

EAE 0422 A	
Code Sujet	LCV A2
Sujet Jury	
Sujet Candidat	

Question au programme :

La BBC et le service public de l'audiovisuel (1922-1995)

Sujet de leçon :

Discuss the following statement:

"Hitherto it had been assumed—apart from the occasional flurry over a programme—that Britain had 'solved' the problem of the political relations of broadcasting to Government, Parliament and the public. [...]. But some, with equal fervour, maintained that broadcasters were not challenging enough and were cowed by Government and vested interests to produce programmes which bolstered up the *status quo* and concealed how a better society could evolve."

Annan Committee, *Report of the Committee on the Future of Broadcasting*, London, HMSO, 1977, p. 15.

EAE 0422 A	
Code Sujet	LCV A3
Sujet Jury	
Sujet Candidat	

Question au programme :

La BBC et le service public de l'audiovisuel, 1922-1995.

Sujet de leçon :

Discuss:

Uniformity and variation

EAE 0422 A	
Code Sujet	LCV A4
Sujet Jury	
Sujet Candidat	

Question au programme :

La BBC et le service public de l'audiovisuel, 1922-1995

Sujet de leçon :

Discuss the following statement:

"The attacks on the supposed liberal or left-wing 'bias' of the BBC which emanated from the New Right, therefore, need to be understood as part and parcel of the broader contemporary attacks on the BBC over its funding and organisational structures".

Tom Mills, *The BBC: Myth of a Public Service*, London, Verso, 2016, p. 113.

EAE 0422 A	
Code Sujet	LCV A5
Sujet Jury	
Sujet Candidat	

Question au programme :

La BBC et le service public de l'audiovisuel (1922-1995)

Sujet de leçon :

Discuss the following theme:

The household

EAE 0422 A	
Code Sujet	LCV A7
Sujet Jury	
Sujet Candidat	

Question au programme :

La BBC et le service public de l'audiovisuel, 1922-1995

Sujet de leçon :

Discuss the following statement:

The BBC and wars

Comment on the following document	EAE 0422 A	
Lord Pilkington, House of Lords Debate on « Future of Broadcasting », 21 May 1969. <i>Hansard</i> vol. 302 cc 360-457	Code Sujet	CCV A3
	Sujet Jury	
	Sujet Candidat	

In our Broadcasting Committee's Report we referred to the danger of bias being created not merely by treatment of events but by their selection. No newspaper, no Broadcasting Corporation, can possibly report everything: the day is just not long enough. In the space of a few minutes all the news that is to be reported must be presented, and this means drastic selection. It was for this reason that we said that all communications in any one area must never be in one pair of hands. But recently dangers, openly foreseen eight years ago by the Committee, and by the B.B.C. and I.T.N., have become real. This is what I might call the preselection of news by its deliberate creation. This can happen in two ways.

The first is a natural temptation for broadcasters to seek out news which is startling and striking, and to present it in a startling and striking way but without keeping a true balance. This is controllable by both authorities, and each of them slips up, if at all, only occasionally. The second, which is the obverse, is that when groups of determined people know that some event may be televised they themselves set out to make that event sensational, in order to draw attention to themselves and the institution they represent. Student troubles in universities, troubles in Northern Ireland and disturbances of many kinds are examples of this. It is easy to unbalance news, to ensure selection and thereby to ensure that extreme points of view, unrepresentative points of view, minority points of view, receive quite disproportionate coverage, to the exclusion of the quieter, less sensational activities of the vast majority.

No one, I am sure, wants to keep out of the news all these minority activities—on the contrary. But they must be kept to some extent in balance. How often does the news start with pictures of some marching or demonstrating? And how often are we assured later by other people that those concerned in the demonstrations have merely the tiniest following; that they are not representative; that they do not matter, and that everybody else wants to get on with his or her work? But broadcasting is their most powerful means of growing significant. One well-known broadcaster has told me that when he is known to be on the air some exhibitionists will collect; and where they used merely to dance and wave their hands, in order to be seen at home, now they will deliberately shout out obscenities in order to be heard. Not long ago many of us, probably, saw someone being interviewed at a university and being grossly heckled in a way that I am sure would not have happened if it had not been known that the programme was to be broadcast. So the preselection of news can be done by those who are determined to hit the headlines, and can be done by live intervention in programmes that are not part of news bulletins. In my view, this is something which needs further thought by the broadcasting authorities themselves. As with piracy, dangerous developments will not be dangerous if they are tackled early enough.

Comment on the following document	EAE 0422 A	
Helena Normanton, "BBC Dictatorship", <i>The Daily Mirror</i> , 28 August 1933.	Code Sujet	CCV A4
	Sujet Jury	
	Sujet Candidat	

The enormous staff now employed by the BBC is naturally deeply concerned to know whether the women in its service enjoy the same right to live normal family lives as other British women, or whether some policy of more or less compulsory celibacy is on its way.

5 The public will be even more concerned, for broadcasting comes into every home, and every licence-holder feels himself to be in a sense an employer of those thousands of men and women who add so much interest to our lives.

Fair play is such a jewel that it would make us all very uneasy to feel that there is any possibility of one rule (or rather a wider measure of freedom from rule) for the highly-placed woman, and another and harsher for the stenographer or translator.

10 Two circulars have just been issued to heads of departments of the BBC upon the subject of women and marriage, upon which the huge listening-in family will want to know a great deal more.

15 *Interference*

According to the first circular, London women members of the staff contemplating marriage should discuss the matter with the Chief of the London Welfare Staff, and if employed in the provinces should consult with the local Director of Staff, or else communicate with the Welfare Chief in London.

20 The second circular issued to the heads of various departments asks them to indicate to married women in the employ of the BBC what their position would be if they have children. Under the exigencies of the conditions of their work some of them would be compelled to resign and others would be permitted to carry on – so this circular indicates.

25 The BBC would greatly enhance its own dignity and that of all its employees by resolutely refusing to interfere with their domestic and private lives. That is, if anybody at all can be said to have any private life in these days.

Organisations of great prestige and authority such as the Benchers of the Inns of Court, the General Medical Council, Chambers of Commerce, or the Royal Academy are far too wise and farseeing to trust their feet upon such slippery slopes.

Having observed the conduct of their women members over long periods, it has become obvious to them that married women themselves know when and when not to engage in professional work.

35 Women lawyers of all countries and periods have tended to marry and perpetuate the race from time to time (such as Maître Maria Vérone, who has six children), but history is entirely silent as to any occasion when it has been necessary to inform learned ladies that it would be seemly for them to desist for a while from public engagements.

40 But novices rush in where the experienced read the notices put over the entrance and then go off elsewhere!

Helena Normanton (1882-1957) was one of the first female barristers in the United Kingdom and a campaigner for women's rights.

Comment on the following document	EAE 0422 A	
Margaret Thatcher, <i>The Downing Street Years</i> , London, HarperCollins Publishers, 1993, pp. 634-635.	Code Sujet	CCV A5
	Sujet Jury	
	Sujet Candidat	

5 Some of Britain's television and radio was of very high quality indeed, particularly drama and news. Internationally, it was in a class of its own. But the idea that a small clique of broadcasting professionals always knew what was best and that they should be more or less immune from criticism or competition was not one I could accept. Unfortunately, in the Home Office the broadcasters often found a ready advocate. The irony that a Reithian rhetoric should be used to defend a moral neutrality between terrorism and the forces of law and order, as well as programmes that seemed to many to be scurrilous and offensive, was quite lost.

10 The notion of 'public service broadcasting' was the kernel of what the broadcasting oligopolists claimed to be defending. Unfortunately, when subject to closer inspection that kernel began rapidly to disintegrate. 'Public service broadcasting' was extremely difficult to define. One element was supposed to be that viewers or listeners in all parts of the country who paid the same licence fee should be able to receive all public service channels - what was described as the concept of 'universality'. More important, though, 15 was the idea that there should be a proper balance of information, education and entertainment offered through a wide range of high quality programmes. More recently, the public service obligation had been extended to cover particular 'minority' programmes. The BBC and the IBA - which regulated the independent television companies - mainly gave effect to this public service obligation by their influence over 20 scheduling.

So much for the - somewhat nebulous and increasingly outdated - theory. The practice was very different. BBC1 and ITV ran programmes that were increasingly indistinguishable from commercial programming in market systems - soap operas, sport, game shows and made-for-TV films. To use Benthamite language, the public 25 broadcasters were claiming the rights of poetry but providing us with pushpin. Good fun perhaps. But did our civilization really depend on it?

Furthermore the duopoly was being undermined by technical developments. Scarcity of available spectrum had previously determined that only a very few channels could be broadcast. But this was changing. It seemed likely that ever higher-frequency parts of 30 the spectrum would be able to be brought into use. Cable television and direct broadcasting by satellite (DBS) also looked likely to transform the possibilities. There was more opportunity for payment - per channel or per programme - by subscription. An entire new world was opening up.

I believed we should take advantage of these technical possibilities to give viewers a far 35 wider choice. This was already happening in countries as diverse as the United States and Luxemburg. Why not in Britain? But this vastly increased potential demand for programmes should not be met from within the existing duopoly. I wanted to see the widest competition among and opportunities for the independent producers - who were themselves virtually a creation of our earlier decision to set up Channel 4 in 1982. I also 40 believed that it would be possible to combine more choice for viewers and more opportunity for producers with standards - both of production and of taste - that were as high as, if not higher than, those under the existing duopoly. To make assurance doubly sure, however, I wanted to establish independent watchdogs to keep standards high by exposing broadcasters to public criticism, complaint and debate.

Comment on the following document	EAE 0422 A	
Lord Tweedsmuir, "The BBC Charter", House of Lords Debates, <i>Hansard</i> , Vol. 141, 26 June 1946.	Code Sujet	CCV A8
	Sujet Jury	
	Sujet Candidat	

To turn to the much more popular platform of criticising it, one finds that it is, after all, a monopoly in a country which hates monopolies. It raises by the licence tax vast sums of money, which it spends, one might say, in a manner far removed from the scrutiny of the public or even of Parliament. It has just

 5 doubled the licence fee and no reason has been given. It has the vices that are inherent in all monopolies, and they will come out in the long run. The first is an arbitrary attitude towards the public, and the second is that with the lack of competition a monopoly eventually sells to the public an inferior product.

 The noble Lord, Lord Elton, has said, and also the noble Lord, Lord Brabazon,

 10 before him, that whatever an investigation of the B.B.C. did, it could not possibly do harm. I call upon His Majesty's Government to tell us whether or not they will give sympathetic consideration to the appointment of a Joint Select Committee of both Houses, to examine and review the B.B.C. Charter before it is renewed at the end of this year. As I think both Lord Foley and Lord Elton said, so far as

 15 broadcasting goes, England is no longer an island, and from the present nature of the B.B.C. it is bound to fall behind in the race. A Joint Select Committee, if it were set up to examine the present functioning of the B.B.C. and all the possible alternatives, would then be able to look round the world and examine the different patterns, country by country.

 It will find at one end of the scale, in totalitarian countries, a Government-owned, Government-run radio service. Those who sigh for that particular form of paradise in this country are happily very few. The antithesis of that is the American system, where all is private enterprise, though not, I sometimes

 20 suspect, as free as it looks. But although their news is far inferior to ours, by virtue of competition and the much higher prices they can pay they are able to get a far higher standard of individual talent in entertainers. Then there are countries like Canada, New Zealand and Australia who come between the two; part of the time on the air is Government property and part is that of private enterprise. If we study those systems there must be certain points which we can

 25 learn and which will redound to our benefit. To those of us who sit on these Benches a monopoly is wholly repugnant, and that goes for State monopoly as well as others. It has, as I have said, these inherent vices: an arbitrary attitude to the people and the inevitable result of a second-class product being foisted on the public.

 30 If we are to have the B.B.C. constituted as it is now, there must be two absolutely certain safeguards. One is that it comes before the public for review at least every seven years when the Charter is renewed, so that the public may have a chance to see how it works and how it has developed, and at the same time to criticize; and also, for the first time, so that the staff and officials of the

 35 B.B.C. can be given an opportunity to answer some of the criticism which is thrown at them, to which they normally have no right of reply and no channel of reply.

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