



Conservative Central Office

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PRIME MINISTER

PANORAMA

The first 8 minutes will be taken up by Fred Emery who will give 1 minute on the political news of the day: 1½ minutes on Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister (basically a recollection of the time in Office): 3 minutes on our Manifesto and 1½ minutes on the Campaign that the Labour Party have mounted against you.

Sir Robin Day will begin his interview by asking you questions based on the news of the last two days. That will include:

- 1) Mr Healey's press conference today.
- 2) What were the achievements of Williamsburg and was it largely a political exercise.
- 3) Whatever emerges in the next 24 hours.

The main body of the interview will come in 4 sections:

- 1) The Economy and Unemployment: Inevitably Nigel Lawson's prediction on the timing of the reduction in unemployment will figure and you will be asked to give your own version of it. "You speak of prudent housekeeping, why have you borrowed £40 billion" etc.
- 2) Certain details of our Manifesto. George Cary shows some reluctance to go into details of what these may be but my investigations show that privatisation of parts of the Health Service will show largely. Stephen's brief today is very pertinent.
- 3) Defence.
- 4) What will Britain be like if you win. What will your style of Government be. What do you hope a new Government will achieve. What can we expect Britain to be like at the next Election if you win this one.

The actual interview time will be just short of 40 minutes.

GORDON REECE
30.5.83

TO: THE PRIME MINISTER

FROM: GORDON REECE.

Some Reflections on Broadcasting

A principal reason for higher standards in fairness and reporting by independent television (with the exception of Channel 4) over the BBC is the measure of executive and content control which can be exercised in ITV.

In ITN, for example, the executive who takes responsibility for the output (the Editor) has the direct supervision of the man who makes up the bulletins and it is the Editor who takes public responsibility if anything goes wrong.

In the BBC on the other hand, the producer responsible for news reports to the Manager of News, who reports to the Head of Television News and Current Affairs, who reports to the Managing Director of Television who in turn reports to the Assistant Director General or the Director General. It is the Director General who then has the public accountability.

1. The BBC should have an entirely separate news service on the lines of ITN split off from the Current Affairs department with its own Editor. That Editor should take public and personal responsibility for output. Current affairs (Panorama, Nationwide, etc) is a different discipline from news reporting. Experience has shown that News and Current Affairs has not been a good mix.
2. There is no good reason why BBC radio should be governed by the same authority as BBC TV. They could become totally separate - with the current BBC TV service having a new title - say public service broadcasting. This would in effect remove an entire layer of bureaucracy. It might also enable the BBC to content itself with its present building rather than build a grand new HQ (costing many millions of pounds).
3. The restriction of compulsory TV licences to those who wished to take the current BBC TV service would be no more difficult to administer and police as the current detector van system allows. The fine would of course have to be substantially increased but I am sure the measure would be exceptionally popular with the people in the lower income bracket who tend to watch ITV anyway.
4. Most important the IBA and BBC Board of Governors should be abolished and a single controlling body responsible for both licensing and standards substituted. This new small supervisory board would not need either regional or special interest participation. (These are the components in the current boards which make them so ineffectual. People who are chosen because they are Irish, or because they are Presbyterians or because they have some other special sectarian representation cannot be expected to be effective watchdogs of broadcasting. And they are not. These very proper geographical religious balances can be catered for lower down the scale, NOT on the governing body). It is already difficult enough to find responsible and qualified people to serve on the BBC and IBA. This way at least you could halve the number we were looking for. And if the regional people and do-gooders were eliminated a new central control commission could operate in a more professional manner.

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5. Channel 4 seems to be so bad that the IBA has simply abandoned it. Perhaps this wouldn't matter if the taxpayer were not footing the bill, as ITV's subventions to Channel 4 are deductible from the levy.

Why not give the IBA one year to make Channel 4 self-supporting. Thereafter payments to it would be post, not pre, levy. That would galvanize the IBA into making Channel 4 into ITV2 which it should have been in the first place.