meaning.

For working purposes let us, then, conceive of education as being distinguished by three characteristics: (1) purpose; (2) design; (3) continuity. Its purpose is, as we have said, that progressive enlargement of a man's understanding of himself and of the universe that is the only basis for reasoned and reasonable action. Its design will be related to the several, sequent stages by which such understanding is attained and to the means by which human faculties, necessary to understanding, can best be trained and developed. Its continuity will be such as to keep the muscles of the mind supple. Continuity is essential to the execution of the design and to preclude the haphazard, inter-

mittent, and disorderly impact of experience. It provides for ordered learning and for the saving of time.

The context of all education is twofold—individual and social. Its business is to make us more and more ourselves, to cultivate in each of us our own distinctive genius, however modest it may be, while showing us how this genius may be reconciled with the needs and claims of the society of which we are a part. Though it is not education's aim to cultivate eccentrics, that society is richest, most flexible, and most humane that best uses and most tolerates eccentricity. Conformity, beyond a point, breeds sterile minds and, therefore, a sterile society. It is this that foredooms authoritarian regimes, which are the first to insist on strict conformity and the last to concede the social advantages of individual difference.

Authoritarianism, however, is only an extreme example of a danger ever-present in all institutionalized education—the insistence, within communities, on a strict observance of convention coupled with a deep-seated fear of new and 'therefore,' dangerous thoughts. Man 'hates to stand alone in his opinion'—and hates even more for others to do so. The position of the teacher is thus paradoxical. His task (at least in a democracy) is to educate for change, to breed a healthy discontent, and to feed in the young the fires of constructive reform. For is there one of us so well-contented with himself or with his lot that he would wish to see his child grow up in his own likeness? The question is, alas, rhetorical, for it would seem that there are not one, but many. We cling to what we have and what we are, and there are still relatively few who, recognizing ideas as dangerous, are prepared to face the danger.

The teacher is thus circumscribed by social conservatism in his efforts to liberate the child from a conformity that in a hundred ways has been at work on him from early infancy, and to defer for as long as possible the corroding influence of custom and habit that masters most of us long before we reach middle age. The teacher's actual power to influence children is, inci-

dentally, much overrated. Forces outside the classroom—pre-eminently the home and today, perhaps, the mass media of communication—are much stronger and more permanent in their effects.<sup>3</sup> Educators should be the indirect pacemakers of social progress and enlightenment. In practice their influence, like their pay, is modest and, like their social status, respectable and generally speaking uninspiring.

Education is a long process. Indeed, if properly conceived and intelligently pursued, it never ends. Formal education (which alone ends) provides the springboard for what should be a life pursuit. Its task is to make us literate; socially conscious, adaptable, and active; competent, to some degree, in our mastery of useful skills; capable of enjoying leisure fruitfully; and, last but not least, the sum of all these things—masters in some sense of the not so gentle art of living. The aim of all true education is philosophy—a broad, synoptic view of life compounded of character, imaginative insight, and applied experience.

In a democracy universal education is not a luxury but a necessity. A semiliterate electorate, ignorant, indifferent, and inert, constitutes a standing invitation to disaster. We have universal education of a sort, but it is not adequate. But those who complain of its shortcomings tend to overlook its comparative youth (in 1870 the movement was still only getting under way) and the burdens that have been increasingly loaded on it.

In the 70 years between then (1870) and 1940 the population slightly more than tripled. But in 1870 some 80,000 students were enrolled in secondary schools and 60,000 in colleges, whereas by 1940, 7,000,000 were enrolled in the former and 1,500,000 in the latter (while, in addition, more than 1,000,000 were engaged in part-

<sup>3</sup> 'Almost inevitably, school people, and also the general public, overestimate the importance of the influences of schools and colleges in forming the individual's character, beliefs and habits of thought. The community outside the schools has a weight and influence the schools cannot possibly have. If life in the community fails to illustrate the teaching of the schools, the individual is more apt to conform to the community mores than he is to hold fast to the teaching of his school or college.' *General Education in a Free Society*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1946, p. 256.



time, vocational and adult education.) Thus, while the general population was increasing three times over, the enrollment of high schools was being multiplied about 90 times and that of colleges about 30 times. And the end is not yet.<sup>4</sup> Even now one young person in six fails to reach high school and half of those who enter drop out before the end.<sup>5</sup>

Not only has enrollment increased at a staggering pace but so have the demands upon the teacher to provide instruction in ever-widening and varied fields of knowledge. Modern industry demands more and more technicians, and, in the rush to provide them, there are those who overlook the cultural importance of a liberal education as the necessary ballast for a civilized way of life. It is small wonder, then, that education remains largely unfinished business and that we number, to this day, millions of citizens unfitted, educationally speaking, to pull an oar in the great Ship of State.<sup>6</sup>

Public impatience with education is altogether too easy a way of shifting the burden of responsibility from where it properly belongs—squarely on the shoulders of the public. We could have better education if we wanted it. It is ironical that men who will blithely vote vast sums for better roads and improved garbage disposal will lobby to avoid an increased tax rate to provide better school facilities. In one sense it is always true that 'there is never anything wrong with the educational

<sup>4</sup> Indeed crisis looms ahead, unless action is taken. Its occasion is two-fold. 'During and since the war more than 350,000 of our 850,000 teachers have left teaching, in addition to the normal turnover. . . More than 110,000 "emergency" teachers are now employed who do not have the proper qualifications.' (Article by George J. Hecht in *Parents Magazine* 1948.) At the same time pupil enrollment rises rapidly. It is estimated that by 1956 there will be some eight million more children seeking enrollment than there were in 1948. 'From 1949-1959 a total of 262,100 new elementary teachers must be prepared to handle the increased enrollment alone.' (Report on *Probable Demand for Teachers in the United States*, National Education Association, 1948.)

<sup>5</sup> *General Education in a Free Society*, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> According to the 1940 census, illiterates in the United States numbered over ten million. Some two million children, between the ages of six and fifteen, were not attending school. In the same year, too, nearly twenty million voters had less than a sixth grade education.

system of a country. What is wrong is the country. The educational system that any country has will be the system that country wants.<sup>7</sup>

There is, however, an aspect of universal education that can be less readily dismissed—namely, the risk taken and the price paid for this brave experiment. It is pure self-deception to assume that, when educational facilities are increased ninetyfold, something is simply ‘added’ to the existing system, that it becomes more all-embracing while retaining its essential characteristics. The fact is that the whole structure of education is rocked to its foundations. Nothing is as it was before—and least of all the institutions of higher learning already operating when universal education was, to all intents and purposes, achieved. The intermediate price paid is (or at least may well be) a general lowering of standards, the dilution of scholarship, and a downward adjustment of the pace of education to that of the more backward student. (Mass education is almost inevitably egalitarian, exceptional students creating a certain problem for the harassed teacher by being out of line in terms of the level of instruction aimed at the total group.) The risk is that, in the process, we lose sight of the true goal and of the quintessential character of education as described at the beginning of this chapter.<sup>8</sup> The necessity to level down becomes elevated to a virtue, while the prospect of leveling up is relegated to an

<sup>7</sup> *Education for Freedom*, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1943, p. 48.

<sup>8</sup> Britain, having since the war raised the school-leaving age, is experiencing this intermediate problem. A contemporary journal thus comments on it: ‘The defect of English secondary and higher education in the past has been that it was reserved for too few. Its glory has been the quality of the intellectual training that it conferred on those few, perhaps better balanced between the theoretical and the practical, between scholarship and human judgment, than any other system of national education could provide. The danger of the educational revolution through which the country is now passing is lest, in correcting the defect, the glory should depart. . . So fierce is the demand for “parity of esteem” from those who have hitherto felt themselves the underprivileged that the whole set of values implicit in advanced education after the age of 16 is in danger of being jettisoned. Quality is being sacrificed to equality.’ *London Economist*, 11 June, 1949.

indefinite future and assumes the character of wishful thinking.

Materially, the gains of universal education are reflected in our industrial pre-eminence in the world today. Culturally, they are, perhaps, to be measured by the quality of our mass media of communication,<sup>9</sup> by the chaotic, if transitory, state of our moral code, and by the seemingly increasing contempt for and disregard of high standards of excellence. The fact that the word intellectual is now rarely seen in print without inverted commas or used other than as an opprobrious term is of itself, perhaps, significant. To overlook such possible intermediate consequences of perhaps the bravest and noblest enterprise that any nation ever undertook is to dishonor the idealism and to confound the high hopes that launched it. To reckon with the consequences involves the occasional raising of our eyes from the immediate job in hand to recover true vision and perspective by a fresh glimpse of education's far horizon. It is essentially a matter of perspective, of reconciliation to the fact that universal education will not bear fruit short of, perhaps, two hundred years ahead. Those teachers are not fools who knowingly cast their bread upon the waters, hoping only that it will return to them after many days.

One further consequence of 'wholesale' education may be mentioned, which has to do with the demand-supply relation. If there is less respect<sup>10</sup> for education now (because there is less understanding of its true, final purpose), it still has a considerable, if residual, prestige. Even those least acquainted with it

<sup>9</sup> 'Like the highschool curriculum, the movies and radio, not to speak of newspapers and magazines, have adapted themselves to the enormous range of taste and intelligence which exists in the general public, catering quite consciously, often quite cynically, to one or another level. . . Doubtless wisdom has always been the fruit of the tree of good and evil. But one need be no soft paternalist to believe that never in the history of the world have vulgarity and debilitation beat so insistently on the mind as they now do from screen, radio and newsstand. Against these the book or movie which speaks with authentic largeness to the whole people has no easy victory.' *General Education in a Free Society, op. cit., p. 30.*

<sup>10</sup> It is better, perhaps, to say 'too little.' Whether there is less respect now than formerly is a matter of sentimental speculation.

pay it lip service. Increased facilities at the primary and secondary levels have fired many to storm the heights of higher education, and, to meet the demand, colleges have sprung up on all sides, many of them peddling degrees for a modest fee, with a reckless and sometimes cynical disregard for academic standards.<sup>11</sup> What was formerly a cherished and hard-won prize has all too frequently become a readily salable commodity. The one-time symbols of true accomplishment—the A.B., M.A., and even the doctoral degrees—have themselves become the objective to be realized, the commodity to be acquired, rather than the accomplishment they should symbolize. Such idolatry is dangerous, bringing the gods themselves into contempt.

Perhaps the greatest of all the risks involved in universal education is this leveling-off of the high peaks of educational attainment to a broad plateau—the elimination, as it were, from the educational landscape of its mountain ranges. Would India be the same without its Everest? Economics apart, is the continuance of such a leveling process actually necessary? It would hardly seem so. And yet so powerful is the influence of a trend that it appears to master and condition our thinking. A good example is the report of the President's Commission on Higher Education. Among its proposals is the doubling of college and university enrollment by 1952. This proposal provoked much enthusiasm and little adverse comment. Yet might it not be true that the best interests of our society would have been better secured by a proposal the exact reverse of this one? Have we not now reached a point at which education in depth, rather than in breadth, should be the order of the day? Is not Dr. Conant nearer the mark in pleading for higher standards at the university coupled with greater opportunities for university education for those now debarred, by economics rather than lack of ability, from attendance? Every form of society—and a democracy above all others—must guard against one liability, while constantly

<sup>11</sup> There are today 1681 colleges and universities in the United States. Graduating students in 1948-9 numbered approximately 423,000.

nurturing one priceless asset. The liability is a semiliterate and backward mass; the asset is an intellectual elite. It is not undemocratic to prize the qualities of leadership and intellectual distinction. Though we move forward together, there must be someone in the lead. Move we must, but the *direction* in which we move is all-important. There must be those to point the way.<sup>12</sup>

But to create leaders (perhaps the nation's outstanding need of education) involves leadership.<sup>13</sup> Liberal education, as we have seen, is always subject to the retarding influence of what is rather vaguely called a 'social lag.' Its subservience, however, to social climate is never more than partial—and is roughly in inverse proportion to its own dynamic. Teachers are vital and significant as they show the will and capacity to affect the environment. Education, indeed, is a constant dialectical process, helping us to see the nature and the cause of current defects in ourselves and our society and to find acceptable ways of removing them.

The main function of primary education is to *acquaint* children with their social environment—the history, tradition, and character of the society and the world of which they are a part.

<sup>12</sup> It is important, however, to guard against misunderstanding. We do not intend to argue that, with the extension of educational facilities, *all* academic standards have gone by the board. The number of distinguished scholars is unquestionably greater today than at any previous time in our history. But, by and large, universities have been geared down to the level of attainment of the public schools. One could readily name a score in which high scholarly achievement is required. But what are 20 among well-nigh 2000? The symbols of attainment—the degrees given—are the same for all. Can we claim that the average M.A. degree means today what it once did? Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of modern education is the increase of gigantism in so-called institutions of higher learning—universities with enrollments of tens of thousands of students. There is probably a certain size beyond which no institution can grow without progressively defeating the very ends it set out to achieve. In our giant universities the supply of teachers to give students individual attention has not kept pace with the increase in enrollments. With classes inflated in size—sometimes to hundreds—the process of education too often approximates that of the conveyor-belt system in a modern factory.

<sup>13</sup> We are not in search of dictators. A leader is one who has learned to lead *himself* and thereby *fitted himself for the service of others*. In a democracy the role of leadership is conferred, not assumed.

Its concern is with basic skills, with social adjustment and personal security. The function of secondary—and still more of higher—education is to *affect* the environment. Teachers are not, and should not be, social reformers. But they should be the catalytic agents by means of which young minds are influenced to desire and execute reform. To aspire to better things is a logical and desirable part of mental and spiritual growth.

Clearly, then, education is not just an elegant frill or adornment, or merely a matter of cultivated manners or correct deportment. It is the deeper perception that, in a quite literal sense, 'manners makyth man'; it is the creation of a cast of mind all-pervasive in its influence on conduct and outlook—and in particular on human relations. For 'manners' read social mores, and you have the central concern of all true education.

## 2. EDUCATION IN AND FOR OUR TIME

That our own education in the past has seemed to have little to do with our 'practical life' is due partly to the fact that it is the business of education, as of religion, to offer us standards that are beyond our present reach, but perhaps more to the fact that concepts of education, derived from Europe, were grafted onto a new and totally different society. Nineteenth-century European education, in its main emphasis and pre-occupation, was selective and aristocratic. Classical training and rigid discipline served their purpose well enough for a country like Britain, steeped in tradition and convinced of its consolidating virtue, while at the same time engaged in Empire-building and needing capable administrators and men imbued (at their best) with a selfless and humane ideal of social responsibility and public service. But such was an inept pattern for a new country faced toward the future rather than tied to the past.

Classical education in the United States is now properly defunct, being at once too arduous a discipline to provide a useful pattern for universal education, and totally inadequate, of itself alone, to equip us with the knowledge requisite for

life in the modern world. The context of modern education is the present, and the approach thereto is that of 'problem-solving.' Emphasis on the present is natural, but whether it is being carried too far is perhaps open to question. To crowd upon a child's mind all the unresolved complexities of modern life is to risk, in any but the most skilled hands, either premature confusion and a neurotic concern over life's insolubility, or the presumption, expectation, and request for the 'answer' or 'solution' to it all. Problem-solving, admirable up to a point, tends to the naïve belief that, especially here in America, we can 'lick any problem.'

As to concentration on the present, 'the difficulty here is a somewhat naïve dismissal of the fact that a great many people have contributed over a very long time to human knowledge, which in consequence has a dignity, almost an austerity, calling for some respect.'<sup>14</sup> This reaction, natural if extreme, to the backward-looking tendencies of earlier education will find its level when we learn how to convey to students the essential fact that history is something to draw on rather than to lean upon, and that the present constitutes no more than a convenient (because familiar) frame of reference for the exploration of truths and insights that become more and more timeless as we pursue them further and understand them better.

The concern that modern education be 'practical,' either in the sense of concerning itself with current problems or of accelerating the pace of vocational training (to make us more efficient cogs in our industrial machine), is the more dangerous for overlooking the crucial fact that, in almost every respect, what a man does is a reflection of what he is. (Even the way a man writes is a revelation of what kind of person he is. 'Faults of style,' said Arnold Bennett, 'are largely faults of character.') We have more than enough 'know-how' in America today. What we need—and in providing it, education will not be indulging in the frills of elegant living—is more 'be-how.'

<sup>14</sup> *General Education in a Free Society*, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

But when we suggest that education about the present has perhaps been overdone, we do not deny that many of the conditions under which modern education operates and many of the problems with which it grapples are distinctive of our age. Because education is always for, as well as in, our time, educators must be among the most acute observers and appraisers of current social problems.

Of all the factors that have complicated education's task perhaps none compares in importance with that of technological advancement. It has not only partly transformed the function of education (in so far as it has stressed the need for more vocational training) but profoundly affected the social environment and psychological climate in which modern education operates.

Consider, first, the social environment. One direct consequence of modern technology is the rapid urbanization of America. More than 50 per cent of us inhabit cities marked by congestion and frequently by slums; marked, too, by a decrease of neighborly relations and a diminished sense of belonging. For millions of children, streets have been substituted for playgrounds, and for thousands gang warfare and delinquency have been the results. Urban poverty is not offset by the self-respect and comparative self-sufficiency of even the subsistence farmer. Disparities of wealth are more extreme and ostentatious, and social stratification (a growing 'class' consciousness) is more marked. The opportunity for privacy is conspicuous by its absence.

And what of the psychological climate? If home influences are even half as powerful as we have claimed they are, we must consider not merely the physical circumstances of the average urban dweller but also his state of mind—as this stems from the conditions of modern factory life. We might visit a modern factory and observe workers on the conveyor belt—the din, the monotony, the uncreative task; man now adjunct of the machine, starved of self-expression even in its humblest forms, and craving the human touch in his industrial relations. The unnatural stimulation and dulling strain of urban-industrial existence present



problems that the psychiatrist, the town planner, and the industrialist himself may help, ultimately, to mitigate if not to solve. Meantime, as aspects of the home life of a child, these are factors that infinitely complicate the daily ministrations of the city teacher.

Most striking, however, is the effect of modern, urban-industrial life on men's use and evaluation of leisure. On the importance attached to it—and the consequent use made of it—depend in large measure the quality and dignity of human life. We can regard it as 'surplus' time, as a kind of scrap or waste product to be disposed of at day's end like filings on the factory floor. Or we can think of it as the hard-won prize of daily toil—the consummation of man's struggle to become more than a hewer of wood and drawer of water, and to realize his own self in its fullest dimension.

To enjoy its fruits in this sense requires a reserve of energy and an absence of nervous strain that modern working conditions concede only to a privileged minority. For the average man the most natural impulse at day's end is to relax, to assume for a brief while a passive role, to escape from life as he knows it, not into life as he might discover it to be. The dulling, enervating daily round induces a cessation, not a transfer, of the energy that makes of leisure at once a refreshment, a reward, and a healthy kind of rest.

Small wonder, then, that modern leisure is marked by passivity and that the influence of radio and other mass media (where others do the work) is so pervasive and so powerful. When every evening offers a 'command performance' on the air, who wants to be anywhere but in the royal box? Hence, too, radio's obsequious and studied adulation of its audience, persuading us all that 'Here upon earth we're kings—and who but we can be such kings or of such kingdoms be?' The defects of our use of leisure reflect accurately the defects inherent in our daily way of life.

No review of circumstances peculiar to our time would be

complete without reference to mass communication—a by-product of technological development. Some of the social and psychological aspects of radio's influence have been discussed in previous chapters. Here we are concerned with it only as it bears on education (1) as the measure of mature and cultivated living and (2) as a process.

What is unique about the mass media is their pervasiveness. What is significant about them is the speed with which they have virtually cornered the leisure time of millions. All, in their degree, put the consumer in a passive role. Radio, as we have seen, constitutes, broadly, an open invitation to escapism, dependence, and credulity. This results not from a malign intent (there is no villain in the piece), but from a less than responsible exploitation of environmental factors affecting the habits and inclinations of twentieth-century industrial man.

The powerful influence of the mass media is also in part a derivative of education at its present rudimentary level. It is ironical that mass communication appeared just in time to aggravate the problem created by the dilution of knowledge and the lowering of standards attendant on the rapid development of universal education. The *New Yorker's* description of the *Reader's Digest* as made to a prescription of 'simpleism, dogmatism, optimism' is apt for most mass communication, as it is admirably adapted to the immature minds and unrefined emotions of millions who, prior to universal education, had not been catered to at all.

Mass communication prompts discussion of two important questions. First, is it producing a progressive discount of intellectual and aesthetic standards? Is the average quality of what we see at the movies, read in the press, and hear on the radio a true measure of our cultural attainment, and if so, have standards of excellence been lost from sight? The answer depends of course on 'whose' cultural attainment and 'what' standards are being discussed.

But whatever else may be said in answer to the question, it

does seem clear that, as a consequence of mass communication, we are witnessing a sudden and convulsive upheaval of our culture, marked by a shift in its center of gravity. It is probably safe to say that of all matter printed fifty years ago, the proportion of intelligent matter was higher than it is today. But fifty years ago the literate were comparatively 'few and select'—and there was much less printed matter. Today, as the market for mediocrity is greater, the supply is greater. This is the combined consequence of universal and still very elementary education and of the mass marketing of communicable matter that technology has made possible.<sup>15</sup>

The pessimist, appraising the effects of this cultural upheaval, claims that we are rapidly establishing the sovereignty of ignorance and thereby achieving the total eclipse of quality. The paradoxical result of technological advance, he says, is the opportunity created for the adulation and aggrandizement of the mass mind and the exaltation of vulgarity and mediocrity. And for evidence he invites us to use our eyes and ears and to ask ourselves if the blind and deaf are not nowadays the blessed of this earth.

A more sanguine and balanced view would be that we are passing through an intermediate phase of cultural development in which outward manifestations of inanity and even vulgarity are admittedly everywhere, but which, because they are so omnipresent, tend to obscure the more unobtrusive and gradual adherence of many people to higher standards.

Such an apologist for our day and age might base his case on two considerations. In the first place, the primacy of cultural values remains unaffected. Quality still counts. Excellence will out and attracts (even occasionally over the radio) more devotees

<sup>15</sup> Even book publishing is affected as mass distribution becomes the norm of its operations. The time is almost past when publishing houses (university presses excepted) would, as a matter of policy, publish some books in virtue of their distinction and merit, despite the certainty of a financial loss to be incurred. Rising costs and the gearing of printing presses to mass marketing today make this increasingly difficult.

than ever before. A well-trained mind and cultivated personality lack neither recognition nor opportunity. Men of such stamp are simply more jostled nowadays by a noisy crowd. The thoroughfare of modern living is more crowded, and private estates are fewer.

In the second place, the cultural proletariat (an invidious phrase) is, by past standards, more, not less, cultured today. Mass media can claim some credit for this fact. Anyone of them is probably better (and not merely technically better) than it was twenty years ago. What our culture exhibits is the growing pains of adolescence, and adolescence, whether cultural or physical, is gawky, pimply, brash, loud-voiced, and, by definition, immature.

But lest such a view seem to represent an overlenient optimism akin to the naïve nineteenth-century view of progress described by Herbert Spencer as 'a beneficent necessity,' let it be said that there *is* in our situation a danger of cultural backsliding. The measure of this danger is the social irresponsibility of those who control the mass media of communication and the public unconcern about it. Using such a yardstick, we may well find cause for alarm. But here again, it must be said that there are voices raised in protest. Small and still as they may sound in the general babel, their chorus is swelling. We may find modest comfort, also, in the degree of sensibility shown, for instance, by radio and films, to public criticism.

As to education as a process, what is most disturbing is that the profession has allowed a revolution to creep up on it, the nature and consequence of which it has, to date, largely overlooked. For centuries the schools, together with the Church, have enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the interpretation and transmission of cultural values, but that monopoly is at an end. Today both face the stiff and enterprising competition of the mass media of communication for the attention and loyalty of both young and old. The teaching world has failed thus far either to avail itself extensively of these media or to acquaint itself with

their cultural effects and provide proper antidotes where these run counter to educational objectives. Paradoxically, though modern education's accent is on the present and though it has adopted problem-solving techniques, there is relatively little reference to or use of the mass media. Even at the college level students are being trained to use these media rather than to appraise them. That they present a problem crying out for 'solution' has been largely ignored.

Perhaps the greatest threat to our culture results from the general underestimation, in mass communication, of the public's potentialities. The answer to this problem is more and better education and the rapid elimination, throughout the entire social scene, of those factors in the environment that tend to make the current fare of the mass media palatable. Children, if not adults, probably listen so intensively to radio for lack of any alternative occupation offering greater satisfaction. The provision of outlets for more active self-expression might work wonders in reducing the present addiction to cliffhangers. Much 'idleness' among the young today is the enforced idleness of a totally inadequate social environment.

### 3. RADIO AND EDUCATION

We live in communication's Golden Age, but we are still far from the cultural millennium. We have all the instruments we need for rapid, extensive, and vivid communication, but we don't yet know the uses to which they might be put. Or perhaps it is truer to say that we know well enough, but we simply do not care to apply our knowledge. Education, in its truest, most vitalizing sense, is nowhere near the head of our list of personal or national ambitions.

What has been said in this chapter will, it is hoped, have made it clearer why the current response to radio's meager educational fare is so limited. The lack of response is due not merely to the distracting influence of commercial radio's concern to find mass markets for its entertainment programs, but in far larger measure

to the uneven advance along the whole front of social betterment. In view of the conditions of modern life we have mentioned, it is little wonder that radio should be what for many it is—an open invitation to passive relaxation, a chance for the indulgence of vicarious living in a gaudy, loud-voiced world of cheap emotions, an opportunity for sentimental attachment to popular personalities as a substitution for true intimacy. It is little wonder, too, in a world so gregarious, so noisy, and so insistently brought to our doorstep, that even the awareness of the importance of privacy—of the fact, as Professor Sidney Hook says, that 'there must be some private altars in a public world where the human spirit can refresh itself'—seems to be on the wane. So far from seeking solitude, we dread more and more to be alone. So persistent is the noise that silence, when it descends, brings terror, not consolation, recuperation, or relief.

But enough has been said to suggest the kind of influence that radio, like other mass media, has on our culture. What of its contribution to education as a process that has purpose, design, and continuity?

#### *Radio in Education: Assets and Defects*

Radio's merits are obvious: (1) Its reach—its power to dispose in large measure of the disadvantages of physical isolation. Radio has run a highway to everybody's door. All that man has ever said, or is capable of saying, is potentially available to all.

(2) Its convenience—the easy circumstances under which listening is possible, the homeliness and intimacy of the 'fireside chat,' the luxury of a full orchestra assembled in one's living room, the time saved, the sense of rich possession.

(3) Its resources of technique—the peculiar power (earlier touched on) of its variant modes of firing our imagination and eliciting our interest; the new and still-emergent *lingua franca* of the radio talk, the radio drama for which the listener's imagination provides the stage.

(4) Its human resources—the experts, the public figures, the celebrities it can summon; the stimulus (particularly to those whose life is often solitary) of a new voice and the growing fascination of personality conveyed by a present voice, an absent person.

(5) Its conquest not only of space but of time—its power (already usurped, in part, by television) to bring us a verbal picture of events and ceremonies as they occur. All these are unique and unrivaled resources, and all are most apt for education's task.

#### What of radio's hazards and shortcomings?

(1) A certain strain attaching to 'listening blind,' limiting the length of what can be said and affecting our power of retention; the ease with which we can be distracted when there is no living presence to hold us to the words.

(2) The one-way traffic of radio communication—the listener's unequal status, his incapacity to interrupt or answer back, his subservience to the speaker. (This, for purposes of education, is radio's most serious defect.)

(3) Radio's indeterminate audience—the difficulty for a speaker to envisage the circumstances and aptitude of those whom he addresses. True, all radio finds its own level by a process of 'natural selection' at the listening end; but the speaker, at least where national broadcasting is concerned, is still at a loss for the right illustration, the appropriate frame of reference for what he says.

(4) The tyranny of time—radio's program schedule, the necessity for the listener to be on call, even though the hour prove inconvenient.

(5) The cost of radio—not merely of equipment and maintenance but of production. Radio is not for amateurs. It is exacting in the skills it demands, and professionals are conscious that 'the laborer is worthy of his hire.'

### *Radio and School Education*

Purpose, design, and continuity are most fully realized in radio broadcasting to schools. In the main, there are two types of service, to which radio's resources, as summarized above, are harnessed: (1) broadcasts that serve to enrich the teaching of subject matter in the school curriculum and (2) broadcasts that extend the child's experience to subject matter beyond the teacher's competence, or outside the normal curriculum. The latter is of particular value to rural schools where subject specialists are relatively few.

Effective use of radio in the classroom depends on the recognition of certain paramount conditions. The broadcaster must meet the following specifications:

(1) The material broadcast must be carefully adapted, in terms of its style, simplicity, and the manner of its presentation, to the age level of the children concerned.

(2) Every broadcast, if not designed by a teacher, should at least be based on close consultation with someone with long teaching experience. All courses offered should be planned to dovetail as conveniently and suitably as possible into the school curriculum.

(3) A printed teacher's manual should be available, well in advance, providing details of all courses offered, suggestions for supplementary reading and for effective handling of class discussion when the broadcast ends. Most courses should also have supplementary pamphlets for the student, including outlines and descriptions of the broadcasts and, wherever possible, illustrative matter to engage the eye as well as the ear.

The school, too, has obligations.

(1) Provision must be made for adequate reception. A suitable receiving set, capable of being heard distinctly in the back row, must be installed. All classrooms should be wired for reception, or portable receivers should be available wherever needed. The common practice of installing a receiver in the



school auditorium is to be deplored. It is not a suitable place for conducting a class, and the practice involves the inconvenience of shifting students from their accustomed place of work.

(2) The best conceivable broadcast is virtually useless without the full and imaginative co-operation of the teacher in the classroom. To secure this co-operation, two successive battles have had to be fought. In the first place, it took literally years to persuade teachers as a whole that broadcasting would not eventually put them out of a job—that the schools of the future would not be robot institutions peopled by students, loud speakers, and possibly a caretaker. In the second battle, only partial victory can be claimed even today. Teachers must be persuaded that the enrichment of a child's experience through broadcasting depends on them, that broadcasting is not a substitute for teaching. The child's reward is a greater fullness of insight, alerted interest, and a richer intake and residue of understanding—at the price of increased effort on the teacher's part. Successful use of educational broadcasting involves more work and a greater exercise of the imagination, not less.

(3) Great care must be taken (with full use of the manual) in preparation for the broadcast. Even more care is necessary in developing the follow through, in exploitation of the interest aroused, once the broadcast is over. From passive listening the class must be rapidly led into active and critical participation in discussion. There is here no 'rule of thumb' technique. Everything depends on the successful leads to 'open end' discussion provided in the broadcast—and on the teacher's skill in manipulating them.

Experts in audio-visual education (of whom there are few) have, incidentally, been quick to realize that radio is not the only supplementary resource now available to schools. Filmstrips, films, diagrams, and charts, for instance, have like uses in the enrichment of experience and should be used in combination where occasion offers. The low priority that, as a nation, we still attach to the education of our children is, perhaps, nowhere

better illustrated than in the backwardness (in terms of equipment—to say nothing of comfort and decor) of the average American classroom in this age of unrivaled technological resources.

Optimum conditions for the effective use of radio in schools are not, alas, to be found in America. They are more nearly realized in Britain where, not surprisingly, perhaps the finest service of school broadcasting in the world exists. This is a matter more of luck than of design, though the British have not been slow to exploit their advantage. Britain is a small, compact community where, untroubled by time zones, the clocks in Aberdeen and Birmingham and Plymouth ring out the same hours at the same time and where, consequently, school hours are uniform. It has also the advantage (for school broadcasting) of a centralized system of education which, while it allows for considerable local independence, provides for a basic uniformity in the curriculum. It has, in addition, a public-service broadcasting monopoly which, whatever its disadvantages, has signal merits for school broadcasting. For, in the first place, all the production skills, the studio resources, the acting talent of a national broadcasting system are at the service of the schools. Moreover, as broadcasting in Britain is primarily, and not incidentally, a public service, a high premium is put on education. School broadcasts, therefore, have priority in daytime program schedules—and, more important, a high priority in terms of expenditure. The exact figure of the school-broadcasting budget is one of the BBC's many secrets, but it can be confidently said that money is not spared to make school broadcasting as good as it can be. First-rate script writers, producers, and artists are employed. The school Broadcast pamphlets, with their wealth of illustration, are a joy to the eye as well as models of good writing and helpful guidance to the student.

Britain's combination of advantages further allows the BBC to exploit radio's unique capacity to bring to the furthest listener

the best minds and greatest authorities on any given subject. The whole nation is its oyster in terms of the talent it can muster, and its prestige as a national corporation permits the BBC to subject this talent to the rigorous and necessary disciplines of microphone technique. Scholars and experts of all kinds literally go to school at Broadcasting House before they are permitted to invade the classrooms over the air.

But perhaps the crowning advantage is the degree of co-operation possible with the schools and teachers themselves. A combination of good sense and astute diplomacy led the BBC to make over its school-broadcasting service to the schools themselves. Over-all policy and individual programs alike are determined not by the BBC but by a Central Council for School Broadcasting, composed of teachers and educational administrators, and divided into innumerable working committees. The BBC limits itself to the execution of their design, claiming expertise only in matters of broadcasting technique. The result is a sense among teachers of active participation and genuine partnership—a spirit fostered by the BBC's appointment of regional education officers whose function is to visit schools, observe school broadcasts in action, consult with teachers, and represent their views and their complaints to headquarters.

Conditions in America are far different—and far more difficult—and have resulted in a wholly different type of service. Our population is not only three times that of Britain but sprawls, with its schools, through four time-zones across 3000 miles of continent. Our school system is decentralized; our broadcasting is predominantly commercial, and only our networks could attempt or afford a nationwide school service. One (CBS) did make the attempt, but wearied of the cost and of the difficulties. It has therefore fallen to a relative handful of non-profit stations to fill the breach. A cluster of state universities, mostly concentrated in the Middle West, provide school programs on a statewide basis and are supplemented by city stations of which Cleveland, Chicago, and New York City are examples.

The comparative dearth of non-profit stations (most of which include school broadcasts among their services) is not due to any shortage of frequencies. Indeed the FCC has specially provided for them by setting aside a generous band of FM frequencies which would allow of a nationwide network or, alternatively, for hundreds of independent stations. The snail-like pace at which educators have taken up this option is due, probably, to the cost involved.

Cost, in fact, is the major headache and the most serious limitation of both state and city stations now on the air.<sup>16</sup> The quality both of the broadcasts and of the supplementary printed matter is affected, and field service by education officers is out of the question entirely. Service falls short of optimum requirements in other respects also. Both state and city stations are limited in the experts whose advice or service they ask. Nothing quite comparable to the BBC's Central Council exists to give teachers a sense of active partnership. Nor has sufficient care always been taken to secure that receiving sets of adequate quality and in sufficient number are installed. For instance, it was not until 1949 that city funds were made available in New York City for an adequate supply of sets.

But though funds are short, it would be ludicrous to suppose that budgets comparable to those of commercial stations are necessary. A doubling of most present budgets not only would work wonders but would still be a modest outlay if judged by the proved educational advantages of broadcast services to schools. The testimony of hundreds of teachers, both here and abroad, shows that school broadcasting increases interest, broadens the understanding, and fires the imagination—as well as extending the range of subject matter in the school curriculum—beyond what any but the most gifted teachers can achieve alone. If education matters, teachers should have liberal resources

<sup>16</sup> Cleveland's school-broadcasting services, which enjoy a very high prestige, had a total budget in 1948 of \$40,054.

beyond their personal talents, but we continue to ask teachers to make bricks without such straw.

It should not be assumed that because the conditions in our country fall short of perfection, school broadcasting is a failure. Just as commercial budgets are unnecessary, so, too, are some of the more elaborate forms and techniques of program presentation. (For children below a certain age they constitute a positive hazard.) Many school broadcasts have a simplicity and directness of appeal that commercial broadcasters might well emulate.

Where school broadcasting has taken root, as in Cleveland, Chicago, New York, and throughout the state of Wisconsin, it has won the loyalty of teachers and school administrators alike. Even greater, perhaps, is the devotion of the children themselves, for whom many radio personalities have become household names and personal friends. Thus, in Wisconsin, where over 450,000 school children regularly go to school on the air, the love for a nature-study instructor known as 'Ranger Mac' is only this side of idolatry. For sixteen years he has 'hit the trail' over the air, taking with him 44,000 pupils each week. Largely inspired by this radio personality, Wisconsin children have planted more than 7 million trees in 214 school forest plots. One school publishes a monthly nature magazine. Other children have established school museums, made vivariums, and in innumerable ways pursued the exploration of nature begun for them on the radio. Examples of similar achievements in firing active interest and of the magnetism of personality could be multiplied.

But if school broadcasting is far from a total loss, there remains the question whether the effort and expenditure involved are being put to the most effective and economical use. A remedy is worth considering for at least two obvious defects in present practice—(1) the dispersal (and consequent impoverishment) of effort among 100 independent units of operation and (2) the rigidity imposed on co-operating teachers by the tyranny of the broadcast-time schedule. Programs repeated at various hours

during the day (as is now standard practice in, e.g., Cleveland and New York) are a makeshift device and no full or final solution of the problem resulting from variant hours at which subjects are being taught in different schools within a given city system.

Can these defects be corrected? The answer is yes, and at no great price to present operations. Marked improvement in the general quality of broadcasts and in the extent of the use made of them would result from a concerted plan for the production of transcriptions. Such a plan could be worked out at two levels—national and regional. Let us consider each in turn.

There are many subjects that do not need local illustration. What they require, to come alive, is a highly skilful exploitation of the techniques of radio production. A modest annual addition to its budget would allow the United States Office of Education, for instance, to commission the best writing and production talent in the country and to avail itself of experts and personalities with national and international reputations for the preparation of a transcription service that could be made available to schools at cost. The advantage of modern transcriptions is twofold. High-fidelity recording is now possible, thus eliminating present defects in radio reception (due either to poor receivers or to atmospheric conditions). Transcriptions, secondly, are portable and permanent. They are the equivalent of a school library and could be used with like convenience—at the time and in the place the teacher needs them rather than at an arbitrary hour set by a broadcast schedule.

Where programs are needed that are illustrative of regional life and history, a similar centralized-production unit would be feasible (in, say, five main regions), to be financed by a pooling of the funds now spent on school broadcasting independently by non-profit stations within the region. The gains, as with the federal service, would be in quality, fidelity, and ease of use. The loss, such as it is, would be some delimitation of local self-expression, the debatable psychological difference in lis-

teners' attitudes to a live (as compared with a transcribed) program, and the elimination of current events. These last, however, where of any real significance, are generally available on commercial stations, and already it seems as though they would become the prerogative and peculiar province of television.

### *Radio and Adult Education*

Rapid extension of adult education is one of our most urgent needs. We must first make over ourselves if peace is to be won in time and life is to be enriched in other than material terms—and if our children are to be more than sorry replicas of our poor selves. Of information—and statistics—we have more than enough; they fairly crowd upon us. Indeed, as Artemus Ward wryly said, 'it would be better not to know so many things than to know so many things that ain't so.' Information is of no avail unless it is ordered, sifted, and digested. Poise and discrimination are marks of a trained mind, and it is the function of education to provide such training. It is the meaning and value of what we experience and observe that alone lend significance to living.

The need for a concerted drive in adult education hardly needs corroboration. Ignorance, prejudice, superstition, and misunderstanding are all about us. Survey after survey has confirmed what eye and ear can observe.<sup>17</sup> The necessity for more intelligence and fuller knowledge ranges from public affairs, from social, political, and economic problems, to such domestic issues as home economics and family relations. Indeed, the obstacle to any fruitful discussion of education (in which one neither loses his head in the clouds nor narrows the question to some pet specialty) is the sheer enormity of the subject. Can we, nevertheless, define the conditions of radio's successful participation in some concerted scheme of action?

1. For more than a casual, unsystematic absorption of knowl-

<sup>17</sup> For evidence the reader is referred to the quarterly summaries of the findings of the public-opinion polls published in the *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Princeton University Press.

edge and understanding about any subject, the first essential is continuity of treatment. In radio this means concession of regular time periods, at shortly spaced intervals and at convenient hours. Commercial radio has been grudging in making such concessions. From earliest days the complaint of educators has been that their efforts to collaborate with broadcasters have been stultified by the shifting of programs from convenient to less convenient hours or the abrupt termination of useful series just as they showed signs of bearing fruit.<sup>18</sup> Education on the air has, in this reference, a depressing history.

2. The radio educator, secondly, must settle for small audiences—small, that is, by commercial standards. How small an audience warrants the use of broadcast facilities is a disputed point. It depends on the value attached to the service rendered—and on the means available. Fifty thousand listeners (a clientele equivalent to that of our largest university) are surely not to be dismissed as negligible, but broadcasters, accustomed to reckoning in millions, tend to regard even hundreds of thousands as small potatoes.

In rare instances 'small' audiences have been catered to. CBS' 'Invitation to Learning' has acquired a steady and loyal audience of some three millions. NBC's Chicago Round Table (which qualifies as education less by related and sequential treatment of a subject than by virtue of its publication of the broadcasts with supplementary annotations and suggested reading) has been on the air continuously for more than a decade, though not at a consistent hour. Before its hour was shifted, it had acquired an audience of several millions and warranted sponsorship. CBS' 'Doorway to Life,' a first-rate psychiatric interpretation of child-parent relations, was broadcast for two years, but then, despite inexhaustible subject material, unaccountably

<sup>18</sup> See *Four Years of Network Broadcasting*: a report by the Committee on Civic Education by Radio of The National Advisory Council on Radio in Education and the American Political Science Association, 1936, and also *Public Service Responsibility of Radio Licensees*, United States Government Printing Office, 1946, pp. 12-36.



dropped out. In 1949 NBC initiated a project the success of which remains to be tested. A series of broadcasts under the title 'NBC University of the Air' was begun as a basis for study in the home. Seven universities are co-operating. Students, who register by mail, are graded on their written reports based on the broadcasts. Five thousand students enrolled at the University of Louisville in connection with this project. But such instances of purposive, designed, continuous education are, and have always been, few. In terms of our definition, commercial broadcasters (except for CBS' defunct 'School of the Air') have simply not dealt in education. There has been no grand design.

3. Radio has no schools with students in compulsory attendance. Listeners are volunteers and must be attracted and held. Most efforts at radio education have fallen short of their true potentialities by failure to observe what in radio constitutes virtually a scientific law: without skilful, intensive, and sustained promotion the potential audience will simply not be reached. Advertisers know this, and what is true of entertainment is even more true of education. The finest programs represent money and effort wasted unless listeners are made aware that they are available.<sup>19</sup> Most of the programs offered as education by commercial radio have mustered audiences far short of their true potential because of failure adequately to promote them. For this reason we can dismiss as disingenuous nonsense the claim frequently made, with reference to 'poor' audience ratings, that educational services are not wanted or appreciated by the public.

4. But promotional efforts by the broadcaster must be matched by a like initiative and effort by members of the public. Radio's shortcomings are often mentioned and deplored, but we hear very little about listeners' default. Mr. Paley, chairman of the board of CBS, had justice on his side when, in introducing a

<sup>19</sup> For confirmation of this view see Lazarsfeld, *Radio and the Printed Page*, *op. cit.*, p. 124. Also 'Coverage of a Radio Documentary' by Siepman and Reisberg, in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Princeton University Press, Winter 1948-9.

new series of radio talks,<sup>20</sup> he complained that many critics of radio never even trouble to consult their radio log to discover what is available. Audience-building is a divided responsibility. Teachers and leaders of community activities, in particular, have failed to muster listeners for worth-while broadcasts. It is on this account also that radio's potentialities for education have never been properly tested.<sup>21</sup>

5. Benefit from radio education, though possible through private listening in the home, is enhanced by group discussion. A few such groups exist, but the amount of broadcasting designed for group discussion has never been sufficient or long enough sustained to encourage anything approximating a radio-discussion-group movement. The most notable experiment along these lines was made in Britain where, over a period of ten years, no pains were spared to make it a success. Beginning in 1927 a series of weekly talks and discussions on a wide range of subjects was broadcast nightly at good listening hours. The co-operation of what in Britain is a powerful and extensive adult-education movement was enlisted; regional educational officers were appointed as field workers and promoters; excellent pamphlets were published to supplement each series; and a national advisory council (similar to that for school broadcasting) was formed to direct the project. Hundreds of groups were formed, but after ten years the experiment was allowed to lapse. The results proved to be incommensurate with the money and effort expended. The decisive stumbling block was the difficulty of finding group leaders with sufficient skill and knowledge to hold the groups together and to sustain effective discussion following the broadcasts.

Britain's experience, under conditions as nearly ideal as can be hoped for, suggests that for formal group activity radio is not well-suited. Even more than in school broadcasting its one-way

<sup>20</sup> 'Time for Reason—About Broadcasting,' a series broadcast in 1947.

<sup>21</sup> For comment on audience-building and listeners' responsibilities see Siepmann, *The Radio Listener's Bill of Rights*, *op. cit.*

flow of communication militates against success. This is not to suggest that groups are not worth forming. They are. Even more worth while, and more feasible, is the use of radio to enrich group activities already existing. What past experience suggests, rather, is that there is little prospect of the growth of an extensive educational group movement based and dependent on radio communication.<sup>22</sup>

To what conclusions does this brief survey of radio and adult education lead us? A great need exists for education in depth, to save us from bewilderment and mental vertigo, or from a too facile reaction to the multiple impressions that radio and other media foist on us. Facts and ideas must be ordered and related. We need some grasp of underlying principles. Given the conditions we have enumerated, radio can do much to meet this need. It has, in fact, done little, and the reasons are not far to seek. What of the prospects?

The immediate situation in commercial broadcasting is not promising. Radio, in the face of television, feels itself in jeopardy. Its bonanza days are over. Retrenchment is the order of the hour, and public-service broadcasting is among the early casualties. It is conceivable that, when radio and television achieve a more stable equilibrium, radio may find itself forced to cultivate the lesser majorities and significant minorities it has so long disdained. But, at best, it seems naïve and over-sanguine to expect from the commercial broadcaster service remotely approximating what our national need requires.

What, then, of the non-profit stations? At the end of 1949 there were 103 educational stations: 34 are AM stations owned

<sup>22</sup> Reference has been made exclusively to commercial broadcasting as a source of educational supply, because the majority of non-commercial stations are forced to close down at sunset. Their services to education in the evening, when listeners are available in large numbers, are thus severely restricted. The development of FM broadcasting, without time restrictions, may work some change in the general picture. But the number of stations that thus far have taken up their option is too small to suggest any radical transformation of the existing scene. An exception is the state of Wisconsin where the construction of a statewide network of educational FM stations nears completion.

by colleges and universities, most of them limited in their transmission hours; 66 stations are operating (or have acquired or applied for construction permits) in the reserved FM band, but half of these are for school systems. Most of these stations have limited range; many are local, ten-watt installations. The University of Wisconsin, which will soon operate eight FM stations with statewide coverage and multiple programs, is a rare exception.

As with school broadcasting, the achievements in adult education of these non-profit stations are not to be lightly dismissed, but they fall so far short of the ideal as to justify a tentative analysis of the reasons why. We shall confine our discussion to state-university stations whose potential resources are undoubtedly the greatest and whose comparative failure, thus far, to attract sizable audiences is consequently the more perplexing. We are aware that by speaking in broad terms we do less than justice to individual achievement; nevertheless, we believe that, if exceptions to the rule are granted, the following general diagnosis merits consideration.

The shortcomings of state-university stations derive essentially from a lack of vision on the part of university authorities—a failure to realize that radio makes possible the execution of a grand design that could transform life on the campus and enhance both the utility and the prestige of the university among those (the taxpayers) who contribute to its maintenance. What is the nature of this grand design?

It involves, first, the conception of the state—its land, its industrial resources, and its people—as a vast laboratory or proving ground for comprehensive on-campus research. It involves, secondly, the use of radio as the means of reconveying to the people of the state (in language and in a context they can readily appreciate) the fruits of such research. To the farmer, it might mean improved methods of soil cultivation; to the housewife, more economical disposal of the household budget; to parents, a fuller understanding of child psychology and

happier family living; to management and labor, better human relations and higher output coupled with greater satisfaction on the job; to teachers—and parents of school children—new conceptions of the methods of teaching; to all and sundry, better health resulting from a more widespread knowledge of medical service. These are but a few examples.

Such a concerted relation of studies to the life, interests, and needs of the community could do much: (1) to break down the departmental barriers so widely prevalent at universities; (2) to demonstrate that research and abstract thinking are essentially practical pursuits; (3) to destroy the idea that academic studies are remote from life and that scholars are unpractical visionaries remarkable chiefly for forgetting where they are and for mislaying what they own!

It is a commonplace that we have more knowledge at our disposal that we apply in our daily living. This is at least partly due to the fact that such knowledge finds its way only into learned journals and not into the mainstream of popular communication. For this reason, radio is essential to the execution of our 'grand design.' (Knowledge that stops at the laboratory door is knowledge wasted.) Radio is the means by which the fruits of scholarship are effectively distributed to their rightful consumers—the lay public. This, incidentally, also identifies radio's pre-eminent task in education—to provide popular interpretation of knowledge and ideas that fail of acceptance largely through failure of apt communication.

Radio, then, is integral to the grand design and thus becomes part of the essential fabric of a university, intimately related in its function to the pursuits of scholars and research workers. Because there is no such grand design, radio at universities, far from being integral, is an incidental accessory. Failure to grasp its true potentialities is due, perhaps, to failure to appreciate the urgent importance of adult education and of a university's contribution to it through extension work. (At many universities directors of the radio station are not conceded academic status.)

But whatever the cause, a depressing chain reaction is begun, which has four unfortunate consequences:

1. The radio personnel, not always distinguished products of education at its best, imperfectly grasp the significance of education. This is disastrous in its effects on the station's output. For competence in radio is not enough, as radio is but a means to an end. A radio station at a university should adhere to the ideals and standards that a university exists to proclaim and to exemplify. What goes out on the air should differ from what goes on in the classrooms and laboratories only in the manner of its communication and in its ingenious adjustment to the needs and circumstances of the listener.

2. This imperfect grasp of education in turn results in a tendency to go 'whoring after false gods.' There is no occasion whatever for strained or distant relations between commercial and educational broadcasters. There is, however, a very definite need to recognize the distinct and in some ways complementary function of the two. Many educational broadcasters have become infected and indeed infatuated by the commercial broadcasters' morbid concern with counting heads and determining success by the size of audiences. This has led some of them to include in their schedules, by way of an inducement, programs of entertainment that have nothing to do with education and that commercial broadcasters are far more competent to produce. Educational broadcasting is foredoomed to failure as it attempts to ape or rival the commercial broadcaster. Its real opportunity is to provide those services (and they are many) that commercial broadcasting either does not provide at all or offers in inadequate amount and quality.

This does not mean that educational radio should go 'high-brow' exclusively, though it can be proud of doing so to some extent. It means, rather, the patient cultivation of interest among listeners by the development of skills of 'presentation' comparable to, but not necessarily identical with, those of commercial broadcasting. The bane, indeed, of educational broad-

casting is its imitativeness and the dearth of imaginative, inventive exploration of new and original techniques of interesting presentation. (Remarkable, for instance, is the almost total disregard of the possibilities—long since successfully exploited abroad—of the broadcast talk.) Commercial broadcasting, by concentrating on mass marketing, has left the field wide open for the educator to cultivate the loyalties of the lesser majorities and significant minorities whose needs are not fulfilled by commercial radio.

3. The relations between the radio station and the faculty are not what they should be. Broadcasting by the faculty takes the form of volunteer work 'after hours.' Few members of the faculty are ready to submit themselves to the arduous discipline essential to effective broadcasting. The humble status of the station personnel hinders any insistence by them on the time and trouble necessary to good broadcasting.

4. Inadequate budgets have resulted in inadequate promotion and publicity for programs broadcast from universities. Some transfer of even present meager funds to such promotion seems warranted. But a prior step would be the more deliberate relating of program services to special interest groups in the community. The success of some farm programs shows what extension of such practice might achieve. The first necessity in broadcasting is to persuade a listener or a group that you have something special to offer. Stable, distinctive audiences, not undifferentiated mass appeal, should be the goal of educational stations.

But if all these defects were remedied, radio's optimum potentialities would still be only partly realized. The present movement, despite a considerable postwar increase in the number of educational stations, still presents dispersed and largely uncorrelated effort. Program resources are strictly localized, and talent and quality are thus delimited. Nothing resembling a nationwide diffusion of co-ordinated education is remotely in prospect. Is

any alternative solution to the problem of increasing radio's services to education feasible?

Two possibilities suggest themselves. A centrally organized transcription service (similar to that proposed for school broadcasting) might prepare regular series of educational programs of the finest quality for use, at cost price, by all and sundry. (This is already being done on a modest scale by the Institute for Democratic Education, which during the past eight years, has produced twelve series of programs designed to promote better understanding of American democracy. These have been broadcast by more than 800 stations, and over 2,000 schools have used them.) But such service would solve only part of the problem. It would make material available in which radio's manifold resources of technique were fully exploited, but it would not insure or even greatly extend the regular transmission of such programs at convenient hours. A more radical departure from present practice is, perhaps, necessary.

The time may come when, as a people, we come to recognize that we are neither culturally nor intellectually equipped for the role of world leadership that has been thrust upon us. When that day arrives, we shall accord a higher priority to education, both in our thinking and our expenditure, and, perhaps, depart from precedent in the measures we adopt to insure that it is universally available.

Among these measures might be the development of a national network, supplementing commercial radio, wholly devoted to education, financed out of federal funds, but directed independently of government by a board of responsible citizens. Precedent of a kind already exists for such a step. Several million dollars are now being spent annually to inform the world about us through 'The Voice of America' short-wave transmissions. Is there valid reason why we should not inform and improve ourselves?

The physical facilities are available in the band of FM frequencies reserved by the FCC for education. The financial



burden would constitute a paltry sum compared with our current expenditures, for instance, on military preparedness. The 100-odd educational stations now on the air could function as 'basic' affiliates of the network, could contribute to the service, and could rapidly be supplemented by the construction of more stations until every listener was brought within range.

There would, no doubt, be opposition. Commercial broadcasters would protest, with appeals to the Constitution and warnings of the sinister implications of this further extension of federal powers. (Their political lobby, for instance, has 'already thwarted the development of such a network on a statewide basis in California, paying education an unwitting compliment by designation of its threatened inroads on the California scene as 'unfair competition.')

But if the need is great and if, as we have shown, it has not been met under the present operation of our broadcasting system, can such a step be sensibly challenged?

We have suggested elsewhere that the BBC in Britain might profit from a little competition without serious risk to its own cultural objective. Perhaps commercial broadcasting in America might likewise derive stimulus and benefit from a rival institution designed for and devoted to cultural pacemaking. It would thus be rid, in some measure, of what it now so bitterly resents—the FCC's theoretical insistence that it serve the public interest in positive, cultural terms as well as by avoidance of any flagrant abuse of its privileged access to a public domain. The alternative would seem to be to continue, as at present, with the use of radio predominantly as a source of news and entertainment, its great wings permanently clipped against its soaring higher and into broader, freer skies.

What, then, do we finally conclude? Radio is an educational resource of unique power and value. Some have expected and hoped too much, wishing it godlike when it is only human. Broadcasters (here, as elsewhere) are a not wholly inaccurate reflection of the people's values and preoccupations.

To consider radio in isolation—out of its social context—is at

once to overestimate its powers and to cast an intolerable burden on it. It is but one instrument of many, and, like other tools, whether of education or enlightenment, its use is limited by the intractable material to which it is applied—our own stubborn, wayward natures.

Human nature, however, is not inherently perverse. Outlook and behavior are in large measure the results of environmental influences. Thus, advance in education is dependent on concurrent advance on many other fronts. It constitutes only a part of a huge piece of social engineering comprising better housing and slum clearance, improvement of health, of working conditions, of amenities, and so on. Until some formidable road blocks of this order have been removed, only slow progress in education (and in radio) can be expected.

To make this claim is an invitation not to defeatism but rather to redoubled effort and concerted action, to the harnessing of our collective will and intelligence to a grand but far from grandiose design—the more rapid disposal of the unfinished business of democracy. There is small hope of progress until more people grasp what Professor I. A. Richards has called ‘the interlocking togethernesses’ of the modern dilemma. The primary task of education (to which radio can contribute) is to help to create some such synoptic view of life. Two consequences may be anticipated: a less self-centred outlook (the fuller recognition that we ‘are members one of another’), and less ‘simpleism’ (a more mature realization of the inherent complexity of all human problems).

Intermediately, what is needed is more generous contribution to this end by radio—the infusion of more deliberate and responsible purpose, design, and continuity into its over-all policies and operations, and a more effective and extensive use and integration of its services with the activities of schools, colleges, and communities. Much of its present influence is at variance with the outlook and values that educators are dedicated to advance. The result is a kind of cultural schizophrenia—a virus

in the social bloodstream at war with the blood corpuscles. From such a conflict and rivalry no good can come. A saner, healthier equilibrium is needed in which the standards and concepts for which education stands receive more recognition and are conceded higher status. No single agency can achieve this end. It requires a give and take relationship between the two worlds of education and mass communication.

No radical departure from present practices can, however, be expected from broadcasters for whom profit is the main concern and whose service is therefore subject to the ebb and flow of the economic tide. If education, as we have characterized it, is important, and if broadcasting is a convenient instrument for spreading it, special provision for the use of radio (perhaps along the lines we have proposed) is necessary.

WORLD LISTENING

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'The peoples of the world are islands shouting at each other over seas of misunderstanding.'

—PRIME MINISTER ATTLEE

ON 12 December, 1901, a wanderer along the shore near the harbor mouth of St. John's, Newfoundland, might have observed a kite riding high in the wind. Led on by curiosity, he would have discovered, in a near-by shack, two men surrounded by strange apparatus and listening intently to a primitive telephone. Attached to the kite was a vertical aerial. The sounds that were coming repeatedly over the telephone were the three dots standing for the letter S, in the Morse code alphabet. They emanated from Cornwall, England. The two men were Marconi (then 27 years old) and his assistant, Kemp. Thus for the first time in history the Atlantic Ocean was traversed by wireless waves.

That was the beginning—in 1901. Today, more than fifty nations are regularly communicating news and views round the world by radio. Transatlantic phone calls and point-to-point broadcasts are a commonplace. By 'multiple address' press services can transmit news on a wide beam to an area of several thousand square miles, within which it can be picked up simultaneously by hun-

dreds of contracting newspapers. What does it all mean? What has it done to us? What happens to a world with but a single ear? Before we attempt to answer these questions, let us trace the breathtaking developments of this half century of progress.

#### DEVELOPMENTS PRIOR TO WORLD WAR II

The beginnings were relatively slow. Morse-code radio (voice broadcasting, as we have seen, developed twenty years later) was initially the sport of amateurs, but from the start it became involved in the rivalries of vested interests and even in international diplomacy. (Marconi and his kites were quickly driven from Newfoundland by the Anglo-American Cable Company, which saw in his achievement a threat to its operations.) Ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore communication was the first extensive use to which radio was put. But lack of national and international regulation resulted in chaos (occasioned largely by amateur operators) which continued for years. 'Gossip between friends could and did crowd out messages of life and death on the high seas. It is said that the terrible Titanic tragedy might have been averted had not a gossiping pair refused to yield precedence to an operator who tried vainly for half an hour to warn the doomed ship of the presence of icebergs.'<sup>1</sup> The irresponsibility of amateurs, indeed, knew no bounds.

Amateurs would send out fake orders to naval vessels, purporting to come from admirals. . . In May, 1914 a message was received in Japan, allegedly from the American liner *Siberia* saying that it was aground and sinking off the coast of Formosa. Vessels at once rushed to her aid, but meanwhile the *Siberia* arrived at Manila next day. . . There being no law to cover most of the amateur's tricks, few or no police searches were made for them. . . When remonstrated with by air, these were apt to respond with curses and obscenity.<sup>2</sup>

Effective regulation was long deferred. Rivalries over patents and national pride made a fiasco of the first international con-

<sup>1</sup> Archer, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

ference held in Berlin in 1903. Others followed, in 1906 and 1912, and gradually paved the way toward order on the air. The first United States law was enacted in 1912 and remained the sole regulatory provision until 1927 when the Federal Radio Commission was established.

Radio received its first baptism of fire, when the *London Times* engaged the American radio pioneer, Lee De Forest, as a war reporter, to cover the Russo-Japanese war in 1902. Its first use to further a nation's political objectives occurred in 1915 when Germany, isolated by blockade, developed a radio news service by Morse code, of which a number of neutral countries availed themselves. After the revolution in 1917 Russia, likewise isolated, also used radio to break loose. The modern war of words between nations was dimly foreshadowed when the Bolsheviks broadcast daily accounts of the Brest-Litovsk peace negotiations, presenting their side of the argument for world appraisal.

But the modern significance of radio in international (as in domestic) communication dates from the advent of voice broadcasting. From an adjunct of the press and an added resource for long-distance telephony it has developed as a form of political warfare and a new arm of international diplomacy. Nazi Germany was the first to realize its potentialities in this regard. A concerted program directed at North America was inaugurated in 1933 and, within six years, daily broadcasts, totaling 126 hours, were being transmitted in a variety of languages the world over.<sup>3</sup> Italy followed suit, with a campaign designed to 'soften up' world opinion in preparation for her Ethiopian adventure. By 1937 Italy was broadcasting in eight languages, concentrating on Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries. Britain, stung by Italian abuse and distortions of fact and concerned for her interests in the Middle East, was drawn reluctantly and late into the growing war of words and in 1938

<sup>3</sup> Whitton and Herz, 'Propaganda by Shortwave,' in *Radio in International Politics*, ed. by Childs and Whitton, Princeton University Press, 1942.

initiated broadcasts in Arabic by way of counter-propaganda. By the late 1930's, in fact, there was hardly a political crisis throughout the world that lacked its broadcast accompaniment. The civil war in Spain, China's struggle with Japan, the Munich crisis—all contributed new, strident symphonies of sound to the short waves of the air.

Roughly parallel to this exploitation of radio for political warfare was its more peaceful and constructive development by the major colonial powers to consolidate the ties of empire. Holland began broadcasting to her nationals in the Netherlands East Indies and the Americas in 1927, with regular service following in 1929. Britain began regular transmission to her dominions and colonies in 1932; and soon France, Belgium, and Portugal followed suit. The United States, with no ties of empire to consolidate, was belatedly aroused to the implications of short-wave propaganda. In 1935 the World Wide Broadcasting Foundation (privately organized, with support from the Rockefeller Foundation) began cultural short-wave transmissions to Europe and Latin America. NBC and CBS had experimented with short-wave services as early as 1929, but regular broadcasting developed some years later. It was unprofitable and was therefore not energetically pursued. But in 1936, 1937, and 1938, government surveys drew attention to the inadequacy of our services to South America and to the successful inroads there of rival voices from overseas. This led to the drafting of three bills<sup>4</sup> (in 1937 and 1938) recommending the operation of short-wave radio stations financed and owned by the government. But opposition from the radio industry (which feared the precedent of government radio even in an obviously unprofitable field) led to their being dropped. Private broadcasting continued and was much improved when, in May 1939, the FCC allowed commercial sponsorship and at the same time required that all short-wave

<sup>4</sup> H.R. 4281, 75th Congress, 1st session February 1937; H.R. 10295, 75th Congress, 3rd session April 1938; S. 3342, 75th Congress, 3rd session January 1938.

stations raise their power to a minimum of 50 kilowatts. Nevertheless, operation continued at a loss, and the service was short of the efficiency and effectiveness of that of some competing nations, notably Germany. In 1943 the president of RCA disclosed that, for each year of prewar broadcasting, expenditures of all private broadcasters had amounted to \$1,000,000 while income had not exceeded \$200,000. He predicted that at no foreseeable time would short-wave radio be supported by time sales alone.<sup>5</sup>

Although the radio industry was opposed to government activity even in short-wave broadcasting, it became persuaded, as the possibility of war loomed, of the need for some co-operation with government. In 1941 a Co-ordinator of Information and a Co-ordinator of Inter-American Affairs were appointed to work with the private broadcasters and to encourage and direct the expansion of their short-wave services. Despite this collaboration, however, the United States entered the war with virtually no comprehensive plans for the wartime use of its short-wave radio facilities. The number of transmitters was inadequate, and programs and personnel were woefully defective. Such a laggard and ineffective start makes the subsequent scale and success of our achievements more remarkable.

#### DEVELOPMENTS IN WORLD WAR II AND AFTER

All the wartime overseas information services of the United States were absorbed by two government agencies—the Office of War Information (established by Executive Order 9182 on 13 June, 1942) and the Office of the Co-ordinator of Inter-American Affairs (established by Executive Order 8840 on 30 July, 1941). These agencies took over the thirteen privately owned transmitters then in operation. A measure of our disadvantage at that time is the fact that Great Britain had twice the number of transmitters and the Axis powers five times as many. But by

<sup>5</sup> Sarnoff, 'Problems of International Broadcasting and Proposals made for their Solution,' Radio Corporation of America, New York, 1948, pp. 10-11.



1945, the United States Government operated 36 transmitters in this country alone, supplemented by twelve in Europe and two in the Pacific.

But the government did more. It developed shortwave broadcasting from a plaything, involving three or four hours' programming a day in half a dozen languages to a few areas in Europe and Latin America, into a serious business, involving round the clock programming in 40 to 45 languages to literally every part of the globe. . . Plugging away for nearly three years, OWI and OIAA made the 'Voice of America' an indispensable medium of information in many parts of the world. . .<sup>6</sup>

Apart from their services to the war effort, these agencies created, or for the first time satisfied, a hunger for undistorted facts about American life and opinion that has modified, as it has clarified, attitudes to this country among millions of foreign listeners. Admittedly, such hunger derived in many cases from the imposition of censorship abroad (this was of course true throughout all the Axis countries as well as the countries they occupied) and the desire to escape from it. But irrespective of its origin, it created an atmosphere in which people the world over were peculiarly receptive to the further projection of American ideas after the war.

Before we record the postwar developments in international broadcasting, we must take account of factors that make this present time a new and critical era in human history. It is only in relation to such factors that we can appreciate the ambivalent potentialities of short-wave broadcasting or understand the occasion of its present use. This is a novel era in at least four ways: (1) We have to reckon with a radical change in the balance of world power. We live today in a world of two powers, not, as before the war, of eight. Neither of the two dominant powers has had experience in world leadership. Greatness has, rather, been thrust upon them, constituting a heavy burden. (2) We are witnessing, the world over, a polarization of political and

<sup>6</sup> White and Leigh, *Peoples Speaking to Peoples*, Chicago University Press, 1946, p. 44.

economic ideas and a consequent sharpening of issues—a steady tendency toward crisis. A stark choice between two irreconcilable alternatives is being presented to people everywhere. Decision is invited in 'either-or' terms, and the prospect of a middle way seems progressively more remote. (3) International communication, whether immediate (as by radio) or through printed matter conveyed, with minor delay, by airplane, has been perfected to a point that, potentially at least, brings virtually the whole world into the auditorium of contemporary discourse. (4) This in turn has introduced a new concept that may in time profoundly affect the conduct of international affairs. 'Modern international relations lie between peoples not merely governments.'<sup>7</sup> That such a statement (however partial its truth) should occur in a government document on policy is indicative of a changed world. Foreign policy, it appears, is to be brought at long last into the area of popular consideration. If we keep in mind these four characteristics of the modern world, we shall better understand why and how international broadcasting has become predominantly an instrument of international diplomacy.

The first official reaction to the end of the war was a bid for a return to 'normalcy,' involving the dissolution of our two wartime information agencies. We thus dismantled in large part the machinery by which the 'Voice of America' had, for the first time in our history, been carried to the four corners of the earth. Short-wave broadcasts were drastically reduced in number and suffered a deterioration in quality. The remnants of a once great army of constructive propagandists were, on 31 August 1945, absorbed by the State Department on an interim basis and engaged thereafter in an annual struggle to secure from Congress a few million dollars to carry on.

Meantime, decision in regard to the appropriate permanent agency to carry out our broadcast information services was

<sup>7</sup> 'Memorandum on the Postwar International Information Program of the United States,' United States Government Printing Office.

steadily deferred. A careful review of four alternative possibilities, prepared by Professor Arthur A. MacMahon for the State Department, was published in January 1946.<sup>8</sup> Choice seemed to be among (1) a private, limited dividend corporation, with program standards determined by government; (2) government ownership and operation; (3) a split system, partly governmental, partly private, with both parties preparing programs and operating transmitters; (4) split private ownership, with unco-ordinated and uncontrolled operation. A year later (21 March 1947) the State Department, already restive as foster mother of its emasculated war baby, proposed to Congress the creation of a public corporation, supported by public funds and directed by a board of trustees of private citizens. But this proposal, too, fell on deaf ears. Serious concern about the problem was first shown as the cold war with Russia developed. Perhaps the decisive factor was a tour of Europe by a group of Congressmen who returned dismayed at the inadequacy of American information services as compared with those of other countries both friendly (e.g. Britain) and unfriendly (e.g. Russia). In 1948, with the passage of the United States Information and Educational Exchange Act (Public Law 402), the State Department's adopted war baby was legitimized, and a permanent broadcasting information service, aided by a civilian advisory commission, was established.

The overseas broadcast information services of the United States are currently disseminated over 36 short-wave transmitters either owned or leased by the government. These are supplemented by 15 relay stations in Munich (4), Tangier (6), Manila (3 short-wave and 1 medium-wave), and Honolulu (1). The British Broadcasting Corporation also co-operates in relaying our programs over five of its own transmitters. Programs amounting to 28 hours daily are transmitted in 20 different languages. Of the total program output 33 per cent consists of news, 51 per cent of news analysis and features, and 16 per cent of music.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

Radio, of course, is only one activity. Films are circulated abroad by the State Department, libraries of information have been established in a number of foreign capitals, and similar activities (including in Russia, a special magazine, *Amerika*, with a circulation of 58,000 and estimated readership of one million) supplement the radio. In the opinion of some experts the budget available for such services is totally inadequate to present needs. 'A budget which contemplates \$15,000,000,000 for military, \$500,000,000 for economic and only \$46,000,000 for information and educational services does not provide an effective tool for cleaning out the Augean stables of international confusion and misunderstanding.'<sup>9</sup>

The intent of such service is to convey accurate, factual information about America's foreign policy and about its way of life. Its occasion is the ignorance widely prevalent abroad both about our way of life and our political intentions, and the deliberate distortion of fact and intention systematically disseminated by the USSR.

One percent of America's population—a cynical, conniving, fascist minded clique—determines the government and controls the destiny of the remaining 99% of the American people. . . . As an aftermath of war, America is beset with mass starvation and mass unemployment, and many Americans look gleefully toward another world conflict to recapture their wartime earnings. . . . American food, sent to the starving children of the Balkans at the end of the war, has stunted their growth, and American medicines sent to Europe have aggravated illnesses.<sup>10</sup>

It is to offset such misrepresentation that our information services exist.

But who listens to the 'Voice of America'? What guarantee have we that we are not broadcasting into thin air? There is no guarantee nor are there audience statistics at all comparable in

<sup>9</sup> First Semi-annual Report of the United States Advisory Commission on Information, United States Government Printing Office, March 1949.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted from the Russian radio in an address before the 19th Institute for Education by Radio, 7 May, 1949, by David Penn, International Broadcasting Division, Department of State.

their reliability to those for listening in America. However, fairly confident deductions are possible on the basis of known facts.

1. Listening obviously depends on ownership of, or access to, a short-wave receiver (though in many European countries relays on medium wave bring a larger audience within potential range of our transmitters). It is estimated that 'Voice of America' broadcasts are beamed to areas with a potential audience of 295,000,000. According to a report prepared by the International Broadcasting Division in March 1949, short-wave receivers are available as shown in the chart below.

Area	Short-wave Receivers
Europe:	
a. West	28,029,000
b. Iron Curtain	8,263,000
U.S.S.R.	5,000,000
Middle East and Africa	1,626,015
Far East	1,478,650
American Republics	3,677,200
Total	43,073,865

Thus the potential audience is sizable, though unevenly distributed. The prospects of attracting audiences in western Europe are good; in Russia they are fair. Broadcasts to China particularly and to the Far East generally are likely to be ineffective—at least in so far as access to a receiver conditions audiences. But experience in the war years proves that wherever censorship is imposed, an almost morbid interest in news from the outside world is aroused, and news received by only a few is disseminated to the many with incredible rapidity.

2. Correspondence, though no reliable index of the total listening audience, does at least attest the presence and, perhaps more important, the enthusiastic interest of listeners. Letters inspired by the 'Voice of America' in 1948 were in excess of 100,000. But here again the uneven distribution is of interest. From October 1948 to March 1949, 72,849 letters were received from different countries in the proportions indicated on the following page.

German language	34,244
English language	24,718
French language	5,537
Spanish language	4,118
Italian language	3,467
Miscellaneous	765

From information submitted by American embassies and consulates and other sources, the following specific estimates of listeners have been made: in Czechoslovakia more than one million may be being reached; in Poland one million; in Sweden 500,000; in Finland 270,000; in France 4,500,000. In countries behind the Iron Curtain, listening, like attendance at American libraries of information, is frowned upon. 'In Warsaw the library is under constant surveillance by the secret police. In Praha, party members stand outside the library and try to persuade readers to stay away.'<sup>11</sup>

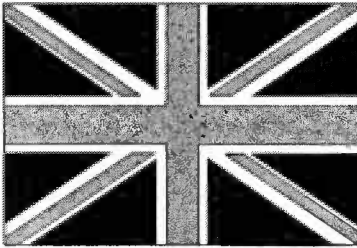
3. Perhaps the most impressive testimony to the effectiveness of our broadcast information came, in April 1949, with the sudden and unaccountable decision of the Russian Government to 'jam' the 'Voice of America.' The intensity of the concern to prevent any Russian from listening is suggested by the fact that some 1000 jamming transmitters were being employed. 'So efficiently is the "jam network" operating that recently it took a Soviet transmitter just 12 seconds to break up a United States program suddenly shifted to a different wavelength to get around interference.'<sup>12</sup> By August 1949 jamming had been intensified, and sporadic efforts to jam broadcasts other than in Russia, including programs beamed to Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Greece, and China, were also reported. The answer of the American Government was to appropriate \$11,500,000 for the 'Voice of America' (as compared with a \$6 million budget in 1948) to assist in stepped-up power of transmission, strategic relocation of transmitters, and 'a pouring of transmitters into

<sup>11</sup> This quotation and the preceding statistics are taken from the Semi-annual Report of the United States Advisory Commission on Information, March 1949.

<sup>12</sup> *New York Times*, 14 June, 1949.

## INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING

**GREAT  
BRITAIN**  
687 Hours  
30 Minutes



11.10%

**U. S. S. R.**  
434 Hours  
50 Minutes



7.04%

**BRAZIL**  
237 Hours  
50 Minutes



3.83%

**U. S. A.**  
214 Hours  
15 Minutes



3.44%

## PERCENTAGES BY AREAS:

EUROPE	44.50
LATIN AMERICA (Incl. Mexico)	21.20
NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST	10.10
FAR EAST AND PACIFIC	9.90
AFRICA	9.40
NORTH AMERICA	4.90
	<u>100.00%</u>

International broadcasting, in August 1949, by Great Britain, U.S.S.R., Brazil, and U.S.A. as (a) total hours a week, (b) percentage of total hours broadcast by 65 nations.

*(These figures kindly provided by the U. S. Department of State.)*

the counter-actions in such volume as to match or override Moscow's jamming.'<sup>13</sup>

Comparable facts and figures could be cited to illustrate the activities of other countries. For the Voice of America competes

<sup>13</sup> *New York Times*, 20 August, 1949.

with a Babel of other voices, all equally intent on the furtherance of national policy and on counter propaganda. Fifty-six nations today are beaming more than 4,000 hours of international short-wave broadcasting per week. Nor is ours either the loudest or the most persistent of these voices. Britain and the USSR and its satellities outstrip us in the extent of their activities. World tension and international rivalries have thus made of broadcasting a subsidiary tool of nationalist propaganda and the instrument of a new, supplementary form of diplomacy that seeks to reach over the heads of foreign offices, embassies, and legations direct to people. The guns of World War II are silenced but a war of words persists, with friends and enemies aligned along new fronts. (See chart, p. 303.)

But if nations have used broadcasting for the furtherance of their private advantage (an advantage that each, of course, claims to be a contribution to the common good), we are not without a different and more hopeful concept of the potential uses of this new instrument of speech. Inadequate as it may be, as a step toward the assurance of world peace, the United Nations exists, and it, too, uses broadcasting for the furtherance of its aims. These are expressed in the preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO: 'Since wars are born in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.' To this end the United Nations has established its own short-wave broadcasting system; it also relies on the co-operation of member nations in the further dissemination of its message. Over the air and across the world is carried news of the proceedings of the United Nations Assembly, the Security Council, and so on, as well as the findings and achievements of its various humanitarian agencies such as the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization. Though limited by meager funds and only partial co-operation of the nations, its radio services stand for a use of broadcasting that is peaceful in its intent and healing in its effects.



Broadcasting of UN activities began with the opening of the first General Assembly in London in February 1946. Its radio division came effectively into being with the opening of the second half of this first Assembly at Lake Success in October 1946. At that time its staff consisted of 53 members representing 18 countries. Its functions are twofold. First and of primary importance is the provision of transmission facilities for accredited radio and newspaper correspondents. To supplement these regular broadcasts, it prepares programs of its own, designed to meet the needs and requests of broadcasting systems round the world. Each week 20 to 25 hours are devoted to live broadcasts of regular UN meetings. In addition, some 100 hours of broadcasting originate weekly at Lake Success. These in turn are supplemented by countless hours of rebroadcasting by national systems and local stations and by the use in many countries of both transcriptions and scripts prepared by the UN. Thus 'United Nations Today,' a quarter-hour review of significant international events highlighted by the recorded voices of delegates as they speak at the UN, is heard over some 150 stations in the United States alone. 'Memo from Lake Success,' a weekly program, is similarly carried by the Trans-Canada network. Many like examples from other countries could be cited. Over its own five short-wave transmitters UN programs go out steadily to listeners the world over. European and Middle-Eastern services amount to 16 hours weekly, Latin-American 12 hours, Trans-Pacific 10½ hours.

Beyond the evidence of correspondence there is, however, no means of determining the size of audiences tuned in directly. Despite statistics and research, we are still in the dark with respect to the use of this new universe of discourse.

Having surveyed its development in terms of practice, we may now return to a theoretical consideration of the questions raised at the beginning of this chapter. In view of this new dimension of global communication, what happens to us? How may we best avail ourselves of it? What intermediate problems remain

to be solved before the defences of peace can be constructed in the minds of men?

Man has moved far from his 'natural' state and he has moved rapidly. We have repeatedly referred in previous chapters to technology and its revolutionary consequences. We refer to it again in its reference to world affairs.

Nothing ever before recorded in the history of man equals in speed, universality and impact the transformation that modern industrial organization has wrought in the foundations of society in the 40 years since Henry Ford developed the mass production principle to turn out the Model T. Though 'Made in Detroit,' the impact of the new principle is neither confined to the United States nor to the old industrial territory of the West. Indeed, the impact is greatest on pre-industrial civilizations. . . In China the mass production principle . . . is destroying the world's oldest and hitherto most stable institution, the Chinese family. In India industrialization has begun to corrode the Hindu caste system. . . Russia uses the mass production principles . . . to mate . . . the technological fruits of western thought and Oriental despotism. . . The new principle of mass production corrodes and undermines the very basis of traditional society. It substitutes organization for the individual as the productive unit and thus, in separating the worker from the product, it makes the threat of unemployment intolerable; it separates the family from society; it introduces new social classes; it imposes tasks upon government far beyond the capacity of traditional government and so gives new weapons to the tyrant.<sup>14</sup>

The fact is that the mode and rhythm of modern life are new, and we are not yet used to them. The change, even though it has been going on for a long time, is too abrupt. We boast of speed, but like all boasting, it argues uneasiness.

Least of all are we used to the speed of the modern impact of ideas, which is the latest and most formidable product of the modern age. In former times the knowable was limited, and ideas, once formed, lay dormant quite a while. They spread slowly, for the means of communicating them were few. Today

<sup>14</sup> Drucker, Peter, 'The New Society,' in *Harper's Magazine*, September 1949.

knowledge is vastly greater, and not only is man spawning new ideas at a frightening pace, but he has found unprecedented means of spreading them. The speed of modern radio communication exceeds that of light. Its reach is now worldwide. Therefore, it is in planetary terms that we have to ask ourselves the likely consequences of this new development.

The global impact of mass communication suggests at least three thoughts. The first, which bears on politics, is the altered potential significance of every word spoken or written in public. The modern world, through mass communication, has become a vast whispering gallery in whose echoing corridors even the most casual remarks of public figures reverberate. The consequences may be at once unpremeditated and disastrous, for the echo is never accurate or clear. Sometimes muffled and sometimes monstrously enlarged, it reaches a distant ear with overtones of import and almost invariably with distorted meaning. In international communication the prospect—indeed, the virtual certainty—of misunderstanding is frightening. Global communication makes an atmosphere of crisis immanent as well as imminent and, potentially at least, risks its precipitation.

The practice of the war years, when, here and in other countries, every available word printed or broadcast in enemy and allied countries alike was recorded, summarized, and interpreted, has not lapsed. As of this moment, nations literally hang on one another's lips, each seeking from the communicated word clues, large and small, to the mood and intention of the other. There can be little doubt that this fact accounts in part for the restrained and cautious tone of official governmental utterances. It accounts, also, for the increased nervousness in governmental quarters over indiscretions in the public utterances of private persons. Words have so far become weapons that we are almost afraid to use them. The general tension about what is said in public today would have amazed our forebears, for whom free speech, including invective and gross indiscretions, was the breath of life.

Global mass communication also affects (some think adversely) the conduct of international negotiations. The whole question of open or secret diplomacy is here involved. Walter Lippmann has several times protested against the intrusion of the journalist on delicate negotiations. Secret diplomacy survives, but no one can question the disturbing effects—on both the public and the diplomat alike—of the ‘leaks’ and disclosures from ‘an authoritative source,’ which are part of the currency of modern journalism.

Our second consideration bears on the peace of mind of the ordinary citizen. There is much talk these days of modern man’s neurotic personality. Some say that our society is sick; that, living under the shadow of the atomic bomb, we have lost purpose and direction and hope. Whether we are more care-ridden than our ancestors is a morbid and unprofitable kind of speculation, for it serves no purpose and there is no way of finding out. But it is neither morbid nor unprofitable to inquire how extensive and serious a state of anxiety exists among us and whence it springs. Modern psychiatry has advanced our general understanding of the sources of mental sickness. (Popularization of psychiatry and our consequent awareness of mental sickness may account, in part, for the impression we give of a sick society.) But we have as yet no certain knowledge of the extent to which modern conditions of life of themselves imperil ‘normal’ personality development. But at least we can confidently say that probably no previous generation in the history of mankind has had to adapt itself at such speed to such a multiplicity of changes in its environment.

Can it be that prominent among the many causes of our anxiety-neurosis (if such we have) is the unfamiliar and blinding experience of living constantly under the klieg lights of modern publicity? Is it perhaps true today that ‘the world is too much with us’—that newspapers and radio and films and advertising have too violently and suddenly brought the whole world to our doorstep? Have we a surfeit of communication—

more than our minds and emotions can digest? It is certainly not easy to preserve independent judgment when our ears and eyes are so constantly assailed by the blatant claims, appeals, and warnings of advertisers, columnists, and others 'in the know.' 'Teach us to care and not to care. Teach us to sit still.' How many of us any longer study to be wise in this sense? Is this failure a cause of the widespread incapacity to stay long with a subject; of the tendency, earlier mentioned, to escape from life into fantasy; of the paradoxical prevalence at once of fanatical hatred of individuals ('that man') and of groups (the communist hysteria) and apathetic rejection of personal responsibility for what goes on?<sup>15</sup> Is there a limit to what the mind can absorb, and have we reached it? Are fear and recoil the modern substitutes for faith and zest for living, and is worldwide communication a factor in this change? These are questions we must ask, even if we cannot answer them, for they affect our appraisal of the matter and the manner of modern mass communication.

The third thought stems from the second and bears on the present state and status of education here in America and the world over. It concerns the new and crucial importance of knowledge and of clear and distinct ideas. As to knowledge, a few samples of ignorance may serve to show what even we, the richest and, as we claim, the best-educated nation in the world, have still to overcome. More than one third of the American people are unaware that the United States has joined any international organization working for peace. (In 1947 one third of the people of Cincinnati had never heard of the United Nations.) Over half of us either deny or 'don't know' that Great Britain is a democracy; 26 per cent believe that if we closed our ports to all imports from abroad, we could maintain our present standard of life; 28 per cent cannot locate Great Britain on a map of Europe; 35 per cent cannot locate France.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> One glaring example of such apathy is the attendance at the polls, in the last presidential election, of a mere 50 per cent of the qualified electors.

<sup>16</sup> For these and other uncited revelations see the quarterly summaries of opinion polls published in the *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *op. cit.*

The modern world is being rocked to its foundations by a conflict of ideas. (The term 'ideology' was never so overworked.) Modern mass communication, as we have seen, has given them unprecedented currency. They are affecting not only civilized nations but also the so-called 'backward' countries, where, particularly in the Far East, a social ferment, spearheaded by ideas, is at work. But this worldwide preoccupation with ideas does not signify a new, spontaneous flowering of the mind of man. In other words, it is not that we have suddenly become intellectually eager and alert, but that the conditions of modern life are forcing us to clarify our thinking and redefine our purposes—if we are to cope successfully with our surroundings and our relations with each other. Modern science and technology offer us a profusion of new tools; we must decide how we shall use them. The world, suddenly shrunk to the metaphorical size of a pea, claims of us a new or at least an improved science of human relations, for which both knowledge and clear thought are paramount.

As we reflect on this fact, we realize the ambivalence of the resources offered us by global mass communication. The circulation of ideas on such a vast scale involves grave risks unless (1) the ideas conveyed are themselves clear and valid; and (2) their circulation is matched by some capacity on the recipient's part to grasp and to assimilate them. Let us dwell for a moment on these two conditions.

The precision and clarity of an idea and of the language in which it is clothed are not easily distinguished, for it is only through language that ideas can, in general, be conveyed. But we do not need to be semanticists to appreciate that words, which are merely symbols of ideas, can be very dangerous if what they symbolize becomes obscured either by careless use or by deliberate distortion of their meaning. This is an age of slogans, and not in commercial advertising only. The danger of slogans is that they tend (as they are intended) to stir vague emotions, not precise ideas. It is this that makes it possible to

evoke a common response from a mass audience, which would respond to a precise idea not as a mass but as individuals. Communication thus becomes a means of muddying the waters of the mind, of bestirring it with waves of irrelevant emotion, and of actually dividing, not uniting, people. When reason and emotion are at odds with one another—and still more when false emotion is clothed in the language of sweet reasonableness—there is danger ahead.

How much, we may ask, of the world's current anxiety, conflict, aspiration, and indecision stems from the misuse of terms? What, for instance (to choose two words in constant use today), do 'communism' and 'democracy' *mean*? Do they have the same meaning for you and for me? And when we use them in broadcasts across the world, do they mean the same things to us and to others? Here in America they are symbols, respectively, of fear and faith. But fear of what, and faith in what? To pose such questions is to illuminate the difficulties that beset us in communication's Golden Age. Words can be dangerous.

There is, moreover, the complicated question, faced daily by newsmen of both press and radio, of an adequate simplification of the record of occurrences. There is hardly an event in international affairs that is not rooted in causes of the greatest complexity, defying succinct or simple explanation. (The trial of Cardinal Mindzenty in 1949 is a good example of such an 'event' and of grossly oversimplified reporting by both press and radio.) An honest record of some occurrence tells us nothing beyond a fact, and a fact out of context has little meaning. Thus, news too often stands between us and a proper understanding of events, and as facts accumulate and news-gathering facilities increase, understanding sinks to the bottom as sediment in water.

But even should we assume (and we cannot) that those who communicate use language with honesty and tolerable precision, we are aware that something is still missing from the equation—namely, precise and unclouded understanding on the part of the recipient. We might here recall the prophetic statement of

a mid-nineteenth-century writer: 'The blessing conferred by print will perhaps be complete when the diligence, the weariness, and, above all, the courageous justice of those who read, shall be brought into fair proportion with the skill and power of those who address them.'<sup>17</sup>

Without trained intelligence among the masses, whom mass communication has brought within the potential orbit of understanding and of useful participation in affairs, what are the prospects for that triumph of reason that the great champions of free speech have claimed as its justification and its assured outcome? Global communication makes it mandatory that we use our heads. Ideas are now weapons of infinite range. Mass communication has made them so and has thereby transferred a huge part of the burden of responsibility for the destiny of nations from the elected few (from leaders) to the electorate (to the masses of the people). Either we become masters of our fate or we lapse into a subservient slavery—a degradation of the mind and spirit, wherein we feed vicariously on others' wits and wills. In previous ages men have been enslaved by brute force. The mass media make suppression possible by the subtler device of the debauchery and the enslavement of men's minds.

It is not surprising that it was a great pioneer in one field of mass communication, films, who grasped this truth and foresaw the imperative necessity for mass intelligence as the logical outcome of the new age of global intercommunication. 'Yesterday,' said D. W. Griffith (who created *Birth of a Nation*, *Intolerance*, and *America*), 'was the age of the warrior. Today is the day of the capitalist. Tomorrow will be the day of the thinker.' But how do we acquire the trained intelligence that makes a thinker? Who is to undertake this herculean task? Certainly it is not the mass media of communication. Theirs is a subordinate, contributory, if vital, role. We shall attain intelligence, if at all,

<sup>17</sup> Kinglake, *Invasion of the Crimea*, 1863, p. 360.



through education, the new scope and added urgency of which we have previously discussed.

We have seen that international broadcasting has thus far been exploited mainly as an instrument of national policy. Should the day come when global tensions yield to a more relaxed and co-operative mood among the nations, how then could radio be used? What factors determine the best exploitation of radio's distinctive powers?

1. Of over a billion adults in the world, only about one in four can read more than a few words of his own tongue. Here is radio's chance. Millions need no longer depend on literacy for information and understanding. Radio's voice can serve them, once it learns to 'communicate in the language of the people.'

2. But to make of radio a common voice, we need a common language. It is indeed surprising that UNESCO has not yet stressed and urged the adoption of some form of international language. The cumbrous, inexact, and time-consuming translation into scores of different languages of what urgently needs communication is anachronistic in this one-world era.

3. But to hear, listeners must have receiving sets. For short-wave listening, such sets are still comparatively few and unevenly distributed; they are mostly in the hands of those whose need is relatively the least—the comparatively well-to-do. Here again, action by UNESCO seems warranted. Sets must be provided. Even our national interest argues that a modest portion of our huge financial gifts and loans to others be set aside for the building up of audiences for our programs. In countries like China, India, and Africa where the agricultural population predominates, communal-village sets would be practical. (Much of the domestic broadcasting within the USSR is heard in this way.)

4. But even with an adequate supply of sets, there must be an inducement to listen. Here we run into difficulties. For in view of the reasons for radio listening and such preferences for programs as we have earlier identified, the factor of habit enters in to vitiate the conditioning of listeners to short-wave radio.

There is, in fact, operative here what amounts almost to a scientific law. Audiences for direct short-wave broadcasts are likely to be in inverse proportion to the success and popularity of the domestic broadcasts within the country in question. Or, to put it in another way, extensive listening to short-wave radio may, generally, be taken to connote dissatisfaction with the home service.

5. Effective escape from this dilemma suggests certain desirable developments in international-broadcast communication. It suggests, first, a drastic modification of present practice by individual nations and by the United Nations—the reduction rather than the increase of independent transmission, and a far greater degree of exchanged material. Into domestic-broadcast services should be incorporated a generous supply of program matter originated by or about foreign countries. If we and other nations could agree to the inclusion on our domestic radio of regular, reciprocal-exchange programs, we might speed understanding on its way and feed internationalism to our systems.<sup>18</sup> For convenience such programs should be transcribed for use on appropriate occasions, and they should be unfettered by radio's tyranny of time. Here again, UNESCO might assist by the establishment of transcription-exchange libraries throughout the world. Easy availability is a condition of effective use.

6. Little imagination has been shown in developing types of programs that might prove attractive to listeners. As yet, few of us are genuinely and enthusiastically one-world-minded. Out of sight continues, for most people, to be out of mind. The detailed reporting of proceedings at United Nations' sessions may not, for instance, be the most useful service rendered to the cause of peace. Imaginative programs revealing facts about world poverty, world health, world food problems, man's race to recover in time what he himself has lost of nature's store by

<sup>18</sup> Several countries, e.g., Britain and France, now make available to stations in the United States transcriptions descriptive of their ways of life. But the use of these transcriptions is modest in the extreme.

improvident squandering of its resources, the story of deforestation, soil erosion, and so on, coupled with constructive instances of co-operative effort to fight and conquer famine and disease, might better serve to persuade us that we are truly members of one world. Programs exploiting the common interests of men and women in like occupations all over the world—teachers, farmers, scientists, trade unionists—and bringing them in touch with one another over radio's sky waves suggest untapped resources of appeal.

7. But perhaps the necessary prelude to such full and free exchange is a convention on the good manners of international communication. Friendly exchange and intercourse are not possible where mutual suspicion and childish abuse poison relations. Various suggestions (none of them as yet accepted) have been made along such lines. For instance, it has been proposed that, as part of a general disarmament agreement, the following acts be defined as acts of psychological aggression and be outlawed by all signatories: 1) 'Discrediting . . . the government of another signatory nation, especially among its own citizens. 2) Dividing . . . the people of another signatory nation among themselves. 3) Discrediting . . . the structure and philosophy of government, or the social or economic way of life of the people of any other signatory nation. 4) Stimulating . . . prejudice, hate, and discrimination . . . against any racial, social, economic, political or religious group anywhere in the world.'<sup>19</sup> The Commission on the Freedom of the Press has suggested a similar code for journalists and an international covenant protecting them in terms of free access to news sources.<sup>20</sup> The United Nations itself, through the Commission on Human Rights and others of its bodies, has struggled to tame the madness in men and give sovereignty to reason.

Radio, like other media, is no cure-all; it is no more than an

<sup>19</sup> Warburg, James P., *Unwritten Treaty*, Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1946, pp. 157-8.

<sup>20</sup> For details see White and Leigh, *op. cit.*

instrument for use. Nor is the diffusion of facts and of ideas, however universal, of itself enough to harmonize the nations. Understanding is a necessary condition of the peace, but it will not bring peace. There is first work for each of us to do to tame the beast in us, to exorcise fear, and to subordinate our private (and national) interests to the larger interests of the society of men. There is for us no alibi. We cannot leave such matters to the lawmakers and the diplomats. One who feels deeply and has pondered long on the subject has said:

If there is to be peace, citizens as well as leaders—or more than leaders—must make it. They had better speak up. There was never an hour in history when citizens more needed to speak up than now. Without the call of the people for the substitution of law for anarchy and the exchange of justice for indiscriminate massacre, humanity will destroy itself. Only one redemption can save it, and that is to end war before war ends us. The only way to do that is think the truth and to set to work for it. . . . Getting world government is not a task you can leave to others. If you leave it to others, so may they. No more urgent message will present itself to you in your life time than this: Save the peace. Save it while there is yet light and reason in the world.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> From an address by Raymond Swing at Columbia University, 3 January, 1949.

TELEVISION

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'ONE side,' said the caterpillar mysteriously, 'will make you grow taller, and the other side will make you grow shorter.' And when Alice, figuring out the reference, nibbled a piece from one side of the mushroom, she did indeed grow taller—and at a disconcerting pace. Her counterpart in our modern Wonderland has done the same, but, to the dismay of all concerned, it has not yet found its way to the mushroom's 'other side.' Television grows and grows and gets 'curiouser and curiouser.' To point at it is like pointing at a jet plane—it has passed out of sight while you raise an astonished finger.

All that follows, then, is written in water. We are concerned with a precocious, modern prodigy, whose vital statistics, here laboriously compiled, are out of date even as they are recorded. Television's present is already past; it has only a future. Prodigies, moreover, are notoriously unpredictable. Prognosis, therefore, is little better than idle speculation. 'Norms' of development are hilariously irrelevant. 'The simple but elusive fact is that it [television] is neither stable nor mature. Television is young, fluid, and unpredictable.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From an address by Oscar Katz, CBS Director of Research, at the seventh (1949) annual luncheon of *The Pulse*, Inc.

Yet so prodigious is what has already happened, and so momentous are the possible consequences of what is yet to be, that the gambler's instinct is aroused in all of us, and even an author may be pardoned for wanting to play the tables. But let the reader be warned of what he is in for—a record largely of outdated facts and of prophecies doomed, as they should be, to the derision of those with the advantage of hindsight. But before we proceed to pure speculation, let us record a few facts in the immediately post-natal period of this dreadful infant, seasoned with some confident predictions of its development.

Television was first authorized on a commercial basis five months before Pearl Harbor. At the end of World War II there were six television stations on the air. By January 1950 there were 98 (a figure, as we shall later see, artificially restricted by action of the FCC). When the war ended, there were 7000 receiving sets in the entire country; in early 1950 the number exceeded 4 million. In 1947 advertisers looked suspiciously at television. Within a year NBC, to take one example, had increased its time sales by 1000 per cent. Set manufacturers in 1947 numbered 29; early in 1950 they numbered over 100.

But statistics such as these are already drowned in the floodwaters of confident prediction. The chairman of the FCC soberly anticipates that 'five years from tonight I expect to see 600 to 800 stations on the air. That will mean that five years from tonight television service will be available to the overwhelming majority of the people of the United States.'<sup>2</sup> Not to be outdone by his chairman, Commissioner Sterling prophesies that 'five years from now there will be 20,000,000 sets—one for every two households. These sets are being steadily improved and the prices are coming down.'<sup>3</sup> These facts may serve as an introduction. Now to a more orderly description of television—of current obstacles to its progress; of its effects on people and on

<sup>2</sup> Wayne Coy in an address at the Ohio Institute for Education by Radio, May 1949.

<sup>3</sup> Commissioner George G. Sterling in an address before the Canadian Manufacturers Association, 8 June, 1949.

its cousins in the entertainment world; of television in education; and of television as an art in its own right.

### 1. TECHNICAL

Current television operations conform to a provisional plan, based on public hearings conducted in the winter of 1944-5, and devised by the FCC to insure as rapid and extensive a development of service as possible. Originally thirteen and later (in 1947) twelve channels were allocated to television stations between 24-216 megacycles. Frequencies were so distributed as to avoid interference. It was anticipated that under this plan room would be found for some 400 stations giving program service to viewers in some 140 metropolitan areas, and accounting for about 57 million people, or 40 per cent of the total population. It was recognized from the outset that many rural and even some important metropolitan areas would be without service. But the important thing was to get the ball rolling, while engineering experts figured out a way to achieve universal coverage either by use of other channels (in the ultra-high-frequency band) or by alternative methods of transmission.

But in the middle of 1948 the scheme ran into unanticipated trouble. Interference was greater than had been expected, and in September 1948 the FCC reluctantly called a temporary halt to the mad pace of development, and imposed a 'freeze'<sup>4</sup> on its processing of the hundreds of new license applications that were piled up on its desks. It was hoped that the 'thaw' might follow within six months. But this hope proved over-sanguine, and at the time of writing (March 1950) the freeze is still on and 330 applicants are still shivering out in the cold.

Despite this fact, however, expansion has been phenomenal. In 1949 there was a significant development in network operations. Coaxial cable and microwave relay already connect cities in the East from as far north as Boston to as far south as

<sup>4</sup> For a forceful discussion of this subject, see 'The Television Freeze' in *Fortune* magazine, November 1949.

Richmond. Since January 1949 a coaxial cable has been in operation between the East Coast and St. Louis, and a microwave system now connects New York and Chicago. In 1950 this system will be extended to Des Moines, and a coaxial cable will be run from Des Moines to Minneapolis and St. Paul. The new microwave relay between New York and Chicago will eventually have thirty intermediate stations along the route. 'Between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh the concrete towers will be placed on mountain tops and will be about 60 ft. high. . . . A coaxial cable for television will link Toledo and Dayton and will tie into microwave relays linking Columbus and Cincinnati in October [1949]. I expect to see the West Coast linked with the East Coast by a combination of microwave relay and by coaxial cable in another two years.'<sup>5</sup>

Meantime, consideration is being given to ways and means of making television's highways as extensive as those of our road system. Hope centers on the use (in addition to the twelve allocated channels in the VHF band) of the ultra-high frequencies in the band from 475-890 megacycles also set aside for television by the FCC in 1945. Three questions arise to which different answers are given.

(1) Do we have sufficient propagation data now to enable the Commission to write standards of good engineering practice for television service in the VHF frequencies; (2) Shall we perpetuate the present system of television now utilizing the 12 VHF channels by assigning a sufficient number of channels in the UHF band to the service in order that we may have a nationwide competitive system? (3) Shall we give consideration to another system of television such as (a) higher definition black and white or (b) color?<sup>6</sup>

It might be well to clarify some of the points at issue here.

1. In trade circles everyone is in a hurry. Millions of dollars have been invested, and all are eager to see an early and rapid

<sup>5</sup> Address by Wayne Coy at the Nineteenth Institute for Education by Radio, 5 May, 1949.

<sup>6</sup> Address by Wayne Coy before the Advertising Club of Baltimore, 23 March, 1949.



return on this investment. At Commission hearings most witnesses have claimed that the FCC could write standards on the basis of information available. The Commission, on the other hand, having been once bitten, is twice shy and favors further experiment before rewriting its standards of practice.

2. There is in trade circles a natural concern that current purchase of sets by the public shall not be affected by any drastic change in the method of transmission. The trade wants assurance that the use of the twelve channels in which television operates today will not be discontinued.<sup>7</sup> The Commission concedes such assurance. 'There is no proposal by the Commission . . . to delete any of the present VHF channels. This service will not be eliminated.'<sup>8</sup>

3. As to 'higher definition,' there are critics who complain that quality is being sacrificed to speed in the development of television here in the United States. Both Britain and France have higher technical standards than does this country, but the price paid for this finer quality of picture is a monopolistic system and the consequent limitation of program services. Reduced services eliminate the problem of spectrum space. For us the die is cast in favor of variant, competitive service. As chairman Coy has said, 'I am quite sure we could have a wider channel, higher definition service in this country if we had a monopoly—either privately owned or government owned. Personally I will take competition rather than improved definition if it means monopoly of either variety. But I will also take improved definition or color when it is technically practicable and when it is no longer sense to restrict competition.'<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> On 26 September, 1949 the Commission opened hearings to consider several amendments of its rules and regulations and a specific proposal to add to the 12 VHF six-megacycle channels presently assigned an additional 42 six-megacycle channels beginning at approximately 470 to 500 mc.; 32 of these channels will be used for metropolitan stations and 10 for community stations. For details see Mimeo #37460 FCC 49-948.

<sup>8</sup> Address by Wayne Coy before the Advertising Club of Baltimore, 23 March, 1949.

<sup>9</sup> Address by Wayne Coy before a joint luncheon meeting of the Radio Executives Club and the Advertising Club of Boston, 25 January, 1949.

## TELEVISION FACILITIES IN



# THE UNITED STATES



4. As to color television, the prospect of its early coming was quashed some time ago. Regularly scheduled, experimental transmission of color television was inaugurated by CBS on 28 May 1941, and a bold (and to many a convincing) bid was thereafter made to prove that it was technically feasible and that black and white television could be by-passed as already an anachronism. Investors in black and white were outraged and rallied in violent opposition. The argument was cut short by a ruling of the FCC, on 18 March 1947, that the case for color was 'not proven.'

But in September 1949, yielding to renewed pressure from the industry, the FCC began fresh hearings on color television. It continued to insist, however, that 'it will not license stations for color transmission until such time as it has been shown that color is possible within a 6 megacycle channel and that there are sufficient numbers of receivers and devices which can be utilized with a monochrome receiver for the purpose of receiving color with relatively minor modification.'<sup>10</sup> Here again, we see the overriding concern of the Commission for stability and continuity in the development of our prodigy and for the protection of purchasers against rapid obsolescence of their sets.

To the old rival claimants for adoption of their color systems (CBS and RCA) a new dark horse, Color Television, Inc., was added at these hearings. In early March 1950, the outcome was still in doubt. Alternatives of choice open to the FCC appeared to be: (1) approval of one or other of the rival applicants; (2) approval of each, on an experimental basis; (3) continued deferment of color television and the unfreezing of black and white and its admission to the UHF band.

But to move television 'upstairs,' as the jargon goes, into the UHF band is not the only possibility for extending service to the nation as a whole. Imagination and enterprise have soared literally into stratospheric realms, and the most amazing of all proposals has yet to be recorded. Employment now appears to be open for that growing number of distracted mortals who find

<sup>10</sup> Commissioner Sterling, *op. cit.*

this earth-bound atmosphere entirely too oppressive. They may go up aloft and hitch their wagons to the stars. Experiments have been conducted to see how feasible it might be to provide service by 'stratovision'—a system of airborne television. Planes have been sent up, cruising round a 20-mile circle at an altitude of 20 to 25 thousand feet. It has been estimated that 33 planes, flying at this altitude and carrying transmitters, would cover most of the area and serve 98.9 per cent of the population of the United States. It is further estimated that the cost of operation would compare favorably with that of operation on the ground.

The FCC's comment on this proposal is a masterpiece of understatement: 'This mode of operation poses technical, economical and social problems.' A somewhat less laconic interpretation of the problem is offered by Dr. Dallas Smythe: 'The ultimate issue on which the possibility of Stratovision appears to rest is that of public policy. Already men who in AM have opposed power in excess of 50 kilowatts have expressed opposition to Stratovision on the argument that to give the operator of Stratovision control over TV program service would be to cast too much political, social, and economic power in too few hands.'<sup>11</sup>

Yet another alternative system of bringing televised programs to the viewer is based on the 'pay as you see' principle. Under this system, viewers would order programs of their choice by telephone. A 'scrambled' image on their television screen would then become clear by means of a corrective electronic signal relayed over the phone wires into the viewer's set. A monthly charge for service would then appear on his telephone bill. An experiment to test viewers' reactions to this mode of operation has been approved by the FCC.

But to return to the basic principles of policy thus far enunciated by the FCC. Its policy appears to be established in terms

<sup>11</sup> Smythe, Dallas, 'Television: Position and Outlook,' in *Current Economic Comment*, vol. 11, no. 1, February 1949, University of Illinois Press, p. 21.

of certain priorities of need that the Commission will seek to see fulfilled. It aims

1) to provide at least one television service to all parts of the United States. 2) to provide each community with at least one broadcast station. 3) to provide a choice of at least two television services to all parts of the United States. 4) to provide each community with at least two television broadcast stations. 5) any channels which remain unassigned under the foregoing priorities will be assigned to the various communities depending on the size of the population of such community and the number of television services available to such community from television stations located in other communities.<sup>12</sup>

Such, at the moment, is the blueprint of television's future.

## 2. OWNERSHIP AND FINANCE

### A. Ownership

It is not surprising that the great majority of licensees and applicants (76.7 per cent) for television stations should be associated with AM and FM radio-station operations. The investment, apart from its obvious inherent advantages, is a form of insurance for capital already sunk in radio, and liable to some depreciation. An FCC breakdown of business interests of television licensees, construction-permit holders, and applicants follows:

	Number	Per cent
Newspaper publishing	128	31.3
Broadcasting only	66 <sup>13</sup>	16.1
Motion pictures, theaters, et cetera	27	6.6
Radio manufacturing	25	6.1
Merchants, dealers, et cetera	25	6.1
Miscellaneous manufacturing	18	4.4
Real estate, insurance, et cetera	17	4.2
Oil production	17	4.2
Educational institutions	10	2.4
Miscellaneous	76	18.6
Subtotal	<u>409</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Information not available	26	
Total	<u>435</u>	

<sup>12</sup> Mimeo #37460. FCC 49-948.

<sup>13</sup> The apparent disparity between this figure and the 76.7 per cent earlier quoted is explained by the fact that many AM and FM radio stations are themselves owned and operated by newspaper publishers, radio manufacturers, and so on.

## B. Finance

Television is costly. In addition to the millions of dollars invested in research, its overhead and operating costs distinguish it sharply from radio, which, as mass media go, is a comparatively cheap enterprise. TV is generally held to be four or five times as expensive as radio. Construction costs for a metropolitan station range from the NAB's highly conservative estimate of \$380,000-plus to \$1,000,000. (Compare this with the average original cost of 300 regional radio stations [1946 figure] of \$133,000.) Average individual operating costs for 14 stations in 1948 amounted to \$538,000. Staff requirements, according to the NAB, range up to a personnel of 90, and the average is 50. A television studio, when the show is on, bears about as much resemblance to a radio studio as does Grand Central Station in the rush hour to the Sahara Desert. The minimum requirements are two cameramen, one 'audio' engineer, one 'video' engineer, one announcer, one producer, a general assistant, and a bevy of 'extras' to move props, handle lights, maneuver the 'booms mike,' and so on.

'A one hour dramatic show costs \$20,000 to produce. A popular vaudeville show costs around \$15,000 for which the star receives about half. The sponsor of the world series television broadcasts last fall paid \$140,000 for the rights alone.'<sup>14</sup> Such costs must be met—by the advertiser. High costs combined with the relatively limited audience presently available create television's transitional problem. Its promoters have dug deep into their pockets to make it a going concern. CBS, for instance, claims to have spent \$3½ million since 1940 on color television only. (Most television stations, even today, are operating in the red. In 1948 the industry suffered a loss of approximately \$15 million.) These stations cannot long continue without sponsors, but until quite recently sponsors have continued to hang back. True, a number of big advertisers are shelling out big money, but more

<sup>14</sup> Commissioner Sterling, *op. cit.*

as the price of 'know how' and an early footing in the business than in the hope of recouping from immediate increased sales of their goods.<sup>15</sup> The following table gives some comparative indication of the relative earnings, of TV and AM stations during 1948.<sup>16</sup>

Metropolitan District	No. of Stations	1948 Total Revenues of AM Stations (\$ million)	No. of Stations	1948 Total Revenues of TV Stations (\$ million)	Total Revenues (AM plus TV) (\$ million)	Per cent of Total
New York, New York	26	\$24.5	6	\$2.2	\$26.7	8.2%
Chicago, Illinois	18	15.9	4	0.7	16.6	4.2
Los Angeles, California	23	10.5	3*	0.5	11.0	4.5
Philadelphia, Pa.	13	6.7	3	0.7	7.4	9.5
Washington, D. C.	14	4.8	3	0.4	5.2	7.7
Baltimore, Maryland	8	3.7	3	0.3	4.0	7.5
Milwaukee, Wisconsin	7	2.8	1	0.2	3.0	6.7
Total	109	\$68.9	23	\$5.1	\$74.0	6.9%

\* A fourth station, which went on the air 31 December 1948, reported no revenues.

The need for support has led to frenzied promotional campaigns aimed at convincing potential sponsors that television is the pre-eminent advertising medium and aimed also at securing a lower price for sets to build up the audience, which, in the last analysis, is all that sponsors are prepared to buy. But by-passing the many extravagant claims that have been made, let us consider the solid evidence of what television has to offer and what it has secured by way of recognition from hard-headed businessmen.

What television has to offer—to sponsor and viewer alike—is the incomparable appeal of sight, plus sound, plus motion. Army experiments during the war years went far to prove (if proof was necessary) that the recall impact of sight-sound-motion stimuli is in general greater by far than either oral or visual

<sup>15</sup> By the close of 1949 this situation had changed somewhat. Television was being sold on a 'cost per thousand' basis which compares favorably with other major media, and the number of advertisers investing in television now indicates that the 'hanging back' phase is passing.

<sup>16</sup> Cited in an address by Wayne Coy, 11 April, 1949, to the National Association of Broadcasters.



stimuli alone. Experiments in television advertising seem to confirm the fact. A camera company that advertised a special offer received enough telephone orders by the time the program left the air to pay for the entire show. A company offering a recipe book was flooded with requests, at a cost of .8 of a cent per inquiry. A watch company offered and displayed for 14 seconds a booklet with a four-word title; 85 per cent of the requests named the book with complete accuracy. Television has, for the moment at least, the further advantage of exposing more people to its selling power. It is a source of social entertainment; neighbors are invited in to view. Television audiences constitute a larger target for the sponsor's sales message than do radio listeners.

In the light of such evidence, advertisers have already responded in force, though greater support is necessary before television moves into the black. Television boasted some 23,000 advertisers in January 1950. Initially it attracted local and retail advertisers, its operation being mainly local. The advance in clients was here impressive. In September 1948, there were 236 such advertisers; by the end of 1949, they totaled 1141, or five times as many. But according to *Variety* (12 December 1949) 'the era of the small time sponsor in television is already beginning to fade. Thus history is repeating itself. Just as, over the past couple of decades, the mounting time, talent and production costs for coast to coast radio programming forced the medium sized and small bank rollers to beat a hasty retreat as the industrial giants moved in, so, too, in TV it's becoming a "rich client's luxury."' Progress thus far is phenomenal but it is not enough. (Compare radio's annual intake of over \$400 million with the estimate for television's take of \$25 million in 1949.) The FCC's freeze has seriously affected expansion. Nerves of men in the industry are taut, and the sponsor, by and large, continues to prolong the vicious circle by withholding his funds. If the future is assured, the present is an anxious time.

### 3. POLICY

In one of his many public addresses on the subject of television Mr. Wayne Coy, Chairman of the FCC, told his audience a story. In a bygone era of electronic miracles, Great Britain built a cable connecting London, seat of the Empire, with dependent India. John Ruskin was asked to comment on this momentous achievement. He said that he was impressed—but he then asked a question that baffled his interviewers: 'What do you have to say to India?' This is the question that, in effect, we have been asking throughout this book. What are the true ends (true, in the sense of socially constructive) of modern mass communication? What does it have to say?

It is appropriate to raise the question once more, as we appraise the likely influence, for better or for worse, of the new prodigy we are now examining. What policy will be adopted in television? Whose voice will be decisive in the formulation of a policy? In theory it is a quartet of voices that should achieve the harmony at which our system of broadcasting aims—the voice of the public, the telecaster, the advertiser, and the FCC. The harmony will be as rich and melodious as the 'true pitch' of the component voices. There will be discord, or less than harmony, as one or more of the four voices sings off key—or fails to sing at all.

If past precedent proves anything, it would seem to suggest that John Q. Public will sing pianissimo at best, for he has thus far scarcely learned to read the score. What, then, of the telecaster? Here we have only clues to guide us—for the reader must be reminded that we are now in the realm of speculation. The most revealing clue is a statement on television by the President of the Columbia Broadcasting System.<sup>17</sup> 'I find many people,' he says, 'who carry about with them serious misconceptions, unexamined assumptions and sheer prejudices about

<sup>17</sup> 'Television and People,' an address by Frank Stanton to the Institute of Radio Engineers, March 1949.

the nature of mass media.' For the benefit of these misguided souls he then generously describes what constitutes a 'true mass medium.' 'I can count up to four basic characteristics which I think apply universally to them. These are, in order, first broad appeal; second, speed; third, availability and fourth, low unit cost.' Unfortunately, we have space to examine only the first of these remarkable propositions.

'Broad appeal,' says Mr. Stanton, 'is inherent in the very term mass medium. . . A mass medium must concern itself with the common denominator of mass interest. Its basic appeal cannot be special, or excessive [sic] or subjective.' It appears, then, that the policy that has governed radio broadcasting (not, let us remember, in radio's early days—see Chapter 1—but as propounded by its latter-day saints) is to be carried over into television, and that the fallacy of 'the mass' is to be perpetuated.

The nature of this fallacy becomes clear as soon as we try to give meaning to Mr. Stanton's phrase, 'the common denominator of mass interest.' What, in the first place, is 'the mass'? If it is the totality of an undifferentiated public, it is total and therefore has no 'common denominator,' for it has nothing with which to be common. If the mass is a public differentiated in its interests, what is its common denominator? Research has proved conclusively that it has none. There is nothing in which everybody shows equal interest.

It is, indeed, the glory of a democratic society that it not merely tolerates but encourages difference, that its concern is with the full flowering of diverse individuality, not of conformity and mass-mindedness. 'Giving the majority of the people what they want,' which Mr. Stanton later dignifies as 'cultural democracy,' is that form of tyranny which, as it either excludes or scouts the interests of minorities, is (as we claimed in our discussion of free speech) the breeding ground of intolerance and the ultimate death knell of democracy.

The mass theory of the public is that illusion which comes over men who become habituated to seeing people in terms of

figures, not of faces; men, too, whose concern with people is as means to ends, and not as ends in themselves. It connotes that mentality which, in defiance of language, assumes the words 'bigger' and 'better' to be synonymous. Far from symbolizing cultural democracy, such an attitude deserves no better title than that of vulgar exploitation. The term democracy is much abused and in no context is its abuse more shameful and disastrous than in this.

Mass media differ from other media only with respect to the relative size of the many, differentiated markets available to them. In any given category of interest they can, by virtue of their reach, muster relatively more customers than can media with shorter arms. Broadcasters and telecasters, however, are retailers of a great variety of goods. Mr. Stanton's theory of retailing makes as much sense as if a large department store were to clear its shelves of all commodities except the best-selling lines. This, presumably, would be economic democracy.

We have only to look abroad to see how insubstantial is this view of mass communication. Neither in Britain nor in Canada, for instance, is the bulk of time devoted to 'giving the majority of the people what they want.' (We are not, by the way, arguing that radio in these two countries is the better for this reason.) Yet mass audiences are reached, if we can reasonably claim that 'millions' are 'masses' of people. Apart from this, it is a theory that defies and defeats the concept of the public interest that Congress wrote into law in the Communications Act.

The fact is that such a theory is no more than a disingenuous rationalization of the commercial broadcaster's natural preoccupation with delivering the largest possible audience with the greatest possible frequency to the piper who calls the tune of revenue—the advertiser. The broadcaster can do so because of the limited number of effective hours in which the public as a whole is able either to listen or to view.

But even if the mass theory of the public is patently in error, it seems almost certain that it will be applied in practice. Dis-

ingenuous as is Mr. Stanton's rationalization, the basic economic factor in television, in our commercial system, is not to be lightly dismissed. As we have seen, television is exceptionally and inherently costly, and the cost must be passed on to the sponsor.<sup>18</sup> Current advertising rates will, no doubt, be adjusted as the available market of customers expands, but rates will remain high as compared with those of radio. The logic of this situation, which seems intrinsic in the medium, suggests that in return for his exceptional outlay the sponsor will demand the largest possible audience at any given time. The natural impulse to mass marketing will be buttressed by the sheer necessity to cover costs.

In the absence of countervailing influences, it seems likely, therefore, that for some years to come the trend of television will be increasingly toward lowest-common-denominator programming. We may be now witnessing a peak in television's service to a variety of tastes. For while sponsors continue to hold back, air time must be filled, and even programs with minority appeal are currently welcome—if they cost nothing or just a little. It is unlikely that this situation will continue much longer. Moreover, the composition of television's audience, with its preponderance of middle- and lower-income set owners, further suggests (as, to a large extent, it properly dictates) the character of programs to be expected in the future.

Marketing considerations, together with the fact of television's short reach of 50-odd miles, suggest that, as with radio (only more so), viewers in congested urban areas will be the first to be served, and that it may be some time before small urban areas, not contiguous to cities, and country districts will be

<sup>18</sup> 'Studies of television broadcasting costs indicate conclusively that, in order to provide a nationwide system of television broadcasting, supported exclusively by advertising revenue, it will be necessary for advertisers to spend more money on advertising in television than they spend today on radio, magazines and outdoor advertising put together. . . The pattern of television broadcasting will inexorably be fixed by the nature of the economy which supports it.' Smith, Bernard B., in *The Journal of the Association for Education by Radio*, vol. 9, no. 6, February 1950.

brought within reach of our prodigy. Only Stratovision could rapidly encompass these viewers, and there are weighty arguments against, as well as solid opposition to, its adoption.

As to advertising and advertisers, forecast is not easy. One might hazard a guess that TV advertisements will be both more attractive and more popular. Sight is always preferable to hearsay. Objects, if seen, speak for themselves, and it is earnestly hoped that they will be allowed to do so unaccompanied by anything equivalent to radio announcers' verbal bludgeoning. We might anticipate more time devoted to advertisement without increase of objection from the viewer, for advertising should be more attractive and, as with fashion displays, can constitute a show in its own right. Visual advertisement lends itself to abuses from which radio, as a 'blind' medium, is exempt, but the public may confidently be left to curb excesses.

The expressed intentions of advertisers are confusingly varied. They range from the gay and daring to the sober and moralistic. With reference to sex appeal, 'Mr. Griffin (vice-president and group copy head, J. Walter Thompson Co.) gave as a good general rule to try to get away with as much as you can. . . . Another agency criticized the advertiser whose determination "to wring the last drop out of his allotted time succeeds only in most thoroughly annoying the viewer. . . . We . . . believe in the philosophy of keep it simple."' <sup>19</sup> Commander Lowe, director of the Du Mont Television network, speaks of television as 'the greatest instrument for mass dissemination of information knowledge since the days of Gutenberg.' But he goes on to berate viewers for their tendency to expect something for nothing. 'A race raised on a diet of entertainment shortly will display many of the characteristics of a moron, including the demand for more and more at less and less, and lack of appreciation for favors rendered. . . . We are selling television short when entertainment is allowed to dominate the schedule to the exclusion of a sales

<sup>19</sup> Smythe, Dallas, *op. cit.*, pp. 27, 28.

message well represented.'<sup>20</sup> Anything, it would appear, can happen.

But if recent trends in radio are likely to be extrapolated into television and the controlling influence of sponsors is to be asserted still further, what prospect of compensating influences is there? What of the fourth voice in our quartet—that of the FCC? If exhortations were enough, our hopes might run high, for the Commission has spoken out loud and bold. Sponsors have been put on their honor.

Advertisers and advertising agencies are not licensed by the government or anyone else. Yet, because our system of radio depends on advertising for support, they exert an enormous influence, in many cases a controlling influence, over the kind of program service that the stations provide. . . I suggest that the public interest will be served, the long range interests of everyone else concerned—the broadcasters, the advertising agencies and the advertisers—will be promoted if the advertising industry recognizes and respects the licensee's responsibility.<sup>21</sup>

And in an address to members of the radio industry similar exhortation was given.

As this mighty force expands week by week and month by month and competition becomes keener and keener, the days of temptation will come. Now is the time to recognize this danger and to resolve that undesirable practices shall never secure a foothold on this new dimension of our lives. . . The American home is not a night club. It is not a theater. It is not a midway. The attitude that people bring to those places is not the attitude they bring to their homes or suffer others to bring. If you take precautions now not to be tempted to the primrose path, you will be saving this art from excesses, the remorse, the clamor for reform, the struggles for redemption that plague, in varying degrees, almost every other form of communication.<sup>22</sup>

Such words may strike responsive chords in some people, though others will question whether television's scope does not,

<sup>20</sup> In an address at the May 1949 Ohio Institute for Education by Radio.

<sup>21</sup> FCC Chairman, Wayne Coy, in an address before the Advertising Club of Baltimore, 23 March, 1949.

<sup>22</sup> Wayne Coy in an address, 8 December, 1948.

almost by definition, make it the poor man's night club, theater, midway, and much else besides; whether, in fact, it does not—and with advantage—dispose finally (at least in mirror fashion) of the barriers of space and time already breached by radio.

But what evidence have we, beyond words, of prospective action? Does the Commission's practice over sixteen years warrant the belief that it will now be diligent in defining and upholding the public interest in television? We look in vain for proof. The Blue Book, which a former chairman publicly proclaimed would 'not be bleached,' is considered by the industry as a dead letter. Its requirements of the licensee have been repeatedly overlooked in Commission practice with reference to license renewal. Decision in the KMPC case remains long deferred. Many other instances of inaction could be cited. The incoming tide is strong, and it is moving fast. It will require great courage, and more than words, to stem it.

The seemingly desirable principles of regulation do not differ from those relevant to radio. They involve exploitation of the medium's resources to the widest conceivable advantage of the public. The golden rule would seem to be that, within the strict limits of effective viewing time, there should be something for everybody. This, of course, is a counsel of perfection. Yet diversity of appeal seems a reasonable policy proposal. One might guess that television's main preoccupation will be (1) with the instantaneous visual transmission of current events, (2) with entertainment shows, (3) with drama. Its usefulness for education we shall consider separately.

#### 4. AUDIENCE

We have spoken of television as wholly unpredictable. Statistics regarding its audience confirm the fact, for few would have guessed either the speed with which the public has embraced its new toy or the social characteristics of television's present audience. Research nowadays follows hard on the heels of enterprise, and a number of studies, surprisingly consistent



in their findings, tell us the story of the growth of television's audience.

The first fact disclosed is the almost reckless abandon with which money has been invested in television by the public even when ready cash was not available. (Deferred payment is a characteristic of present purchases.) Thus, in 'Videotown,' an anonymous community of 40 thousand people near New York City, the average family spent \$45 in 1948 on television receivers. 'This amount is more than the average family spends in a year for such individual items as radios and other musical instruments, movies, jewelry, cosmetics or magazines, newspapers and books.'<sup>23</sup> Television sets in this community have been bought by 1241 families—a fact eloquent in its implications when we consider that the average price per set was \$384. This, however, is only the beginning. 'On the basis of the current survey it appears that by January 1, 1950, Videotown will have three times as many sets as it had on January 1st this year.'<sup>24</sup> But to keep our perspective, we should recall that even today less than 8 per cent of America's 42 million families have television sets.

One would have assumed that the high cost of receivers would have been reflected in purchases predominantly by people in the higher economic levels. But here too television confounds reason. The trend of purchases is in precisely the opposite direction. It is of the lower- and middle-income groups that television's audience is chiefly composed. 'Today the lower and middle income groups, which make up 83% of Videotown's population own 82% of television sets. . . About one out of 8 poor and middle class families now has a set while one out of 12 of lower class homes are set owners.'<sup>25</sup> That Videotown is not unique is confirmed by statistics in studies made for the Co-

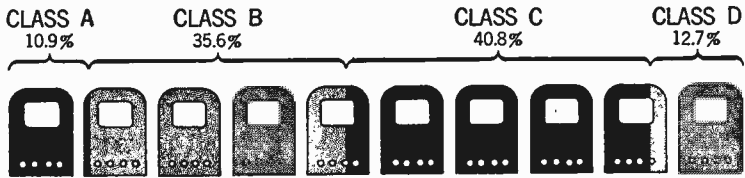
<sup>23</sup> Statement by Jerry Tasker, Director of Research, as quoted in a release accompanying a study 'Videotown, One Year Later' by the Newell-Emmett Company, New York.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> 'Videotown, One Year Later,' Newell-Emmett Company, New York, p. 12.

lumbia Broadcasting System which show that, except at the very lowest levels of income, set purchasing is in inverse proportion to wealth, as seen in the diagram below.<sup>26</sup> The remarkable extent of purchases among lower-income groups together with their numerical size (as compared with the more well-to-do) is an important consideration as it affects the likely character of programs offered.

#### TELEVISION-SET OWNERS



Of all set owners, only 11% are in the top (A) income group. The middle brackets, B and C, account for 76%. And 13% of all set owners are in the lowest income group—double the 1947 percentage in this group.

The progressive trend toward increased purchases by people in lower-income groups may be seen by a comparative study of set purchases over a twelve-month period, as indicated in the chart below. The well-to-do were initially the biggest purchasers; today they are the smallest.<sup>27</sup>

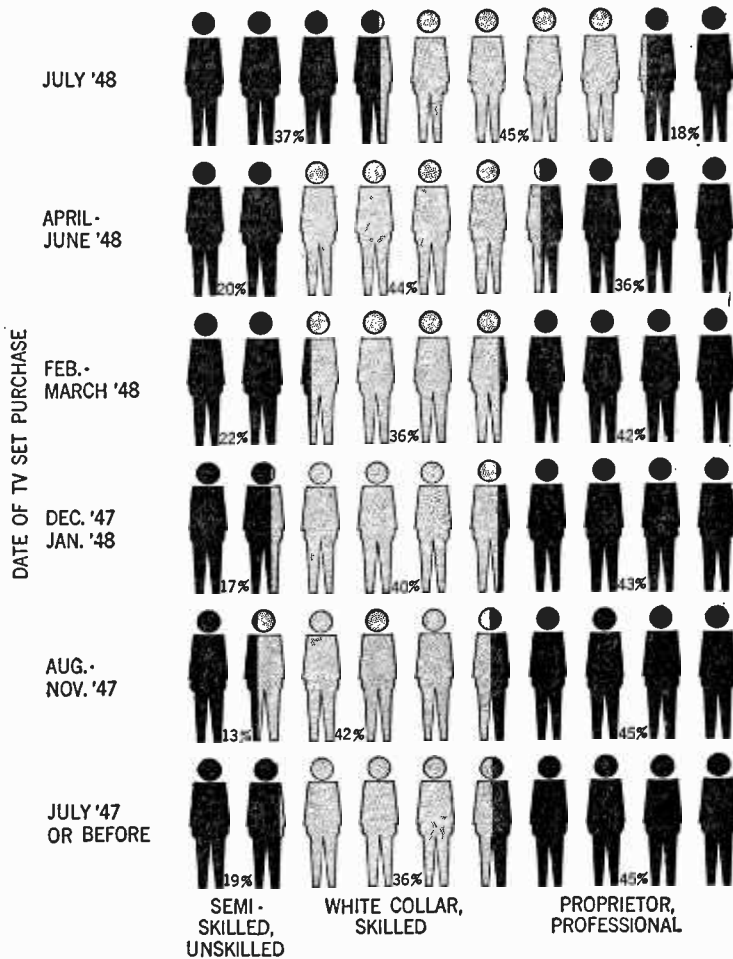
Of further interest is the fact that the relatively poor are not only the most enthusiastic purchasers but also the most enthusiastic viewers. As with radio listening, television viewing increases as you descend the socio-economic scale. Television is the poor man's latest and most prized luxury. We might, here, mention again the correlation between the popularity of the mass media of communication and the audience's conditions of life.

Other audience characteristics also make television a unique and fascinating medium. There are, for instance, more young

<sup>26</sup> Quoted from 'Television Today,' Columbia Broadcasting System, May 1949, p. 10.

<sup>27</sup> Source: CBS-Rutgers University Joint Television Research Project.

## OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF TV SET BUYERS



children in television families, and interest in television is on the increase among children under ten.

Among children between the ages of 6 and 12 in television homes, listening to the radio almost disappears as a form of activity. The same children spend a great deal of evening time viewing television. It

cannot be said that television in this situation is displacing radio, as is so often the case with adults; on the contrary there is good reason for believing that the children who now devote more than two hours to television probably spent not much above one half hour listening to evening radio prior to family purchase of television. In short, television is adding a completely new dimension to the experience of these children.<sup>28</sup>

Television is further differentiated from radio in its appeal to the sexes. In radio women tend to predominate in the audience; in television this situation is reversed. 'In the families interviewed men and women were present in about equal numbers. But when we asked who in the family was most interested in television, men were indicated in 91% of the cases. We also checked actual viewing by quarter hours and discovered that men as a group spend more time viewing than do women.'<sup>29</sup>

What of the nature of television's appeal? 'Television provides a maximum extension of the perceived environment with a minimum of effort. Many television viewers reflect this concept when they make remarks like these. "It is as if you were right there. You have a box seat or better for all sorts of things right in your own home." "We have been all over Europe now, we have seen much that we would never have seen."<sup>30</sup> Here again we see the obvious correlation between the viewer's restricted environment and its effortless expansion by means of television. Television is a form of 'going places' without even the expenditure of movement, to say nothing of money. It is bringing the world to people's doorsteps.

<sup>28</sup> J. W. Riley, F. V. Cantwell, K. F. Ruttiger, 'Some Observations on the Social Effects of Television,' in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Summer 1949, Princeton University Press, p. 230.

<sup>29</sup> Address by Oscar Katz, CBS Research Director, at the seventh (1949) annual luncheon of *The Pulse*, Inc. But here again television's fluidity defies stable interpretation of trends. More recent tests suggest that, as the television schedule expands, the proportion of women viewers in relation to men is tending to increase. By 1950 there were generally more women than men in the average program's audience.

<sup>30</sup> Address by Oscar Katz at the Nineteenth Institute for Education by Radio, 6 May, 1949.

Viewers' program preferences have shown themselves as fluid as television's own development of program services. As networks developed and more advertising money became available, the character of programs changed—as did the public's response.

About two years ago, in New York, surveys showed the most popular types of programs to be: first, sports; second, live drama; third, feature films; and fourth, children's shows. Two years later, Pulse of New York data for last Spring provide a new picture. Here the most popular program category is comedy—variety programs; second comes drama and mysteries; third, the talent program, with a bow to Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts; in fourth place comes sports; and fifth, situation-comedy programs.

In the list of popular program types now, three of them—talent programs, situation-comedy and comedy-variety programs do not even appear two years ago, and sports rank fourth, not first.<sup>31</sup>

Here again we have significant social and psychological indications of present cultural trends and of the center of popular interest.

##### 5. TELEVISION'S INFLUENCE ON LEISURE HABITS

Thus far we have considered television as an isolated social phenomenon. Greater interest attaches to its effects on other facets of human life, for it inevitably involves displacement of interest and a redistribution of leisure-time activities. All the research studies are unanimous in their conclusion that television's entry into the home alters in certain fundamental respects, though to a varying extent, the pattern of family behavior. Some claim that it even affects family relations.

The most immediate and obvious effect is the modification of previous leisure-time avocations. There is, for instance, some decline in movie-going, in attendance at sporting events, in reading, and, most markedly, in radio listening. One study conducted in Philadelphia by Princeton University, shows a decrease

<sup>31</sup> 'Television Research,' a talk by Edward G. Reeve, Manager of Research Projects, Columbia Broadcasting System, Research Department, before The Advertising Club of Boston, and The New England Chapter, American Association of Advertising Agencies, 1 November, 1949.

in radio listening of 43 per cent.<sup>32</sup> Social habits are also affected. Television has become, temporarily at least, a means of social entertainment. Friends are invited in to 'view,' and many families are showing themselves more sociable in this sense.

Family relations, too, are being influenced. 'Television appears definitely to be giving the family a more home centered orientation. 66% of the respondents in the total television sample stated that it was their frank opinion that TV served to bring all of the family closer together . . . 66% said that television keeps the children home more. 92% reported that their families get together often to watch the same television program.'<sup>33</sup>

Many have stressed this factor as significant. The automobile, they say, has tended to break up the home. Television is re-establishing home ties. There are, however, those who question whether a family grouped in silence around a television receiver is in any true sense favorably affected in terms of family relations. The development of common interests within a family is obviously desirable, and common experience is an essential basis of personal relations. But much depends upon the nature of the experience and its life-giving quality. Maybe it will take more than television to make a home into a family.

All these facts are pregnant with interest, but caution is necessary in extrapolating present findings. There is no guarantee, or even much likelihood, that current habits will be stabilized. The period under review is altogether too short for confident prognosis. We must remember, too, that even within this period television itself has changed. Television today is in many respects

<sup>32</sup> A study by Thomas E. Coffin at Hofstra College confirms this trend. 'Sports attendance suffered only slightly while movie going and reading declined about 1/5, other commercial entertainment drops for about 1/3, while listening is cut nearly in half.' More recent studies, however, suggest that after a time there is a return to previously formed habits. Radio listening picks up again—at least for favorite programs. What appears to be indicated is that, with the alternative of television available, radio listening becomes less routine and more selective.

<sup>33</sup> Cited from the Princeton University report quoted in *Television Magazine*, May 1949.

markedly different from what it was a year ago. We might do well to follow the advice of one of television's ablest and closest observers. 'I have no quarrel,' says Mr. Katz, 'with such research as long as it is interpreted as *descriptive* research. That is, as long as it is used to indicate present status in a changing situation. But I think that we are being short-sighted and open to the widest error if we treat research of this kind as predictive research and if we let it occupy the center of research attention.'<sup>84</sup>

## 6. TELEVISION'S EFFECTS ON OTHER MEDIA

In our review of television's audience, we have seen its effects on people's use of other media of information and of entertainment. How, in the long run, will these media be affected? Let us confine consideration to the two media whose future interests are most vitally involved.

### A. Radio

It seems almost certain that, of all the media, radio will be the hardest hit. There are prophets of disaster who foresee its total displacement by television. Such an alarmist view hardly seems tenable. There will be a temporary disequilibrium but, once the present craze is over, subsequent adjustment to a more normal pattern of behavior seems probable. For the two media, after all, are far from equivalent. Radio will continue to hold a number of trump cards. As we probe the distinctive attributes of radio and television and their relation to the needs and circumstances of the consumer, we discover grounds for the belief that radio's days are far from numbered.

The most striking immediate effect of television's advent has been a frantic effort to cut operating costs in radio. More than three quarters of television stations are, as we have seen, owned by men already operating radio stations. Radio consequently

<sup>84</sup> Address by Oscar Katz at the seventh (1949) annual luncheon of *The Pulse*, Inc.

has been converted into television's milch cow. The results are in several respects unfortunate. For the ax, which is presently being swung with such vigor, is falling on heads that neither radio nor public interest can afford to see lopped off. Early casualties have been radio research (the CBS research department, for instance, now has only one half of the personnel it had three years ago) and public-service programs.

Concurrently, standards of acceptance for advertising copy have been lowered. Networks and private stations are today accepting, and even inviting, copy that five years ago would have been dismissed as unfit for publication on the air.

Finding a taboo in radio today is as difficult as wrapping up a sponsor for a \$20,000 a week program. Both belong to an almost forgotten era. Revelation last week that Schenley was moving into network radio . . . climaxes a year of unprecedented policy revamping within the industry. . . A few years back any station would have shuddered at the thought of a laxative commercial getting a meal-time airing. There's no such squeamishness today among broadcasters. Having spent years trying to eliminate commercial religious programming, radio has begun to invite it back, with ABC even giving it Sunday afternoon show casting. Deodorants, medical books, mail order selling, questionable products, all are getting a play today to fatten radio's coffers. . . CBS which, with NBC, has been most Simon Pure on questionable plugs, only this week went whole hog in a reversal of policy on acceptance of deodorant business.<sup>35</sup>

The industry appears oversold on disaster. It will no doubt recover balance, but meantime the consequences are unfortunate.

On a longer view, we might hazard the guess that television will become the predominant medium of entertainment in evening hours. But what of daytime hours? Throughout the day the available audience consists mainly of women, who are occupied with household duties. Television, which claims the attention of both eye and ear, is likely to prove altogether too exacting in its demands for daytime audiences. Women will

<sup>35</sup> 'Bars are Down on all Taboos,' *Variety*, Vol. 175, No. 7, 27 July, 1949.



probably continue to listen to the serial drama and other daytime radio features. Apart from occasional special events, television's power to lure these women away from the radio would seem to be limited.

We might expect radio drama in evening hours to vanish in time altogether. There are those who think of it as a bastard art at best. Here the advantage seems to be television's. On the other hand, radio newcasts will probably continue to be popular; their attraction is that of immediacy and of conciseness. Nor does it seem reasonable to expect that radio commentators will go out of business. Little is gained by sight of them and, with reference to some of them, much may be lost. The peculiar magnetism of the unseen voice may be expected to continue to exert a strong hold over listeners. The same would seem to be true, in part, of forums and discussions. Admittedly there is an initial attraction in observing the interplay of faces, but in the long run the distractions of the home may be such as to result in little more than an occasional glimpse at the television screen. It also seems questionable whether music lovers will insist on seeing as well as hearing the instrumentalists. Music's appeal is essentially aural and is likely to remain so.

What is currently being underestimated with respect to television as a whole is the strain involved in yielding both eye and ear over prolonged periods of time. It seems doubtful, on a long-term view, whether television will maintain its present lead over radio other than with respect to programs in which the visual element is dominant and all-important.

For some years to come, a shift in the predominant locale of radio listeners seems probable. Technical and economic factors suggest that it will be some time before television provides service to people in small urban and rural areas. Intermediately, at least, these people will, of necessity, remain loyal to radio, and radio in turn may take more into account the special needs of listeners thus located.

One thing seems certain, and it is a factor that may have

revolutionary consequences. Radio's days of swollen profits are over. It must reconcile itself not to bankruptcy but to more modest profits and a smaller share of advertising revenue. Obviously we cannot predict the full consequences of this changed status. It does, however, seem likely that radio will be forced to greater efficiency and to a more economical use of its limited financial resources. Theoretically, increased competition should stimulate increased resourcefulness and invention. Should radio take the easy course (as, in the absence of any powerful rival, it has for ten years been able to do) and convert itself into a kind of peripatetic victrola, it will doom itself to disaster. If, on the other hand, it makes a virtue of necessity, there is at least the remote possibility that, at the price of some reduction in radio's profits, the public may be enriched in a surprising sense by the competitive inroads of television.

If we are correct in surmising that the inherent costliness of television will result in its almost exclusive devotion, in the evening, to the satisfaction of the mass appetite for entertainment, lesser but still considerable interests may at long last come into their own through radio.<sup>36</sup> Both self-interest and public interest now seem to require that radio study how to win back the audiences it has lost through default of service, and to build audiences it has hitherto considered not worth courting. Lesser majorities of taste and interest than that for entertainment are still capable of providing advertisers with a rich reward for their investment. Necessity may force radio to that revision of its policies, which with foresight and a real concern for public interest, it might have long since seen to be identical with enlightened self-interest.

### B. *Motion Pictures*

The motion picture, like radio, has its prophets of doom. At *Life* magazine's Round Table on the film, Mr. Robert Sherwood

<sup>36</sup> Station WNEW in New York, for instance, is already experimenting along these lines.

expressed the view that television 'will have a revolutionary and devastating effect on Hollywood as it is now constituted.' Revolutionary the effect may well be, and in a very salutary sense; but one may question whether it will be devastating. That television will make financial inroads seems indicated by present evidence, but there is reason to believe that they will not be comparable to those on radio. There may be a momentary crisis, because Hollywood is temporarily hard hit by the severe reduction in its film markets abroad, on which it has depended for some 40 per cent of its total income and the bulk of its clear profits. But on a long-term view, substantial recovery of these markets seems probable. Opinions differ in regard to the loss of revenue that Hollywood can take without 'devastating effects.' Leaders of the film industry think that a 20 to 25 per cent loss of revenue to television would spell ruin. There is, however, no present indication that anything resembling such a reduction of movie-going is probable.

Hollywood, moreover, has an advantage over radio in that it can to some extent recoup its losses by itself subserving television. Television operators will find it difficult to fill 16 hours a day. Extensive use of film shorts seems likely, and Hollywood has (or can acquire) the 'know how' to produce such films.

But as with radio, the decisive factor in the situation is the distinctive drawing power of these two rival media. There is talk in Hollywood of bringing television to the theater screen and thus luring viewers out of the home into the movie houses. Such a policy might seem foredoomed to failure because it overlooks a characteristic of television that constitutes one of its most attractive features—its easy availability. On the other hand, there is little in present evidence to suggest that the basic motivation of movie-going will be decisively affected by television's advent. Hollywood's advantage is the inherent attractiveness of moving pictures on a full-sized screen.

As with radio, the effect of television (in terms of the stimulus of intensified competition) may well be salutary. Increased

economy and efficiency will be forced upon the film industry. Like radio, too, it may be forced to search for different markets of appeal, and should it do so, the rewards in store are likely to be even greater than those for radio. For, vast as are film audiences today, they are not comparable to those of radio. Film attendance, as we have seen, is predominantly a teen-age avocation. Hollywood has a huge absent audience to entice.

Thus the over-all picture is far more encouraging than it seems at first sight. A division of labor, similar to that already suggested as feasible between television and radio, is possible with respect to the film industry. It may well be that television will become the dominant mass means of entertainment. Films may develop in terms of appeals far more widely differentiated than at present. At least there are grounds for hope that Hollywood's product will slowly veer away from present stereotypes attuned to adolescent minds and begin to tap the undeveloped market of the mature in age and the mature in culture.

If we consider the distinctive nature of the appeal of each of the three media we have considered, and if we take the long view, undistracted by the highly unreliable indices of current and essentially transitional change in the public's leisure-time habits, we may confidently conclude that 'nothing is here for tears, nothing to beat the breast.' Television's advent provides a healthy and stimulating shot in the arm to private enterprise and to that keen competition that in the entertainment industries has long been overdue. It remains to be seen how far private enterprise will effectively exploit the wider scope for rich and diverse service to the public which is now open to it.

#### 7. TELEVISION AND EDUCATION

No provision has been made in the FCC's allocation scheme for frequencies reserved for use in education. One lone, dissenting voice on the Commission has been raised in protest.

I believe this Notice of Proposed Rule Making should include a provision for the reservation of a specified number of frequencies . . .

for the establishment of a non-commercial educational television service. For I think that our duty to 'encourage the larger and more effective use of radio in the public interest' requires us to make an affirmative effort to make provision to insure that education will be able to make full use of television, and to enter into the field before the spectrum becomes too crowded. . . It would, I think, result in tragic waste from the standpoint of the public interest, if, at the outset of development in this field, adequate provision were not made for the realization of the almost limitless possibilities of television as a medium of visual education.<sup>37</sup>

The enrichment through television of a child's educational experience seems, at first glance, so obvious as to admit of no dispute. But second thoughts suggest at least some limitations inherent in the medium, and several others of a more practical nature. Let us ask, in the first place, in what sense is the medium limited?

Television, like radio, is subject to that tyranny of time that, as we have seen, affects its ready and convenient use. It is limited, secondly, by the size of the image it projects and by the area within which that image can be conveniently viewed. Thirdly, like radio, it is one-way communication. No one of these limitations is more than marginal—in itself. Taken together, however, they prompt a question.

What, apart from the portrayal of significant events as they occur, has television to offer the classroom that a film cannot offer in larger measure? Films can be used when they are wanted. Films offer a wider 'canvass' on which demonstrations (e.g., of scientific experiment) can be given with much greater clarity. Films have universal range; that is, they can be made anywhere—in India, Africa—and brought to the classroom. The one, unique characteristic of television (to be discussed in the next section) hardly has relevance for classroom education.

What of practical considerations? These must be reckoned with, for we are concerned with prognosis, not with pipe dreams.

<sup>37</sup> Separate views of Commissioner Frieda Hennock to Notice of Further Proposed Rule Making (FCC 49-948).

Have we any precedent to guide us, and is it encouraging? There is the precedent of radio. Stations devoted exclusively to education sprang up in radio's early days. They survived, rather than flourished. With FM's advent, the interests of educators were specifically safeguarded by the FCC through reservation of a special band of frequencies for their exclusive use. Relatively few have taken up this option.

Prospects are even more discouraging when we consider costs. These, which, as some claim, have proved to be the major deterrent in educational broadcasting's development, are far greater in television—as are the skills involved in competent production and transmission. Both capital outlay and operating costs are, indeed, so much greater as to give us pause. It has been estimated that the all-inclusive cost of an educational station covering an entire state would be between three and five million dollars. This includes about \$300,000 for construction, \$50,000 for the first year's operation, and more than \$2,500,000 for eight or ten booster transmitters with relay links to give statewide service.<sup>38</sup> The probable returns on such a large investment must be seriously weighed against rival claims for urgent capital outlay in the general field of education. Where does expenditure on television stand on the list of priorities of need in education—school buildings, teacher's pay and so on?

Such a question cannot be answered without thinking of the role it is intended that television should perform. Commissioner Hennock conceives that 'the present lack in many places of sufficient qualified teaching personnel makes television available as a vital force in achieving a raising of our educational standards.' The same thought seems to be in the mind of the Commission's Chairman when he suggests that

In the face of the demand for more and better education we must consider that the universities, in three years from now, will need 100,000 more teachers and 13,000 more administrators. . . It is esti-

<sup>38</sup> Figures cited by Professor Carl Menzer at the 1949 Ohio Institute for Education by Radio.

mated that there will be a 40% increase in elementary and high school enrollment by 1958. . . Clearly the mechanics of higher learning must be modernized, must be expedited if our colleges and universities are to fulfill their true function in society. . . Because of its unique power to demonstrate, television is arousing the intense interest of advertisers. There is every indication that they will exploit this medium to the hilt to sell both goods and services. . . Surely America's educators cannot be less progressive in availing themselves of this electronic miracle.<sup>89</sup>

Implied in both these quotations is the view that television can somehow make good the present defects in education resulting from a dearth of competent teachers. How it can do so is not made clear. Tools are useless other than in the hands of craftsmen, and television is not more than a tool. To substitute television for teaching is to make present educational confusion worse confounded. To use it effectively requires the skilled teacher whose dearth or absence is deplored. Present ills in education require more than gadgets for a cure.

But what if we conceived of education in broader terms and in a context more urgent, even, than that of the classroom? Schooling, we have suggested, is retarded by the prevalence of ignorance and set ways of thought in the child's family and social environment. A concerted drive in adult education is necessary to release the child mind from shackles early imposed on it by its elders and so-called betters. Commissioner Hennock undoubtedly sees television in such broad terms and claims reservation of some frequencies for such use of it. Her colleagues on the Commission appear to rely on the commercial telecaster for the rendering of such service.

In the Communications Act of 1934 the Congress directed the Commission to 'study the proposal that Congress by statute allocate fixed percentages of radio broadcasting facilities to particular types or kinds of non-profit activities.' The Commission, in its report to Congress, recommended that specific percentages not be reversed by

<sup>89</sup> Address before the American College Public Relations Association, 28 April, 1949.

statute, specifically on the ground that existing commercial stations were ready and willing to carry programs of non-profit organizations. . . . The Commission has consistently maintained that licensees must be responsive to the needs and interests of the community, that they cannot surrender their program responsibilities to networks, but must retain some measure of initiative in program making and serving community needs.<sup>40</sup>

The Commission has 'consistently maintained,' but it has almost consistently not acted. Will it act now that it has a double universe of discourse to police? Is public opinion itself sufficiently aroused to the need of adult education to lend support to the Commission? The chances, at the moment, appear to be slim. If, moreover, we are even approximately right in our analysis of the economic factors likely to dictate the future trend in television, how far can the Commission go in insisting on public service?

If television is to be salvaged for use in education, reserved frequencies and subsidized service seem essential. Given the premise that television should not be restricted in its use to entertainment, it is the lone voice of Commissioner Hennöck that would seem to have reason on its side. Her plea, moreover, has a boldness and a generosity that are typically American. It reasserts the belief of our forefathers that, as the church is the spire, education is the cornerstone of a free society. It is a bid not for piecemeal, uncorrelated action, but for a grand design, nationwide in its reach and comprehensive in its service to the ends of adult education in our time. But the habit of thinking about education on a grand scale appears to have waned among us. The vision has faded. Current regard for education as the cornerstone of freedom hardly warrants the belief that generous expenditure of public funds (nothing short of a large federal grant seems worth considering) will be forthcoming to realize this noble dream.

<sup>40</sup> Wayne Coy in an address before the American College Public Relations Association, 28 April, 1949.



## 8. TELEVISION AS AN ART

All kinds of extraneous factors are likely to affect the future use of television—the character and outlook of those in control of the medium, the economics of production, the kind of audience predominantly catered to, and so on. In the light of our discussion, it seems probable that television will rapidly conform to a few more or less stereotyped conventions. It will be technically ingenious and inventive but artistically poor. Except on rare occasions, its true scope as a medium of expression will not be fully realized for some time to come. Nevertheless, let us, for a moment, give free rein to fancy and speculate on its potentialities (if any) as a fine art.

The artist is one who, for purposes of self-expression, lends himself to the strait disciplines of form. One such form, for instance, is the sonnet, limited in length to fourteen lines and narrowly exacting in its demands of rhyme and rhythm. Yet from such limitations, once accepted, stem a concentrated power of expression and a measured beauty of related sounds, readily apprehended, though they elude exact analysis. The beauty and impact of any work of art derive, in some part, from its mastery of the limitations imposed by the form adopted.

Even more elusive, as it affects us, is the peculiar quality of what is poured into the confining mold of form—that miraculous compound of the thing observed and of the observer's inward eye; of an object that was there for all to see but which the artist clothes with a transcendent meaning and significance it did not have before. (There is the familiar story of a lady contemplating a landscape by Whistler and objecting that she had never seen a sunset like that. To which Whistler rejoined, 'But, madam, don't you wish you had?') Self-expression in art is imaginative insight—that which informs familiar objects and experiences with new life and transforms our confined concept of reality.

We cannot anticipate what insights the future artist in television will have. We may, however, hazard a few comments on the limitations imposed and on the scope offered by this new medium. Of all the modern media of communication, television will prove the most exacting, for it represents the culmination of a trend (now 50-odd years old) that, as the result of technical invention, has unloaded at the artist's door an embarrassing profusion of resources. The general lack of art in the outpourings of our modern media may be due less to a lack of artistry than to the speed at which the artist has been compelled to incorporate new techniques into his art. In other words, the lack is due in part to the repeated transformation of the form itself.

We have only to look back a few years to observe the effects of this metamorphosis. Movie makers, for instance, had just begun to master the conventions and to exploit the limitations of the silent screen when sound was thrown in for good measure. This innovation involved not merely an added resource, but a complete transformation of the art of the film. Movie making, in effect, began all over again. A decade later, color was introduced and, though less disruptive, it further complicated the skills requiring mastery and added a new aesthetic factor for the artist to consider. With television we have reached the end of the road. All the technical resources of communications are here synthesized at last. Speech, music, natural and artificial sound, visual imagery (now still and now in flowing motion), and color—all these must be blended into a coherent pattern and subordinated, each in its place, to the effects desired.

To achieve such a synthesis taxes the genius of any one man, and we may observe in television, as in films, the emergence of a new, composite kind of art. The credits listed on the screen at the beginning of a picture are not mere gestures of courtesy; they truly represent the co-operative nature of a film's construction under the direction of a dominant, creative mind. It is the same with television. How, then, do these two media differ?

One basic difference is that television programs are viewed

in the home, and movie programs are seen in a public theater. Little, if anything, is known as yet about the differences (as these affect the observer's attitude to, expectation of, and likely response to the thing observed) involved in these contrasted situations. But it is at least arguable that marked and perhaps crucial differences exist and that they lend themselves to differential exploitation.

Consider, for instance, the architecture and decor of the larger metropolitan movie theaters. They suggest and invite expectation of lavish entertainment, of a public display, of a show on a grand scale. The clink of coins at the box office argues a return on the investment. As we move into the darkness, we move out of the world into a modern fairyland of grand illusion. Moreover, there can be little question that we are affected, as we look and listen, by those around us. Our responsiveness is in part and in some subtle way collective.

Viewing at home is different. It is (or can be) at once more private, intimate, and personal. Perhaps we may here prove responsive to appeals and situations, touching us personally and privately, to which we should not willingly lend ourselves in public—at least not without embarrassment. We go to movies to get out of ourselves. Could it be that, through television, we might turn inward and, with interest and profit, submit ourselves to self-revelation?

Apart from this, we suggest that the decisive limitation distinguishing television from the film will be the reduced size of the projected image. (The present screen will undoubtedly be enlarged but not, we believe, by much. The receiver, after all, is part of the home furniture, and the perspective of the viewer will have to remain proportionate to the dimensions of an average-sized living room.) It is this reduced image that will determine the distinctive scope and limitations of telecasting as an art.

All dramatic art is make-believe and yet induces the illusion of reality. Thus in the theater we soon forget it is a stage that

we observe as we are absorbed by the drama and identify ourselves with the players. With films, also, we readily forget that it is a screen we are watching. Here the illusion of reality is facilitated by the life-size portrayal of the characters, the panoramic vistas of the background, the restless movement of the camera as it brings figures into close or remote focus, and the constant change of the *mise en scène*. Action and movement, visually portrayed, are the essence of film making. What we see dominates what we hear (though it is not contradictory to say that no film is ever better than its script), and we unconsciously lend ourselves to a new form of visual language.

Television will create its own dramatic make-believe, but it will be of an order different from that of the film. Thus the reduced image will make less credible the imitation of life in action—achieved in films by the expansive, roving, restless movement of the camera projected on a full-sized screen. (A miniature has not the same appeal as a full-sized portrait. The miniaturist does not imitate the portrait painter ‘in the small.’ He plies his own distinctive art.) It is for this reason that those who have moved to television from either radio or films must unlearn much and forget more. Any attempts (and many such may currently be seen on television screens) to ‘transfer’ to television techniques of radio and film are both foredoomed to failure and calculated to make a bastard art of television.

Every composition, Aristotle claimed, must, to achieve perfection, be ‘of a certain size.’ Television’s make-believe must be achieved without violating our sense of probability, as this is associated with the reduced image we watch. The reduced image is likely to affect quite fundamentally the sight-sound relationship in telecasting. In the film the eye is held by, as it eagerly follows, action. In television no comparable scale of action is feasible (without breaking the spell of our illusion) or pace of action necessary.

Thus as the scope for expansive movement is more circumscribed, so, possibly, the proportionate emphasis and interest of

sound—of what is said—will be the greater. A subtle modification of the sight-sound relationship is here involved. We think of television as predominantly a visual medium, and such it is. Yet, paradoxically, it may well prove that visual impressions will come to subserve what is said in a way that will distinguish television from either film or theater, and offer it a new, distinctive field for art.

We suggest that television lends itself to the development of a new kind of drama in which action is not, as in the film, predominantly physical, but psychological—both sight and sound serving to give overt expression to the covert operations of the mind. Subtleties of this kind are difficult to achieve on either stage or screen. Unrelieved by action, they tend to leave the stage empty, as, in the film, the claims of movement preclude long sustained shots or suspended action. The film is extrovert. Television, perhaps, lends itself to introvert adventures. It is a medium potentially more intimate and subtle. As the image is 'of a certain size,' the eye is not called upon to rove as constantly as in the film. It can rest longer without a sense of being held up. Far longer shots are feasible—if and as the spoken word lends meaning to, as it itself derives increased significance from, such sustained tension of the eye.

Visual language, which, as in great films, informs even inanimate objects with life and meaning by the selective focusing of our attention and which, by lighting and angle can make its silence 'speak volumes,' provides, perhaps, that supplement to words by which alone we may come to apprehend the shrouded fears and hopes and longings of our own subconscious world. If television, by exploitation of what we believe to be its inherent limitation—the confined dimension of its projected image—can explore such fields, it may offer us an art as new and as momentous as that mental underworld (revealed to us by Freud and his successors) which it seems so well-adapted to explore.

One of television's pioneers, John Houseman, steeped in the theater, radio, and movies but enslaved, as an artist, by none

of them, has already explored such possibilities, setting himself a seemingly impossible task. In 'The Stronger' he has adapted a dramatic monologue by Strindberg in which the wife and ex-mistress of a man sit opposite each other in a restaurant. The wife, conscious of her precarious hold on her husband's affections and conscious, too, of his one-time mistress's continuing hold and deeper understanding of him, pours out her fears in terms of flurried, verbose self-justification. The ex-mistress, sodden with drink, sits, listens, watches—and speaks not a word. For thirteen minutes the monologue is sustained, while the camera plays upon the two women's faces and the ex-mistress communicates (without a word) the bitterness of her rejection, her contempt for the other woman, her deeper love and understanding of the man, and her determination to win him back. Here, we suggest, is an example of what may one day make of television not merely a vehicle for the visible transmission through space of current events and scenes, not only a relay point for theatrical films reduced to miniatures, not radio with visual embellishments, but an art in its own right and with its own worlds to conquer.

## APPENDIX I

Excerpts from the Communications Act of 1934:

SECTION 1. For the purpose of regulating interstate and foreign commerce in communication by wire and radio so as to make available, so far as possible, to all the people of the United States a rapid, efficient, Nation-wide, and world-wide wire and radio communication service with adequate facilities at reasonable charges, for the purpose of the national defense, for the purpose of promoting safety of life and property through the use of wire and radio communication,\* and for the purpose of securing a more effective execution of this policy by centralizing authority heretofore granted by law to several agencies and by granting additional authority with respect to interstate and foreign commerce in wire and radio communication, there is hereby created a commission to be known as the 'Federal Communications Commission,' which shall be constituted as hereinafter provided, and which shall execute and enforce the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 4. (a) The Federal Communications Commission (in this Act referred to as the 'Commission') shall be composed of seven commissioners appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, one of whom the President shall designate as chairman.

(b) Each member of the Commission shall be a citizen of the United States. No member of the Commission or person in its employ shall be financially interested in the manufacture or sale of radio apparatus or of apparatus for wire or radio communications . . . nor be in the employ of or hold any official relation to any person subject to any of the provisions of this Act, nor own stocks, bonds, or other securities of any corporation subject to any of the provisions of this Act. Such commissioners shall not engage in any other business, vocation, or employment. Not more than four commissioners shall be members of the same political party.

\* The provision relating to the promotion of safety of life and property was added by An Act to amend the Communications Act of 1934, etc. Public Law No. 97, 75th Congress, approved and effective 20 May, 1937, 50 Stat. 189.

(c) The commissioners first appointed under this Act shall continue in office for the terms of one, two, three, four, five, six, and seven years, respectively, from the date of the taking effect of this Act, the term of each to be designated by the President, but their successors shall be appointed for terms of seven years; except that any person chosen to fill a vacancy shall be appointed only for the unexpired term of the commissioner whom he succeeds. No vacancy in the Commission shall impair the right of the remaining commissioners to exercise all the powers of the Commission.

SECTION 301. It is the purpose of this Act, among other things, to maintain the control of the United States over all the channels of interstate and foreign radio transmission; and to provide for the use of such channels, but not the ownership thereof, by persons for limited periods of time, under licenses granted by Federal authority, and no such license shall be construed to create any right, beyond the terms, conditions, and periods of the license. No person shall use or operate any apparatus for the transmission of energy or communications or signals by radio . . . except under and in accordance with this Act and with a license in that behalf granted under the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 303. Except as otherwise provided in this Act, the Commission, from time to time, as public convenience, interest, or necessity requires, shall—

- (a) Classify radio stations;
- (b) Prescribe the nature of the service to be rendered by each class of licensed stations and each station within any class;
- (c) Assign bands of frequencies to the various classes of stations, and assign frequencies for each individual station and determine the power which each station shall use and the time during which it may operate;
- (d) Determine the location of classes of stations or individual stations;
- (e) Regulate the kind of apparatus to be used with respect to its external effects and the purity and sharpness of the emissions from each station and from the apparatus therein;
- (f) Make such regulations not inconsistent with law as it may deem necessary to prevent interference between stations and to carry out the provisions of this Act: Provided, however, that changes in



the frequencies, authorized power, or in the times of operation of any station, shall not be made without the consent of the station licensee unless, after a public hearing, the Commission shall determine that such changes will promote public convenience or interest or will serve public necessity, or the provisions of this Act will be more fully complied with;

(g) Study new uses for radio, provide for experimental uses of frequencies, and generally encourage the larger and more effective use of radio in the public interest;

(h) Have authority to establish areas or zones to be served by any station;

(i) Have authority to make special regulations applicable to radio stations engaged in chain broadcasting;

(j) Have authority to make general rules and regulations requiring stations to keep such records of programs, transmissions of energy, communications, or signals as it may deem desirable;

(k) Have authority to exclude from the requirements of any regulations in whole or in part any radio station upon railroad rolling stock, or to modify such regulations in its discretion;

(l) Have authority to prescribe the qualifications of station operators, to classify them according to the duties to be performed, to fix the forms of such licenses, and to issue them to such citizens of the United States as the Commission finds qualified;

(m) (1) Have authority to suspend the license of any operator upon proof sufficient to satisfy the Commission that the licensee—

(A) Has violated any provision of any Act, treaty, or convention binding on the United States, which the Commission is authorized to administer, or any regulation made by the Commission under any such Act, treaty, or convention; or

(B) Has failed to carry out a lawful order of the master or person lawfully in charge of the ship or aircraft on which he is employed; or

(C) Has wilfully damaged or permitted radio apparatus or installations to be damaged; or

(D) Has transmitted superfluous radio communications or signals or communications containing profane or obscene words, language, or meaning, or has knowingly transmitted—

(1) False or deceptive signals or communications, or

(2) A call signal or letter which has not been assigned by proper authority to the station he is operating; or

(E) Has wilfully or maliciously interfered with any other radio communications or signals; or

(F) Has obtained or attempted to obtain, or has assisted another to obtain or attempt to obtain, an operator's license by fraudulent means.

(2) No order of suspension of any operator's license shall take effect until 15 days' notice in writing thereof, stating the cause for the proposed suspension, has been given to the operator licensee who may make written application to the Commission at any time within said 15 days for a hearing upon such order. The notice to the operator licensee shall not be effective until actually received by him, and from that time he shall have 15 days in which to mail the said application. In the event that physical conditions prevent mailing of the application at the expiration of the 15 day period, the application shall then be mailed as soon as possible thereafter, accompanied by a satisfactory explanation of the delay. Upon receipt by the Commission of such application for hearing, said order of suspension shall be held in abeyance until the conclusion of the hearing which shall be conducted under such rules as the Commission may prescribe. Upon the conclusion of said hearing the Commission may affirm, modify, or revoke said order of suspension.

(n) Have authority to inspect all radio installations associated with stations required to be licensed by any Act or which are subject to the provisions of any Act, treaty, or convention binding on the United States, to ascertain whether in construction, installation, and operation they conform to the requirements of the rules and regulations of the Commission, the provisions of any Act, the terms of any treaty or convention binding on the United States, and the conditions of the license or other instrument of authorization under which they are constructed, installed, or operated.

(o) Have authority to designate call letters of all stations;

(p) Have authority to cause to be published such call letters and such other announcements and data as in the judgment of the Commission may be required for the efficient operation of radio stations subject to the jurisdiction of the United States and for the proper enforcement of this act;

(q) Have authority to require the painting and/or illumination of radio towers if and when in its judgment such towers constitute or there is a reasonable possibility that they may constitute, a menace to air navigation.

(r) Make such rules and regulations and prescribe such restrictions and conditions, not inconsistent with law, as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act, or any international radio or wire communications treaty or convention, or regulations annexed thereto, including any treaty or convention insofar as it relates to the use of radio, to which the United States is or may hereafter become a party.

SECTION 304. No station license shall be granted by the Commission until the applicant therefor shall have signed a waiver of any claim to the use of any particular frequency or of the ether as against the regulatory power of the United States because of the previous use of the same, whether by license or otherwise.

SECTION 307. (a) The Commission, if public convenience, interest, or necessity will be served thereby, subject to the limitations of this Act, shall grant to any applicant therefor a station license provided for by this Act.

(b) In considering applications for licenses, and modifications and renewals thereof, when and insofar as there is demand for the same, the Commission shall make such distribution of licenses, frequencies, hours of operation, and of power among the several States and communities as to provide a fair, efficient, and equitable distribution of radio service to each of the same.

(c) The Commission shall study the proposal that Congress by statute allocate fixed percentages of radio broadcasting facilities to particular types or kinds of non-profit radio programs or to persons identified with particular types or kinds of non-profit activities, and shall report to Congress, not later than February 1, 1935, its recommendations together with the reasons for the same.

(d) No license granted for the operation of a broadcasting station shall be for a longer term than three years and no license so granted for any other class of station shall be for a longer term than five years, and any license granted may be revoked as hereinafter provided. Upon the expiration of any license, upon application therefor, a renewal of such license may be granted from time to time for a term of not to exceed three years in the case of broadcasting licenses and not to exceed five years in the case of other licenses, but action of the Commission with reference to the granting of such application for the renewal of a license shall be limited to and governed by the

same considerations and practice which affect the granting of original applications.

(e) No renewal of an existing station license shall be granted more than 30 days prior to the expiration of the original license.

SECTION 309. (a) If upon examination of any application for a station license or for the renewal or modification of a station license the Commission shall determine that public interest, convenience, or necessity would be served by the granting thereof, it shall authorize the issuance, renewal, or modification thereof in accordance with said finding. In the event the Commission upon examination of any such application does not reach such decision with respect thereto, it shall notify the applicant thereof, shall fix and give notice of a time and place for hearing thereon, and shall afford such applicant an opportunity to be heard under such rules and regulations as it may prescribe.

(b) Such station licenses as the Commission may grant shall be in such general form as it may prescribe, but each license shall contain, in addition to other provisions, a statement of the following conditions to which such license shall be subject:

(1) The station license shall not vest in the licensee any right to operate the station nor any right in the use of the frequencies designated in the license beyond the term thereof nor in any other manner than authorized therein.

(2) Neither the license nor the right granted thereunder shall be assigned or otherwise transferred in violation of this Act.

(3) Every license issued under this Act shall be subject in terms to the right of use or control conferred by section 606 hereof.

SECTION 310. (a) The station license required hereby shall not be granted to or held by—

(1) An alien or the representative of any alien;

(2) Any foreign government or the representative thereof;

(3) Any corporation organized under the laws of any foreign government;

(4) Any corporation of which any officer or director is an alien or of which more than one-fifth of the capital stock is owned of record or voted by aliens or their representatives or by a foreign government or representative thereof, or by any corporation organized under the laws of a foreign country;

(5) Any corporation directly or indirectly controlled by any other corporation of which any officer or more than one-fourth of the directors are aliens, or of which more than one-fourth of the capital stock is owned of record or voted, after June 1, 1935, by aliens, their representatives, or by a foreign government or representative thereof, or by any corporation organized under the laws of a foreign country, if the Commission finds that the public interest will be served by the refusal or the revocation of such license.

Nothing in this subsection shall prevent the licensing of radio apparatus on board any vessel, aircraft, or other mobile station of the United States when the installation and use of such apparatus is required by Act of Congress or any treaty to which the United States is a party.

(b) The station license required hereby, the frequencies authorized to be used by the licensee, and the rights therein granted shall not be transferred, assigned, or in any manner either voluntarily or involuntarily disposed of, or indirectly by transfer of control of, any corporation holding such license, to any person, unless the Commission shall, after securing full information, decide that said transfer is in the public interest, and shall give its consent in writing.

SECTION 311. The Commission is hereby directed to refuse a station license and/or permit hereinafter required for the construction of a station to any person (or to any person directly or indirectly controlled by such person) whose license has been revoked by a court under section 313, and is hereby authorized to refuse such station license and/or permit to any other person (or to any person directly or indirectly controlled by such person) which has been finally adjudged guilty by a Federal court of unlawfully monopolizing or attempting unlawfully to monopolize, radio communication, directly or indirectly, through the control of the manufacture or sale of radio apparatus, through exclusive traffic arrangements or by any other means, or to have been using unfair methods of competition. . .

SECTION 312. (a) Any station license may be revoked for false statements either in the application or in the statement of fact which may be required by section 308 hereof, or because of conditions revealed by such statements of fact as may be required from time to time which would warrant the Commission in refusing to grant a license on an original application, or for failure to operate substantially as set forth in the license, or for violation of or failure to

observe any of the restrictions and conditions of this Act or of any regulation of the Commission authorized by this Act or by a treaty ratified by the United States. . .

**SECTION 313.** All laws of the United States relating to unlawful restraints and monopolies and to combinations, contracts, or agreements in restraint of trade are hereby declared to be applicable to the manufacture and sale of and to trade in radio apparatus and devices entering into or affecting interstate or foreign commerce and to interstate or foreign radio communications. . .

**SECTION 315.** If any licensee shall permit any person who is a legally qualified candidate for any public office to use a broadcasting station, he shall afford equal opportunities to all other such candidates for that office in the use of such broadcasting station, and the Commission shall make rules and regulations to carry this provision into effect: Provided, that such licensee shall have no power of censorship over the material broadcast under the provisions of this section. No obligation is hereby imposed upon any licensee to allow the use of its station by any such candidate.

**SECTION 316.** No person shall broadcast by means of any radio station for which a license is required by any law of the United States, and no person operating any such station shall knowingly permit the broadcasting of, any advertisement of or information concerning any lottery, gift enterprise, or similar scheme, offering prices dependent in whole or in part upon lot or chance, or any list of the prizes drawn or awarded by means of any such lottery, gift enterprise, or scheme, whether said list contains any part or all of such prizes. Any person violating any provision of this section shall, upon conviction thereof, be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned not more than one year, or both, for each and every day during which such offense occurs.

**SECTION 326.** Nothing in this Act shall be understood or construed to give the Commission the power of censorship over the radio communications or signals transmitted by any radio station, and no regulation or condition shall be promulgated or fixed by the Commission which shall interfere with the right of free speech by means of radio communication. No person within the jurisdiction of the United States shall utter any obscene, indecent, or profane language by means of radio communication.

## APPENDIX II

Excerpts from the 'Royal Charter' and 'License and Agreement,' dated the 29th day of November 1946, between his Majesty's Postmaster General and the British Broadcasting Corporation.

### I. ROYAL CHARTER

1. The Corporation shall continue to be a body corporate by the name of The British Broadcasting Corporation with perpetual succession and a common seal with power to break, alter and renew the same at discretion; willing and ordaining that the Corporation shall and may sue and be sued in all Courts and be capable in law to take and hold real or personal property and do all matters and things incidental or pertaining to a body corporate, but so that the Corporation shall apply the whole of its surplus revenue (if any) and other income solely in promoting its objects. The members of the Corporation are hereinafter referred to as Governors.

2. This Charter shall come into operation on the first day of January one thousand nine hundred and forty seven and (subject as herein provided) shall continue in force for a period of five years from that date.

3. The objects of the Corporation are as follows:—

(a) To carry on as public services, by means of stations established within Our United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man under and in accordance with a Licence or Licences in that behalf granted by Our Postmaster General for the time being, Services for the broadcasting by wireless telephony and television of matter which may for the time being be permitted by or under or be within the scope or ambit of any such Licence, for reception by the public in Our United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, in Our dominions beyond the seas and territories under Our protection, and in other countries and places and by persons on the seas.

6.—(1) There shall be a Chairman of the Corporation who shall be entitled to preside at the meetings thereof.

(2) There shall also be a Vice-Chairman of the Corporation who shall be entitled to preside at the meetings thereof in the absence of the Chairman.

(3) The Chairman or an officer authorised by him shall, subject to such regulations as may be made by the Corporation as hereinafter provided, summon all meetings of the Corporation for the despatch of business.

(4) The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Corporation shall from time to time be appointed by Us in Council for such period and upon such terms as We may determine.

(5) The chief executive officer of the Corporation shall be called the Director General.

11.—(4) The number of Governors (including the Chairman and Vice-Chairman) shall unless otherwise directed by Us in Council be seven, but may from time to time be increased or reduced by Us in Council.

12. The Governors of the Corporation shall (during such time or times as the broadcasting services hereinbefore referred to shall be carried on by the Corporation) receive out of the revenues of the Corporation by way of remuneration for their services as Chairman, Vice-Chairman or Governor, as the case may be, the sums following (to be deemed to accrue from day to day), that is to say:—

The Chairman—3,000 pounds per annum.

The Vice-Chairman—1,000 pounds per annum.

Each of the other Governors—600 pounds per annum.

The Governors may in addition receive out of the revenue of the Corporation expenses properly incurred by them in the due performance of their office.

## II. LICENCE AND AGREEMENT

3. The Corporation shall not without the consent in writing of the Postmaster General receive money or any valuable consideration from any person in respect of the transmission of any broadcast matter by means of the Stations or any of them or broadcast any commercial advertisement or sponsored programme Provided that nothing in this Clause shall be construed as precluding the Corporation (so far only as the licence of the Postmaster General is required) from using for broadcast purposes without payment or for a reduced pay-



ment concerts theatrical entertainments or other broadcast matter performed in public or as precluding the Corporation from announcing the place where any broadcast matter is performed and the name and description of the performers or the number and description of any mechanical record broadcast or the acknowledgment of any permissions granted for the broadcasting of such matter.

4.—(1) Unless prevented by circumstances beyond their control the Corporation shall send efficiently on every day (including Sundays) from such Stations during such hours as after consultation with the Corporation may from time to time be prescribed in writing by the Postmaster General programmes of broadcast matter for reception in the British Islands or by persons on the seas (hereinafter called 'the Home Services') and programmes of broadcast matter for reception in His Majesty's dominions beyond the seas and territories under His Majesty's protection and foreign countries (hereinafter called 'the Overseas Services').

(2) The Corporation shall broadcast an impartial account day by day by professional reporters of the proceedings in both Houses of the United Kingdom Parliament.

(3) The Corporation shall whenever so requested by any Department of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland at the Corporation's own expense send from all or any of the Sound Broadcasting Stations any announcement or other matter which such Department may require to be broadcast Provided that the Corporation when sending such matter may at its discretion announce that it is sent at the request of a named Department.

(4) The Postmaster General may from time to time by Notice in writing to the Corporation require the Corporation to refrain from sending any broadcast matter (either particular or general) specified in such Notice and the definition of broadcast matter hereinbefore contained shall from time to time be read construed and take effect subject to the provisions of any such Notice or Notices which may have been given by the Postmaster General. The Postmaster General may at any time or times revoke or vary any such Notice as aforesaid. Any such Notice may specify whether or not the Corporation may at its discretion announce that the Notice has been given.

(5) The Corporation shall send overseas programmes to such countries, in such languages and at such times as, after consultation with the Corporation, may from time to time be prescribed, with the approval of the Postmaster General and the Lords Commissioners

of the Treasury (hereinafter called 'the Treasury') by such Departments of His Majesty's Government aforesaid as may from time to time be specified in writing by the Postmaster General. The Corporation shall consult and collaborate with the Departments so specified and shall obtain and accept from them such information regarding conditions in, and the policies of His Majesty's Government towards, the countries so prescribed and other countries as will enable the Corporation to plan and prepare its overseas programmes in the national interest.

5. The Corporation shall observe and perform such stipulations conditions and restrictions and do such acts and things in relation to the Television Broadcasting Stations or the Television Service as from time to time may be prescribed by the Postmaster General in writing.

18.—(1) For the purposes of the Home Services and the Television Service (subject as is and in manner hereinafter provided) the Postmaster General shall pay to the Corporation (out of such aids and supplies as from time to time may be appropriated by Parliament therefor) in respect of the first three years and three months of the term a sum equal to 85 per centum of the net licence revenue (as defined in sub-clause (4) hereof), and in respect of the remainder of the term a sum equal to such percentage or percentages of the net licence revenue as the Treasury may authorise.

21.—(1) If and whenever in the opinion of the Postmaster General an emergency shall have arisen in which it is expedient for the Public Service that His Majesty's Government shall have control over the transmission of messages by means of the Stations it shall be lawful for the Postmaster General to direct and cause the Stations or any of them or any part thereof to be taken possession of in the name and on behalf of His Majesty and prevent the Corporation from using them and also to cause the Stations or any of them or any part thereof to be used for His Majesty's service or to take such other steps as he may think fit to secure control over the Stations or any of them and in that event any person authorised by the Postmaster General may enter upon the Stations or any of them and the offices and works of the Corporation or any of them and take possession thereof and use the same as aforesaid.

23.—(1) The Corporation shall not:—

(a) offer or give or agree to give to any person in His Majesty's Service any gift or consideration of any kind as an inducement or reward for doing or forbearing to do, or for having done or foreborne

to do any act in relation to the obtaining or execution of this or any other Contract for His Majesty's Service, or for showing, or forbearing to show favour or disfavour to any person in relation to this or any other Contract for His Majesty's Service.

### APPENDIX III

Partial data on broadcast systems and audiences abroad, based on returns to a questionnaire issued to over thirty nations.

Country	System of Operation	Source of Revenue	Annual Income (Approx.)	Population Coverage (Approx.)	Families Owning Sets	Average Daily Listening Hours
Argentina	Private commercial	Advertising	Unreported	Unreported	1,300,000 sets in population of 14 million	Unreported
Australia	Public corporation and private commercial	License fee, 24 shillings Advertising	1,725,000 pounds from licenses, 1 million + from advertising	85-90%	82%	4½ +
Austria	Government	License fee, 48 shillings	35-40 million shillings	90%	50-60%	Unreported
Belgium	Public corporation	License fee, 144 francs	176,659,776 francs	100%	25-30%	Unreported
Brazil	Government and private commercial	Advertising	Unreported	Unreported	1,200,000 sets in population of 42 million	Unreported
Canada	Public corporation and private commercial (local stations)	License fee, \$2.50 Advertising	CBC 17,500,000 Private \$13,700,000	96%	94%	Unreported
Chile	Private commercial	Advertising	\$120,000,000 (Chilean currency)	80%	25%	6½
Czechoslovakia	Government	License fee, 300 crowns	Unreported	50%	60%	4½
Denmark	Government	License fee, 15 kroner	15 million kroner	100%	95%	Unreported
Great Britain	Public corporation	License fee, 1 pound	9 million pounds	95%	91%	3½
Finland	Combined (90%) government and private ownership (10%)	License fee, 500 finnmaks	288,500,000 finnmaks	50%	55%	Unreported
France	Public corporation	License fee, 750 francs	4 billion francs	95%	50%	6
Holland	5 separate organizations run by religious and political groups	License fee, 12 guilders	f. 15,519,603	90%	1,237,500 sets	12

## APPENDIX III—Continued

Country	System of Operation	Source of Revenue	Annual Income (Approx.)	Population Coverage (Approx.)	Families Owning Sets	Average Daily Listening Hours
India	Government	License fee, plus government grant	Rs 18,300,000	15%	0.5%	3
Italy	Public corporation with some government control	License fee and government grant from taxes	Unreported	100%	Approximately 2,000,000 sets	3
Mexico	Commercial	Advertising	27,500,000 pesos	Confined to principal cities	10%	Unreported
New Zealand	Public corporation and private commercial	License fee, 25 shillings Advertising	762,091 pounds	98%	95%	Unreported
Norway	Public corporation	License fee, 20 kroner	20 million kroner	99%	22%	Unreported
Poland	Government	License fee and government subsidy	6½ million zlotys	Unreported	975,000 sets in population of 24 million	Unreported
Sweden	Private public service corporation (2/3 subscribed to by press, 1/3 by radio industry)	License fee, 10 kroner	19,074,850 kroner	75%	96%	3
U.S.S.R.	The Russian system of broadcasting is too complex for such tabulating as this, and up-to-date statistics are conspicuous by their absence. For the latest and fullest description of Russian radio, see 'Domestic Broadcasting in the USSR' in <i>Communications Research 1948-1949</i> by Lazarsfeld and Stanton, Harper Bros.					

## APPENDIX IV

Excerpts from the Federal Communications Commission's revised ruling (1 June, 1949) in the matter of Editorializing by Broadcast Licensees (FCC-49-769 36009):

1. To determine whether the expression of editorial opinions by broadcast station licensees on matters of public interest and controversy is consistent with their obligations to operate their stations in the public interest.

2. To determine the relationship between any such editorial expression and the affirmative obligation of the licensees to insure that a fair and equal presentation of all sides of controversial issues is made over their facilities.

SECTION 4. It is apparent that our system of broadcasting, under which private persons and organizations are licensed to provide broadcasting service to the various communities and regions, imposes responsibility in the selection and presentation of radio program material upon such licensees. Congress has recognized that the requests for radio time may far exceed the amount of time reasonably available for distribution by broadcasters. It provided, therefore, in Section 3(h) of the Communications Act that a person engaged in radio broadcasting shall not be deemed a common carrier. It is the licensee, therefore, who must determine what percentage of the limited broadcast day should appropriately be devoted to news and discussion or consideration of public issues, rather than to the other legitimate services of radio broadcasting, and who must select or be responsible for the selection of the particular news items to be reported or the particular local, state, national or international issues or questions of public interest to be considered, as well as the person or persons to comment or analyze the news or to discuss or debate the issues chosen as topics for radio consideration. . .

SECTION 5. But the inevitability that there must be some choosing between various claimants for access to a licensee's microphone, does

not mean that the licensee is free to utilize his facilities as he sees fit or in his own particular interests as contrasted with the interests of the general public . . . the legislative history of the Communications Act and its predecessor, the Radio Act of 1927 shows, on the contrary, that Congress intended that radio stations should not be used for the private interest, whims, or caprices of the particular persons who have been granted licenses, but in manner which will serve the community generally and the various groups which make up the community.

SECTION 6. It is axiomatic that one of the most vital questions of mass communication in a democracy is the development of an informed public opinion through the public dissemination of news and ideas concerning the vital public issues of the day. . . The Commission has consequently recognized the necessity for licensees to devote a reasonable percentage of their broadcast time to the presentation of news and programs devoted to the consideration and discussion of public issues of interest in the community served by the particular station. And we have recognized, with respect to such programs, the paramount right of the public in a free society to be informed and to have presented to it for acceptance or rejection the different attitudes and viewpoints concerning these vital and often controversial issues which are held by the various groups which make up the community. It is this right of the public to be informed, rather than any right on the part of the government, any broadcast licensee or any individual member of the public to broadcast his own particular views on any matter, which is the foundation stone of the American system of broadcasting.

SECTION 12. It is clear that the licensees' authority to determine the specific programs to be broadcast over his station gives him an opportunity, not available to other persons, to insure that his personal viewpoint on any particular issue is presented in his station's broadcasts, whether or not these views are expressly identified with the licensee. And, in absence of governmental restraint, he would, if he so chose, be able to utilize his position as a broadcast licensee to weight the scales in line with his personal views, or even directly or indirectly to propagandize in behalf of his particular philosophy or views on the various public issues to the exclusion of any contrary opinions. Such action can be effective and persuasive whether or not it is accompanied by an editorialization in the narrow sense of

overt statement or particular opinions and views identified as those of licensee.

SECTION 14. The Commission has given careful consideration to contentions of those witnesses at the hearing who stated their belief that any overt editorialization or advocacy by broadcast licensee is *per se* contrary to the public interest. The main arguments advanced by these witnesses were that overt editorialization by broadcast licensees would not be consistent with the attainment of balanced presentations since there was a danger that the institutional good will and the production resources at the disposal of broadcast licensees would inevitably influence public opinion in favor of the positions advocated in the name of the licensee and that, having taken an open stand on behalf of one position in a given controversy, a licensee is not likely to give a fair break to the opposition. We believe, however, that these fears are largely misdirected, and that they stem from a confusion of the question of overt advocacy in the name of the licensee, with the broader issues of insuring that the station's broadcasts devoted to the consideration of public issues will provide the listening public with a fair and balanced presentation of differing viewpoints on such issues, without regard to the particular views which may be held or expressed by the licensee. . .

SECTION 15. Similarly, while licensees will in most instances have at their disposal production resources making possible graphic and persuasive techniques for forceful presentation of ideas, their utilization for the promulgation of the licensee's personal viewpoints will not necessarily or automatically lead to unfairness or lack of balance. While uncontrolled utilization of such resources for the partisan ends of the licensee might conceivably lead to serious abuses, such abuses could as well exist where the station's resources are used for the sole use of his personal spokesmen. The prejudicial or unfair use of broadcast production resources would, in either case, be contrary to the public interest.

SECTION 16. The Commission is not persuaded that a station's willingness to stand up and be counted on these particular issues upon which the licensee has a definite position may not be actually helpful in providing and maintaining a climate of fairness and equal opportunity for the expression of contrary views. Certainly the public has less to fear from the open partisan than from the covert propagandist.



On many issues, of sufficient importance to be allocated broadcast time, the station licensee may have no fixed opinion or viewpoint which he wishes to state or advocate. But where the licensee, himself, believes strongly that one side of a controversial issue is correct and should prevail, prohibition of his expression of such position will not of itself insure fair presentation of that issue over his station's facilities, nor would open advocacy necessarily prevent an overall fair presentation of the subject. It is not a sufficient answer to state that a licensee *should* occupy the position of an impartial umpire, where the licensee is *in fact* partial. In the absence of a duty to present all sides of controversial issues, overt editorialization by station licensees could conceivably result in serious abuse. But where, as we believe to be the case under the Communications Act, such a responsibility for a fair and balanced presentation of controversial public issues exists, we cannot see how the open espousal of one point of view by the licensee should necessarily prevent him from affording a fair opportunity for the presentation of contrary positions or make more difficult the enforcement of the statutory standard of fairness upon any licensee.

SECTION 17. It must be recognized, however, that the licensee's opportunity to express his own views as part of a general presentation of varying opinions on particular controversial issues, does not justify or empower any licensee to exercise his authority over the selection of program material to distort or suppress the basic factual information upon which any truly fair and free discussion of public issues must necessarily depend. . .

SECTION 19. There remains for consideration the allegation made by a few of the witnesses in the hearing that any action by the Commission in this field enforcing a basic standard of fairness upon broadcast licensees necessarily constitute an abridgement of the right of free speech in violation of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. We can see no sound basis for any such conclusion. The freedom of speech protected against governmental abridgement by the First Amendment does not extend any privilege to government licensees of means of public communications to exclude the expression of opinions and ideas with which they are in disagreement. We believe, on the contrary, that a requirement that broadcast licensees utilize their franchises in a manner in which the listening public may be assured of hearing varying opinions on the paramount issues facing

the American people is within both the spirit and letter of the First Amendment. As the Supreme Court of the United States has pointed out in the Associated Press monopoly case:

'It would be strange indeed, however, if the grave concern for freedom of the press which prompted adoption of the First Amendment should be read as a command that the government was without power to protect that freedom. . . That Amendment rests on the assumption that the widest possible dissemination of information from diverse and antagonistic sources is essential to the welfare of the public, that a free press is a condition of free society. Surely a command that the government itself shall not impede the free flow of ideas does not afford non-governmental combinations a refuge if they impose restraints upon that constitutionally guaranteed freedom. Freedom to publish means freedom for all and not for some. Freedom to publish is guaranteed by the Constitution, but freedom to combine to keep others from publishing is not.' (*Associated Press v. United States*, 326 U. S. 1 at p. 20.)

SECTION 21. To recapitulate, the Commission believes that under the American system of broadcasting the individual licensees of radio stations have the responsibility for determining the specific program material to be broadcast over their stations. This choice, however, must be exercised in a manner consistent with the basic policy of the Congress that radio be maintained as a medium of free speech for the general public as a whole rather than as an outlet for the purely personal or private interests of the licensee. This requires that licensees devote a reasonable percentage of their broadcasting time to the discussion of public issues of interest in the community served by their stations and that such programs be designed so that the public has a reasonable opportunity to hear different opposing positions on the public issues of interest and importance in the community. The particular format best suited for the presentation of such programs in a manner consistent with the public interest must be determined by the licensee in the light of the facts of each individual situation. Such presentation may include the identified expression of the licensee's personal viewpoint as part of the more general presentation of views or comments on the various issues, but the opportunity of licensees to present such views as they may have on matters of controversy may not be utilized to achieve a partisan or one-sided presentation of issues. Licensee editorialization is but one aspect of freedom of expression by means of radio. Only insofar as

it is exercised in conformity with the paramount right of the public to hear a reasonably balanced presentation of all responsible viewpoints on particular issues can such editorialization be considered to be consistent with the licensee's duty to operate in the public interest. For the licensee is a trustee impressed with the duty of preserving for the public generally radio as a medium of free expression and fair presentation.

*Dissenting Views of Commissioner Hennock:*

I agree with the majority that it is imperative that a high standard of impartiality in the presentation of issues of public controversy be maintained by broadcast licensees. I do not believe that the Commission's decision, however, will bring about the desired end. The standard of fairness as delineated in the Report is virtually impossible of enforcement by the Commission with our present lack of policing methods and with the sanctions given us by law. We should not underestimate the difficulties inherent in the discovery of unfair presentation in any particular situation, or the problem presented by the fact that the sole sanction the Commission possesses is total deprivation of broadcast privileges in a renewal or revocation proceeding which may occur long after the violation.

In the absence of some method of policing and enforcing the requirement that the public trust granted a licensee be exercised in an impartial manner, it seems foolhardy to permit editorialization by licensees themselves. I believe that we should have such a prohibition, unless we can substitute for it some more effective method of insuring fairness. There would be no inherent evil in the presentation of a licensee's viewpoint if fairness could be guaranteed. In the present circumstances, prohibiting it is our only instrument for insuring the proper use of radio in the public interest.

## APPENDIX V

Excerpts from the Supreme Court decision re the Chain Broadcasting Report in *National Broadcasting Company v. U. S.*:

The Act itself establishes that the Commission's powers are not limited to the engineering and technical aspects of regulation of radio communication. Yet we are asked to regard the Commission as a kind of traffic officer, policing the wave lengths to prevent stations from interfering with each other. But the Act does not restrict the Commission merely to supervision of the traffic. It puts upon the Commission the burden of determining the composition of that traffic. The facilities of radio are not large enough to accommodate all who wish to use them. Methods must be devised for choosing from among the many who apply. And since Congress itself could not do this, it committed the task to the Commission.

The Commission was, however, not left at large in performing this duty. The touchstone provided by Congress was the 'public interest, convenience, or necessity,' a criterion which 'is as concrete as the complicated factors for judgment in such a field of delegated authority permit.' *Federal Communications Commission v. Pottsville Broadcasting Co.*, 309 U. S. 134, 138. 'This criterion is not to be interpreted as setting up a standard so indefinite as to confer an unlimited power. Compare *New York Central Securities Co. v. United States*, 287 U. S. 12, 24. The requirement is to be interpreted by its context, by the nature of radio transmission and reception, by the scope, character and quality of services. . . ' *Federal Radio Commission v. Nelson Bros. Co.*, 289 U. S. 266, 285.

The 'public interest' to be served under the Communications Act is thus the interest of the listening public in 'the larger and more effective use of radio.' 303 (g). The facilities of radio are limited and therefore precious; they cannot be left to wasteful use without detriment to the public interest. 'An important element of public interest and convenience affecting the issue of a license is the ability of the licensee to render the best practicable service to the community

reached by his broadcasts.' *Federal Communications Commission v. Sanders Radio Station*, 309 U. S. 470, 475. The Commission's licensing function cannot be discharged, therefore, merely by finding that there are not technological objections to the granting of a license. If the criterion of 'public interest' were limited to such matters, how could the Commission choose between two applicants for the same facilities, each of whom is financially and technically qualified to operate a station? Since the very inception of federal regulation by radio, comparative considerations as to the services to be rendered have governed the application of the standard of 'public interest, convenience, or necessity.' See *Federal Communications Commission v. Pottsville Broadcasting Co.*, 309 U. S. 134, 138 n.2.

The avowed aim of the Communications Act of 1934 was to secure the maximum benefits of radio to all the people of the United States. To that end Congress endowed the Communications Commission with comprehensive powers to promote and realize the vast potentialities of radio. Section 303 (g) provides that the Commission shall 'generally encourage the larger and more effective use of radio in the public interest'; subsection (i) gives the Commission specific 'authority to make special regulations applicable to radio stations engaged in chain broadcasting'; and subsection (r) empowers it to adopt 'such rules and regulations and prescribe such restrictions and conditions, not inconsistent with law, as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.'

These provisions, individually and in the aggregate, preclude the notion that the Commission is empowered to deal only with technical and engineering impediments to the 'larger and more effective use of radio in the public interest.' We cannot find in the Act any such restriction of the Commission's authority. Suppose, for example, that a community can, because of physical limitations, be assigned only two stations. That community might be deprived of effective service in any one of several ways. More powerful stations in nearby cities might blanket out the signals of the local stations so that they could not be heard at all. The stations might interfere with each other so that neither could be clearly heard. One station might dominate the other with the power of its signal. But the community could be deprived of good radio service in ways less crude. One man, financially and technically qualified, might apply for and obtain the licenses of both stations and present a single service over the two stations, thus wasting a frequency otherwise available to the area. The language of the Act does not withdraw such a situation from the licensing and

regulatory powers of the Commission, and there is no evidence that Congress did not mean its broad language to carry the authority it expresses. . . True enough, the Act does not explicitly say that the Commission shall have power to deal with network practices found inimical to the public interest. But Congress was acting in a field of regulation which was both new and dynamic. 'Congress moved under the spur of a widespread fear that in the absence of governmental control the public interest might be subordinated to monopolistic domination in the broadcasting field.' *Federal Communications Commission v. Pottsville Broadcasting Co.*, 309 U. S. 134, 137. In the context of the developing problems to which it was directed, the Act gave the Commission not niggardly but expansive powers. It was given a comprehensive mandate to 'encourage the larger and more effective use of radio in the public interest,' if need be, by making 'special regulations applicable to radio stations engaged in chain broadcasting,' 303 (g) (i).

We come, finally to an appeal to the First Amendment. The Regulations, even if valid in all other respects, must fall because they abridge, say the appellants, their right of free speech. If that be so, it would follow that every person whose application for a license to operate a station is denied by the Commission is thereby denied his constitutional right of free speech. Freedom of utterance is abridged to many who wish to use the limited facilities of radio. Unlike other modes of expression, radio inherently is not available to all. That is its unique characteristic, and that is why, unlike other modes of expression, it is subject to governmental regulation. Because it cannot be used by all, some who wish to use it must be denied. But Congress did not authorize the Commission to choose among applicants upon the basis of their political, economic or social views, or upon any other capricious basis. If it did, or if the Commission by these Regulations proposed a choice among applicants upon some such basis, the issue before us would be wholly different. The question here is simply whether the Commission, by announcing that it will refuse licenses to persons who engage in specified network practices (a basis for choice which we hold is comprehended within the statutory criterion of 'public interest'), is thereby denying such persons the constitutional right of free speech. The right of free speech does not include, however, the right to use the facilities of radio without a license. The licensing system established by Congress in the Communications Act of 1934 was a proper exercise of its power over

## APPENDIX VI

Excerpts from the Federal Communications Commission's decision, in re petition of Robert Harold Scott for revocation of licenses of Radio Station KQW, KPO, and KFRC. (96050).

The First Amendment to our Constitution guarantees both religious freedom \* and freedom of speech. While these guarantees are expressed in terms of limitation on governmental action, they are far more than narrow legalistic concepts. They are essential parts of the fundamental philosophy underlying the form of government and the way of life which we call 'American.'

Freedom of religious belief necessarily carries with it freedom to disbelieve, and freedom of speech means freedom to express disbeliefs as well as beliefs. If freedom of speech is to have meaning, it cannot be predicated on the mere popularity or public acceptance of the ideas sought to be advanced. It must be extended as readily to ideas which we disapprove or abhor as to ideas which we approve. Moreover, freedom of speech can be as effectively denied by denying access to the public means of making expression effective—whether public streets, parks, meeting halls, or the radio—as by legal restraints or punishment of the speaker.

It is true that in this country an overwhelming majority of the people profess a belief in the existence of a Divine Being. But the conception of the nature of the Divine Being is as varied as religious denominations and sects and even differs with the individuals belonging to the same denominations or sects.

God is variously thought of as a 'Spirit, infinite, eternal, and un-

\* No principle is more firmly embedded in our Constitution than that of religious freedom. In addition to the First Amendment, Article VI repudiates any religious test as a qualification for any office or political trust under the United States. The same section, in the interests of freedom of conscience, permits affirmation rather than oath in the pledge to support the Constitution required of state and federal officials. Likewise, Section 1 of Article II permits the substitution of an affirmation for the oath of office required of the President of the United States.

changeable,' and as having a tangible form resembling man who, in turn, was created in His image; as consisting of a Trinity and a single Godhead; as a Divine Lawgiver, laying down infallible natural and moral laws by which man is governed, and as a God who concerns himself with the personal affairs of individuals, however petty; as a God to whom each person is individually accountable and as a God to be approached only through ordained intermediaries; a God of the powerful who divinely appoints kings and other rulers of men, and as a God of the meek and lowly; as a God of stern justice and a God of mercy; as a God to be worshipped or appeased primarily through ritual and as a God to be served primarily through service to one's fellow man; as a God whose rewards and punishments are mainly reserved for a future life and as a God who also rewards or punishes through spiritual enrichment or impoverishment of man's present existence. These are only a few of the many differing conceptions which might be cited by way of illustration.

So diverse are these conceptions that it may be fairly said, even as to professed believers, that the God of one man does not exist for another. And so strongly may one believe in his own particular conception of God that he may easily be led to say, 'Only my God exists, and therefore he who denies *my* God is an atheist, irrespective of his professed belief in *a* God.' For example the early Christians were to the Romans atheists because they denied the existence of the pagan gods in which the Romans believed.\*

A rule which denies freedom of expression to the professed atheist should certainly be applied with equal, if not greater, strictness to one whose views are, in fact, atheistic, but who seeks to deny or conceal his atheism. Thus, the necessity arises of making determinations on the basis of personal judgment as to whether views sought to be expressed are, in fact, atheistic. The power then is vested in those making such determination to attach the label of atheism to the believer whose particular belief they may happen to disapprove, and thus of effectively denying the believer the right

\* 'Atheism is a term of varying application and significance. . . Its meaning is dependent upon the particular type of "theism" with which at the moment it is being contrasted. . . The atheist is conceived as the man who denies or despises what he ought not only to fear but to respect. It is intelligible, then, that the early Christians should be called "atheists" by their persecutors. The Christians denied, after all, many more gods than they acknowledged. The pagan was morally offended at this wholesale rejection of familiar loyalties.' *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 14th ed., Vol. 2 (article on 'Atheism' by the Rev. Charles John Shebbeare, M.A., Rector of Stanhope, Co. Durham, and Chaplain to H.M. the King.)



to express his views. Under such a course, Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln, and others whose names we revere could, today, be barred from access to the air to express their own particular religious philosophies. The first two were denounced with particular vigor from the pulpits of some of the wealthier and better established churches, and the label of 'atheist' was freely attached to Jefferson by those who had come to feel that their favored positions, which were threatened by his social, economic, and political philosophies, were rewards which the Deity had bestowed upon them because of their special virtues and accomplishments.

Underlying the conception of freedom of speech is not only the recognition of the importance of the free flow of ideas and information to the effective functioning of democratic forms of government and ways of life, but also belief that immunity from criticism is dangerous—dangerous to the institution or belief to which the immunity is granted as well as to the freedom of the people generally. Sound and vital ideas and institutions become strong and develop with criticism so long as they themselves have full opportunity for expression; it is dangerous that the unsound be permitted to flourish for want of criticism.

Moreover, however strongly we may feel about the sacredness of religious beliefs, we should be mindful of the fact that immunity from criticism cannot be granted to religion without, at the same time, granting it to those who use the guise of religion to further their ends of personal profit or power, to promote their own particular political or economic philosophies, or to give vent to their personal frustrations and hatreds. 'False prophets' are not phenomena peculiar to Biblical days. Their danger now, as then, lies essentially in the difficulty of recognizing them as such. This difficulty is increased to the extent that their doctrines and motives are shielded from critical examination.

We recognize that in passing upon requests for time, a station licensee is constantly confronted with most difficult problems. Since the demands for time may far exceed the amount available for broadcasting a licensee must inevitably make a selection among those seeking it for the expression of their views. He may not even be able to grant time to all religious groups who might desire the use of his facilities, much less to all who might want to oppose religion. Admittedly, a very real opportunity exists for him to be arbitrary and unreasonable, to indulge his own preferences, prejudices, or whims; to pursue his own private interest or to favor those who espouse his

views, and discriminate against those of opposing views. The indulgence of that opportunity could not conceivably be characterized as an exercise of the broadcaster's right of freedom of speech. Nor could it fairly be said to afford the listening audience that opportunity to hear a diversity and balance of views, which is an inseparable corollary of freedom of expression. In making a selection with fairness, the licensee must, of course, consider the extent of the interest of the people in his service area in a particular subject to be discussed, as well as the qualifications of the person selected to discuss it. Every idea does not rise to the dignity of a 'public controversy,' and every organization, regardless of membership or the seriousness of its purposes, is not *per se* entitled to time on the air. But an organization or idea may be projected into the realm of controversy by virtue of being attacked. The holders of a belief should not be denied the right to answer attacks upon them or their belief solely because they are few in number.

The fact that a licensee's duty to make time available for the presentation of opposing views on current controversial issues of public importance may not extend to all possible differences of opinion within the ambit of human contemplation cannot serve as the basis for any rigid policy that time shall be denied for the presentation of views which may have a high degree of unpopularity. The criterion of the public interest in the field of broadcasting clearly precludes a policy of making radio wholly unavailable as a medium for the expression of any view which falls within the scope of the constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech.

Because, as we have stated above, the problem here presented is far broader in scope than the complaint against the particular stations here involved, we feel that the petition should be denied, notwithstanding the views which we have expressed.

On October 28, 1949, the Commission finally disposed of Mr. Scott's petition and made public the following letter to him. 'On October 27, 1949, the Commission considered the petition filed by you requesting that the licenses of Stations KNBC (formerly KPO), KFRC, KGO and KQW, San Francisco, California, be revoked on the grounds that these stations refused to grant you time for the broadcast of atheistic programs.

'It does not appear from the information submitted by you that any program broadcast by the named stations was directed against you personally or against the position which you espoused. In the Commission's view the facts submitted by you do not present a sit-

uation in which the station has denied an opportunity to afford equal time for the presentation of a controversial issue of public importance. There is no obligation on the part of a station licensee to grant the request of any and all persons for time to state their views on matters in which they may be interested.

'Your petition alleges no facts to justify the revocation of the licenses of the above named stations.'

## APPENDIX VII

We offer below suggested projects, research studies, questions for discussion, and selected reading matter appropriate to each chapter in the text.

### I. RADIO IN THE UNITED STATES: 1920-34

1. What would have been the likely consequences, in terms of (a) coverage and (b) program service, of adoption of the various alternative proposals for the development of radio which were advanced in its early days?

2. What do you think were the decisive factors in NBC's departure from Mr. Sarnoff's early plans for its development, and from Mr. Owen D. Young's statement of its policy in 1929?

3. How would you explain the adoption of a system of federal control over radio in a peak period of industrial prosperity?

*Big Business and Radio*, Archer, American Historical Society, Inc., 1939.

*History of Radio to 1926*, Archer, American Historical Society, Inc., 1938.

*Radio from Start to Finish*, Reck, Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1942.

### II. THE COMMUNICATIONS ACT OF 1934

1. Consider practicable ways of putting teeth into the FCC with respect to its regulatory activities in the public interest.

2. Within the limitations of the Communications Act, what do's and don't's might the FCC promulgate as desirable and relevant to broadcasting in the public interest?

3. What precedents are there in our system of government for federal regulation along the lines prescribed for the FCC?

The Communications Act of 1934, United States Government Printing Office.

The ABC of the FCC, United States Government Printing Office.  
*The Independent Regulatory Commissions*, Robert Cushman, Oxford University Press, New York, 1941.

### III. THE FCC IN ACTION

1. Appraise your local broadcasting station's performance in the light of the criteria established in the FCC'S Blue Book.

2. Prepare a week's schedule of broadcasting for a radio station, which would, in your opinion, offer a well-balanced program service. Compare your schedule with that of your local station and account for the differences.

3. What dangers of monopolistic practices persist in radio and television today?

Report on Chain Broadcasting, United States Government Printing Office.

Public Service Responsibility of Broadcast Licensees, United States Government Printing Office.

The Blue Book, Justin Miller, National Association of Broadcasters, Washington, D. C.

*Radio and the Federal Government*, Robinson, Columbia University Press.

*Is American Radio Democratic?* Frost, University of Chicago Press.

*National Policy for Radio Broadcasting*, Rose, Harper Bros.

Congress and the Control of Radio Broadcasting, Friedrich and Sternberg, in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 37, Nos. 5, 6.

NBC v. U. S., *United States Supreme Court Reports*, Vol. 319.

*Government and Mass Communications*, Chafee, University of Chicago Press, 1947.

### IV. THE RADIO INDUSTRY

1. Define what radio 'in the public interest' means to you. Is competitive, commercial broadcasting compatible with such public service?

2. Argue the case for and against the statutory limitation of annual profits for radio stations to, say, a maximum of 20 per cent of the total depreciated value of their capital assets.

3. Appraise the merits and defects of the NAB's 'Standards of Practice' as a basis for self-regulation by the radio industry. Compile your own list of proposed amendments.

4. Discuss the merits of the proposed reforms in radio advanced (a) by Morris Ernst, (b) by Lewellyn White. (See book list below)

*The First Freedom* (section on radio), Ernst, Macmillan, 1946.  
 Standards of Practice (The NAB 'Code'), National Association of Broadcasters, Washington, D. C.  
*Radio's Second Chance*, Siepmann, Little, Brown & Co., 1946.  
*The American Radio*, White, University of Chicago Press, 1947.  
*The Communication of Ideas*, ed. Bryson, Harper Bros., 1948.  
 'U. S. Radio: Record of a Decade,' Ackerman, in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Fall 1948.  
*Radio Advertising for Retailers*, Sandage, Harvard University Press, 1945.

#### v. RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF THE LISTENER

1. Canvass six leading citizens in your community on the proposal to organize a radio listener's council. Appraise the intermediate difficulties to be overcome in the light of their reactions.
2. Under appropriate heads, tabulate a month's programs broadcast over a local station in your community between 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. Canvass the reactions of a clergyman, a teacher, a trade unionist, and a businessman regarding defects in service rendered. Submit these reactions to the station and ask for a considered reply.
3. Over a period of a month, notice the number of controversial issues discussed (not reported) over your local radio station. Concurrently note the number of such issues, local, national, or international, reported in the press. Compare the two lists and discuss their implications.

*The Radio Listener's Bill of Rights*, a pamphlet, Siepmann, Anti-Defamation League, New York, 1949.  
*Radio is Yours*, a pamphlet, Spingarn, #121 Public Affairs Committee, New York.  
*Let's Learn to Listen*, Wisconsin Joint Committee for Better Radio Listening, Madison, Wisc.  
*Radio Listening*, Wisconsin Joint Committee for Better Radio Listening, Madison, Wisc.  
*The Listener Speaks*, American Association of University Women, San Francisco, Cal.  
 A Case for Listener Participation, Hudson and Wiebe, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Summer 1948.

## VI. THE LISTENER IN AMERICA

1. What factors in the environment and home life of listeners condition their choice of radio programs?
2. Conduct a local survey in your community, on a sampling basis, to check the findings in *Radio Listening in America* that most interest you.
3. Question students at your college or university respecting (a) their listening habits and (b) their program preferences, and compare these with the findings on college-educated listeners in the book cited above.

*The People's Choice*, Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, Columbia University Press, 1944.

*Radio and the Printed Page*, Lazarsfeld, Duell, Sloan, & Pearce, 1940.

*Radio Research* 1941, 1942, Lazarsfeld and Stanton, Duell, Sloan, & Pearce, 1943.

*Radio Research* 1942, 1943, Lazarsfeld and Stanton, Duell, Sloan, & Pearce, 1944.

*Communications Research* 1948-1949, Lazarsfeld and Stanton, Duell, Sloan, & Pearce, 1949.

'The Radio Daytime Serial,' Warner and Henry, in *Genetic Psychology Monograph*, 1948, 37, 3-71.

*The People Look at Radio*, Lazarsfeld and Field, Chapel Hill, 1946.

*Radio Listening in America*, Lazarsfeld and Kendall, Prentice Hall, New York, 1948.

*Mass Persuasion*, Merton, Harper Bros, 1946.

'Qualitative Analysis of Radio Listening,' Sandage, in *University of Illinois Bulletin*, March 1948.

## VII. BRITISH, CANADIAN AND OTHER SYSTEMS

1. How practicable and how desirable might it be to supplement commercial radio in the United States by a public-service, non-profit network financed by public funds?
2. Examine a week's programs broadcast by (a) the BBC, (b) the CBC, (c) any two United States networks. In what respects are superior services offered to listeners in Britain and Canada? How could such advantages be secured for American listeners, e.g., by regulatory provisions of the FCC?

3. In the light of what you have read in this and previous chapters, to what extent and under what conditions do you think radio is capable of speeding the growth of popular intelligence and taste? What factors enter decisively into the equation?

*BBC Yearbooks 1928-48*, British Broadcasting Corporation, London, England.

*Broadcasting in the United States*, National Association of Broadcasters, Washington, D. C.

*The Responsibilities of Broadcasting*, The Lewis Fry Memorial Lectures, 1948, British Broadcasting Corporation.

*The Third Program*, British Broadcasting Corporation, London, England.

*The Power Behind the Microphone*, Eckersley, Jonathan Cape, London, 1941.

*The Public Corporation in Great Britain*, Gordon, Harvard University Press.

*British Broadcasting*, Coase, Harvard University Press, 1950.

*This is the CBC*, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Ottawa, Canada, 1946.

The Canadian Broadcasting Act, 1936, Department of Transport, Ottawa, Canada.

The Radio Act of 1938, Department of Transport, Ottawa, Canada.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Summer, CBC, Ottawa, Canada.

#### VIII. PROPAGANDA AND PUBLIC OPINION

1. Secure the transcript or make a recording of a week's broadcasts by any network newscaster and compare this with the news on the front page of your local newspaper. Observe similarities and dissimilarities in (a) the prominence and (b) the length of the selection of news items. To what conclusions does your comparison lead you?

2. Secure the transcripts or make recordings of a month's news broadcasts by any two network commentators. Compare them with reference to (a) the order, (b) the length, (c) the selection (or omission), and (d) the interpretation accorded to different news events.

3. Record the sponsors' advertising copy on any network on any day of the week between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. Analyze and classify the nature of the appeals to the listener and appraise their validity.



4. Analyze the advertisements in any week's issue of *Life* magazine in terms of the nature of the appeals made to the reader. If you were a man from Mars, what would you conclude, from this evidence alone, about the American character?

5. According to the FCC's Blue Book, radio has a constructive propaganda job to do in bringing to listeners a many-sided discussion of important local, national, and international issues. Examine the program log of a radio station in your community for a month and note what controversies, (a) available from a network, if the station is an affiliate, and (b) initiated by the station, were presented. Use the daily newspaper as yardstick of significant controversial issues arising during the period.

*Public Opinion*, Albig, McGraw-Hill Publishing Co.

*Public Opinion*, Lippmann, Macmillan, 1922.

*The Invasion from Mars*, Cantrill, Princeton University Press, 1940.

*The People's Choice*, Lazarsfeld, Columbia University Press.

*Mass Persuasion*, Merton, Harper Bros, 1946.

*Communications in Modern Society* (chapter on The Listening Audience), Wilson, University of Illinois Press.

'Social Problems on the Air: An Audience Study,' Kerchner, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Fall 1947.

#### IX. FREEDOM OF SPEECH: IN THEORY

1. A speaker in a southern city addresses a public meeting, pleading for the concession of equal rights to negroes. A riot ensues. Consider the application in this case of the 'clear and present danger' clause.

2. In the light of the principles outlined in this chapter, would you debar (a) an avowed member of the Communist Party or (b) a convinced Marxist from entry into the teaching profession?

3. *The Nation* was banned in 1948 in the Newark and New York City school systems because of articles critical of the Roman Catholic Church. A group of Jews in 1949 successfully prevented the showing in the United States of a British film of *Oliver Twist* because of the unfavorable portrayal of the Jew, Fagin. The Roman Catholic Church, through the Legion of Decency, successfully prevents the showing in many communities of films it considers undesirable. Relate these actions to the principle of free speech.

*Areopagitica*, Milton, Everyman Press.

'Essay on Liberty,' Mill, Everyman Press.

*Free Speech in the United States*, Chafee, Harvard University Press, 1946.

To Secure These Rights, U.S. Government Printing Office.

*A Free and Responsible Press*, Commission on Freedom of the Press, University of Chicago Press, 1947.

*Freedom of the Press*, Hocking, University of Chicago Press, 1947.

*Free Speech*, Meiklejohn, Harper Bros., 1948.

*Freedom of the Movies*, Inglis, University of Chicago Press, 1947.

Publications of the American Civil Liberties Union, 170 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N.Y.

#### x. FREEDOM OF SPEECH: IN PRACTICE

1. Choose a topic likely to be in the news—e.g., labor or Russo-American relations. Over a three months' period, assign to each member of the class one network news commentator. Let each keep a log of (a) the wordage, (b) the prominence (early or late reference) devoted to this subject, and (c) the bias of approach. Have the findings of the various groups correlated by yet another group of students. Let the class deduce therefrom the over-all bias of outlook among commentators.

2. Promote discussion on this question: Had we no First Amendment, would we, the people, enact such a measure today? (Consult the quarterly poll findings, reproduced in the *Public Opinion Quarterly*, for evidence of popular attitudes to freedom of the press.) Consider also (a) film censorship in several states; (b) the banning of Edmund Wilson's *Memoirs of Hecate County*; (c) the 1948 book raid in Philadelphia.

In addition to books listed under Chapter ix, consult:

*The First Freedom*, Ernst, Macmillan, 1946.

*Radio's Second Chance*, Siepmann, Little, Brown, & Co., 1946.

'Labor in the Radio News,' Sussman, in *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. xxii, No. 3.

*Government and Mass Communication*, Chafee, University of Chicago Press, 1947.

*Radio Censorship*, ed. Summers, H. W. Wilson Co., New York.

The First Amendment to the Constitution and Public Interest Requirements. Address at Amherst College, 1 Dec. 1949, by Wayne Coy, Federal Communications Commission, Washington, D. C.

## XI. RADIO AND EDUCATION.

1. Make an inventory of the lecture courses and research projects at your state university and consider (a) their possible relevance to the community, and (b) the means by which they could be converted into effective radio-program forms.

2. Visit the nearest school where radio broadcasts are being employed. Observe the use made of them and discuss their value with the teachers.

3. Review your own educational experiences to date. Who or what inspired your major interests? Who or what dulled or limited your zest for learning?

4. American youth appears to be less interested in public affairs than are older people. The reverse is true in most European countries. What do you think accounts for this? How would you set about changing this situation?

5. In what respects do the ideals inspired in school and college run counter to the pressures and practices of your environment? How can a nearer reconciliation of the two 'standards of living' be achieved?

*Teaching Through Radio*, Levenson, Farrar and Rinehart.

*Radio and School*, Woelfel and Tyler, World Book Company, New York.

*Radio Programs Intended for Classroom Use*, Atkinson, Meada Publishing Co., Boston, 1942.

*All Children Listen*, Gordon, George W. Stewart, 1942.

*Radio's Listening Groups*, Hill and Williams, Columbia University Press, 1941.

*Education on the Air* (annual yearbooks of the Institute for Education by Radio), Ohio State University.

*Education for Modern Man*, Hook, Dial Press.

*General Education in a Free Society*, Harvard University Press, 1946.

*Dynamics of Learning*, Cantor, Foster and Stewart.

*Conditions of Civilized Living*, Ulich, Dutton.

## XII. WORLD LISTENING

1. Make a week's study of short-wave broadcasts to the United States transmitted from (a) USSR and (b) Great Britain. Analyze and appraise their content.

2. Write to the United Nations and secure available literature on its broadcast services. Consider their value to your community, and approach your local station with a view to their use.

3. Prepare a fifteen-minute script, as basis for a transcription, descriptive of life in your community and designed for use (in translation) by, say, the Belgian broadcasting system.

4. The British and French have available, for use by United States' radio stations, transcriptions descriptive of life in their countries. Secure samples and appraise their merits and defects from the point of view of listeners in your community.

*Peoples Speaking to Peoples*, White and Leigh, University of Chicago Press, 1946.

'Propaganda and Information on International Affairs,' Siepmann, in *Yale Law Journal*, August 1946.

Report of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Information, March 1949, United States Government Printing Office.

The World Audience for America's Story, Department of State Publication #3484, United States Government Printing Office.

*Propaganda by Shortwave*, Childs and Whitton, Princeton University Press.

Memorandum on the Postwar International Information Program of the U.S., Department of State Publication #2430, United States Government Printing Office.

*Overseas Information Service of the U.S. Government*, Thomson, Brookings Institute.

*Unwritten Treaty*, Warburg, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1946.

Committee on Appropriations, Department of State, Justice, and Commerce, and the Judiciary Appropriation Bill for 1947, 1948, 1949, Hearings, United States Government Printing Office.

Bulletins and publications of the United Nations, obtainable from Lake Success, New York.

### XIII. TELEVISION

Publications on this subject are likely to be largely out of date by the time this book appears. Nevertheless, of possible interest are the following:

*Television: A Struggle for Power*, Borkin and Couldrop, Wm. Morrow & Co., New York.

*The Future of Television*, Dunlop, Harper Bros.

*Television: The Eyes of Tomorrow*, Eddy, Prentice Hall.

'The Television Freeze,' in *Fortune* magazine, November 1949.

See also the research studies listed in footnotes to this chapter.

## INDEX

- ABC, *see* American Broadcasting Company
- Ackerman, William C., 'U. S. Radio: Record of a Decade,' 391
- Advertising, abuses in, 12, 40
- agencies, 14
  - domination of radio by, 14, 44-5, 48-55, 64-5, 69n.
  - early objection to, 7, 10, 12-13
  - exaggeration in, 182-3
  - FM and, 57n.
  - in Great Britain, 117-18, 144
  - local, 33, 52
  - national, 30, 33, 48-55
  - public attitude to, 85-7
  - repetition in, 181-2
  - revenue from, 52, 346
  - sex appeal in, 334
  - 'taboo,' 344
  - television and, 328-35
  - wartime, 185, 188-9
  - world-wide survey of, 372-3
- See also* Financing of radio; Sponsored Programs
- Advisory Commission on Information, 300n.
- Affiliated stations, exclusive affiliation, 31-2
- 'option time' system, 32-5
  - program service by, 14, 64
  - sustaining programs and, 53-4, 64
- See also* Networks
- Aird Commission, 156-7, 163
- Albig, William, *Public Opinion*, 394
- Aliens in U. S., and radio licenses, 19-20, 364-5
- Amateur radio operators, 5, 293
- American Broadcasting Company (ABC), 249
- advertising policy, 344
  - establishment, 29-30
  - 'American Forum of the Air,' 32
  - American Tobacco Company, 49n., 242n.
  - Amerika*, 300
  - 'Amos 'n Andy,' 50, 254
  - Anglo-American Cable Company, 293
  - Annual Radio Conference, 10
  - Archer, Gleason, *Big Business and Radio*, 389, quoted, 3, 9
  - History of Radio to 1926*, 389, quoted, 8, 293
  - Aristotle, 186, 356; *On Rhetoric*, quoted, 181
  - Arnheim, Rudolf, 'The World of the Daytime Serial,' quoted, 108, 109
  - Associated Press v. U. S., 378
  - Atheism, BBC policy toward, 245n.; *see also* Scott, Robert Harold
  - Audience, radio, age, 98-105
    - attitude, in Great Britain, 122-3, 130-31; in U. S., 3, 70-72, 84-7, 228-9
    - attitudes, differentiated, 95-109; shared, 84-95
    - in Canada, 157n., 372
    - criticism of radio by, 71, 74-7
    - education of, 96-8
    - fear of offending, 241-2
    - general description of, 83
    - influence of, on radio policy, 71-81
    - international, 300-302, 313-14
    - knowledge of radio by, 71, 97, 105
    - limitation in program choice, 31-2
    - minorities in, 22, 39, 73, 238
    - program preferences, 112-13
    - rights and duties, 69-81
    - rural, 43, 65, 83, 96-7, 160, 345
    - satisfaction of, 67, 111-12

- Audience, radio—*Continued*  
 size, in Great Britain, 122-3, 130-31; in U. S., 5, 73, 82; in other countries, 372-3  
 women in, 83, 105-9, 340, 344-5  
*See also* Non-listeners; Television
- Audience-building, 73-4, 282
- AVCO, 228n.
- BBC, *see* British Broadcasting Corporation
- Bender, Dr. Loretta, 101
- Billboard*, *The*, quoted, 234
- 'Blue Book' (Public Service Responsibility of Broadcast Licensees), 49n., 53n., 81, 84, 336, 390, 394; summary, 37-40, 64
- Blue Network, 13, 29-30, 34
- Brandeis, Louis Dembitz, 215
- British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), bibliography, 393  
 compared with U. S. radio, 115-17  
 competition with, 122-3, 141-54, 289  
 composition, 120-21, 368  
 conditions of operation, 368-71  
 co-operation with U. S., 299  
 cultural policy, 123, 127-32, 133-40, 147  
 financing, 121-2  
 government and, 118-21, 369-70  
 Government White Paper, 141  
 history, 117-18, 141-5  
 Home Program, 122-7, 137  
 'Licence and Agreement,' excerpts, 368-71  
 Light Program, 122-7, 131, 137  
 as monopoly, 141-53  
 policy of secrecy, 135, 152, 274  
 program schedules, 124-7  
 programs, 122-3, 128-40, 150-51  
 purposes, 367  
 religious broadcasts, 245n.  
 Royal Charter, 118; excerpts, 367-8  
 school broadcasting, 274-6  
 Third Program, 122, 133-40, 148, 153  
*See also* Great Britain
- British Institute of Public Opinion, 145n.
- British Post Office, 117, 121, 143-4
- Broadcasting Act of 1936 (Canada), 157  
 summary, 161-6  
*See also* Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
- Broadcasting in the United States* (NAB), 116n., 393
- Broadcasting the War* (OWI), quoted, 188-9
- Bryson, *The Communication of Ideas* (ed.), 391
- Bushnell, E. L., quoted, 159
- Caldwell, Commissioner, 11
- California, proposed educational network in, 66n., 289
- Canada, Aird Commission, 156-7, 163  
 broadcasting system, 114-15, 372  
 Department of Marine, 156, 157n.  
 history of broadcasting in, 156-8  
 national characteristics, 154-6  
 private stations, 157, 158n., 161-6  
 receiving-set license fees, 158
- Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), 115  
 bibliography, 393  
 coverage, 160  
 financing, 158-61  
 income, 372  
 networks, 158-9, 305  
 organization, 157-9  
 program policy, 159  
 regulatory powers, 161-6
- Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission, 157
- 'Canons of Journalism of the American Society of Newspaper Editors,' 235n.
- Cantrill, Hadley, *The Invasion from Mars*, 186n., 394
- CBC, *see* Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
- CBS, *see* Columbia Broadcasting System

- Censorship, bibliography, 394-5  
 forbidden in Communications Act, 21, 366  
 'Mayflower Decision' and, 220, 224  
*See also* First Amendment
- Central Council for School Broadcasting, 275-6
- Chafee, Zechariah, *Free Speech in the United States*, 209, 215n., 226n., 395  
*Government and Mass Communication*, 390, 395
- Chain broadcasting, *see* Networks
- Chain Broadcasting Regulations and Free Speech (FCC), quoted, 32, 33
- Chester, Giraud, 'The Press-Radio War 1933-35,' 47n.  
 'What Constitutes Irresponsibility on the Air,' 239n., 250n.
- Churchill, Winston, 150, 184
- Clear-channel stations, 44, 66, 234
- Cleveland, Ohio, school broadcasting, 276n., 277-8
- Coase, R. H., *British Broadcasting*, 393
- Coffin, Thomas E., quoted, 342n.
- Color Television, Inc., 324
- Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), 117, 219, 330  
 adult education and, 280-81  
 advertising policy, 344  
 establishment, 13  
 monopolistic tendencies, 28-35  
 news policy, 47n., 249  
 program schedules, 50-51, 124-7  
 research, 344  
 school broadcasting, 275  
 short-wave services, 295  
 television policy, 324, 327, 337-8, 341n., 344
- Commission on the Freedom of the Press, 315; *A Free and Responsible Press*, 233, 250, 395
- Communications Act of 1934, 389  
 doubt about extent of FCC powers, 4, 21  
 excerpts from, 359-66  
 'Mayflower Decision' and, 220-33, 374-9  
 provisions of, 11, 16-40, 332, 351  
*See also* Federal Communications Commission
- Communism, discussion of on air, 246-8
- Conant, Dr. James Bryant, 260
- Content analysis, 233; science of, 250-51, 237n.
- Controversial issues in radio, 391; FCC policy on, 374-9
- Coy, Wayne, 328n., 330, 395; quoted, 318, 320, 321, 335, 350-51, 351-2
- Crosby, John, 80, 250
- Cushman, Robert, *The Independent Regulatory Commissions*, 390
- De Forrest, Lee, 294
- Democracy, education and, 256-62  
 free speech in, 210-17  
 freedom in, 201-3  
 mass communication and, 375  
 philosophy of, 169-73  
 virtues and defects in, 35-6  
 wartime, 214-16
- Department of State, 'Voice of America' and, 298-303
- Dill, Senator, 12
- Drucker, Peter, 'The New Society,' quoted, 306
- Du Mont Television, 334
- Eckersley, P. P., *The Power Behind the Microphone*, 393; quoted, 130
- Editorializing by broadcast licensees, *see* 'Mayflower Decision'
- Education, adult, radio in, 279-89  
 bibliography, 396  
 contemporary, 262-9  
 FM in, 66  
 in Great Britain, 258n., 274-6  
 higher, radio in, 283-9  
 influence of, on listening, 96-8  
 international relations and, 309  
 nature and purpose of, 252-5  
 radio in, 8, 12, 66, 90, 146, 289-91



- Education—*Continued*  
 school broadcasting, 272-9  
 television in, 348-52  
 universal, 256-62  
*See also* Non-profit organizations
- Education for Freedom*, quoted, 257-8
- Erle County, Ohio, 99-100, 105n.
- Ernst, Morris, *The First Freedom*, 47n., 63, 391, 395
- Europe, number of receiving sets, 301
- FCC, *see* Federal Communications Commission
- Federal Communications Commission (FCC), bibliography, 389-90  
 compared to CBC, 161  
 composition of, 17, 24-5, 359-60  
 correspondence with, 76-7  
 First Amendment and, 220, 232, 236-8, 382  
 FM and, 57  
 KMPC case, 234-6  
 'Mayflower Decision,' 218-33, 374-9  
 monopoly policy, 27-37, 366  
 non-profit organizations and, 21, 66, 239, 276, 348-52, 363  
 police activities, 25  
 powers, 16-23, 360-63, 380-83  
 powers, limitations of, 21, 24-6  
 public interest and, 14, 19, 22, 69, 232, 289, 360, 380-83  
 purpose, 16, 359  
 Scott case, 240-46, 384-8  
 short-wave policy, 295  
 television policy, 318-21, 324, 329-30, 335-6, 348, 350-51;  
 basic principles, 325-6  
*See also* Communications Act of 1934; Frequencies; Licenses
- Federal Communications Commission v. Pottsville Broadcasting Co., 380-82
- Federal Communications Commission v. Sanders Radio Station, 381
- Federal Radio Commission, 25-6, 224n., 254  
 establishment, 6, 11  
 history, 12-13  
*See also* Radio Act of 1927
- Federal Radio Commission v. Nelson Bros. Co., 380
- Federal Trade Commission, 28n., 183
- Field Harry, and Lazarsfeld, Paul, *The People Look at Radio*, 70n., 392; quoted, 183
- Financing of radio, in Canada, 158-61, 372  
 early schemes for, 7-10  
 by endowments, 8  
 in Great Britain, 121-2, 372  
 municipal, 8  
 speculative nature of, 44-6  
 world-wide survey, 372-3  
*See also* Advertising; Sponsored Programs
- First Amendment, 395  
 intent of, 225-8, 235  
 interpretation of, 211, 215  
 radio and, 220, 222, 225, 377-8, 382  
 theory of, 225-7, 384  
 validity today, 231, 238
- FM, *see* Frequency Modulation
- 'Four Years of Network Broadcasting,' 280n.; *quoted*, 10n.
- Frankfurter, Felix, *quoted*, 226n.
- FRC, *see* Federal Radio Commission
- Freedom, circumscription of, 222-3  
 danger to, 194-7, 201-3  
 meaning of, 169-73  
 personal, 198, 255  
 right of conscience, 204
- Freedom of speech, aristocratic and democratic views of, 209-10, 216-17  
 bibliography, 394-5  
 clear and present danger and, 214-15  
 danger of lip service to, 201-3  
 interference with, in radio, 32  
 minorities and, 242-8  
 psychological basis, 203-4, 212

- Freedom of speech—*Continued*  
 radio and, 382-3  
 reason for, 208-14, 226n.  
 restraint on, 205-8  
 in wartime, 214-16  
*See also* First Amendment! 'Mayflower Decision'; Scott, Robert Harold
- Frequencies (Wave lengths), early  
 confusion in, 5-6, 11  
 in Europe, 122  
 FCC allocation of, 18-19, 21-3, 43, 65, 360-61, 363  
 limited number of, 64, 225
- Frequency modulation (FM), advantages of, 56  
 FCC policy toward, 57, 220  
 in Great Britain, 122n.  
 non-profit stations and, 66, 276, 283-4, 350  
 number of stations, 58  
 opposition to, by AM stations, 57-8, 65
- Friedrich, Carl Joachim, 'Congress and the Control of Radio Broadcasting,' 390
- Frost, S. E., Jr., *Is American Radio Democratic?*, 390
- Fry, Lewis, 128n.
- FTC, *see* Federal Trade Commission
- General Education in a Free Society*, 256n., 396; quoted, 256-7, 259n., 263
- General Electric, 7, 9
- Germany, propaganda broadcasts of, 294-6
- Gordon, *The Public Corporation in Great Britain*, 393
- Gorky, Maxim, 177n.
- Government, control of radio by, 114-17  
 listeners' attitude to, 76-7  
 private enterprise and, 4
- Great Britain, adult education, radio in, 282-3  
 audience in, 122-3, 130-31  
 broadcasting system in, 114 ff., 372  
 education, 258n., 274-6  
 group discussion, radio in, 282  
 history of radio in, 117-18, 141-6  
 international broadcasts of, 294-6, 303, 369  
 license fees, receiving set, 121, 158n., 372  
 program preferences in, 112-13  
 receiving sets, number, 130, 372  
 regional stations, 122n., 123  
 relay exchanges, 141-4, 151  
 schools, radio in, 274-6  
 television in, 146, 321, 370  
 transcriptions from, 314n.  
*See also* British Broadcasting Corporation
- Great Lakes Broadcasting Co., 12n.
- Greece, 'Voice of America' broadcasts to, 302
- Griffith, D. W., quoted, 312
- Haley, Sir William, 133, 140, 148; *quoted*, 127-8, 131, 151
- Hard, William, 116
- Hatfield, Senator, 25
- Hecht, George J., 257n.
- Hennock, Commissioner Frieda, 218n., 350, 351  
 quoted, 348-9  
 excerpts from dissenting views on radio editorializing, 379
- Herz, 'Propaganda by Shortwave,' 294n.
- Hocking, William Ernest, *Freedom of the Press*, 395; quoted, 211, 212n., 226n.
- Hofstra College, 342n.
- Hollywood fan magazines, 107
- Hollywood Quarterly*, *The*, 177n.
- Holmes, Oliver Wendell, Jr., 213, 215, 223; quoted, 214
- Home Program, *see* British Broadcasting Corporation
- Hook, Sidney, 270
- Hoover, Herbert, attempts to regulate radio, 6; opposes radio advertising, 10
- Houseman, John, 357
- Hudson, Robert, 'A Case for Listener Participation,' 391

- In re* Great Lakes Broadcasting Co.,  
quoted, 12
- In re* Report on Chain Broadcasting,  
225n.; excerpts from decision,  
380-83
- Information and Educational Ex-  
change Act of 1948, 299
- Inglis, Ruth, *Freedom of the Movies*,  
395
- Institute for Democratic Education,  
288
- International Radio, audience, 300-  
302  
bibliography, 397  
conditions for effective use of,  
313-16  
extent of, 304  
FCC powers concerning, 363  
history of, 292-6  
postwar conditions for, 297-8  
*See also* United Nations and *list-  
ings under individual countries*
- Interstate Commerce Commission,  
12
- 'Invasion from Mars, The,' 186
- Invasion from Mars, The*, 186n., 394
- 'Invitation to Learning,' 280
- Journal of the Continental Congress*,  
226n.
- Katz, Daniel, *Social Psychology*,  
quoted, 106
- Katz, Oscar, quoted, 317, 340, 343
- KDKA, 4
- Kendall, Patricia R., and Lazarsfeld,  
Paul, *Radio Listening in Amer-  
ica*, 70n., 77n., 84n., 229n.,
- KFKB Broadcasting Association Inc.  
v. Federal Radio Commission,  
224n.
- KFRC, San Francisco, 240, 384, 387
- Kinglake, *Invasion of the Crimea*,  
quoted, 311-12
- KMPC, Los Angeles, 234, 336
- Konecky, Eugene, *The American  
Communications Conspiracy*,  
246n.
- KPO, San Francisco, 240-41, 384,  
387
- KQW, San Jose, Calif., 240-44, 384,  
387
- Lazarsfeld, Paul F., *Communica-  
tions Research*, 392  
*The Listener Looks at Radio*, 84n.  
*The People Look at Radio*, 70n.,  
392; quoted, 183  
*The People's Choice*, 95n., 392,  
394  
*Radio and the Printed Page*, 80n.,  
281n., 392  
*Radio Listening in America*, 70n.,  
77n., 84n., 229n.  
*Radio Research*, 392
- Leisure, significance of, 82, 265-6;  
television and, 341-3
- Lewis, Fulton, Jr., 239n., 250
- Leyda, Jay, 177n.
- Licenses, applications for, 38, 363  
FCC power to grant, 17-20, 364-6  
on receiving sets, 158, 158n., 372-  
3  
renewal, 23, 77, 363-4  
revocation, 26, 361-2, 365-6  
term of, 363
- Life*, 188, 346
- Light Program, *see* British Broad-  
casting Corporation
- Lippmann, Walter, 68, 182n., 308;  
*Public Opinion*, 394
- Listener, The*, 132-3
- Listeners, *see* Audience
- Lotteries, radio, 20, 366
- Lowe, Commander, quoted, 334
- Lowenthal, Leo, 93n.
- Luxembourg, 142
- Lynd, Robert, 92
- MacMahon, Arthur A., 299
- Madison, James, *Report on The Vir-  
ginia Resolutions*, quoted, 237n.
- Mannheim, Karl, 106, 185  
*Diagnosis of Our Time*, quoted,  
172  
*Man and Society in an Age of  
Reconstruction*, 88n.
- Marconi, Guglielmo, 292-3
- Mass communication, content analy-  
sis of, 233

- Mass communication—*Continued*  
 democracy and, 375  
 education and, 266-9  
 ethical use of, 197-200  
 global nature of, 305-13  
 influence on youth, 99-104  
 nature of mass media, 330-32  
 pervasiveness, 266  
 propaganda and, 175-9, 197-200  
 'Mass ecstasy,' 106-9, 176, 183-6, 188-9  
 'Mayflower Decision' (concerning Mayflower Broadcasting Corporation), 81, 235  
 censorship and, 220, 224  
 revised FCC ruling on, 219, 223; excerpts, 374-9  
 summary of original ruling, 218-25, 230  
 support for, 221-3  
 Meiklejohn, Alexander, *Free Speech*, 395; quoted, 213  
 'Memo from Lake Success,' 305  
 'Memorandum on the Postwar Information Program of the United States' (USGPO), 298n., 299n.  
 Mental Disorders, propaganda and, 179-80  
 Menzer, Carl, 350n.  
 Merton, Robert, *Mass Persuasion*, 87n., 98, 392, 394; quoted, 88, 185n., 199-200  
 Mill, John Stuart, 209, 242, 246-7  
 quoted, 41, 148-9  
*Essay on Liberty*, 395; quoted, 201-2, 214, 247n.  
 Miller, Clyde, 'What Everybody Should Know about Propaganda,' quoted, 190  
 Miller, Justin, 117, 390; opposes 'Mayflower Decision,' 219  
 Milton, John, 203, 204, 248, 395  
 Monopoly, FCC action on, 27-36  
 FTC on, 28n.  
 mass communication and, 176  
 provisions of Communications Act, 20, 365-6  
 in radio, British, 141-54; U. S., 3-4  
 television, 321  
 'Mother worship,' 97-8  
 Motion pictures, psychological impact of, 176-7  
 television and, 346-8, 354-7  
 youth and, 100-104  
 Mott, Frank Luther, *Golden Multitudes*, 93n.  
 Multiple address, 292  
 Mumford, Lewis, quoted, 175  
 Murrow, Edward, 50-51, 184, 249  
 Mutual Broadcasting System, 32, 239n.  
 establishment of, 13  
 size of, 31  
 NAB, *see* National Association of Broadcasters  
 National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), 12, 45n., 219  
 'broadcasters creed,' 60-61, 67  
 Code of Ethics, 81, 236  
 early attitude toward broadcasting, 10  
 foreign broadcasting and, 116-17  
 membership of, 60  
 public survey conducted by, 70, 80, 84n.  
 television and, 327  
 National Broadcasting Company (NBC), 249  
 adult education and, 280-81  
 advertising policy, 52n., 344  
 Blue Network, 13, 29-30, 34  
 conceived as non-profit organization, 9  
 favors government regulation, 7  
 monopolistic tendencies of, 28-35, 63  
 program schedule, 124-7  
 Red Network, 13, 29  
 short-wave services, 295  
 television policy, 318  
 National Broadcasting Company v. U. S., 221n., 380-83, 390  
 National Education Association, 257n.  
 'National Farm Radio Forum,' 160  
 National University Extension Association, 116

- NBC, *see* National Broadcasting Company
- Networks (chain broadcasting), advantages, 47
- contracts with affiliates, 30-35
- correspondence with, 75-6
- development of, 7, 13
- FCC power over, 19, 361
- influence of, 13-14
- monopolistic tendencies of, 28-35
- See also* Affiliated stations; *In re* the Report on Chain Broadcasting
- New York Central Securities Co. v. U. S., 380
- New York City, school broadcasting in, 276-8; WNYC and, 8
- News, commentators, 150, 248-50, 345
- distortion (alleged), by KMPC, 234ff;
- listeners' attitude to, 84
- right to editorialize on radio, 374-9, 394
- Newsweek*, 247n.
- 'Nine Niemann Fellows,' *Your Newspaper*, quoted, 235n.
- Non-profit organizations, FM and, 66, 283n.
- number of stations owned by, 283-4
- powers of FCC regarding, 21-2, 25, 351-2, 363
- right to broadcast, 239-40
- television and, 348-50
- Obscenity, 211; disciplinary powers of FCC concerning, 19, 361, 366
- Office of the Co-ordinator of Inter-American Affairs, 296-7
- Office of Education, 278
- Office of War Information, 296-7
- Ogilvie, Sir Frederick, *quoted*, 150
- Ohio State Institute on Radio Education, 160
- Option time, 32-5
- OWI, *see* Office of War Information
- Paley, William S., 281
- Pennkamp v. State of Florida, 226n.
- Pierson, W. Theodore, 224n.; *quoted*, 220-21, 227
- Postmaster-General (Great Britain), power, over BBC, 368-70, 118-19; over relay exchanges, 143-4
- President's Commission on Higher Education, 260
- Press, distinguished from radio, 220, 222, 236-7; hostility to radio, 47n., 80
- Princeton University, 341, 342n.
- Proctor and Gamble, 52
- Program preferences, in Great Britain, 112-13, 122-40
- in Sweden, 113
- in television, 341
- in U.S., 84-5, 96-9, 103-5, 112-13
- Program service, 224n.
- FCC concern with, 225, 37-9
- FRC concern with, 11
- influence of networks on, 14
- type desirable, 66
- Programs, comedy, 85, 96, 113
- daytime serials (soap operas), 108-9, 176, 211, 345, 392
- documentary, 52-3, 90, 146
- dramatic, 96, 113, 345, 355-6
- educational, 12, 227, 270-91
- farm, 113, 160
- musical, 85, 96, 97, 99, 113, 345
- news, 47n., 84, 113, 229, 345, 374, 393
- preferences for, 112-13
- psychiatric, 280
- public affairs, 12, 39, 99, 105, 113, 160, 374
- quiz, 113
- religious, 12, 96, 99, 113, 245n.
- schedules of, 50-51, 124-7
- sports, 113
- See also* Sponsored programs; Sustaining programs
- Propaganda, bibliography, 394
- danger from, 173, 196-7
- definition of, 173-5
- good and bad, 174-5, 184, 193, 197-8
- importance of, 175-80
- monopoly and, 176
- nazi, 174, 192, 198, 294

- Propaganda—*Continued*  
 radio, 294-304  
 social context, 168-73, 199-200  
 susceptibility to, 192-3  
 techniques, 181-91  
 wartime, 184
- Psychological factors in radio, 178-80  
 appeal to authority, 186-7  
 herd instinct, 190-91  
 identification ('mass ecstasy'), 106-9, 176, 183-6, 188-9  
 'mother worship,' 97-8  
 projection, 88-9  
 sense of belonging, 89-90
- Public opinion, bibliography, 394;  
 polls of, 92n., 279n., 309n.
- Public service in radio, 66, 91  
 concept of, 9, 61-2  
 licensee's responsibility for, 12, 55  
 networks and, 52-5
- 'Public Service Responsibility of Broadcast Licensees' (FCC), *see* 'Blue Book'
- Public service responsibility of radio licensees* (USGPO), 280n.
- Pure Food and Drugs Act, 211, 233
- Radio, appraisal of, 60-68, 237-8, 270-71  
 bibliography, 389-98  
 competition in 3-4, 14  
 critics of, 79-80  
 distinguished from press, 220, 222, 236-7  
 global impact of, 307-16  
 group discussion and, 282-3  
 history, international, 292-6  
 history, U.S., 3-23  
 obsolescence of equipment, 56-9  
 psychological impact, 176-8  
 right to use, 239-46, 384-8  
 in schools, 272-9  
 television and, 83, 283, 343-6  
*See also* International radio;  
 Regulation of radio
- Radio Act of 1927, provisions, 11, 16, 27, 375; *see also* Federal Radio Commission
- Radio Broadcast Magazine*, quoted, 5n., 10n.
- Radio Corporation of America (RCA), early policy, 7-8, 9  
 monopolistic tendencies, 28-9, 63  
 television policy, 324
- Radio Council of Greater Cleveland, 78
- Radio Listener's Councils, 72, 391;  
 functions, 77-9
- Radio Listeners of Northern California, 78
- Radio Normandy, 142
- Radio stations, call letters, 362  
 in Canada, 156n., 158n., 161-6  
 classification of, 43, 360  
 conditions of operation, 42-3  
 educational, 283-9, 350  
 financing of, 42n., 45n.  
 freedom to editorialize by, 218-33, 374-9  
 local, 14, 38, 43, 75  
 non-profit, 276, 283-4  
 number of (1920-22), 5; (1944-9), 46, 58  
 obsolescence of equipment, 56-9  
 operating costs, 45n.  
 program service by, 14, 38-40  
 university, 284-8  
*See also* Licenses; Networks
- Radio Times* (BBC periodical), 121, 132
- Radio Writers Guild, 45
- Rating Systems, 74
- RCA, *see* Radio Corporation of America
- Reader's Digest*, described, 266
- Receiving sets, communal, 313  
 licenses for, 158, 158n., 372-3  
 number, in Great Britain, 130, 372; in U.S., 82; in other countries, 301  
 sale of, in 1920's, 5-7; television, 337-8
- Reck, Franklin M., *Radio from Start to Finish*, 389
- Red Network, 13, 29
- Reeve, Edward G., quoted, 341
- Regulation of Radio, Act of 1912, 5, 294

- Regulation of Radio—*Continued*  
 early history of, 4-7, 11-14  
 international, 293-4, 315  
 public attitude toward, 228-9  
*See also* Communications Act of 1934; Radio Act of 1927
- Reith, Sir John, 129-30, 139, 140, 141
- Relay exchanges, in Great Britain, 141-4, 151
- Religion, freedom of speech and, 242-5  
 youth and, 99n.  
*See also* Programs, religious; Scott, Robert Harold
- Rennie, Thomas A. C., *Mental Health in Modern Society*, quoted, 179
- Report on Chain Broadcasting (FCC), 62-3, 390  
 significance of, 35-7  
 summary of, 27-35
- Report on the Training of English Teachers (Harvard), 101
- Richards, G. A., 234
- Riley, J. W., 'Some Observations on the Social Effects of Television,' quoted, 339-40
- Robinson, Thomas Porter, *Radio and the Federal Government*, 390
- Roman Catholic Church, 210, 394
- Rose, C. B., Jr. *National Policy for Radio Broadcasting*, 390
- Russia, 193, 210  
*Amerika*, U.S. periodical in, 300  
 broadcasting system in, 114, 373  
 distortion of fact by, 300  
 international broadcasts of, 294, 303  
 jamming of 'Voice of America,' 302-3  
 number of receiving sets, 301  
 Rutgers University, 338n.
- Sandage, Charles Harold, 'Qualitative Analysis of Radio Listening,' 392  
*Radio Advertising for Retailers*, 391
- Sarnoff, David, 8, 9, 296, 389
- Scott, Robert Harold, protests refusal to broadcast atheistic talks, 240-46; FCC 'Memorandum Opinion and Order,' excerpts, 384-8
- Sevareid, Eric, 50-51, 249
- Shanek, Richard L., *Social Psychology*, quoted, 106n.
- Shebbeare, Rev. Charles John, quoted, 385n.
- Sherwood, Robert, quoted, 346-7
- Siepmann, Charles A., 'Coverage of a Radio Documentary,' 281n.  
*The Radio Listener's Bill of Rights*, 79n., 282n., 391  
*Radio's Second Chance*, 228n., 249n., 391, 395
- Sinatra, Frank, 106-7
- Smith, Bernard B., quoted, 49, 333n.
- Smith, Howard K., 184
- Smith, Kate, War Bond appeals, 188; significance of, 87-92, 97-8, 106-7
- Smythe, Dallas, 'Television: Position and Outlook,' quoted, 325, 334  
 'Soap operas,' 211, 345, 392  
 identification and, 176  
 size of audience for, 108-9
- Society, aristocratic concept of, 170, 209-10  
 class consciousness in, 91-4  
 influence of myths on, 94-5  
 mental disorders in, 179-80
- South America, broadcasts to, 295-7;  
 number of receiving sets, 301
- Spingarn, *Radio is Yours*, 391
- Sponsored programs, 14  
 control of, 48-55  
 early objection to, 10  
 object of, 182
- 'Standards of Commercial Practice' (NAB), 10, 390; quoted, 60-61
- Stanton, Frank, quoted, 330-31
- Sterling, Commissioner George G., 318; quoted, 324, 327
- Sternberg, Evelyn, 'Congress and the Control of Radio Broadcasting,' 390

- Sterner, Alice P., *Radio, Motion Picture and Reading Interests*, 101n., 103-4
- Stratovision, 325, 334
- Strindberg, Johan August, 'The Stronger,' 358
- Sustaining programs, 'Blue Book' on, 38-9  
in Canada, 159-60  
economics of radio and, 52-5, 64
- Swing, Raymond, 32, 184; quoted, 316
- Tasker, Jerry, quoted, 337
- Technology, 267  
influence on education, 264  
world affairs and, 306
- Television, advertising in, 328-9, 332-5  
as art, 353-8  
audience, 336-42, 345  
bibliography, 397-8  
channels, 319-21  
color, 59, 321, 324  
education and, 348-52  
FCC 'freeze,' 319, 339  
financing, 327-9, 333, 350  
in Great Britain, 146, 370  
map of facilities in U.S., 322-3  
motion pictures and, 57-8, 346-8, 354-7  
networks, 319-20, 322-3  
number of sets and stations, 58, 318, 337-8  
ownership, 326  
'pay as you see' proposal, 325  
program policy, 330-38  
program preferences, 58, 341  
radio and, 83, 283, 343-6  
social influence of, 341-3  
Stratovision, 325, 334
- Third program, *see* British Broadcasting Corporation
- Thorp, Margaret, *America at the Movies*, quoted, 108
- 'Time for Reason—About Broadcasting,' 282n.
- 'Today in Parliament,' 131
- Trammell, Niles, 52n.
- Transcriptions, in adult education, 288  
in advertising, 33  
international use of, 314, 397  
in school broadcasting, 278
- Trinity Methodist Church South v. Federal Radio Commission, 224n.
- United Nations, bibliography on radio in, 397  
broadcasting of activities, 304-5, 314  
Commission on Human Rights, 315  
UNESCO, 304, 313-14  
*See also* International radio
- 'United Nations Today,' 305
- United States, appraisal of radio in, 60-68, 237-8  
history of radio in, 3-23  
short-wave broadcasts from, 295-303
- United States v. Paramount Pictures et. al., 225n.
- 'University of the Air,' 281
- University of Wisconsin, 284
- Variety*, 329; quoted, 344
- 'Videotown,' 337
- 'Voice of America,' 288, 297  
correspondence with, 301-2  
'jamming' by USSR, 302-3  
State Dept. and, 298-300
- WAAB, Boston, *see* 'Mayflower Decision'
- Warburg, James P., *Unwritten Treaty*, 397; quoted, 315
- Ward, Artemus, 279
- Warner, 'The Radio Daytime Serial,' 392
- Washington, George, quoted, 168, 171
- Wave lengths, *see* Frequencies
- WCRW, 12
- WCSH, Portland, Me., 32
- WEAF, New York, 10
- Welles, Orson, 186
- Westinghouse, 7, 9



- WGAN, Portland, Me., 32  
WGAR, 234  
White, E. B., quoted, 201  
White, Edward, 231n.  
White, Llewellyn, *The American Radio*, 64n., 391  
    *Peoples Speaking to Peoples*, 315n., 397; quoted, 297  
White, Senator, 27  
Whitton, —'Propaganda by Short-wave,' 294n.  
Wilson, *Communications in Modern Society*, 394  
Wisconsin, 78, 391; school broadcasting in, 277, 283n., 284  
Wisconsin Association for Better Radio Listening, 78  
WJR, 234  
WNEW, New York, 346n.  
WNYC, New York, 8  
Women, attitude toward radio, 83, 105, 108-9; in television audience, 340, 344-5  
Woodward, Luther E., *Mental Health in Modern Society*, quoted, 179  
World Wide Broadcasting Foundation, 295  
Wyatt, Wilson, 239n.  
Young, Owen D., 9, 389  
Youth, preferences in mass media, 98-104; television and, 338-40