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National Identity in the National Interest:
The Branding of Britishness by the BBC in the 1960s

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Enter Through the Gift Shop: A Guided Tour of *Inside Britain*

What is – to borrow a phrase from the advertiser’s jargon – the *brand image* of Britain in the world today? John Bull, in his mid-Victorian splendour, does not quite represent us on the threshold of Europe’s Common Market. And, in a nuclear age, what does it matter now who rules the waves? Napoleon, perhaps, with an outsider’s perspective, was nearer to the mark with his “nation of shopkeepers,” for buying and selling remain principal British occupations. Behind her counters, beyond her shop windows, stand her industries, probably the most persistent formative influence on her national character... Britain has moved deliberately into the era of the Welfare State, and is becoming – this proves to be no contradiction in terms – an “affluent society.”¹

The above listing for a programme broadcast by the British Broadcasting Corporation’s English-language General Overseas Service in 1962, includes within it all of the key elements, and a central concept, through which this dissertation seeks to explore the representation of national identity in the 1960s by the national broadcaster of Great Britain. As one episode in a series that promised global listeners a guided tour of *Inside Britain*, a brief glimpse is afforded us in the pages of *London Calling* – an ‘Overseas Journal’ or magazine guide akin to the domestic *Radio Times* – of what this story of ‘A Nation on the Move’ projected of the British to the world. Britain is defined by its trade and industry, the title suggesting energy and progression; the British are conscientious socialists without missing out on prosperity. Britishness is no longer synonymous with its colonial past, standing as it does on the cusp – the writer believed, at least – of accession to the European Economic Community. Crucially, there is an awareness of the British *brand*, no longer embodied in the brash and jingoistic John Bull. Through analysis of the representations made of Britain in BBC external broadcasting, the following study examines the process by which the broadcaster constructed a new brand for the British that, ‘in a nuclear age’ where these ‘shopkeepers’ were adjusting to a life after imperial ‘splendour’, employed national identity in the service of national interests.

Moving beyond a long debate over propagandism, typically with the Cold War as context and the focus on scrutinising the BBC for complicity, a review of the programming broadcast by the BBC in the sixties shows a more insightful model for interpreting its activities. This can be found in the practice of *modern* ‘nation branding’, parsing the components of a country’s identity into its ‘unique selling points’ and then packaging these into a pitch for the

¹ British Broadcasting Corporation, *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.245 (8 February 1962) p.1.

global marketplace – the core concept explored in chapter one. It is a speculative exercise designed to accumulate esteem, appreciation and awareness of the brand supporting national performance in all exchanges. Thus, this study builds on newer investigations into ‘the cultural dimension of international relations’, most prominently that of Marie Gillespie, considering the role of the media in ‘soft power’.² It is an assessment of the end product and its influence on how identity was understood by an audience, the creation of cultural capital, rather than simply the process behind production from a ‘top-down’ perspective, occupied as that has been with individuals and institutional relations with political and diplomatic powers.³ How the BBC answered in programming the pressing questions asked of Britain in this era – as a great power; as head of the Commonwealth; as part and partner of Europe – is illustrative of the role it played – of its own accord or in accordance with directive – in presenting a brand that supported national need. Rather than simply ‘public diplomacy’ – to ‘speak peace unto nation’ and forge direct conversation with foreign publics – ideas about Britain were seeded to cultivate a ‘competitive identity’. Nation branding has been criticised for ‘turning bases of national recognition into essentialized and homogenized commodity goods’, diversity a ‘fantasy’ in depictions that are only interested in it as a ‘currency’, ultimately concerned with making identity fit ‘patterns of consumption’.⁴ But all identity is ‘montage’, to paraphrase Peter Leese.⁵ How the BBC compiled those images, what was cut out and to what benefit, is our question.

The source for this analysis is *London Calling*, a magazine dispatched to subscribers wherever in the world they listened to the BBC’s General Overseas Service, or World Service as of May 1965. This listings guide came in three volumes during the period 1960-1970, changing from a weekly to a more pictorial monthly edition in April 1963; and a fresh volume came into being in May 1969, when the formerly separate English-language African Service and BBC Europe were consumed within ‘an integrated network of programmes ... planned and presented as the BBC World Service.’⁶ As for what the reader or researcher finds within these volumes, the content and its constraints are explained in the 200th edition of the second volume; that due to the guide being prepared ‘not seven days but several weeks ahead of the programmes it covers’, attention is on ‘trends’ rather than ‘week-by-week developments’ and

² Marie Gillespie, Alban Webb & Gerd Baumann, ‘Broadcasting, strategic challenges and the ecology of overseas broadcasting by the BBC’ in *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (2008) pp.453-458.

³ Thomas Hajkowski, *The BBC and National Identity in Britain, 1922-53* (Manchester University Press, 2017) p.9.

⁴ Melissa Aronczyk, *Branding the Nation: The Global Business of National Identity* (Oxford University Press, 2011) pp.8-9, 31.

⁵ Peter Leese, *Britain Since 1945: Aspects of Identity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) pp.1-2.

⁶ British Broadcasting Corporation, *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.73 (April 1963) p.2.

'neither news nor topical commentary can ever be previewed.'⁷ Such a limitation is to be expected of any journal sent in advance of the affairs that will be current in the period it covers. But this study is concerned with scrutinising those 'trends', seeing how patterns in programming established aspects of identity that correlated with interests, informing a brand. It is a vast resource, touched upon by Emma Robertson in her study of Britishness as espoused by the BBC vis-à-vis its Empire, which this dissertation shall survey in its 'bewildering array' in order to gain more detailed insight into the projection of Britain.⁸ Before this analysis, part two of our study, we will examine the necessary concepts and relevant literature in the first three chapters: how and why the BBC broadcasted and the model provided us by nation branding; national interest in its historical context; national identity and the BBC's role in Britishness.

⁷ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.200 (30 March 1961) p.1.

⁸ Emma Robertson, 'I get a real kick out of Big Ben': BBC Versions of Britishness on the Empire and General Overseas Service, 1932–1948' in *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (2008) p.464.

Part One:
Nation Branding from Stephen Tallents to Simon Anholt

Nation branding, the application of corporate marketing concepts to countries in order to manage their reputation and build recognition of a desired image, offers an understanding as to how the BBC, especially in foreign broadcasting, fulfilled its public service in the national interest. This first chapter will set out the concept of 'nation branding', popularly associated with Simon Anholt, a communications and policy advisor to Britain and others, and the model it offers – cutting through the debate over whether 'projection' equates to 'propaganda'. The project of nation branding is to identify and articulate the identity of a nation state, its peoples and places, best located for what the London School of Economics' Leslie Sklair calls a 'lucrative role' in the globalised world.⁹ Another of its purposes is the preservation of national identity itself, premised on that sense of belonging being boiled – if not broken – down in an integrated world system; one in which 'borders and boundaries appear increasingly obsolete.'¹⁰ The turn-of-the-century tricks of the marketing trade, extrapolated from that profession for public good, are supposed to offer the tools to sustain the nation-state and stake its claim in the global marketplace. As we shall see, nation branding is but the latest iteration of an 'art' whose advocates once called for the 'projection of England' or 'Britain', usefully revised in the language of globalisation. An early bureau for the branding of Britain can, this dissertation posits, be found and studied in the BBC of the 1960s. This case will be made first by exploring the practice and purpose of nation branding, applying it to what the BBC World Service does – and intends to do – before critiquing concepts of 'propaganda' that have proved so controversial - and controvertible - when discussing the BBC. To this end, four central questions will be addressed: why the BBC broadcasts; to whom it broadcasts; by whom it broadcasts; which Britain it broadcasts.

In her 2011 book *Branding the Nation*, communications scholar Melissa Aronczyk collated case studies of practitioners trading in what she calls a 'global business of national identity'. Aronczyk details how branding is employed 'to help the nation-state successfully compete for international capital in areas such as tourism, foreign direct investment, import-export trade, higher education, and skilled labor.' There is also a 'recursive function', in that positive opinions abroad may boomerang back and foster 'pride and patriotism' at home. But the practice is peaceable, having the 'professed ability to render the stakes and claims of nationalism less antagonistic or chauvinistic than its previous incarnations.'¹¹ The trick,

⁹ Aronczyk, *Branding the Nation*, p.22.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.2-3.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp.16-17.

evidently grasped by the BBC in its output, is the marrying of 'heritage and modernization, domestic and foreign concerns, and market and moral ideologies' into a benign nationalism, based on commercial *interests* rather than politicised *passions*. It places nationalism *within* internationalism. Identity becomes a crucial element in the interplay of this 'global nationalism', as Aroncyk understands it, categorising peoples and places for 'capital attraction'; making people and place more 'cohesive or collegial' is a collateral effect. Nations become the matrix in which economic growth 'as the engine of citizens' well-being' occurs.¹² National identities and nationalisms can coexist, compete and, in the creative tension of their plurality, profit from a stable and stratified system.

As a leading purveyor of 'branding' in the context of nations, Simon Anholt, provides a stark demonstration of the importance of identity in a global order. Peace and sovereignty may prevail – the 'Pax Americana' – but it is no less combative on the battlegrounds found away from physical borders. To adapt a phrase, you can take the people out of a place but you can't take that place out of those people; however much one does or does not identify *with*, or believe that they belong *to* a nation, they will be stereotyped for having come *from* it. If that place is reputed as 'poor, uncultured, backward, dangerous or corrupt', its people will find business 'outside their own neighbourhood is harder': 'consumers in Europe or America will willingly pay more for an unknown "Japanese" product than for an identical "Korean" product that is probably made in the same Chinese factory.'¹³ This is also known as the country-of-origin or made-in effect. It is a fight for a fair assessment on foreign soil, where physical force doesn't much help in changing dispositions. Anholt instructs governments to do three things: 'monitor their international image' with reference to how it affects national interests; collaborate across society on a 'story', one 'which honestly reflects the skills, the genius and the will of the people'; support 'innovative and eye-catching products, services, policies and initiatives in every sector' that show the veracity of the national 'narrative'.¹⁴ The BBC can be said to have fulfilled all three of these roles: monitoring, story-building, promotion.

Relevant to Britain and its postwar experience of reduced reach and relegation from the top league of power, the consolation of 'branding' is that there is opportunity through globalism for smaller states to find a 'profitable niche'. In lieu of 'hard power', or the raw strength of military and economic clout, nations can compete through the 'soft power' drawn from turning the raw materials of place and people into an alloy -- one that can only be mined from and made in their given nation. This 'competitive identity' is key to nation branding, whereby states utilise

¹² Ibid., p.22.

¹³ Simon Anholt, *Places: Identity, Image and Reputation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) p.4.

¹⁴ Anholt, *Places*, pp.6-7.

'attraction if they cannot exercise compulsion', making resources of 'their culture, their history, their land, their traditions, their genius and their imagination.'¹⁵ Britain has historic and recent form in this line of not-so-modern manufacture. The Olympic campaign and its ceremonies were in effect the realisation of an image overhaul of *Britain*TM, to borrow the title of a 1997 pamphlet by think-tank Demos, underway since the 'Cool Britannia' phase of the mid-1990s.¹⁶ Demos had advised that a new Britain must be thought out and trademarked, as if a corporate entity in need of a corporate identity, complete with a slogan to sum it up: 'Creative Island' trumped others suggested, such as 'Hub UK - Britain as the world's crossroads', and 'United colours of Britain'. In the 1960s too, much commercial use was made of the fact that the iconography of Britain, chiefly the Union Jack, no longer had the connotation of 'an arrogant, domineering bully, the land of screw merchants, missionaries, gunboats and dreadnoughts.'¹⁷ Aronczyk punctures the 'origin narratives' that ascribe authorship of apparently new-fangled fields and their evolution.¹⁸ Places and people becoming 'marketable and monetizable entities' is evident in the free-flowing aftermath of 1945, and the fin de siècle world fairs of European empires – continuing the work of 'international classification' by the Victorian Great Exhibition – that form branding's 'prehistory'.¹⁹

Thus Anholt's concept of nation branding is not only applicable to the turn of our century, but becomes an updated and better articulated model for past activities and their actors – if far less concerted or conscious in their execution than an Olympic ceremony. Illustrative of this, and very informative for our purposes, is one predecessor of Anholt found in Sir Stephen Tallents. In his 1932 book, *The Projection of England*, Tallents recognised the need in 'another new world, less tangible but not less significant' – redrawn rather by globalisation than through a discovery of some landmass, though hitherto equally unknown – to command 'national personality' through the 'art of national projection'. Least of all England could afford to resign its image to the caricature and graffiti of others. To do this the nation must stop 'waiting, passively and perplexedly, for the sun to come out and restore her shadow' and make good its 'opportunity of establishing a supremacy' in speaking both 'peace unto nation' – to use the BBC motto – and its personality. British identity would be dressed in its Sunday best and pitched for posterity to this 'new world', no longer Britain's playground, in service of the national

¹⁵ Ibid., p.37.

¹⁶ Mark Leonard, *Britain*TM: *Renewing our identity* (London: Demos, 1997) accessed via <https://www.demos.co.uk/files/britainTM.pdf>

¹⁷ Dominic Sandbrook, *The Great British Dream Factory: A Strange History of Our National Imagination* (London: Penguin Books, 2016) pp.62-3.

¹⁸ Aronczyk, *Branding the Nation*, p.27.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp.3-4.

interest.²⁰ The publishing of Tallents' plea was, for propaganda historian Philip M. Taylor, 'the focal point in the campaign for increased national propaganda overseas'.²¹

This 'art' which Tallents agitated for in his pamphlet could not properly be applied through the Empire Marketing Board, which he directed as Secretary from 1926 until 1933, given its insular remit of promoting imperial trade among the 'British' world. The BBC was a reliable receptacle of EMB material, although producers – such as those of *Housewives' News* – could be reprimanded for blindly trumpeting Tallents' campaigns.²² His ideas were, however, carried forward into roles at the BBC, first as Controller of Public Relations between 1935-40 and, crucially, albeit briefly, the Overseas Service during wartime.²³ The World Service was in many ways the perfect instrument, an institution that was best placed to achieve Tallents' ambition, although his influence can only be traced as part of the hive mind behind any such grand decision. At the EMB, Tallents presided over the Board's move away from a creed of constructive imperialism toward the ideal of a consensual, collaborative Commonwealth. As a liberal technocrat, he was 'convinced both that the sun was most assuredly setting on the Empire and that international economic, technical and scientific interdependence was accelerating.'²⁴ What Tallents imagined Englishness (synonymous to him in his time with Britishness) as being, and the benefits so envisioned, are familiar both to nation branding and the BBC's exploits producing and presenting a pre-Demos '*Britain*TM'. If cultivating favour is in the interest of the nation, then its identity must be cultured to best propagate among its market. For Tallents that meant:

In international affairs – *a reputation for disinterestedness*. In national affairs – *a tradition of justice, law and order*. In national character – *a reputation for coolness*. In commerce – *a reputation for fair dealing*. In manufacture – *a reputation for quality*... In sport – *a reputation for fair play*.²⁵

All of these reputed aspects of Britishness were as much reflections of what sold well in the outside world as rooted in reality, and they are repeated as tenets of the brand by the BBC.

²⁰ Stephen Tallents, *The Projection of England*, in 'Appendix' of Scott Anthony, *Public Relations and the Making of Modern Britain: Stephen Tallents and the Birth of a Progressive Media Profession* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012) pp.209-10.

²¹ Philip M. Taylor, *The Projection of Britain: British overseas publicity and propaganda 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) p.110.

²² Hajkowski, *The BBC and National Identity in Britain, 1922-53*, p.24.

²³ See Stephen Constantine, 'Tallents, Sir Stephen George (1884–1958)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Accessed 1 May 2019, from <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/36412>

²⁴ Tallents, *Projection of England*, in Anthony, *Public Relations and the Making of Modern Britain*, p.29.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.210-11.

In a way that could easily be misquoted as from a manual for the nation-brander such as Anholt's, or the appraisals of later BBC executives when defending or demanding state funding, Tallents would recruit 'every channel of communication open to us' to provide the 'background' necessary for national actors to succeed. This is effectively the building and constant maintenance of a brand under whose name, backed by consumer confidence, people and products compete for custom on behalf of Britain. In order to compete, of course, the identity - be it of brand or nation - must be distinctive and recognisable; to be competitive, 'industrial ability' must be shown to meet 'industrial ambition'. So too, 'background' must make a good account of other business vital to the exchequer: 'They come for pleasure, they come for business and they come for learning.'²⁶ And it wasn't merely a case of facilitating the flow of commerce; prophetic again of times to come, freedom of manoeuvre in other spheres depended on opinion rather than privilege:

The English people must be seen for what it is – a great nation still anxious to serve the world and to secure the world's peace... English science ... an instrument of profound importance to the health and happiness of remote millions of people. England herself ... one of the most beautiful, historic and friendly of the world's countrysides.²⁷

While still a great power in a world that remained predominantly imperial red, but no doubt cognisant from suffering the repercussions of the Great Depression that it was not sheltered from its profound interdependence, Britain was not an island. Even an almighty empire without peer required an accord, or at least an *entente cordiale*, and thus it was important too to provide some foreground for its plans and actions in the world.

BBC World Service: why broadcast?

In the very same year in which Sir Stephen Tallents published his plea for projection of the nation, the BBC made its first venture into external broadcasting. The Empire Service of 1932, however, began life modelled more on the EMB than as a global bureau for projecting Britain. It was in the throes of war and the fallout following it that the virtues of a broader remit were realised. What was not certain was whether that remit would involve 'projection' or 'propaganda', insofar as the former differs from the subversive exercises of the latter. After

²⁶ Ibid., pp.214-15.

²⁷ Ibid., pp.228-29.

serving as United Kingdom Permanent Representative to the United Nations from 1979 to 1982, Sir Anthony Parsons bemoaned even then that Britain could not see how ‘dazzlingly obvious’ were the benefits of sustained projection of the nation. As with any brand, familiarity – ‘all other things being equal or nearly equal’ – fosters better outcomes.²⁸ The ‘innocuous’ practices for acquiring ‘soft power’, and the ‘nebulous’ nature of it, notes Philip Taylor, hold the promise of translating familiarity into ‘appreciation’, even ‘empathy and friendship’.²⁹ For Andrew Walker, formerly a World Service journalist and latterly a scholar of it, that promise provides a ‘sense of purpose’ to the BBC, where ‘the staff restaurant and club could be part of the United Nations’.³⁰ While ‘everybody pats it on the back’, that purpose hasn’t been enough to ward off the auditors in periods of austerity. And so the BBC has had to present itself as a ‘valuable asset’ for projection to stave off cuts, by showing how it profits *Britain*TM.

In his study of international broadcasting in 1982, Donald R. Browne found most broadcasters in the post-imperial, post-war world ‘to have little understanding of what they wish to accomplish or why they wish to accomplish it.’³¹ He considered that ‘purposeful programming’ required working toward ‘objectives’ that many lacked – or lacked interest in – but saw that the BBC External Services had been given ‘the impetus to do so’ through the several audits overseen by special committees. The resulting reports tended to roll broadcasting in with other state information and diplomatic activities, all taken as one in accomplishing their strategies. Writing on ‘The Changing Role of British International Propaganda’ in 1971, after his retirement from the British Diplomatic Service, Sir Harold Beeley assessed the BBC together with the British Council and official Information Service. In totum, these sought to explain policy, drive exports – ‘both by directing attention to specific commodities or processes and by advertising Britain as a country in the vanguard of technological progress’ – and spread the English language.³² The External Services fully participated in this trio of aims, even played the key part, since it did indeed have a ‘Role’ in ‘Propaganda’: to borrow a phrase from the Crawford Committee of 1925 that had incorporated the BBC, the broadcaster was (and is) a ‘trustee for the national interest’.³³

²⁸ Anthony Parsons, ‘Vultures and Philistines’: British Attitudes to Culture and Cultural Diplomacy’ in *International Affairs*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (1984-85) p.6.

²⁹ Philip M. Taylor, *Global Communications, International Affairs and the Media Since 1945* (London: Routledge, 1997) p.79.

³⁰ Andrew Walker, *A Skyful of Freedom: 60 Years of the BBC World Service* (London: Broadside Books, 1992) p.114.

³¹ Donald R. Browne, *International Radio Broadcasting: the limits of the limitless medium* (New York: Praeger, 1982) p.340.

³² Harold Beeley, ‘The Changing Role of British International Propaganda’ in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 398 (1971) p.125.

³³ *BBC Handbook 1965* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1965) p.126.

It was because of the spectre of special committees that Sir Beresford Clark, in the year of his retirement as Director of External Broadcasting in 1964, argued in the *BBC Handbook* that Britain's 'trusted voice' had 'to be cultivated, established and, above all, preserved.'³⁴ Since the settlement of the External Services with the state by the BBC's 1947 Charter, much enlarged in the exigency of a war waged by every means, it had been paid for by Foreign Office grant-in-aid. For the most part, this did not mean that the F.O. expected their every wish reflected by some itemised bill they picked up; more often the BBC was in the position of wish fulfilment in order to seek better funding. Speaking from experience as Director of the External Service and, following that, Director-General of the BBC, Sir Ian Jacob considered the needs of external broadcasting to be 'a comparatively insignificant fraction of national expenditure' for such 'a valuable aid to the British international position'.³⁵ Led by executives who appreciated its unique ability to serve the national interest, the BBC 'seizes every opportunity to congratulate itself to show the authorities', especially at Charter renewal or special committee, how wise their investment is.³⁶

It was in terms of a return on investment that the BBC presented its case, more simply shown numerically through benefits to trade than the more 'nebulous' gains of goodwill. It was on those terms too that consecutive, repetitive committees scrutinised their activities, as one aspect of their information strategy and arsenal. Some reports, such as those by Dr Charles Hill in 1957 and Lord Plowden in 1964, in the end avoided giving external broadcasting any clear direction aside calls for further deliberation and the balancing of books.³⁷ But the 'economic context' was always present – a *quid pro quo* – to which the report of Sir Thomas Rapp (1965) considered more could be done to 'project British trade and industry'. More importantly, perhaps because of incessant audits and the preparations for them, the BBC figured out their function as 'trustee of the national interest' where Browne intuited their rivals had not. The BBC recognised in its *Handbook* that programmes dealing in British scientific and industrial achievement – so placing it in Beeley's 'vanguard' – were 'appropriate to the increasing importance of international trade'.³⁸ However much it was to do with constantly being asked the question, "why broadcast?", the BBC had their answer and sought to substantiate it.

³⁴ Beresford Clark in *BBC Handbook 1964* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1964) p.20.

³⁵ Sir Ian Jacob on 'The External Services of the BBC' (May 1956) in Alban Webb, *London Calling: Britain, the BBC World Service and the Cold War* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015) pp.166-67.

³⁶ Walker, *Skyful of Freedom*, p.114.

³⁷ Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, Volume V: Competition, 1955-1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) pp.705-08.

³⁸ *BBC Handbook 1964*, p.87.

Managing Director of External Broadcasting Oliver J. Whitley attested that the real value of the activities he supervised was not that 'they may help to sell tractors or nuclear reactors, nor even that they so influence people in other countries, nobles or mobs, as to be more amenable to British diplomacy or foreign policy'.³⁹ Another ex-staffer of the BBC who has commented on time spent at Bush House for the World Service, Graham Mytton reckoned that any instrumental 'raison d'être' was 'only in the eyes of its funders'.⁴⁰ But executives of external broadcasting were fully aware that to remain funded, and thus broadcasting, required a more tangible answer – one which stood up to testing – as to the question of why they should. In a lecture at Broadcasting House in 1972 as Director of External Broadcasting, tackling the question head on with the title 'Why External Broadcasting?', Gerard Mansell pointed to the 'credit and good repute... as well as more tangible benefits in such fields as export promotion' it brought.⁴¹ Referring to the 'national interest' that underpinned the BBC's efforts abroad, simply and practically, Mansell deemed it right seeing as it 'is what the taxpayer is paying for.' That being the long and short of it he, as did Whitley, concluded that the 'world-wide influence' earned for Britain by the BBC 'must be recognised as being beneficial, desirable and probably unique.' Thus, the reasons why the BBC broadcasted, both of its own volition and to prove value, are comparable with the nation-brand.

Being Diplomatic about Propaganda: definitions and euphemisms

Conversations about how the BBC acted in its service of the 'national interest' usually circle the issue of whether or not it did so as a tool of Whitehall. It is an emotionally charged debate in which nuance is sacrificed to naval gazing over ideology and independence, confusing any definition from an objective distance on the facts of what the BBC actually *does*. It has consumed understanding both inside of the BBC and out, as to its position in theory and by application. As argued, it is better to see it as an agent and agency of the national brand. As such, it is worth unpicking propaganda, and not simply as an embattled term in the abstract, to better define and interpret the BBC's actions at home and, most importantly here, abroad. Ruminating on the 'post-Cold War Information Age', with one eye cast back over the communications arena that was the conflict's principal theatre, Philip Taylor reasoned that propaganda - 'in its value-neutral sense' - would continue to provide the 'ordered presentation of official interests' amid 'disordered reporting'. Its means would remain the democratic media,

³⁹ Letter from Oliver J. Whitley to Foreign Office in Briggs, *Competition*, pp.711-12.

⁴⁰ Graham Mytton, 'The BBC and its cultural, social and political framework' in *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (2008) p.569.

⁴¹ Gerard Mansell, *Why External Broadcasting?, A Lecture* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1976) p.15.

although it forever 'fails to see itself in such terms.'⁴² Taylor makes the point here that - contrary to a more cynical view of the media, either in cahoots with or controlled by the state - duty by one's journalistic oath does not mean dereliction of it to one's nation. As Julian Hale, formerly of the BBC External Services, said: 'The use of radio to further national ambitions is universal, even when the slogan is 'Nation shall speak peace unto nation' and the techniques used are quite different from those developed by the Nazis.'⁴³ Without the purpose of presenting and promoting their home nations, and preserving the peace that profits them, international broadcasters simply wouldn't have been set out in the first place.

However 'consciously inoffensive' an external service is, 'subversion' cannot be 'completely submerged' within 'vague concepts of national advertising', or diplomatic euphemisms.⁴⁴ Here Hale is speaking about 'government-sponsored' broadcasters, somewhat disingenuously omitting the BBC from his references. This is common for BBC alumni, as we shall see, but the case is easily made for its inclusion. A useful outline to the purposes and various expressions of the international broadcaster, as applicable to the BBC as other stations projecting their nation, was provided by Donald R. Browne. Excluding the darker artistry of the 'Coercer and Intimidator' or 'Converter and Sustainer', who give the rest a bad name, there is the 'Entertainer', the 'Educator', the 'Seller of Goods and Services', and, in a phrase that crops up in BBC apologia, the 'Mirror of Society'.⁴⁵ The BBC really isn't so unique in speaking 'peace unto nation' when, as Rutger Lindahl found in his survey of 1978, the motivation of better 'understanding and co-operation' is a common mantra. The widespread wisdom is that 'goodwill' accrued pays dividends in 'politics/ideology, economy/trade, culture, sports and tourism', which isn't so much an ulterior motive as an obvious one.⁴⁶ The BBC may not coerce or convert, but it is not void of purpose. The 'Mirror' reflects a trimmed, touched up image, as with nation branding – a way out of the wrangling over its role and record in propaganda.

As Anholt is also keenly aware, nation branding, especially for its association with politicians – neither disputed nor disputable – does not escape controversy over propagandism either. As among the chief practitioners of nation branding he is uncomfortable with, if not outright critical of its nomenclature. While being the 'perfect metaphor', as nations

⁴² Taylor, *Global Communications*, p.57.

⁴³ Julian A. S. Hale, *Radio Power: Propaganda and International Broadcasting* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1975) p.xiii.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.xiv.

⁴⁵ Browne, *International Radio Broadcasting*, pp.32-37.

⁴⁶ Rutger Lindahl, *Broadcasting Across Borders: a study on the role of propaganda in external broadcasts* (Göteborg: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1978) p.73.

become competitors in the 'global marketplace for products, services, events, ideas, visitors, talent, investment and influence', it is open to 'misunderstanding' by seeming superficial and cynical.⁴⁷ This misapprehension with such a national activity is why John Lee, in editing a collection of essays by diplomats in 1968, preferred to distance public relations from the suspicion of publicists by opting for *The Diplomatic Persuaders*. These 'persuaders', noted Lee, 'are not selling a cigarette, a soft drink, or a mouthwash. They are selling national images, understanding, and, in some cases, possible world survival' in showing how 'my ambitions are not incongruous with your own interests.'⁴⁸ In communications, attempting to separate what one does from supposedly less scrupulous others is old hat; as founder of the Institute for Public Relations in 1948, Sam Black conceded the techniques are shared, but the 'ideology' is not.⁴⁹ So too, ideology is what distinguishes propaganda by its various applications – if only subtly – into different forms.

For many academics propaganda, in defying any easy or accepted definition, presents an opaque, even insoluble obstacle when naming – without shaming – its examples. John Black, touting his theory of it 'as being a conscious, organised attempt to influence attitudes, beliefs or actions primarily through the mass media of communications', lamented that there are 'as many definitions of propaganda as there are writers on the subject'.⁵⁰ Jonathan Auerbach and Russ Castronovo assert that, put simply, it concerns 'nothing less than the ways in which human beings communicate, particularly with respect to the creation and widespread dissemination of attitudes, images, and beliefs'.⁵¹ The etymology of propaganda has its roots in the Counter Reformation, which along with its professed – indeed, perverse – use by such 20th century regimes as Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia explains why it has come to be synonymous with schism and subjugation. Thus, euphemisms abound, along with ambiguity and aversion. But if we equate all propaganda with its flagrant abuses, historian David Welch believes that it perpetuates 'the misleading belief that propaganda has to do with "good or bad," "right or wrong."' This 'excludes activities that should clearly be defined as propagandistic.' His own addition to refining the definition is, put simply: 'targeted communication' with 'purpose'.⁵²

⁴⁷ Anholt, *Places*, p.1.

⁴⁸ John Lee, (ed.), *The Diplomatic Persuaders: New Role of the Mass Media in International Relations* (New York: Wiley, 1968) pp.xiv-xv.

⁴⁹ Anthony, *Public Relations and the Making of Modern Britain*, p.17.

⁵⁰ John Black, *Organising the Propaganda Instrument: The British Experience* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975) p.ix.

⁵¹ Jonathan Auerbach, Russ Castronovo, (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Propaganda Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) p.2.

⁵² Nicholas J. Cull, David Culbert, David Welch, eds., *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopedia, 1500 to the Present* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2003) p.318.

Dovetailing nicely with Welch's more rational and comprehensive definition of the practice, Auerbach and Castronovo contend that a fruitful approach is not to 'isolate propaganda as a thing unto itself' but to judge it by application, 'in relation to culturally specific proximate institutions'. That is to say, assess it in its setting and as analogous with 'teaching, preaching, selling' or 'publicizing'.⁵³ Without touching the term propaganda, Simon Anholt brings together all manner of institutions that speak, acquire influence and, indeed, persuade for Britain. The British Broadcasting Corporation can be listed alongside the British Council, and even the British Red Cross, as instruments - 'in many cases unknown to their domestic taxpayers' and, perhaps, also themselves - of 'soft power'.⁵⁴ That said, 'intellectual, communicative, creative, persuasive, spiritual and cultural power is tangible, measurable, and profound in its effects', hence why Joseph S. Nye Jr. has since preferred the phrase 'smart power'.⁵⁵ Yet it is unsurprising that Sir Reginald Leeper, architect of the British Council, in spite (or because) of his wartime intelligence service was squeamish enough to discriminate its 'publicity' from any such connection. Again, as Philip Taylor reasons, we must define with reference to aims – to 'influence' – and recognise 'cultural diplomacy is very much an adjunct of conventional diplomacy' – intended to serve 'national interests'.⁵⁶

Writing with a detachment mostly absent from the memoirs and histories of ex-BBC staff, Alban Webb called 'diplomacy' mere 'euphemism'. And whilst one cannot plausibly 'accommodate' the diverse actors and views, competing powers and conflicting actions within any case-closed assertion of state control, 'the projection of carefully selected versions of British identity' has been part of the External Services since their inception.⁵⁷ The historian Anthony Adamthwaite said of the World Service that it 'co-habits' with the Foreign Office. Even John Tusa considered it fitting that the two figures carved into the facade at the front of Bush House should look, respectively, one toward the London School of Economics and the other the Foreign and Commonwealth Office: 'The twin polarities of academe and government exercise their respective attractions very explicitly over Bush House.'⁵⁸ However, as Briggs remarks, the BBC is 'always at pains to insist on its own, separate identity'.⁵⁹ For Andrew Walker, the accusation of there being any ideology behind judgments in Bush House is made

⁵³ Auerbach, Castronovo, *Oxford Handbook of Propaganda Studies*, pp.6-7.

⁵⁴ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., to whom the coinage 'soft power' is ascribed, defined it as 'the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment. A country's soft power rests on its resources of culture, values, and policies.' Joseph S. Nye, Jr., 'Public Diplomacy and Soft Power' in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 616 (2008) p.94.

⁵⁵ Anholt, *Places*, pp.113-14.

⁵⁶ Taylor, *The Projection of Britain*, p.7; Taylor, *Global Communications*, p.80.

⁵⁷ Webb, *London Calling*, pp.4-5.

⁵⁸ John Tusa, *Conversations with the World* (London: BBC Books, 1990) p.100.

⁵⁹ Briggs, *Competition*, p.685.

'mostly by people with no experience of a radio newsroom'.⁶⁰ This alludes perfectly to the duality of debate within and without the BBC, and its oxygen-sucking fixation on objectivity. But some efforts to clarify the BBC's position in retort to its accusers have provided for a better understanding, too. Writing then as Director of External Broadcasting in the *Handbook* of 1968, Charles Curran employed *Propaganda* (1957) by Lindley Fraser to argue that the BBC 'explain rather than proselytize.' The principle of Fraser is just as relevant to a marketeer, in that 'we can do no more than activate emotions that are already in existence, if dormant, and bring them into full play and vigour'. Curran advised his reader 'remind our listeners of those elements in the British case which it would be in their own interest to recognize.'⁶¹ This is not predatory propagandism; it is perceptive salesmanship.

Forward to John Black's call to organise propaganda in 1975, he found it unquestionable that 'the BBC is providing long-term propaganda for the British "way of life"' – the brand as lived by *ordinary* Britons; a macrocosm for how today's tech giants are seen through their Silicon Valley technotopia – 'and for British long-range political, commercial and cultural interests.' After all, if it was not, as Mansell has concurred, 'then the British taxpayer might well question whether or not his grant-in-aid is being put to a good purpose.'⁶² In his analysis of the key events that constructed a post-war settlement between the BBC and its government backers, Alban Webb finds that there was a '*quid pro quo*' based on the 'wonderfully imprecise concept of the "national interest"' that established 'an attritional kind of consensus'.⁶³ Webb seeks to correct the BBC narrative of 'heroically resisting' the threat to its independence brought to a head by the Suez Crisis of 1957. While the government did threaten to take a hatchet to the purse strings of the External Services when it aired attacks on Prime Minister Anthony Eden's humiliating, abortive invasion of the strategic Egyptian canal, it could also be 'a witting partner' away from the public eye.⁶⁴ It is worth noting that 'at the height of dysfunction there existed a rich, though hidden, seam of cooperation', Webb says, citing a BBC-administered course for officials on 'radio communications with particular reference to psychological warfare' and the attendance of Hugh Green at a special committee whose 'highly covert objectives' included directing information strategy. This is instructive of

⁶⁰ Walker, *Skyful of Freedom*, p.100.

⁶¹ *BBC Handbook 1968* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1968) p.27.

⁶² Black, *Organising the Propaganda Instrument*, p.94.

⁶³ Alban Webb, 'Constitutional niceties: three crucial dates in cold war relations between the BBC external services and the foreign office' in *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (2008) pp.560, 562.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.564.

an institutional sense of diplomatic, political and cultural guardianship towards the nation's long-term interests that became an essential part of the External Services' corporate mindset and which has since become an integral part of the public service ecology of overseas broadcasting.⁶⁵

It is this inherent sense of 'guardianship', of duty to the national interest, which makes finding proof of some causal link with the state superfluous.

BBC World Service: broadcasting which Britain?

Finally, before moving on in the next chapters to consider what exactly the national interest and national identity were in the context of the 1960s, there is the question of which Britain the BBC had taken it upon itself to hold a mirror up to. Andrew Walker has called 'nonsense' the interpretation of authors such as Yoel Cohen, that the BBC has been obliged at times to include information about British life and policies which do not adhere to newsworthiness.⁶⁶ John Tusa denies any 'special treatment', declaring the BBC to 'treat British writers, artists, actors, industrialists and scientists as we treat those of the world beyond'.⁶⁷ To Ian Jacob, the BBC 'seeks to hold a mirror to British opinion, and to reflect what the ordinary man and woman of Britain feels.'⁶⁸ Although the BBC sought the 'positive projection of British life and the exposition of British policies and British attitudes', Jacob maintained that this was achieved merely by reflecting, not 'conducting'.⁶⁹ According to Charles Curran, with supposed inclusivity of all, 'the way we think, the way we behave, the way we look at other peoples' all figured in that mirror-image.⁷⁰ In any case, as a 1948 note entitled 'The Task of the Overseas Services of the BBC' by Jacob had it, proportionate to the weight of its backing, 'contradictions that may arise from presenting these views helps to demonstrate the tolerance which is a cardinal feature of British democracy'.⁷¹

Browne is quick to point out, however, that 'little is broadcast about those who are alienated from society, unemployed, abjectly poor, or frustrated in their attempts to change society', but

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.566.

⁶⁶ Walker, *Skyful of Freedom*, p.107.

⁶⁷ Tusa, *Conversations with the World*, p.15.

⁶⁸ Sir Ian Jacob, 'The European Service Holds The Mirror Up To British Opinion', *BBC Yearbook 1947*, quoted in Webb, *London Calling*, p.30.

⁶⁹ Sir Ian Jacob, 'The Task of the Overseas Services of the BBC', quoted in Gerard Mansell, *Let Truth Be Told: 50 Years of BBC External Broadcasting* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982) p.217.

⁷⁰ Charles Curran, 'Broadcasting from West of Suez', quoted in Briggs, *Competition*, p.705.

⁷¹ Sir Ian Jacob, 'The Task of the Overseas Services of the BBC', quoted in Webb, *London Calling*, pp.45-46.

for in 'certain measure'.⁷² The hegemonic process toward consensus outlined by Jenks also impacted which guests were chosen, firstly, and retained as commentators thereafter. One such contributor, William Clark, testified in effect that 'the BBC would bring in a variety of respectable journalists – but not too wide a variety – to discuss world and national events in a non-confrontational way'; reliable speakers 'could stay within the BBC's bounds without damaging their sense of independence and integrity'.⁷³ And when negative stories were on the contributor's crib sheet, Browne contends that credibility was only enhanced by reportage of 'unpleasant aspects of British life, including possible racism', reinforced by the broader 'non-threatening aura' of the station.⁷⁴ His rhetorical question punctures this figurative balloon perfectly: 'Could a station that broadcasts the day's cricket scores, including those for towns the size of Bourton-on-the-Water, possibly have any evil intent?' In a similar vein the *New Internationalist*, considering the World Service in 1976 'about as disinterested as a railway built by British colonial administrators' that was of mutual benefit to the colonised, thought the "soft" democratic image of Britain' itself propaganda of a 'subtle' sort.⁷⁵

It is for part two of this dissertation to analyse exactly how far the portrait projected of Britain was romantic or photorealistic. To the mind of BBC executives, insofar as professed in such texts as the *BBC Handbook*, an image that reflected both well and truthfully on Britain could be scrupulously achieved without contradiction. Curran even remarked on 'an impression which circulates from time to time in some quarters that the BBC, in its external broadcasting, has some affinity with that part of the British press which was once thought to judge every country right but its own'.⁷⁶ The impression given is that the BBC could actually be regarded as too critical of Britain, which, by inverting the gains made of credibility, would not present a good model for branding. But Mansell offered a perspective on how such brooding could support, or even be central to the brand, in a decade marked by cleavages within and between societies:

... it is still possible for people the world over to see in Britain not the confused, disputatious, dissatisfied, disorientated society which we imagine ourselves to be, but a country in which there reigns tolerance, justice, sanity and

⁷² Browne, *International Radio Broadcasting*, pp.32-37.

⁷³ William Clark, *From Three Worlds*, quoted in John Jenks, *British Propaganda and News Media in the Cold War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006) p.48.

⁷⁴ Browne, *International Radio Broadcasting*, pp.173-74.

⁷⁵ Quote from *New Internationalist* (date and author not provided) in Walker, *Skyful of Freedom*, pp.162-63.

⁷⁶ *BBC Handbook 1968*, p.26.

democracy, a country which remains the repository of a good deal of wisdom and experience of affairs...⁷⁷

In the end, Britain – so with every brand – was in the eye of the beholder. What remains for the next chapters, before interrogating how the image projected fulfilled the BBC's public service – that is to propagate the brand, not manipulate by propaganda – is to consider what was the national interest and national identity of 1960s Britain, on which '*Britain*TM' was based.

⁷⁷ Mansell, *Why External Broadcasting?*, p.10.

'National Interest' in 1960s Britain

In analysing how the BBC undertook its service in the 'national interest', it is necessary to understand both the term and the historical context in which the broadcaster operated. Certain broad, basic interests are inherent to a nation-state: preservation and prosperity, ultimately. Projection and branding have been presented as ways to ensure both, simultaneously elevating status abroad while shoring up consensus within. Particular circumstances and causes inform the basic national interests and influence how they ought to be realised, as the subject of continual conversation between a nation's stakeholders. 'National interest' can be problematic, as political scientist Joseph Frankel found when conceptualising the term in 1970, given that there is no consensus on its meaning as divorced from the context of its usage.⁷⁸ Some attest a determination can be made from a nation's place in the international system, its history and past policy successes or failures.⁷⁹ Frankel agreed that the 'national interest', 'however vague and nebulous it may appear to be' did exist through 'basic agreement', whereas societal divergence and sectionalism make 'public interest' more difficult to nail down.⁸⁰ The Brookings Institution had for Frankel 'acceptably defined' it as 'the general and continuing ends for which a nation acts'; if nations are thought to exist as the best providers for their people, then the interest is the 'self-preservation of the system' in order to continue that provision.⁸¹ The continuation of Britain as a world power in the winning camp of the Cold War can be classified as 'aspirational'; employing force and making concessions to keep the British world together was 'operational', as was taking opportunities when advantageous to negotiate membership of a European club.⁸² Those who represent a nation intuit and instruct on these interests; their 'basic agreement', which we now explore, was the authority by which the BBC as servant of the 'national interest' operated.

The pivot from Commonwealth to Common Market drives the plot for British foreign policy in the 1960s and shall be central to this study of national projection, as representations morphed to suit their market. First, we shall explore what spurred this market change: principally, crises of mood, maths, and modernity. The 1960s were a time of ominous prognoses. From the hindsight of the end of his tenure in 1969, Director-General Hugh Carleton Greene recalled a

⁷⁸ Joseph Frankel, *National Interest* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970) p.15.

⁷⁹ Peter Byrd, 'National Interest' in Garrett W Brown, Iain McLean, and Alistair McMillan (eds.), *A Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics and International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) accessed 23/08/2020 via <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199670840.001.0001/acref-9780199670840-e-865>.

⁸⁰ Frankel, *National Interest*, p.43.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.18.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp.31-35.

time that had 'brought out into the open one of the great cleavages in our society' – namely that recurring struggle between 'Cavalier' and 'Roundhead'. Britain had left behind a 'largely imaginary golden age' of 'imperial glories', with Greene catching 'a fascinating glimpse of the national mood' – 'of sickness and insanity in our society' – by reporting 'as the brickbats flew'.⁸³ In his survey of the nation published in 1961, *Anatomy of Britain*, journalist Anthony Sampson recounted a telling interview with a cabinet member: 'The trouble is we don't believe in *anything*: we don't believe in Communism, or in anti-Communism, or in free enterprise.'⁸⁴ Given the magnitude of change since the war, startlingly visible on a world map washed of imperial red, Sampson was not surprised about Britain's ideological muddle. Writing in John Lee's *The Diplomatic Persuaders*, as Director-General of British Information Services in New York and a Minister at the British Embassy in Washington, Paul H. G. Wright waged that 'John Bull' was in need of 'Streamlining'. 'We are in a great state of flux', he recognised, and as such there was no wonder that the British image was confused abroad.⁸⁵ Wright called on Britain's *Persuaders* to correct 'the fashionable view of Britain as a sort of has-been nation ... It is dangerous for us because a nation's well-being depends in part on the view and the confidence in it held by its friends abroad.'⁸⁶ Any brand would suffer from such down-and-out status.

Covering 1951 to 1970 for *The New Oxford History of England* series, Brian Harrison opted for a title that encapsulates this chapter in modern Britain: *Seeking a Role*. One influential concept, not punctured until the 1970s, was of Britain as the third in a triumvirate of great – if not itself *super* – powers. With its missionary zeal and 'ideal of fair play ... quietly accepting both success and failure with equanimity', Britain and its welfare model could be a moralising force; a 'Middle Way'.⁸⁷ But it wasn't clear from where Britain would draw the power to play that role, be it the 'national anchor' of 'kinship' in Commonwealth, alignment with Europe, or the so-called 'special relationship' with the United States; or if bowing out may be for the best. 'The dilemmas were painful and decisions were taken reluctantly or not at all', hence Harrison's title.⁸⁸ There was also 'the continuing tension between the UK's hermetic and receptive tendencies', the former binding it to English-speakers, the latter drawing closer through increasing ties to the continent.⁸⁹ However, the pull of Britain out of its 'cultural

⁸³ Hugh Carleton Greene, *The Third Floor Front: A View of Broadcasting in the Sixties* (London: The Bodley Head, 1969) p.135.

⁸⁴ Anthony Sampson, *Anatomy of Britain* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1962) p.620.

⁸⁵ Paul H. G. Wright in John Lee, ed., *The Diplomatic Persuaders: New Role of the Mass Media in International Relations* (New York: Wiley, 1968) pp.92-93.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.88-89.

⁸⁷ Brian Harrison, *Seeking a Role: the United Kingdom, 1951-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) p.544.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, xvii.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, xx.

narrowness' and away from 'geographical breadth' toward Europe, far more proximate and opportune, did not promise an elixir for British perplexion. Walter Laqueur has (psycho)analysed a pan-European case of *abulia* – 'utter listlessness' – perforating the optimism over the continent's extraordinary post-war recovery.⁹⁰

This was acutely felt in Britain where many – mostly but not only politicians and intellectuals – were vexed by 'the absence of a common national purpose and the general preoccupation with individual (or sectional) material interests.'⁹¹ In his history of the period, Dominic Sandbrook found a fatalistic mood among commentators who rarely disputed that Britain was 'bottom of the class'. *Newsweek* remarked in 1963 that Britain was 'wallowing in an orgy of self-criticism', and Penguin Books reflected this self-deprecation in 1962 with a non-fiction series titled *What's Wrong With...?*⁹² Anthony Sampson had set about his investigations on returning from four years spent in Africa, 'curious about the slowness and complexity of Britain' by comparison.⁹³ While the Head of BBC External Services Productions, Konrad Syrop, was conscious of such concerns and the crises behind them, stating that 'the living pains of democracy... cannot be ignored or glossed over', his question was what listeners might 'conclude from this recital of problems and difficulties?'⁹⁴ For Eric Hobsbawm, the lifetime of Sir Winston Churchill (1874-1965) provided the parameters of modern imperialism.⁹⁵ With his death, 1965 became a pivot between a fading past and foggy future. Labour MP Richard Crossman sensed in it 'the end of an epoch, possibly even the end of a nation.'⁹⁶ John Darwin dates this 'world-system' as having wound down by 1970.⁹⁷ And while the empire as an idea remained 'palpable', says Philippa Levine, being publicly propped up by the United States and made a pariah by former subjects 'led to Britain's abandonment of its idea of itself as politically prominent'.⁹⁸ Ashley Jackson further factors in that, in the age of supposed social 'permissiveness', the environment ceased to be 'permissive' for the empire.⁹⁹ This amounted

⁹⁰ Walter Laqueur, *Europe in Our Time: A History, 1945-1992* (New York: Penguin Books, 1993) pp.x-xi.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.369.

⁹² *Newsweek* (September 1963), quoted in Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* (London: Abacus, 2006) p.540.

⁹³ Sampson, *Anatomy*, xi.

⁹⁴ Konrad Syrop in *BBC Handbook 1966* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1966) p.24.

⁹⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991* (London: Abacus, 1995) p.7.

⁹⁶ Richard Crossman, *The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister: Vol. 1*, quoted in Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London: Abacus, 2007) xv.

⁹⁷ John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) p.635.

⁹⁸ Philippa Levine, *The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013) pp.231-32.

⁹⁹ Ashley Jackson, *The British Empire: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) p.97.

to not only a reevaluation of the interests of the nation, but a reflection on what and who Britain was, and wanted, to be.

So, where does this disquiet over decline and confusion over direction – this *abulia* – figure, if at all, in representations by the BBC of Britain and the British? Further, what was the level of popular interest, among the increasingly domestic Britons of a democratic Britain, for the interests that were supposed to be part of national survival? Were the borders of that interest to include the English-speaking world; the Commonwealth (Old and New); the ‘Greater Britain’ of white dominion; a European community; or smaller still, the home Isles themselves – perhaps even excluding those ‘others’ in the UK not considered ‘British’? Before delving into these problems of the British mind and identity, it serves to summarise three strands to the national interest in our historical context where Britishness is key. Firstly, the need to balance the books as necessitated by continual trade deficits. Emphasis was put on exports, asking whether Britain was still a merchant nation; the workshop of the world. Next, Britain as a modern, industrious and innovative nation, which Prime Minister Harold Wilson sought to reinvigorate through scientific ‘White Heat’. Lastly, seeking leverage in a world in flux, prospecting for power – and profit. This required Britain to make choices – and as the U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson made clear in 1962, a choice had to be made – between incompatible clubs: Commonwealth or Common Market. Was Britain global, continental, or resigned to retreat into a ‘little England’? ¹⁰⁰

A Nation of Shoppers

For all the doomsaying over decline, there is – and was – debate over if and how far such a condition occurred. It should be noted that ‘decline’ is an ideological construct, as much to do with the heated ‘politicization of economic policy’ as cold fact.¹⁰¹ Remonstrations were in reality against *growth* that was *relatively* less than that of competitors; that is to say, Britain wasn’t so much anaemic as lethargic. But the British share of commerce was shrinking quicker than commitments were downsized, or rather not growing fast enough to support them – disproportion that could be terminal. The ‘special technical and historical circumstances’ that

¹⁰⁰ Acheson’s statement in full, speaking in 1962: ‘Great Britain has lost an empire and has not yet found a role. The attempt to play a separate power role - that is, a role apart from Europe, a role based on a ‘Special Relationship’ with the United States, a role based on being the head of a ‘Commonwealth’ which has no political structure, or unity, or strength and enjoys a fragile and precarious economic relationship - this role is about played out. Great Britain, attempting to work alone and to be a broker between the United States and Russia, has seemed to conduct a policy as weak as its military power.’ Speech quoted in Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good*, p.218.

¹⁰¹ Nicholas Crafts in Francesca Carnevali and Julie-Marie Strange (eds.), *20th Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007) pp.22-23.

had afforded for the gross pre-war scale of British enterprise, given the country's small size and limited domestic resources, 'had gone'.¹⁰² With it, Britain's 'shares' in global trade and GNP shrank by more than half from the mid-fifties to late-seventies. It is reasonable to say that *relative growth* rates can also reflect the distance that others had to catch up, and did, whether for having industrialised to a lesser extent prior to war or suffering the wreckage far more of waging it. However, contemporary belief in decline is more important to us than any such reappraisal. Thus, correcting the 'fashionable view' of a bankrupt Britain might entail rewriting the story as told by Britons themselves.

Even so, Britons did not miss out on the so-called 'affluent society' that the post-war West lavished in.¹⁰³¹⁰⁴ The 'jet age' – so-named by popular magazine *Queen* – entailed an unprecedented 'pouring out of pockets and wallets and handbags' of cash to fund 'unparalleled lavish living'.¹⁰⁵ *Queen* cautioned against the 'smugness' risked by this new reality, juxtaposed as it was with concurrent decline. Not all this consumer wealth was spent within Britain's domestic economy. On the continent other European countries were becoming ever more self-sufficient in food and materials, as synthetics took over from the organic material that they lacked – oil excepted. Britain had become anomalous for a continent growing faster than the world average. Industrialisation programmes by Commonwealth countries meant less demand for the sorts of manufactures that had formed Britain's entire model of trade, yet the latter still 'showed marked reluctance to abandon its ties' with the former.¹⁰⁶ Sixties Britain was fast becoming a nation of shoppers, not shopkeepers. While the impression of 'stop-go' does not do justice to an economy that still expanded yearly by 1.3% on average, even during the stagnation of 1962, with wages consistently rising and unemployment negligible, the 'strong and justified sense that Britain was falling behind her competitors' held up to comparison.¹⁰⁷ Productivity growth from 1951 to 1964 stood at 40%, versus 100% in France, 150% in West Germany and Italy, and 300% in Japan. This situation perplexed policymakers, hence on succeeding Anthony Eden as Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan listed his priorities as restoring 'national confidence; clearing up the Suez crisis; the Anglo-American relationship; the need to

¹⁰² Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988) pp.424-25.

¹⁰³ The term popularised by Harvard economist John Kenneth Galbraith describes societies, as seen in the U.S.A. following World War Two, in which most members no longer struggle to subsist from a scarcity of resources but participate in and profit from the well-being of the wider economy. John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998)

¹⁰⁴ Wages almost doubled between 1950 and 1959, unemployment touched 2% only eight times between 1948 and 1970, and the *Financial Times* reported that between 1957 and 1959 ownership of cars rose by 25%; televisions by 32%; washing machines by 54%; and refrigerators by 58%. Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good*, pp.109-10.

¹⁰⁵ *Queen* (15 September 1959), quoted in Sandbrook, *White Heat*, p.60.

¹⁰⁶ Laqueur, *Europe in Our Time*, pp.196-97.

¹⁰⁷ Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good*, pp.521-22.

rethink defence priorities; the Commonwealth and Empire; and finally, the economy.¹⁰⁸ The last item was to make or break administrations.

While a deficit in the balance of payments can be deliberate, drawing imports and investment with a mind to increasing future 'visible' (outward produce) and 'invisible' (inward profits, interests and dividends) exports, an imbalance 'is really only "unfavourable" if it is *thought* to be problematic.' 1960 and 1964 served as examples of when and why deficits have 'been treated as matters of serious concern.' Economist Peter Donaldson noted in 1965 that Britain's concern was born from a lack of control over the capital flows in and out of the country. That the direction of payments was mostly outward was not deliberate, and neither was it in the form of desired investments for future 'invisibles'.¹⁰⁹ Donaldson had advised that

a satisfactory balance of payments on current account *plus* a sufficient surplus to provide for a flow of foreign investment *plus* sustained growth of the economy add up to the need for an even greater volume of exports than we have so far achieved.¹¹⁰

Solving Britain's economic woes by balancing trade clearly occupied minds at the BBC and found support in its programmes. 'Touting for Custom' is the unapologetic title of Konrad Syrop's essay for the *BBC Handbook* of 1966, in which he talks up efforts to engage with industry and invite enquiries.¹¹¹ It is a striking example of branding in action, publicising the best of Britain through a catalogue of its innovations and inventions. As a category of output this developed in the sixties through programmes such as 'New Ideas', which Donald Browne noted 'gives details each week on three to five new British products available for export and potentially useful to buyers overseas.'¹¹² John Black found that while questions of purpose and impartiality elicit ambiguous admissions from the BBC about 'projecting Britain as a "good" country', be that propagandistic or not, it is not disputed that in promotion of trade they are 'regularly willing to put British interests forward more forcefully.'¹¹³ It would have been in that interest to ensure an image that sold, and whatever featured – be it a car or the factory that made it – was on brand.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p.79.

¹⁰⁹ Peter Donaldson, *Guide to the British Economy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966) pp.74-75.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., pp.212-13.

¹¹¹ Syrop in *BBC Handbook 1966*, pp.24-26.

¹¹² Browne, *International Radio Broadcasting*, p.166.

¹¹³ Black, *Organising the Propaganda Instrument*, p.62.

A central issue was that British manufacturers, exacerbated by an overvalued pound, could not compete with 'better-designed European products' and 'cheaper Asian wares', which import figures evidence were also more appealing to the domestic market.¹¹⁴ The automobile industry is a prime example of Britain falling from a world-leading export position, as of 1951, to be outranked by more competitive climbers such as Japan.¹¹⁵ The manufacturing disparity has another dimension when looking at the increase in car ownership among Britons, from 2 million in 1948 to 9 million in 1965.¹¹⁶ The imbalance of buying in without selling back was untenable, with the Bank of England struggling to break even supporting sterling while taxpayers enjoyed unprecedented spending. And Wilson's predecessor as Labour leader, Hugh Gaitskell, recognised that the situation could become self-perpetuating if Britain came to be seen by others as merely a relic:

How can Britain look to other people if it continues to stagnate economically? Visitors will still come and praise the behaviour of our policemen and will say half pityingly and half affectionately that we are easy-going, kindly, tolerant people with a great and glorious past whose only trouble is that they are stuck to it.¹¹⁷

It would be no good to have a brand which people knew but, given its image, would not buy into.

Anachronism and the Amateur

It was for the reason that the BBC could not resist 'the pull of history and the fascination of bad news' in its coverage – although it may opt to omit some – that Konrad Syrop thought 'a special effort has to be made to restore the balance'.¹¹⁸ Negativity was often newsworthy and its inclusion sustained credibility. But in consciously 'highlighting the positive side' the 'balance' sought by Syrop was forced, and neither was it karmically neutral. Syrop pointed to 'the dynamism of British science, technology and industry, the explosion of University education' and 'the spirit of adventure and service shown by the young' to counter detractors, albeit necessary, which stole some of the shine from the grand narrative. In a sense he was right to use science as one vertebrae in the backbone of British identity, given that Britain, in spite of wrangling in Westminster, stood only just behind the U.S. and U.S.S.R. (3% of GDP) in

¹¹⁴ Kennedy, *Great Powers*, pp.424-25.

¹¹⁵ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, p.312.

¹¹⁶ Laqueur, *Europe in Our Time*, p.194.

¹¹⁷ Hugh Gaitskell speech to Labour Party Conference 1961, quoted in Sampson, *Anatomy*, p.99.

¹¹⁸ Syrop in *BBC Handbook 1966*, pp.25-26.

spending on it (2.3% of GDP) that had increased tenfold between 1945 and 1964.¹¹⁹ That said, politician Edmund Dell identified an 'imperial tradition in industrial policy' that, by focusing resources in nuclear and aerospace in a bid to sustain global leadership, explained Britain's failure to modernise and properly invest across the economy.¹²⁰ And while English becoming a *lingua franca* owed much to Britain's place as the nexus for scientific exchange between the Commonwealth, Europe and the USA, by 1963 the *Oxford English Dictionary* had cited the 'brain drain': 'really able managers, scientists, technologists, and entrepreneurs' leaving for the U.S.A. and elsewhere.¹²¹

Disputing that this 'imperial tradition' had left Britain 'old-fashioned' and 'noncompetitive', diplomat Paul Wright had to concede a problem in perceptions by claiming that 'the picture is not quite as black as it is painted.'¹²² Wright reckoned that exports in 'chemicals, metals, engineering products' showed that Britain remained 'vigorous', and its shortcomings were no different from 'any developed country.' Anthony Sampson included chemicals as part of the newer industries which he indeed found had made 'full use of connections with and the capacities of the universities to conduct R&D', employing two-thirds of scientists as a promising sign of intent.¹²³ However, older industries such as shipbuilding and automobiles had 'taken exceptional persuasion ... to embark on even small-scale research projects.' Cross-party conventional wisdom had it to train more scientists and technicians, with new institutions and polytechnics in the sixties founded to take the strain off of redbricks which had absorbed a 130% increase in numbers through the fifties.¹²⁴ But 'gleaming new engineering and physics laboratories lay empty and silent.' Classicism persisted while reform was resisted, in what Calvocoressi has called a 'self-perpetuating system' of education for future educators that was totally devoid of thought for the economy.¹²⁵ And in any case, Calvocoressi maintains, scientifically staffed industries such as chemicals are only part of a story in which, 'having won the laurels of pioneers England failed when the going got competitive.'¹²⁶

Donaldson had ruminated on 'accumulated evidence' of 'poor design, quality, delivery rates, and general salesmanship' which could not be ignored as mere generalisation. He was

¹¹⁹ Sandbrook, *White Heat*, pp.50-51.

¹²⁰ Edmund Dell, *A Strange Eventful History*, quoted in Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good*, p.523.

¹²¹ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, p.76.

¹²² Paul Wright in Lee, *The Diplomatic Persuaders*, p.91.

¹²³ Sampson, *Anatomy*, pp.515-16.

¹²⁴ Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good*, pp.426-28.

¹²⁵ Peter Calvocoressi, *The British Experience: 1945-1975* (Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1979) pp.204-05.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.203.

embarrassed to find some blame must be apportioned to 'an ingrained British habit of mind', as described by the Austrian correspondent of *The Economist* for a 1963 series entitled 'Spies for Prosperity': 'regarding all foreigners as inferior.'¹²⁷ It was Britain which remained much inferior in reference to the continent, compared to which its growth in real wages and labour productivity paled into insignificance.¹²⁸ It was an uncomfortable fact that while 'everyone talked about the need to export ... the efforts were often amateurish and the after-sales service provided inferior to that of other trading nations.'¹²⁹ It appeared that Britain did not want to modernise or compete. But Harold Wilson's call for the government to provide more fuel to the 'White Heat' of modern industry proved electorally popular, both for its hope and contrast to amateurism and nepotism.¹³⁰ This dissertation will enquire of BBC programming how such vision was given form in projections, knowing that John Tusa was not alone in taking exception to pressure from politicians to convey hallmark policy.¹³¹ Media representations were expected to keep to script, be the slogan of 'White Heat', 'Enterprise Culture', or whatever was presently the big picture for Britain. Ian Jacob reflected on his time as Director-General in the fifties, as a fairly establishment-minded figure, that 'ministers don't like us as a rule ... because they feel very strongly that [the BBC] should be spouting their policy only.'¹³² It is to be presumed from this that pressure was resisted in favour of projection without strategy, or at least reference to the 'interests' of political rhetoric.

If Britain was to be the workshop of the world, or its laboratory, or a model of modernity, then much was at odds with that projection – expedient as it may be for the national interest. However, when Tallents had argued to 'master the art' of projecting the national image, he was plain that it should be a 'fitting presentation'. It should be 'for the sake of our export trade; in the interests of our tourist traffic; above all, perhaps' it ought be fitting for 'the discharge of our great responsibilities to the other countries of the Commonwealth of British peoples'. There may be some warts, and wrinkles, but the face should be of 'quality and ambition', possessing of 'adaptability and modernity' in – the apparently peculiar – 'English craftsmanship' and 'English science'.¹³³ Questioning the likeness of such a portrait, Anthony Sampson 'drew a great deal of praise from critics on all sides' with his exposé, not of a cabal but rather the 'club-

¹²⁷ Donaldson, *Guide to the British Economy*, p.216.

¹²⁸ A 36% increase in real wages from the early-fifties to mid-sixties fell behind that of French (58%), Italian (80%), and German workers (100%); British labour productivity over the fifties stood at an average growth of 1.8% compared to 5.7% in West Germany and 4.8% each for France and Italy. Laqueur, *Europe in Our Time*, pp.256-57.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.259.

¹³⁰ Sandbrook, *White Heat*, pp.4-5.

¹³¹ Tusa, *Conversations with the World*, p.123.

¹³² Sir Ian Jacob quoted from interview with the author, in Walker, *A Skyful of Freedom*, p.75.

¹³³ Tallents, *Projection of England*, in Anthony, *Public Relations and the Making of Modern Britain*, pp.228-29.

amateur outlook' fortified behind an 'old school tie' class in power.¹³⁴ We will conclude from analysis of the content how far such 'brickbats' were reconciled with the brand in broadcasts. It would have been rational to exercise some economy with the truth, to ensure any representation marketed well. We turn next to considering which market that would be.

Commonwealth and Common Market

In 'seeking a role', Britain had to make decisions about whether its interests were best met in the Commonwealth or through the Common Market. It was a choice between salvaging through certain concessions a post-imperial union of the British world, spanning the seas; belatedly joining in with the European project on the continent, just across the English Channel; or resigning to play Greece to an American Rome, as its junior partner and beachhead over the Atlantic. What Britain could not contemplate was isolation to its Isles. However, it was neither obvious that a choice must be made at the dawn of the decade, nor had it then dawned that the choices were mutually exclusive. Gerard Mansell began his career at the BBC in 1951 and could later recall that 'Britain still saw herself as the centre of the Commonwealth', and Bush House 'seemed still to be carrying something of the white man's burden.'¹³⁵ The circumstance of yet remaining as the head of the Empire, with Rudyard Kipling's cause still at heart, was what would then have answered the question posed by Mansell's lecture: *Why External Broadcasting?* But the World Service was recognition that times, and interests, had changed. While the Drogheda Report of 1954 had urged concentration on emerging states, the report of the Duncan Committee 'was similarly impressed by the national preoccupations of its time': namely 'the balance of payments and the movement toward entry into the Common Market.'¹³⁶

With Macmillan's coming to power after Suez, overseas commitments were the subject of scrutiny through 'penetrating and wide-ranging inquiries' that sought to compile a 'profit and loss account' of Britain abroad.¹³⁷ It was a hard-nosed exercise in getting the books in order, which laid the foundations of an official shift toward the European Economic Community as Britain's rightful place and future. But there is debate over 'the conventional view' of Macmillan and Wilson resigning, even hastening 'to scuttle [Britain's] remaining commitments and fall back upon Europe'.¹³⁸ There were ideological, aspirational interests still in play that interfered with realpolitik. Macmillan was 'haunted' by the dream of an 'updated and modernised' British

¹³⁴ Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good*, pp.567-70.

¹³⁵ Mansell, *Why External Broadcasting?*, p.4.

¹³⁶ Beeley, 'The Changing Role of British International Propaganda', p.126.

¹³⁷ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, p.106.

¹³⁸ Darwin, *Empire Project*, p.610.

world; Wilson 'bewitched' by his own, albeit 'more anaemic and ethereal'. The quick succession from the Empire to a Commonwealth, on to the final accession to the EEC in 1973, was 'a painful surprise'. Studying the political scene of 1965, Herbert Victor Wiseman could call on the various offices established by Wilson – the Commonwealth Exports Council; Commonwealth Development Council; Commonwealth Career Service – to evidence a clear belief that the British world was still the right route for Britain and a roadmap for its economy.¹³⁹ And a Gallup poll of 1961 was reflective of public opinion that persisted in ranking the 'family ties' of Commonwealth (48%) far more important than relations with the U.S. (19%) or Europe (18%).¹⁴⁰

The fact that the Commonwealth was an intricate, somewhat intangible, sometimes intractable construct may not have been widely known, not helped by the fact that the *Empire Games* and *Empire Day* had not been phased out until the late-fifties.¹⁴¹ But into the sixties it still constituted 'an international association much more ambitious in area and potential than any hypothetical European union', that 'could mobilize deep-rooted family affections, historical associations, wartime loyalties, and long-established tariff-protected economic links'. The Nobel Memorial Prize-winning economist James E. Meade could be confident in cautioning against certainty between Commonwealth and Common Market, stating in 1962 that the latter 'means *perhaps* association with a more rapidly growing market; it means *certainly* association with what is at present a much smaller market.'¹⁴² The Commonwealth of Nations had been constitutionally 'equal' since the Balfour Declaration of 1926 and thus beyond diktat, but was at least bound together by the fact that Britain 'purchased the lion's share of their exports, supplied their imports, provided requisite inward investment, and held their sterling balances in London.'¹⁴³ And while *certain* large firms and sectors were lobbying for European entry in prospect of economies of scale, and *some* economists reckoned it was the shot in the arm that would restore vigour, there was no general support for striking out from a safe habitat to face survival of the fittest.¹⁴⁴

Returning to the alluring idea of Britain and its Commonwealth representing a 'Third Way' in an increasingly bipolar world, a sense of duty also remained prevalent – and not necessarily imperialistic. Wiseman cited as his conclusion the 'objects of leadership' – said

¹³⁹ Herbert V. Wiseman, *Britain and the Commonwealth* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1967) pp.137-8.

¹⁴⁰ Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good*, pp.221-23.

¹⁴¹ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, p.101.

¹⁴² James E. Meade, *UK, Commonwealth and Common Market: A Reappraisal* (London: The Institute of Economic Affairs, 1970) p.32.

¹⁴³ Jackson, *British Empire*, pp.20-22.

¹⁴⁴ Neil Rollings in Carnevali & Strange (eds.), *20th Century Britain*, p.341.

inevitably in future to be shared among members – that had been proposed by Guy Arnold. These objects were the provision for a basic standard of living and economic ‘take-off’ across Commonwealth nations; fostering a truly multi-racial cooperative of ‘Commonwealth citizens’; and ‘breaking down the gap which exists between the Western and the Communist world’.¹⁴⁵ There was for many, even in the decade of Britain’s pivot to Europe, a deep meaning attributed to the Commonwealth and devoted mission acknowledged of it. The Commonwealth had a champion in the BBC, given its ideal was intrinsic to the founding of the Empire Service. That this remained part of the grain of the General Overseas Service is evident from the proceedings of the Conference in 1963 of Commonwealth broadcasters, held in Canada. Members ‘reaffirmed the mutual benefit of the Commonwealth conception and links’ while seeing broadcasting as serving ‘the preservation and promotion of Commonwealth interests.’¹⁴⁶ The Conference in New Zealand of 1968 upheld the ‘most important theme’ as being ‘continued belief in the Commonwealth as an institution.’¹⁴⁷ Indeed, Hugh Carleton Greene was proud that the Commonwealth ‘continue to look to us for a lead.’¹⁴⁸

But Greene did not reflect popular concern for the Commonwealth – or simply the world beyond British shores. John Darwin posits it could ‘hardly be doubted that the sense of being part of a larger political world extending far beyond Britain was very widely diffused’, or that ‘a loud public voice’ backed the “greater” Britain on whose power and prestige “little” England depended.’ That said, an ‘imperial interest’ of ‘broad public sympathy’ was lacking.¹⁴⁹ The election of 1959 proved that imperial issues were ‘strikingly unimportant’.¹⁵⁰ It was a topic tackled sparingly by politicians, glossed over with generalities or taken as a given that it would remain a going concern. The British voter consistently ranked foreign affairs and defence policy far down their list of priorities; both in the 1959 and 1964 elections, the economy ruled the ballot box.¹⁵¹ James F. Tierney of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies considered, in 1958, that Liberal Party leader Jo Grimond ‘was correct in identifying as the “fundamental issue” what the “British people themselves are prepared to do and to give up for the sake of the Commonwealth”.’¹⁵² Britain did not appear inclined to consume less in sacrifice for something so obscure for most as to be, practically speaking, ‘other’. The next chapter shall

¹⁴⁵ Wiseman, *Britain and the Commonwealth*, pp.150-52.

¹⁴⁶ *BBC Handbook 1964*, pp.74-75.

¹⁴⁷ *BBC Handbook 1969* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1969) p.98.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.13.

¹⁴⁹ Darwin, *Empire Project*, p.15.

¹⁵⁰ Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good*, pp.286-87.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.275.

¹⁵² James F. Tierney, ‘Britain and the Commonwealth: Attitudes in Parliament and Press in the United Kingdom since 1951’ in *Political Studies*, Vol. 6, Iss. 3 (1958) p.226.

unpick how and to what extent the 'British world' and 'civilisation' figured in the identities of native Britons.

By the turn of the seventies it was accepted that Britain had indeed been relegated from great power status and resigned itself from grandiose pretensions. The publication of a white paper by the incoming government of Edward Heath in 1971 demonstrated that the imperial idea had 'sailed away to the Coast of Nostalgia.'¹⁵³ In it, 'few tears were shed over all that was left of the old British connections', as a Commonwealth of Nations that did not 'offer us, or indeed wish to offer us alternative and comparable opportunities to membership of the European Community' was repudiated. In the same year, United States' President Richard Nixon made clear his view that the world comprised five areas of economic power: the United States, Russia, China, Japan and, eventually, Western Europe, the interrelations of which would determine the future of world power.¹⁵⁵ The fifth was open to 'semantic confusion' due to it remaining more of a 'vague cultural-geographical concept' than a bloc. It could be taken to merely comprise the E.E.C., or be stretched to include all of those Europeans not under Soviet influence; another composition was of the former great powers of Britain, France, Germany and Italy, but this definition was at odds with Britain's own of Europe as 'beginning on the other side of the English Channel'. However, a discrete British world of real ranking was now null and void.

Content analysis of programming in the *London Calling* guides will unpick the above threads of the national interest in output, woven as they were with projections of identity. It is true that the BBC did not advertise any specific product or sponsor one industry giant in particular; rather they were materials with which to build a brand, boosting all things 'British' as bearers of that hallmark. The sense of decline and absence of direction; anachronism and uncompetitiveness; a 'mediocracy' of the old school tie amateur; and ignorance for or lack of interest in, even contempt for the outside world would not be aspects of Britain expected to market well. However, trace amounts might be given positive spin, for example as showing modesty or 'fair-play', and mitigated within a bigger, more robust picture. That broader view, taken as it was from a British perspective, had in its sights the objective of balancing trade by facilitating exports. Crucial to marketing is the market, and the sixties were the decade in which the nation determined to ditch old dreams and go where business beckoned. This gradual shift from Commonwealth to Common Market, while no means foregone by 1970, will underpin analysis. Before that, there remains the tricky topic of 'national identity'. The largest

¹⁵³ Darwin, *Empire Project*, pp.647-48.

¹⁵⁵ Kennedy, *Great Powers*, pp.413, 420.

corporations may rival the economies of small nations but cannot compare with even an island statelet for complexity. Thus, while brands try to create compounds, human society is often molecular – with a tendency to atomise. We turn now to exploring this chemistry, often volatile, in identity.

'National Identity' in 1960s Britain

In order to investigate British 'national identity' in the 1960s an understanding of how the Empire and Commonwealth, race and Europe have figured in and interrogated 'Britishness' is key. Nations, nationalisms and identity are vast subjects that, invariably, this dissertation can not do justice. But a survey of the key ideas of academics in this field and the studies in a British context suffices to gain a grasp of the complexities when 'projecting' a nation, as well as offering an insight into the conceptual building blocks and boundaries of Britishness. In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson argued that nations, nationalisms and the identities involved are rooted in a collective imagination among compatriots, the majority never having met and without actual knowledge of one another, that they share some basic character and lived experience. It is a phenomenon based on belief and a sense of belonging, because of which Anderson places it beside 'kinship' and 'religion' rather than with ideologies like 'liberalism' or 'fascism', as 'Nationalism-with-a-big-N'.¹⁵⁶ This implies something more personal than political; something felt rather than thought out. This supposed commonality of being, as opposed to view, creates a *people* instead of a *party*. For Eric Hobsbawm, the problem was that 'we are trying to fit historically novel, emerging, changing and, even today, far from universal entities into a framework of permanence and universality'.¹⁵⁷ This invention - or imposition - of nations since the early modern period is important for understanding the identities born *from* them. Often national identity has been conjured retroactively, constructing socio-cultural, political and racial history in support of the state it lends legitimacy to. This process of construction and reconstruction behind identity should be considered when thinking of *it* and *its* representations.

Prior to modern states it was not unusual for dynastic families to rule over diverse, discrete peoples, not necessarily united by lived experience but out of loyalty to the single crown of Romanov, Bourbon, Habsburg - or Hanover in the case of Scots, Irish, Welsh and English. Given this disconnect between monarch and country, Anderson asks what nationality the Hanoverians, for example, belonged to. Before the nation-state, the many strata of identity had been subordinated by fealty rather than through nationhood. Nations were consolidated by the formation of states that utilised a vernacular for their administration, then pursued policies of unification based on an official language. From this, national cultures were developed, forging communities that - in the case of whichever culture became primary to a

¹⁵⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006) p.5.

¹⁵⁷ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: programme, myth, reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) pp.5-6.

polity - rulers and the ruled alike came to belong to.¹⁵⁸ The role that print capitalism, a focus of Anderson's, played in opening up a mass conversation that was conducive to nation building has also been argued for the BBC, as it forged and reinforced national consciousness through common listenership.¹⁵⁹ In her 2015 book, journalist Charlotte Higgins considered the broadcaster still to be 'a crucial carrier of British identity: it binds us recognisably to ourselves' through 'shared experience and memory.'¹⁶⁰ In turn, the Empire Service endeavoured to bolster an 'imagined community' of Britishness 'not necessarily dependent on lived experience', using 'racial memories' to invoke an 'exile consciousness', whether or not the listener in question – should they be ancestrally British – was an expatriate.¹⁶¹

By the 1960s, however, an occasion was not even made of the death of Winston Churchill in 1965 to express or excite 'vestigial Britannic identities'.¹⁶² During the course of the 1950s, if not before, the British family tree was trimmed to fit an image that was often racial; it withered concurrently with imperial control. But even the largest nationalisms, Anderson maintains, have 'finite, if elastic, boundaries ... No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind.'¹⁶³ In the context of the British Empire and subsequent Commonwealth, a lack of mutuality was not helped by the fact that neither was it contiguous, like the United States. Anderson looks on Victorian Jubilee processions as resembling the 'random collections of Old Masters hastily assembled by English and American millionaires', reflecting how only a minority of those occupying the 'grab-bag' of British territories had any 'long-standing religious, linguistic, cultural, or even political and economic, ties with the metropole'.¹⁶⁴ In reality the 'Empire' was an 'abstraction', wrote art historian Mark Crinson, considering it 'a host of disparate things' drawn together by products, pageantry and paraphernalia – by such things as an *Empire Service* – that construct for it a 'collective meaning'.¹⁶⁵ Keith Robbins concurred, saying that '*the* British Empire did not dissolve as a single entity because it never was a single entity.'¹⁶⁶ The reason that *the* Commonwealth was only a 'specialist interest' was that *the* Empire had always been perceived differently person to person, any sympathies for it selective, its appeal shallow – and 'white skin-deep at that.'

¹⁵⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp.83-85.

¹⁵⁹ Hajkowski, *The BBC and National Identity in Britain*, p.6.

¹⁶⁰ Charlotte Higgins, *This New Noise: The Extraordinary Birth and Troubled Life of the BBC* (London: Guardian Faber, 2015) p.185.

¹⁶¹ Robertson, "I get a real kick out of Big Ben", *HJFRT*, p.462.

¹⁶² Simon J. Potter, *Broadcasting Empire: The BBC and the British World, 1922-1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) pp.232-33.

¹⁶³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p.7.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.92.

¹⁶⁵ Jackson, *British Empire*, pp.26-7.

¹⁶⁶ Keith Robbins, *Great Britain: Identities, Institutions and the Idea of Britishness* (Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman, 1998) p.304,

The limits of imperial identity and common humanity were evident in Bush House, then home to the BBC's external services and its multinational staff. Marie Gillespie is concerned with diasporas and 'cross-cultural contact' in such media organisations as the BBC, and saw the headquarters of the BBC World Service as a 'zone of conflict' where 'colonial, postcolonial and Cold War conflicts clash and collude, and cosmopolitan and national imaginaries collide.'¹⁶⁸ Despite being Commonwealth citizens working side by side within one of its chief institutions, any imagined community that existed did not translate into a sense of shared identity; a single culture, it seems, could not accommodate the many tongues spoken. It is also worth noting, as BBC World Service stalwart Graham Mytton commented in recollecting his career since 1964, that the culture of the broadcaster is 'recognisably British' but 'not Tunbridge Wells, nor is it Hartlepool, Cardiff, Aberdeen or Blackpool.' Recruiting in the past predominantly from the 'professional middle classes' and public schools, it was at once not 'mainstream' and animated by the 'internationalist, collegiate' ethos of an 'NGO'.¹⁶⁹ As well as representing a type of Britishness instead of its totality, or at least overrepresenting impeccably educated cosmopolitans, to Mytton's mind there was also a 'conservative' streak to staff of the sixties. If the BBC World Service were an international organisation, its charitable purpose was the civilising mission, whereby 'the world learns from us, not the other way around.' Many having spent time as colonial civil servants, they were biased by an 'attitude of superiority' in which they might bestow British virtues, not by the values of a multiracial, multicultural Britannic identity they sought to build.¹⁷⁰

And try as BBC officers might to inspire sentiment in Britain for a British world, either made in their own image or as a composite inclusive of Gillespie's 'cross-cultural contact', BBC officers often despaired how Britons remained 'ignorant, apathetic, or hostile' to their efforts.¹⁷¹ Kathleen Paul, a historian of race and imperial citizenship, finds that in reality there were 'communities of "Britishness"' that reflected an ingrained incoherence of the Empire. While the state attempted in the British Nationality Act 1948 – whereby all remaining subjects were made imperial citizens with rights to free movement – to project the Empire as 'liberal', legal inclusivity only contradicted an exclusive 'notion of who really did or could belong.'¹⁷² The 'facade of equality' was fractured by a racialisation in which white Britons, Irish, Europeans

¹⁶⁸ Hamid Ismailov, Marie Gillespie & Anna Aslanyan, (eds.), *Tales from Bush House* (London: Hertfordshire Press, 2012) p.11.

¹⁶⁹ Mytton, 'The BBC and its cultural, social and political framework', *HJFRT*, p.572.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.571-72.

¹⁷¹ Potter, *Broadcasting Empire*, p.239.

¹⁷² Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Postwar Era* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1997) p.xii.

and imperial subjects, further split by ancestry and colour, belonged to and *in* separate categories. Subjecthood that was universal to both motherland and territories did not change the fact that ‘some subjects were more British than others’. The ‘true custodians’, born in Britain and bred of the right stock, proscribed government in trust of those who had not attained a civilisation yet capable of independence.¹⁷³ While white Britons were being encouraged to emigrate and buttress the Britishness being displaced in the Dominions, migrants of colour with the status of ‘United Kingdom and Colonies’ citizens were upon arrival ‘rejected as members of British society because they had never been and could never become “really” British.’¹⁷⁴

Writing on ‘The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation’ in his 1987 book, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, Paul Gilroy critiqued Anderson’s theory that racism and nationalism are ‘essentially antithetical’ because of the primacy of print language, meaning that one can become naturalised as part of a nation regardless of their race. In the British context, ‘conceptions of national belonging and homogeneity ... blur the distinction between “race” and nation’ with such idioms of identity as ‘Island Race’ and ‘Bulldog Breed’.¹⁷⁵ One of the principal figures of race politics in the sixties, Conservative MP Enoch Powell continued to argue in later life that all nations must be ‘united by identity with one another ... and that’s normally due to similarities which we regard as racial similarities.’¹⁷⁶ Such ‘ethnic absolutism’ was publicly popular, even if ‘self-declared “British” blacks’ might be championed.¹⁷⁷ The ‘social identity’ acquired by groups led Gilroy to ask the extent to which Britishness – or any national identity – can ‘displace or dominate the equally “lived and formed” identities which are based on age, gender, region, neighbourhood or ethnicity?’ Especially so where ‘domination and subordination’ between those groups, supposedly all British in membership, has been rationalised by an ‘appeal to the authority of nature and biology’.¹⁷⁸ An identity thus comes burdens with asterisks depending on one’s other associations, be they in a political movement or prayer at the local mosque. Media representation may not find time or space for such clauses.

For Linda Colley, the ‘*raison d’être*’ of the ‘invented’ British nation, reliant on the ‘threat and tonic of recurrent war’ and ‘the triumphs, profits and Otherness represented by a massive

¹⁷³ Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, pp.22-23.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.xiv-xv.

¹⁷⁵ Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The cultural politics of race and nation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991) pp.44-5.

¹⁷⁶ Transcribed from BBC2, *Odd Man Out: A Portrait of Enoch Powell* (11 November 1995), in Richard Weight, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain, 1940-2000* (London: Macmillan, 2002) p.431

¹⁷⁷ Gilroy, *Ain't No Black*, pp.59-60.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.50.

overseas empire', was somewhat spent by the mid-twentieth century. Loss of contact with the 'exotic' and resistance to Catholicism made it increasingly difficult for nation-builders to persuade for 'an identity in common.'¹⁷⁹ The role of the 'Other' in Britishness, be they Continental or Oriental, is of particular importance in this study, with one of its chief focuses being changing representation as Britain pivoted from Commonwealth to Common Market. How the candidacy for Britishness was considered of Kathleen Paul's 'communities' illustrates how deeply an 'us' and 'them' dichotomy still fortified identity. Replacing the British Nationality Act in 1962, the Commonwealth Immigrants Act set precedent – or confirmed a position – through choice of language in debate and legislation. Given that the 'immigrants' in question in fact held imperial citizenship, 'it would have been equally appropriate to call it British Subjects Migration Act'. Instead, 'the act carried the title that most clearly explained its purpose': the refusal of rights on grounds of race. The voucher scheme introduced prejudice against unskilled jobseekers, the wording broadly helping to 'define potential migrants as non-British individuals connected to the island only through some legal error rather than through three hundred years of colonialism.'¹⁸⁰

On the other hand, the treatment of Caucasians always differed to Asians or Africans. Officials 'manipulated' public opinion in support of Europeans, 'clothing them in a discourse of potential Britishness.'¹⁸¹ Fearing 'displaced persons' from Europe were being lumped with 'foreigners', the Committee for the Education of Public Opinion on Foreign Workers orchestrated features in magazines, broadcasts by the War Office and leaflets from the Ministry of Labour; the BBC pitched in with programmes designed to counter prejudice and promote assimilation.¹⁸² In practice, at the border, European aliens and passport-holding persons of colour from the ostensibly 'British' world had their status as immigrant and migrant inverted. While this implies a receptivity to Europe, memories of and memorials to the Second World War evidence a deeper cultural Europhobia to match racial xenophobia. It had served the Union as both tonic and triumph, which the BBC itself traded heavily on to restore Britishness at low ebb.

The BBC and the Battle for Britain

Nations and nationhood then, the British case in particular, are complex and controversial. Britishness has dimensions to it – imperial, racial, subnational, Continental – that are felt in

¹⁷⁹ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) pp.6-7.

¹⁸⁰ Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, pp.166-68.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp.64-65.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, pp.85-86.

differing degrees and have been used to determine whether or not a person, regardless of their choosing, can be or could become a Briton. Representing this spectrum rather than a mere stereotype is, if not impossible, beyond any simple or single projection. However, as referenced from the work of Anderson, Colley and others, national identity itself is inorganic and often contrived. The role of the Second World War in redefining and invigorating British identity, and the BBC's involvement in that, is a case in point for this conscious process and especially significant in this study. Weight went so far as to speculate in 2002 that 'we would probably now be witnessing not the beginning of its end but the end itself' of Britishness had Nazi Germany not interjected.¹⁸³ When Sampson reflected back in his *New Anatomy* of the British nation, he recognised how wars against the Kaiser and Fascism had served as 'great centralisers of loyalty, inspiring the outlying provinces with a sense of nationhood.' Without France or Germany posing an existential threat, he did not think it 'obvious' why a Dundonian or Mancunian would feel loyalty to Westminster, especially so a cabinet of 'London-based Oxford graduates'. Writing on the relationship between war and identity, Max Jones found polls reflected how people tend to use the former to substantiate the latter. It is little wonder, since 'the union has been strongest when defined against a common enemy.'¹⁸⁵ But the storied 'People's War' enshrined in national consciousness required a 'people', which the BBC had knowingly helped to fashion.¹⁸⁶

As previously covered with concern to 'dual identity', there were problems in perceptions of Britain between the nations. Mass-Observation posed a question to its National Panel in 1941 that drilled into the difficulties with descriptors of identity: 'What Does Britain mean To You?' While most countenanced the various nations and regions as their fellows in nation, they were not widely considered to be countrymen; diarists identified as English as opposed to Scottish, Welsh or Irish.¹⁸⁷ And even in the English case, where Britishness could be confusingly interchangeable, Britain bore the brunt of negative connotations and criticisms. Respondents associated Britain with 'Empire', 'capitalist exploiters', 'self serving politicians', 'class divisions', and 'a political system mired in outdated convention'; England was the cultural heart. The media rallied around the notion that, contrasted with the declaration of war by 'England' in 1914, the war with Nazi Germany in 1939 was one undertaken as 'Britain'. This owed much to recognition that it would be won or lost together, cognisant of separatism as a

¹⁸³ Weight, *Patriots*, pp.15-16.

¹⁸⁵ Max Jones in Carnevali and Strange, (eds.), *20th Century Britain*, pp.79-80.

¹⁸⁶ Angus Calder, *The People's War: Britain 1939-1945* (London: Random House, 1992).

¹⁸⁷ Lucy Noakes, "Deep England": Britain, the countryside and the English in the Second World War' in Wendy Ugolini and Juliette Pattinson, (eds.), *Fighting for Britain? Negotiating Identities in Britain During the Second World War* (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2015) pp.40-45.

growing force that needed to be reckoned with.¹⁸⁹ The BBC were instrumental in putting into practice the memo from above that it was Britain, not England that was the nation in war, and that the two were not synonymous. The BBC also conducted a domestic campaign for 'The Projection of Britain', designed to instill unity across nations and classes in reaction to a perceived lack of patriotic material. The authors of the campaign identified 'a love of tradition and order', 'a belief in tolerance and fair play', and 'a sense of humour' as the touchstones of national character that ought to be played up in programming.¹⁹⁰ This complemented plans for 'deploying the poets', fostering national pride through popular artists that were supposed to reflect the whole community of Britishness.¹⁹¹

The BBC had an arguably tougher task in reconfiguring Britishness for external audiences, crucially Britain's co-combatants in the Empire and Dominions. This community was extremely diverse in respect of closeness to Britain, both culturally and geographically, demography and experiences of colonialism, and progress toward or attainment of independence. The Empire was thus 'reimagined as a more collective, collaborative enterprise, partly through the language of the Commonwealth', with Britain presented as a 'peacemaker' in rejection of perceived 'upper-class imperialism'. An example of this new messaging was the BBC's Empire Day programme of 1945, celebrating the British world for its 'rich diversity and an underlying unity'. Producers were strict that there was to be 'no moralising or generalising ... about the sun never setting, being brothers under the skin, or anything of that sort'. 'Britishness as routinely performed within the British Isles could be censored for an international audience', as evidenced by how producers of entertainment were instructed to consider any 'judgment of British character' that may be made. 'Old school tie' characters in comedy were acceptable for humanising colonial Britons, proving that the overlords could at least laugh at themselves, while 'local' jokes were prohibited along with 'cracks about Indians'.¹⁹² In the construction of Winston Churchill, it was to be a 'war of peoples and of causes', not 'national ambition', depending upon 'the British race in every part of the world'.¹⁹⁴ But while the BBC was promoting the idea of a 'People's War' in a 'People's Empire', the contribution and sacrifice of imperial conscripts and soldiers of colour 'to the defeat of Hitler was ignored and then forgotten.' The legend of the Finest Hour, the Battle of Britain,

¹⁸⁹ Both the SNP and Plaid Cymru considered, even openly countenanced the prospects of independence should they accommodate German occupation of England. Weight, *Patriots*, p.49.

¹⁹⁰ Alan Bullock, et al, 'Projection of Britain 1941-46', quoted in Weight, *Patriots*, p.36.

¹⁹¹ Siân Nicholas, 'The People's Radio: The BBC and its Audience, 1939-1945' in Nick Hayes and Jeff Hill (eds.), *"Millions Like Us"?: British Culture in the Second World War* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999) p.75.

¹⁹² Cecil Madden, Policy Directive for Variety Material Broadcast Overseas, in Robertson, "I get a real kick out of Big Ben", *HJFRT*, p.466.

¹⁹⁴ Jones in Carnevali and Strange, (eds.), *20th Century Britain*, pp.87-8.

became, according to Richard Weight, the monument to a 'culturally homogenous and self-sufficient nation' that would be used later in a battle for Britain opposite to that waged by the BBC.¹⁹⁵

Lastly and with special reference to the European element of Britishness, if it exists for most or many Britons, we must contend with the legacy of war in the first half of the 20th century when looking at identity in its second. While standing alone against Nazi-occupied Europe incited a sense of apartness – even aloofness – from the Continent, this was, as Michael Francis notes, counterbalanced by Britain acting out its leading role as 'proxy for an often fantasised cosmopolitan European culture that otherwise would be consigned to oblivion.' But while Britishness was shown to be 'elastic' enough to incorporate 'a broader European sensibility', being the last nation standing in a struggle between good and evil also lends itself to a certain superiority complex often seen in Britons *vis a vis* 'Continental'.¹⁹⁶ This complex, running contrary to Europeanness, was well fed by propaganda efforts to boost morale that heavily featured British victories over 'jumped-up, power-crazed Continental dictators' of the past. This constant restatement of the 'island story' by poets and politicians alike, summoning ancestral Britons who had preserved the nation against plots from the other side of the Channel, affirmed the exceptionalism of Britain against Europe.¹⁹⁷ Reminiscences of the Elizabethan and Napoleonic eras were replaced postwar by the latest episode in this serialised conflict, where once again old foes were beaten against the odds in defence of a British way of life.

Until the mid-sixties and even into the seventies, the Second World War dominated the British media, be it through themed comic books, paperbacks for adults, a genre of film that was by far the most prolific, or the persistent pumping out of wartime stereotypes and depictions of German politicians as Adolf Hitler by the press. Memorabilia of Winston Churchill, says Weight, 'constituted a personality cult of Maoist proportions.'¹⁹⁸ Pride in British victory and the unique values believed to have brought it was influential in discourse over entry into the Common Market, along with prejudiced views of a Continent 'as inherently unstable, undemocratic and therefore too dangerous to be closely involved with.' Iain Macleod, Chairman of the Conservative Party when Britain first applied to join, produced a report for Cabinet in 1962 on 'Public Opinion and the Common Market', finding 'increasing distrust of foreign political connections and indeed of foreigners ... fears that we are going to be "taken

¹⁹⁵ Weight, *Patriots*, p.83.

¹⁹⁶ Martin Francis, 'Foreword' in Wendy Ugolini and Juliette Pattinson, (eds.), *Fighting for Britain? Negotiating Identities in Britain During the Second World War* (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2015) pp.xiii-xiv.

¹⁹⁷ Weight, *Patriots*, p.65.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.342-43.

over”, “pushed around”, “outvoted”, “forced into the Common Market to serve American interests” or “to surrender our independence to ‘Frogs and Wogs’.”¹⁹⁹ When Britain was denied entry into the Common Market in 1963, it was obvious from the lack of any ‘sense of grief’ that ‘Euro-enthusiasts were swimming against the clear tide of public opinion’, many of whom regarded Europeans still as ‘incomprehensible aliens’.²⁰⁰

The bid to join the European project had been an exercise in dispassionate pragmatism, conducted entirely speculatively and without commitment. The attempt of a Labour government in 1967 was even more sparing of public participation. Of the debate that did occur outside of closed meetings, the sides broadly comprised ‘Europhile elite-oriented groups and Europhobe mass-based groups.’ Support fell the farther one polled from the most continentally proximate – and prosperous – South-East, and Harold Wilson had an even tougher time mustering his party faithful. Forging ahead without public involvement, or even that of party membership, aided the argument that Britain’s journey into Europe was one made without Briton’s ‘full-hearted consent’.²⁰¹ Rejection of Britain’s bid was presented as a triumph by most of the press with the agreement of the majority of their readership, with the European Union threatening the Union of Britain. ‘Most Britons cared little about the Empire and did not mourn its passing’, summarises Weight, ‘but neither did they have much wish to become European. They were happy being Little Britons.’²⁰² When mixed with an already inflexible notion of identity, this insular nature lent itself to an isolationist tendency; one that would contradict the very idea of such international activities as external broadcasting. Turning next to the programmes as listed in *London Calling*, we shall see how well representations of Britishness represented actual Britons - or more likely, what sort of identity a *World Service* in the ‘national interest’ espoused.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p.338.

²⁰⁰ Kenneth O. Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Britain: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) p.73.

²⁰¹ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, pp.116-17, 120-1.

²⁰² Weight, *Patriots*, pp.356-57.

Part Two:
London Calling and Britishness by Radio

Having examined national identity and interest, the second part of this dissertation will consider how Britain and Britishness were represented in BBC external broadcasting. It will examine actual programme output, with reference to nation branding, in order to better understand projection and propaganda. The *London Calling* magazine guides are an imperfect source, as they cannot give the comprehensive view of what was said and by whom that would be afforded by scripts and recordings. A sense of how the content was delivered, its tone and aesthetic, the voices and the contributors they belong to is lost without full text and sound. However, these were either never kept or no longer exist in quantity sufficient enough for broad conclusions. While accepting that there are gaps to the listings found in *London Calling*, nevertheless it is an important and under-utilised asset for gaining insight into the content broadcast, in the round, by the BBC External Services. These guides provide a panorama of the programming and its themes over the course of what was a crucial decade for both Britain and its national broadcaster. With lack of detail on certain areas of the schedule in each edition comes focus on others, offering treatment of key themes and the editorial focal points. As outlined in chapter two, key areas of interest were balancing trade deficits, maintaining power status, modernising the economy, and, pivotally, making a choice between the Commonwealth and the Common Market; a British world or a European neighbourhood. In part two, we shall see this reflected in several themes: Britain as the place to be and buy from; Britain as the 'middle way' in a bipolar world; Britain as young and competitive; Britain beyond the British world.

On the topic of national identity serving national interests, there are features on sports and culture, the institutions of law and parliamentary democracy, history and heritage that both project Britain as a nation and British ideas universally. There are also programmes, both regular and feature, of an overtly advertorial nature; the BBC often acts not merely as a shop window but also as the sales representative within. The products of Britain chosen to be touted are as constructive of the 'brand' as the salesmanship that promoted them. When the launching of a new ocean liner is occasion for commentary, such as with the *Canberra* and *Oriana* in 1960 and the *Northern Star* in 1962, tours of the vessels aside details of 'cabin convertibility' and cuts to journey time do the work of the travel agent, while the description of 'a 45,000 ton product of the Harland and Wolff shipyards, and the largest liner to have been built in the United Kingdom since the *Queen Elizabeth*' sustain the identity of a maritime nation

while leafleting for its industries.²⁰³ When considering that ‘the once-booming shipbuilding industry grew to depend almost solely upon Admiralty orders’ in this period, such brags were certainly to the benefit of British business.²⁰⁴ It was a story of boom to bust untold until *The New Ship-Builders* in December 1968 sought to ‘examine why orders are returning’ to ‘busy’ shipyards that were honing ‘new techniques and innovations’; this in the same edition where the image of a ‘modern, purpose built container ship’ shows the cost-cutting efficiency of *The Container Revolution* in action.

The free press and parliamentary democracy are common subjects. Again, the serving of interests – persuading new nations and pressuring old to pick the side of the ‘free world’ – also aligned with the rehearsal of key tenets of British identity for the Britain’s profit. The decade opens with *Fleet Street - 1960*, in which the owners and editors of the great newspapers, ‘famous the world over’, represent a fourth pillar ‘under constant criticism, as the Press is apt to be in a democratic country’.²⁰⁶ It is on their model that the International Press Institute, heard through its Director Jim Rose in *The Fourth Estate*, advocates internationally for ‘the ethics and practice of a free Press’. It is, says Lord Francis-Williams, ‘the one indispensable weapon in the armoury of freedom’.²⁰⁷ Later in 1960, three weekly products of London’s famed journalism were the subject of a feature series, including the *New Statesman* and *Spectator*, and it is *The Economist* that exemplifies a British mould. In such a paper, ‘the spirit of the great Victorians [i.e. their liberal editors James Wilson and Walter Bagehot] lives on’.²⁰⁸ The occasion of the 700th anniversary of the ‘Mother of Parliaments’ inspires several programmes, including talks in *Government by the People* on ‘how the parliamentary experiment has fared’ in Africa and Asia. Further situating the origin story of modern political movements in Britain, *Aspects of Revolution* traces the history of contemporary systems of government back through the French Revolution and the American War of Independence to the English Civil War – not to forget the Industrial Revolution that spurred further change.²⁰⁹

²⁰³ It is on ‘the world’s largest liner, the 82,997-ton R.M.S. Queen Elizabeth’ that a programme on the *Atlantic Crossing*, and how the ocean has appeared to intrepid sailors without the ‘luxury’ of a Cunard Line-operated cruise, is produced in 1967. *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.145 (11 March 1960) p.2; Vol.2, No.183 (1 December 1960) p.1; Vol.2, No.266 (5 July 1962) p.1; Vol.3, No.47 (February 1967) p.5.

²⁰⁴ Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, pp.424-25; *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.69 (December 1968) pp.2-3.

²⁰⁶ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.145, (11 March 1960) p.1.

²⁰⁷ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.286 (22 November 1962) p.1.

²⁰⁸ Using the favoured drama format to extol such tenets of the Western, British model, the character of a Brazilian journalist, Pancho Gomez, can be found making his way in the media on the fictional *Daily Planet* in *Assignment U.K.* Having ‘come to England to learn about the British way of life’, Gomez and his colleague Jane Howard are dispatched to investigate stories that take in a tour of the British Museum, ‘an English stately home’ and the Hampton Court Palace maze; there is also the mystery of a missing British scientist to solve. *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.173 (23 September 1960) p.2; Vol.3, No.46 (January 1967) p.8.

²⁰⁹ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.49 (April 1967) p.3.

Such chronologies are common and place Britain in the privileged position of the sage, looking with maturity on the growing pains of political puberty around it.

The themes of law and order are also heavily featured in programming and contribute to British credentials for fairness and ethics. The effect of such a reputation for the making and upholding of rules is self-evident on those seeking to do business with the nation and its peoples. Sports provided a rich seam for presenting a British mind for rulemaking and mentality of fair play. English idioms are reeled off in the listing for an episode of *Inside Britain* entitled 'Nation of Sportsmen?': 'don't hit below the belt, don't hit a man when he's down ... the game's the thing' and 'be a good loser'.²¹⁰ In the 'English Courts', a listing for one programme argues, one is drawn more toward the scales than the sword that the Blind Goddess of Justice holds: 'while most peoples abroad look to their Constitution or to some rigid Code to safeguard their freedom, Britain still relies on her Courts, her Judges, her lawyers, and on the Law itself, to achieve a proper balance between the claims of society and the liberty of the individual.' According to Alfred Thompson Denning, the Law Lord later made famous through his report on the Profumo affair, the scales err on 'the side of freedom'; it was for this reason that former British territories 'continue to recognize the Crown as the fount of justice.'²¹¹ Light entertainment as well as drama was used to educate the listener in 'English' law, as seen in *Your Verdict*. Each episode presented a panel, composed of Europeans and Americans as well as Commonwealth citizens, with a dramatised case in order to see 'whether the verdict of the man in the street is the same as the strict legal interpretation of the case.'²¹² The pride of place of legal practitioners in British life is attested to in *Advocate Imperative*, recreating famous cases and the oratory of barristers for whom 'ovations ... might have gratified the Beatles.'²¹³ We will return to the Liverpudlian foursome, who are employed here to imply an almost Roman love of reason and passion for debate.

The English language and its literature are also, unsurprisingly, core subjects for programming. Having a way with words and their creation is central to the British brand, constantly reminding the listener of the uses of English as the *lingua franca* of arts, science, commerce and diplomacy. Given that the BBC was at the forefront of efforts to expand through education the understanding and usage of English, it makes sense that much was made of the merits of knowing, reading and speaking it. In terms of explicitly tutorial content, *Walter and Connie...*, the television series that served as the BBC's flagship educational franchise,

²¹⁰ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.259 (17 May 1962) p.2.

²¹¹ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.191 (26 January 1961) p.1.

²¹² *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.55 (October 1967) p.5.

²¹³ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.25 (April 1965) p.6.

crops up in *London Calling* in order to advertise it being bought and shown by other broadcasters. The central characters are a young married couple, observed in their domesticity in fictional Warchester; its bliss broken by situations not shorn of tension, such as in 'Connie and the Burglars' and 'Walter in Court', but all in good English humour. Walter is frustrated by a series of jobs, forced on him to provide the required settings for each episode, before finding his fit as a journalist at the local paper.²¹⁴ This reminds of Julian Hale's contention that an innate conventionality made 'the BBC External Services no better or worse than the British Tourist Authority, with its thatched cottages, or Radio 4, with the Archers. 'The danger', for Hale, 'is the extent to which these limited social attitudes colour political comment.'²¹⁵ In the case of English by Radio, as with *Walter and Connie...* on television, the supposed ordinariness of middle-of-the-road, middle class stereotypes could colour ideas of British life, lending Britishness a false moderacy or consensus.

In seeking to cultivate understanding and appreciation of the English language, literature is a favoured route. No figure features more, again without surprise, than William Shakespeare. The quatercentenary of Shakespeare's birth is marked on the front cover of *London Calling* for April 1964, heralding a catalogue of programming in his honour that is only slightly more profuse than usual. An article asserts that the 'impression which the works of Shakespeare has made upon life and thought, not only in Britain, nor even in the English-speaking world, but upon countries of widely differing peoples, cultures and traditions would be very hard to assess.'²¹⁶ While ponderously noncommittal, this statement tends toward the assessment, hard as it is to make, that the influence is profound. *My Word!*, the panel show that paid homage to English phraseology in all its poetry and puns, decided it should 'devote a whole programme to his works' when 'quite a number of Shakespearean quotations have already been used during the series'. Aside myriad musical and dramatic programmes, *What Shakespeare Means to Me* continues with 'eminent' guests of international stature speaking to the playwright's global phenomenon, be they Argentine writer Jorge-Luis Borges, American and Egyptian actors Jose Ferrer and Yusef Wahby, or former Director-General of Radio Pakistan, Z. A. Bokhari.²¹⁷ Showing that the 400th anniversary of his birth did not mean any special treatment of Shakespeare and his works, in October *Such Sweet Thunder* presented translations in some 21 different languages: 'Romeo wooing Juliet in Chinese, German, Arabic, Hungarian and English ... and Lady Macbeth will pursue her wicked course in Polish, Hebrew, Telegu and Greek.'²¹⁸ The genius of the English language, its masters and

²¹⁴ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.3 (June 1963) pp.6-7; Vol.3, No.24 (March 1965) pp.6-7.

²¹⁵ Hale, *Radio Power*, p.58.

²¹⁶ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.13 (April 1964) p.4.

²¹⁷ *London Calling*, p.5; Vol.3, No.12 (March 1964) p.10.

²¹⁸ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.19 (October 1964) p.12.

masterpieces is clearly to be taken as granted. That the *lingua franca* of the world happened to have originated in Britain was obviously to the benefit of the British brand; connotations of power were not, however, substitutes for the real thing. We turn next to power as our first primary theme.

'Great' Britain in a Bipolar World

Ruminations on a new role as the 'Third' or 'Middle Way' was recognition that Britain's power, if it could still be considered great, was below that of the United States and Soviet Union in the pecking order, or at best between them in a new post-war dynamic. The fact that Britain was by no means of equal superpower status in this triumvirate, however the balance of power might be conceptualised, could not be ignored and, indeed, was not in BBC programming. This relegation from the first order was plain, if not otherwise proven, in the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962. Programmes in June of 1963 on the Soviet and American leaders involved, Nikita Khrushchev and John F. Kennedy, are listed in *London Calling* under the headline, 'The Men Behind the Power', reflecting how their confrontation had shown that 'survival or destruction' of the world rested in the hands of these leaders of 'the two most devastating concentrations of power in history'.²¹⁹ A series of talks in 1961 on the *Challenge of our Time*, when political atlases 'are no sooner published than they are out of date', acknowledged the supremacy of the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R., with China 'striving to make up the leeway of the lost years.' In 1962, *New Society* declared a 'climate of uncertainty' in Britain, 'assailed by doubts about our – and our country's – position in the world'; a Gallup Poll had even asked Britons how they felt about 'becoming more like Sweden and Switzerland'.²²⁰ But the BBC was unwavering about the respect due to the Commonwealth of Nations, 'which has already shown that friendship with independence can be a mutually enriching experience', whereas the 'suspicious tolerance' of East-West relations 'seems to defeat the hope of wholehearted and fruitful collaboration.'²²¹ The model of another 'Way' is well made out by positive coverage and comparisons in the General Overseas and World Service; the Commonwealth community was the spine of British pretensions to power, the treatment of which as a theme over the decade we will return to.

²¹⁹ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.3 (June 1963) p.8.

²²⁰ In that poll, the nation was split over whether to remain 'a great power' over the alternative of Swedish or Swiss neutrality; roughly half again were dissatisfied with the British position in the world. *New Society* (4 October 1962) p.3; 'Election Year Britain', *New Society* (30 April 1964) pp.6-7.

²²¹ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.213 (29 June 1961) p.1.

As previously discussed, part of the pitch for Britain's role and continued seat reservation at the top table was its position as moderator between the leviathans of East and West, demonstrated by Prime Ministers Winston Churchill and Clement Attlee in the conferences of the 'Big Three' at the climax of war in 1945. That said, Britain was firmly ensconced in the Western camp and avowedly anti-Communist. The BBC was engaged in a *War of the Black Heavens* with the Soviets, investing heavily in their own propaganda while spending exorbitantly on jamming others.²²² Of the two Prime Ministers of the sixties, Harold Macmillan 'saw Britain as playing Greece to the USA's Rome' and Harold Wilson remained through his tenure a 'keen proponent of Britain's supposedly special relationship', 'cock-a-hoop with pride' in his first meeting with Lyndon B. Johnson.²²³ Hungarian intellectual Arthur Koestler, introducing an edited collection of essays on the *Suicide of a Nation* that first featured, to acclaim, in the magazine *Encounter*, considered the 'Graeco-Roman analogy ... arrogant nonsense or, to be more polite, just plain silly.' Continental '*joie de vivre*', its 'cultures by no means inferior to ours', contrasted sharply with 'the rate at which we develop stomach ulcers.'²²⁴ It was by no means clear why new powers, or new nations, would accept the instruction of an infirm Britain.

Playing up the idea of the British as an elder statesman of the international order, wise counsel and 'honest broker' to the new superpowers, were programmes that offered journalistic and academic critiques of American democracy and Soviet communism.²²⁵ One such regular series, produced for the domestic Home Service and primarily 'to inform the people of Britain about the people of the United States of America', was Alistair Cooke's *Letter from America*. In *London Calling* a write-up on the programme reasoned its inclusion in General Overseas Service schedules was important 'since the mood, character and doings of the great and often perplexing country he talks about are of more than a passing interest to the world at large' – as presumably is the judgment of a British commentator.²²⁶ Later, the World Service presents a less politically hamstrung take on Britain's ally with *America in Perspective*:

²²² Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War* (1997).

²²³ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, p.109; Sandbrook, *White Heat*, pp.120, 379-80.

²²⁴ Arthur Koestler, (ed.), *Suicide of a Nation?* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1963) p.12.

²²⁵ Harold Wilson placed great emphasis – and exhausted great energy – on a magisterial role for Britain, organising a 'grand tour' with Commonwealth colleagues to make the case for a compromise in Indochina; in 1967, a breakthrough was thought to be achieved in London with the Soviet Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin, only for a diplomatic debacle to ensue when the American side made fresh demands before the ink had dried. Sandbrook, *White Heat*, pp.382-84.

²²⁶ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.149 (8 April 1960) p.2.

Five programmes examine the background and direction of American policies and the problems facing the United States today. English and American experts will consider How United is the United States?; The Power of the President; Society Under Pressure; Isolation or More Vietnams?; and The Future: American Dream or Nightmare?²²⁷

Given such a tough 'perspective' offered by 'English' analysts, Britain certainly appears uncompromised and, in image terms, uncompromising. Such unrestrained assessments of Soviet Russia and its satellite states are more common and less remarkable, although presented as objective and unemotional expositions rather than exposé. The reputation for British fairness and its role in the 'middle' is helped by the platform given to such figures as John Gallam, then General Secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain.²²⁸ So too, the BBC carried this responsibility to act as the conciliator of East and West and similarly trumpeted its achievements in opening conversations, as seen in the bulletin of a summit with their Soviet counterparts printed in July 1963: agreements included 'interchange of programmes', 'provision of facilities on either side', 'attachment of members of staff', and a visit of the Director-General to the U.S.S.R. Broadcasting Organization.²²⁹ And when there is a series of talks on the *Newspapers of the World*, whose 'handling of news and comment can exert an enormous influence for good or evil', one of the contributors was the Deputy Chief Editor of *Pravda*, Vadim Nekrasov.²³⁰

Through BBC programmes the listener is also led to believe in a British identity not tending toward crisis when under scrutiny, but rather welcoming of it and able to own up to mistakes. The recently published memoirs of Anthony Eden were reviewed in 1960, covering 'the 1954 Geneva conference on Indo-China, the breakdown of the plan for a European Defence Community, the Persian oil dispute, and the revolution in Egypt'. However, the climax of this first volume is said to be 'the decision of the British and French governments to intervene' in Suez, which removes any premeditation from that intervention.²³¹ It is of note that the guest expert chosen to give a reading of Eden's account is Lord Strang, a member of the General Advisory Council of the B.B.C. who avidly defended the broadcaster through its nervous standoff with the then Government. A former Head of the Foreign Office, Strang stood in the House of Lords in 1957, in the fallout of the showdown over Suez, to accuse that 'the art of hobbling an organisation without entirely crippling it is one which is well understood and

²²⁷ *London Calling*, Vol.4, No.5 (September 1969) p.4.

²²⁸ *London Calling*, Vol.4, No.8 (September 1969) p.4.

²²⁹ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.7 (October 1963) p.2.

²³⁰ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.61 (April 1968) p.3.

²³¹ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.143 (26 February 1960) p.2.

practised in Whitehall.²³² When the BBC came under fire for helping to birth a satire boom through its controversial television series *That Was The Week That Was*, Strang's impression was that, if anything, there was 'too much fooling around and not enough bite'.²³³ On the topic of *TW3*, *London Calling* used the programme as 'evidence of political maturity' in Britain; Mr. Kenneth Adam, writing as Director of BBC Television, clearly did not foresee it being axed for reaching and then crossing the line during the election of 1964. Nevertheless, a Canadian journalist is quoted attributing to it 'a healthy, enquiring, irreverence almost totally lacking in Canadian and U.S. public affairs programmes'.²³⁴

While beating a retreat from past hegemony allowed Britain to embrace a post-imperial image – 'more in tune with the spirit of the times', as Gerard Mansell remarked – this did not mean that martial prowess was not part of British identity as portrayed by the BBC.²³⁵ In 1960 a series about *Training for the Services* starts with the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, before covering the Royal Naval College and Royal Air Force College; in its listing in *London Calling*, high-profile overseas graduates are referenced from General Mohammad Ayub Khan to King Hussein.²³⁶ *The Sandhurst Tradition* again draws attention to the famed institution in 1966, now 'a far cry from the insular beginnings of the college' with its overseas cadets making up one in seven of the officers in training.²³⁷ As another 'of the most famous British institutions', the tercentenary of the Royal Marines is marked by a programme that proudly recounts how its soldiers 'drove the first armoured vehicles on to the beaches of Normandy in 1944' and 'provided some of the finest Commando units'.²³⁸ Honour and heroism are woven into such tales of British arms – a military history where Britain is shorn of any belligerence – as the 1961 reconstruction of the 'Yangtse Incident' of April 1949. A stalemate ensued when a British frigate on a 'routine visit to Nanking' was forced ashore after taking fire from the Chinese People's Liberation Army, during the fighting of what would be the final phase of their Civil War. The listing tells the story of how Lieutenant Commander John Kerans resisted 'the preposterous demands the Communists were making before they would guarantee safe conduct for his ship', seeking to save the lives of his casualties by making a daring escape to Shanghai.²³⁹

²³² House of Lords debate (6 February 1957) in Mansell, *Let Truth Be Told*, p.211.

²³³ Minutes of the Board of Governors (24 January 1963) in Briggs, *Competition*, p.363.

²³⁴ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.8 (November 1963) pp.4-5.

²³⁵ Mansell, *Let Truth Be Told*, p.246.

²³⁶ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.187 (29 December 1960) p.2.

²³⁷ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.41 (August 1966) p.3.

²³⁸ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.19 (October 1964) p.8.

²³⁹ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.188 (5 January 1961) p.2.

If past conflicts provide the material for representations of British gallantry and the professionalism used to tutor the armed forces of its friends, then modern military capacity is showcased through the declaration of nuclear power occasioned by the launching of *H.M.S. Dreadnought*, Britain's first atomic submarine.²⁴⁰ The Queen presided over the ceremony, as she does at the various other military events covered by special BBC broadcasts, most prominently the annual Trooping the Colour on the monarch's official birthday. Elsewhere, *White Mice to Dreadnoughts* charted British submarining 'through two world wars and intermittent peace to the nuclear Dreadnought of today.' The story of Submarine Branch is told by Captain Anthony Kimmins with those who have served on the vessels, now 'nearly sixty years old', so handling an important part of the history of the Royal Navy that it is said, in total, 'could scarcely be compressed into a hundred programmes'.²⁴¹ However, rarely is a glimpse caught of British forces deployed in the contemporary world, fighting the 'brush fires' in Malaya or Kenya or Aden which Charles Curran alluded to; a programme on the Gulf states in 1969 asked 'How do they see their future when by the end of 1971 the British military presence in the Gulf is withdrawn, the end of a long chapter in their history?'²⁴² What is not wondered aloud is how this severing of commitments 'east of Suez', the conclusion of a major chapter in British history also, might mean the 'dramatic farewell to Britain's world role'.²⁴³

Grandiose displays of scientific advancement were as prized as those of strength in the great power politics of the Cold War, the central expression of which being the 'Space Race'. 1961 saw the first man in space, the Soviet Union's Yuri Gagarin, and 1969 the American moon landing of Apollo 11. It was a contest fought between superpowers that, crucially, had the enormous manpower and economic resources to run extraordinarily costly research programmes. Naturally, the BBC closely followed this dramatic and awe-inspiring competition. What is remarkable is that in the listing for one such programme in 1960, no longer debating post-Sputnik 'whether a human being will ever be put into orbit', the question is 'when' the first man goes to space whether he might be 'American, Russian, or British?'²⁴⁴ Efforts appear to be made to bracket Britain within the primary participants – albeit a respectful 'Third', as ever – in other programmes. Dr. Robert Boyd, Head of the Space Research group at University College, London, 'justifies the expense of British space research' in an episode of *Research Project* in 1962, discussing 'the scope available for smaller nations which will be later entrants in the space race.' Boyd is among those working on Britain's Scout Satellites, which it is said when launched 'will incorporate completely new experiments which have not

²⁴⁰ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.176 (13 October 1960) p.1.

²⁴¹ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.197 (9 March 1961) p.2.

²⁴² *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.70 (January 1969) p.3.

²⁴³ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, pp.643-44.

²⁴⁴ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.142 (19 February 1960) p.1.

yet been carried out by either America or Russia.' But 'before our own Blue Streak is available', the listing goes on, these along with other projects by 'European countries, led by Britain' will be carried into orbit by American rockets.²⁴⁵ Understandably Blue Streak, an unmitigated failure eventually traded for the American-bought Polaris, is never mentioned in the schedules again; in the words of journalist Bernard Levin it served as 'a dreadful symbol of the country's erratic attempts to move into the future, a paradigm of national impotence'.²⁴⁶

A fortnight following the famous speech of 1962 by President John F. Kennedy in Houston, Texas, imploring Americans to 'choose to go to the moon' in the name of 'knowledge and peace' and urging that its 'conquest deserves the best of all mankind', the BBC were anticipating that 'every careers master must be prepared for questions about astronautics from school-leavers and from pupils even younger'.²⁴⁷ The programme referenced, *Eyes Up!*, offered up 'British achievements in outer space' to a younger audience who, unless American, were as unlikely as Britons, adolescent or adult, to pilot any NASA rocket.²⁴⁸ Coming back down to earth, another line of programming on *The Exploration of Space*, as shown in one talk of that title, looked at the space race as hubris with a typical question being 'how much of the assorted ironmongery circling the earth today owes its origin to national and political prestige?'²⁴⁹ Further into the decade the BBC might still position Britain as a runner in the race to space, worrying if it now 'lagged dangerously behind', but began to cast doubt on 'any positive value for the growth and well-being of mankind' in the enterprise - 'a useless digression which we may choose to ignore in the future?'²⁵⁰ Britain was involved in such explorations purely for the sake of science and the possibilities of some utility, and it was on behalf of 'mankind' that the BBC interrogated not only the 'dubious' value of men on the moon, but the 'military motives, and the desire to impress the rest of the world with spectacular feats' of the Americans and Soviets.²⁵¹ The sober British, by clear contrast in the programming, do things for the right reasons.

Another area of international rivalry, from the inception of the modern Olympiad to today, was the Olympic Games. Coverage of the Olympics is not missing from schedules in which sport was prevalent, with *London Calling* making sure to mention that it was in Britain 'that modern athletics were developed (after Oxford-Cambridge matches of the mid-nineteenth

²⁴⁵ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.244 (1 February 1962) p.2.

²⁴⁶ Bernard Levin, *The Pendulum Years*, quoted in Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good*, pp.243-45.

²⁴⁷ See 'JFK RICE MOON SPEECH', *Johnson Space Centre: Space Movies Cinema*. Accessed 26 August 2020, from <https://er.jsc.nasa.gov/seh/ricetalk.htm>

²⁴⁸ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.278 (27 September 1962) p.2.

²⁴⁹ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.155 (20 May 1960) p.2.

²⁵⁰ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.16 (July 1964) p.3.

²⁵¹ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.272 (16 August 1962) p.2.

century)...'. But if the Games were a stage on which to showcase not only sporting achievement but national status, Britain woefully underperformed throughout the sixties; medal counts placed British athletes behind such lower-order powers as Czechoslovakia, Hungary and even Britain's Commonwealth subordinate Australia at Tokyo (1964) and Mexico City (1968), while not even finishing in the top ten in Rome (1960). Britain could however show humility about this mediocrity – as well as take a moral stance on what it, and the BBC, saw as the erosion of the spirit of the Olympiad. A series previewing the Games in Rome, *Talking about the Olympics*, attested to the threat to its 'genuinely amateur nature' from it being turned into a 'testing ground' for West versus East, drawing on a report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.²⁵² In 1964, *Britain in the Olympics* posed the question to the British athletes contributing to the programme, 'does the old Greek ideal of competing for honour alone still count in an era of intense national prestige?'²⁵³ If the British could not occupy a rung higher than Japan or Germany (East and West) in the medals table, they could at least occupy the higher ground among the great powers.

Before moving on to the theme of competitiveness with regards to science and industry, of anachronism and modernity, much could be said and, indeed, was made of Britain's part in international organisations and overseas aid. At the dawn of the decade, Britain's position in the hierarchy of the United Nations and commitment to global development are made beyond question. In one of a series of prophetic talks about the *Prospect for the 1960s*, on the topic of food and population, a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science is said to be 'the opening salvo' of the U.N.'s Freedom from Hunger campaign.²⁵⁴ British figures within the various agencies of the U.N. are frequent contributors to programmes that are obviously intended to meet the interests of listeners who may well be in receipt of its campaigns, but also foremost advertises Britain's role. 'As important as the financial aid Britain provides for developing countries is the technical advice and assistance given by her consultants', which *Experts from Britain* was able to give positive coverage to through interviews with those men and women on their assorted assignments.²⁵⁵ Compared to exorbitant sums lavished on space programmes without clear reward – 'Whitey on the moon', as put acerbically by the sixties poet Gil Scott-Heron – British investment in concrete aid is boast-worthy.²⁵⁶ And the BBC did boast, in 1969, that 'Britain is among the top three or four countries contributing to overseas aid. The British contribute not only as tax-payers, but

²⁵² *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.161 (1 July 1960) p.2.

²⁵³ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.17 (August 1964) p.7.

²⁵⁴ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.137 (15 January 1960) p.1.

²⁵⁵ *London Calling*, Vol.4, No.2 (June 1969) p.4.

²⁵⁶ Gil Scott-Heron, 'Whitey On The Moon', *Small Talk at 125th and Lenox* (USA: Flying Dutchman/RCA, 1970).

through churches and voluntary societies, and thousands offer their skills for service overseas.²⁵⁷ Such a power, with its 'Middle Way' of Welfare State and Western democracy, was presented as an antidote to the Cold War dichotomy. Furthermore, this new role is perfectly fitting for British identity. No one would have been led to the same conclusion of a 'national hardening of the arteries' as the *Spectator's* Anthony Hartley, the British descending into a limbo of 'decadence', 'decline', and 'the loss of purpose'.²⁵⁸

Modern Britain and the 'New Men'

A chief national interest of Britain in the 1960s was balancing foreign trade, the economic necessity of which was the operative force behind most other political and diplomatic change that occurred. If the ends for which power is coveted are reliant on economic means, as Paul Kennedy concluded, then Britain had to compete economically, first and foremost, if it was to be able to stake any claims in the greater geopolitical competition. The fact that the External Services of the BBC provided a pro bono advertising outlet for British firms is both explicitly recognised in the writings of executives, and abundantly clear in the content broadcast. The *BBC Handbook* accepted uncontroversially that a purpose of external broadcasting is 'to act as a shop window', flaunting rather than acquiescing to this fact in 1960 by counting how one programme had 'described some 1,500 new products and processes and mentioned some 300 British firms by name'.²⁵⁹ Later *Handbooks* do not fill so many paragraphs, if not pages, with testimonials to these efforts. 1959, on the other hand, is reflected on with a certain pride for having reported on, 'As far as is possible, every invention, new product, major contract, show, and exhibition ... and followed up in the daily and weekly scientific and industrial reviews'. While not the first function of external broadcasting, it is argued - perhaps with Whitehall officials and future committees in mind - that 'it can do much to create an atmosphere of knowledge and confidence overseas whereby the sales of British goods and services will be facilitated'.²⁶⁰ This 'atmosphere' and its effect on audiences sounds remarkably akin to branding, whereby the brand awareness and image instilled by certain products and their manufacturers rubs off well on other things of similarly British origin and, it follows, genius.

The listing for a feature series showing 'the real care and attention given to detail' of firms manufacturing *Made to Order* products represents well how the BBC in reality served not simply as a showroom for British goods, but more broadly to market Britishness. 'Britain is

²⁵⁷ *London Calling*, Vol.4, No.4 (August 1969) p.4.

²⁵⁸ Anthony Hartley, *A State of England* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1963) pp.226-27.

²⁵⁹ *BBC Handbook 1961* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1962) p.195.

²⁶⁰ *BBC Handbook 1960* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1961) pp.106-07.

not just an old country', the Duke of Edinburgh is quoted as saying in his speech at the British Exhibition in New York, 'if you suspect we are living in the past, forget it ... get a balanced view of Britain, right through to our scientific and technological achievements ... three out of every five gas turbines flying, or on order, in the entire Western world are British'. This view, the listing affirms, 'has been reflected in many programmes in the General Overseas Service.'²⁶¹ Prince Philip was the most popular of the Royal Family, striking a chord with the public when castigating elites for not having 'pulled [their] fingers out'.²⁶² The BBC clearly preferred the Duke's talking Britain up to his dressing it down. When in a future episode of this particular series it is the plastics industry being inspected for its craft and customer service, the listing is gushing about Britain's role in the material's development: the invention of celluloid in 1865 in Birmingham is followed by Perspex, which 'played a valuable part in wartime'; polythene – 'originally British' – by polystyrene, also 'first manufactured in Britain.'²⁶³ This retracing of the steps behind a major field of modern research and manufacturing, marking out Britain's sizeable footprint, is beyond mere promotion of a particular export – it creates a story in which the British are endowed with scientific excellence. How exactly such programmes were presented on air, whether they carried the same purpose to champion and to cultivate, is roundly answered by the host of *New Ideas*. Explaining what to expect from this regular programme and his presentation of it, Allan Murray remarks that 'To keep an eye on British inventions, techniques and discoveries, and size up their possibilities ... is like trying to read an encyclopedia by flashes of lightning.'²⁶⁴

Made to Order was among feature series that were supplementary to regular programming on the subject of scientific progress and industrial production, principally *Science & Industry*, which fielded enquiries from across the world while exhibiting British achievement abroad such as the £1m Durgapur Steelworks in India.²⁶⁵ Following the theme, 1968's *Made in Britain* described 'four spheres in which Britain's achievement has always held its own against foreign competition.' This cherry-picking approach focused attention on 'such pioneers' as Sir Alliot Verdon Roe of aircraft manufacturer Avro; Lord Ernest Rutherford, New Zealand-born British nuclear physicist; and Walter Owen Bentley, the automobile and aircraft engineer who founded Bentley Motors.²⁶⁶ As aspects of industry it is apt that nuclear, planes and cars form the core of the programme, being that they do across programming in general. Rutherford, 'described as the greatest scientist since Isaac Newton', on whose discoveries -

²⁶¹ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.202 (13 April 1961) p.1.

²⁶² Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good*, pp.549-50; Sampson, *Anatomy*, p.37.

²⁶³ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.206 (11 May 1961) p.1.

²⁶⁴ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.215 (13 July 1961) p.2.

²⁶⁵ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.145 (11 March 1960) p.1.

²⁶⁶ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.67 (October 1968) p.3.

at Cambridge - 'rests the whole of modern nuclear physics', is often used to demonstrate the hand Britain had in making the atomic age.²⁶⁷ The great physicist is named alongside the Curies, Bohr, Geiger, Chadwick and Hahn as the eminent predecessors of contemporary British researchers harnessing 'nuclear energy for peaceful use' in a special programme recounting *The Road to Dounreay* - the power station in Pentland Firth that was employed to counter those believing Scotland to be behind the times. The 'Giant Ball' of the reactor building adorns the front cover of this edition in Volume 2, typically found wanting of imagery.²⁶⁸ When the British Exhibition in Tokyo, 1965, gets the write-up and report customary for these shows, the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority has its own hall, *London Calling* refers, for two working models of the 'British designed' nuclear stations constructed to serve the Japanese capital.

It was par for the course that the other hall at the Tokyo Exhibition – aside a third 'devoted to the "Spirit of Britain"' and its 'creative genius' – was given over to the Society of British Aerospace Industries and various motoring firms.²⁶⁹ The BBC World Service, and General Overseas Service before it, served the function of a permanent exhibition on the model of these three 'halls'. Turning to the automobile industry, the annual International Motor Exhibition in Britain provided a central, recurring point for programming on this second rich source for industrial pride, even if - and the realities raised earlier by Paul Kennedy and Brian Harrison do not feature - Britain's place in car manufacturing was diminishing. The 1960 show is said to display the whole range of speed - 'up to the 170 m.p.h. Aston Martin sports car' - and luxury - the top end of that scale being 'a £9,000 Rolls-Royce'.²⁷⁰ In 1967 *The Giants* offered portraits of Rolls-Royce and Imperial Chemical Industries, 'to find out what makes them so successful in so many fields.' Rolls-Royce, 'whose very name has become a hallmark for quality and excellence all over the world', apparently provided 'the best car in the world.'²⁷¹ Rolls-Royce fell into difficulties over development costs and delays in a contract for Lockheed declared a 'stupendous national victory', with bankruptcy following in early 1969. Anthony Sampson considered it a 'demonstration that this kind of high technology had outgrown the scope of medium-sized nations, and that projects of such extravagance, if attempted at all, needed both the backing and the market of a whole continent.'²⁷² As for Imperial Chemical Industries, Walter Laqueur deemed it another example of British failure to forge ahead and compete with European counterparts, as Germany regained its dominance and French and

²⁶⁷ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.221 (24 August 1961) p.1.

²⁶⁸ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.164 (22 July 1960) p.1.

²⁶⁹ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.30 (September 1965) p.8.

²⁷⁰ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.177 (20 October 1960) p.1.

²⁷¹ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.47 (February 1967) p.4.

²⁷² Sampson, *New Anatomy*, pp.580-83.

Italian firms developed at a rate even exceeding that. Neither the Rolls-Royce debacle nor the fact that I.P.I. itself relocated its plants to the Maas River featured in BBC programmes.²⁷³

Nevertheless, the identity of the British as *Great Engineers* – George and Robert Stephenson, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, Henry Boyce and Frank Whittle were adduced to prove that in one programme of the title – is beyond doubt in *London Calling* and the output it acts as a guide to.²⁷⁴ When reporting on the ‘national triumphs’ of the Monte Carlo Rally, in 1960, it is stated that R.A.C. crews ‘will drive British cars, as, indeed, will many of the entrants from other countries.’²⁷⁵ And while Rolls-Royce is used to add a touch of class to the produce of British factories, and the hands of those operating the assembly lines, figures such as Sir Alec Issigonis often speak, sometimes personally, to the ingenuity and thrift one ought expect of Britain’s designers. As ‘unquestionably Britain’s leading car designer’, ‘acknowledged by the motor industry all over the world to be one of the few men whose concepts are changing the shape of the familiar passenger car’, the man behind the Morris Minor and Mini perfectly portrays the qualities that go along with quality.²⁷⁶ Issigonis is among the voices of *The Carmakers* who tell the ‘dramatic story of success’ in the Midlands, the listing of which makes sure to use a favourite adjective to describe the work of those minds at the British Motor Corporation and elsewhere: Britons are pioneering or, as in this case, have ‘pioneered’.²⁷⁷

Serving to underscore the previous point, *The Plane-makers* promised to go behind the curtain of an industry that Britain still had a right to rank itself alongside the U.S. in, charting fifty years of development through all-British ‘pioneers’ Geoffrey de Havilland, A. V. Roe and Frederick Handley Page. A ‘highly complex industry, geared to the production of an immensely complex refined high precision product’, it is presented as natural for Britain to have carved out a significant part of the market.²⁷⁸ Programmes with more mundanely worded listings such as *Flight 950* and *The Airline Pilots*, looking respectively behind-the-scenes of London Airport and in the cockpit during one of its flights, still serve to show the precision of technicians and trailblazing of airmen taking to the skies in brand new, British-made Trident, Comet and BAC 111 jets.²⁷⁹ In reality it was the American Boeing 707 that near monopolized world aviation; the Comet I could be seated aside the Magnox nuclear reactor as another ‘unprofitable’ flagship of national research and development, recalled due to three of the seven of its first

²⁷³ Laqueur, *Europe in Our Time*, pp.184-85.

²⁷⁴ *London Calling*, Vol.4, No.3 (July 1969) p.4.

²⁷⁵ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.137 (15 January 1960) p.1.

²⁷⁶ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.245 (8 February 1962) p.2.

²⁷⁷ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.30 (September 1965) p.9.

²⁷⁸ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.17 (August 1964) p.7.

²⁷⁹ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.26 (May 1965) p.4; Vol.2, No.194 (18 February 1961) p.1.

iteration spectacularly crashing within two years of 1952.²⁸⁰ A positive spin is instead provided by repeated press for the next big project: Concorde. In 1962 *Research Project* triumphantly declared that engineers from Handley Page and Bristol Aircraft were working on supersonic jets that could be brought into service 'sooner than the American project'.²⁸¹ In the same series British invention and innovation was again vocalised by John Keenan of Rolls-Royce, working on the propulsion system for an 'aircraft which according to the calculations of the designers would be able to fly non-stop halfway round the world in a few hours.'²⁸² Emblematic of the desired brand, opportunities are seized upon to print images of Concorde in *London Calling* and promote it within programmes on air.²⁸³

Extra to the British trinity of nuclear power, motoring and aircraft, astronomy provided a field of science, helpfully supportive of status amid the space race, with much of note to extensively promote. The chosen emblem here was undoubtedly the Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope, with its Director Bernard Lovell the symbol of the scientific community and its continuity of past accomplishments. A. C. B. Lovell was included as one of the *Scientists at Home* in a series of intimate interviews with professors and other practitioners; he speaks 'about the construction of the first major radio telescope and historic space shots' as a guest of *The Time of My Life*; in an image accompanying the page on 'Science, Industry and Commerce in the World Service' in April 1968 is, as ought be expected, the Director in the control room of Jodrell Bank with his grand, 250-foot steel dish in the background.²⁸⁴ The mighty telescope, testament to both British brains and brawn, is a stock image for programmes on space themes, such as in the listing of April 1967 for documentary *Man and the Universe*.²⁸⁵ And as with the name of Rolls-Royce and its connotations, Jodrell Bank is seemingly shoehorned in where possible in discussions of unrelated programmes. The Annual Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science will, being held in Manchester, afford 'some of the most learned and eminent scholars of our time ... the chance to visit the Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope in Cheshire'; more tangentially, an exploration of Sheffield goes into great depth about everywhere other than the city that its famed steel has been used, including Jodrell Bank with other projects that 'cannot do without it.'²⁸⁶

²⁸⁰ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, pp.313-15.

²⁸¹ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.247 (22 February 1962) p.2.

²⁸² *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.31 (October 1965) p.12.

²⁸³ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.42 (September 1966) p.1.

²⁸⁴ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.147 (25 March 1960) p.2; Vol.3, No.72 (March 1969) p.4; Vol.3, No.61 (April 1968) p.2.

²⁸⁵ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.49 (April 1967) p.8.

²⁸⁶ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.273 (23 August 1962) p.1; Vol.2, No.237 (14 December 1961) p.1.

The reader of *London Calling* gets the incontrovertible sense, as it can be presumed the listener would too from the content broadcast, that the British are a technocratically-minded society disproportionately populated by scientists – all of whom rightly renowned. There is no sense of a ‘brain drain’ away from Britain which, real or not, was widely reported.²⁸⁷ On the occasion that Lord Hailsham appears on *Asian Club* among his posts the Minister for Science is listed, without elaboration, as being ‘a new appointment and an addition to the Cabinet.’²⁸⁸ The novel ministry is afforded few words and the title of the talk, ‘*On Being Oneself*’, suggests it was neither at the heart of the Viscount Quintin Hogg’s concerns or the recorded conversation. This would only reflect the then reputation of the Ministry, an office in a house off of Whitehall with a barely functioning lift, which Sampson agreed with *The Economist* and civil servants was somewhere ‘between being a post-box, not often emptied, and having real influence.’²⁸⁹ Exploding the myth of a modern Britain run by ‘new men’ – sometimes women – is the driving point of Sampson’s *Anatomy*, revisited with renewed emphasis in the 1971 edition. Puncturing the reality of an elite Establishment, he draws attention to the fact that Harold Macmillan’s cabinet largely consisted of the sons and son-in-laws of peers without technical qualification; Lord Hailsham is said to know ‘nothing about science’ and Reginald Maudling ‘had not been to Africa until two months before he became Colonial Secretary.’ This translated into Parliament - ‘which is confused and bored by science, as its sporadic scientific debates suggest’ – and upper society at large, where no newspaper editors and only two of 22 permanent heads of government departments had scientific experience.²⁹⁰ This ‘rule by mediocracy’, dominated by familiar names from familiar schools, and all too familiar with one another, was also a central motif of the *Suicide of a Nation* writers.²⁹¹

Given that the civil service and state departments were charged with making decisions and overseeing investments on national research and development, it stunned Sampson to find that even a technical ministry such as that for Aviation had on its board ‘not scientists or engineers, but “Latin and History scholars.”’ ‘The conditioned reflex of the civil service is still to imitate the action of a clam, and retire into its shell’ was his observation on witnessing what

²⁸⁷ While declaring the ‘Brain Drain’ to be a ‘Loch Ness monster’, *New Society* investigated on the basis that ‘Rumours abound: whole teams of draughtsmen packing off to South Africa, disgusted aircraft workers joining the human flood to California, Dutch industries raiding Britain for as much as 30 per cent of their top technical staffs, barrages of Canadian recruiting teams denuding Midlands firms of their best managers.’ John Barr, ‘Is the Brain Drain gaining pace?’, *New Society* (9 September 1965) pp.5-7.

²⁸⁸ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.198 (16 March 1961) p.2.

²⁸⁹ Sampson, *Anatomy*, p.527.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.138, 510.

²⁹¹ This ‘mediocracy’ is enabled by a ‘cult of amateurishness, and the contempt in which proficiency and expertise are held’ which ‘breed mediocrity by natural selection; the too-keen, the too-clever-by-half, are unfit for survival and eliminated from the race in which the last to pass the post is winner.’ Koestler, ed., *Suicide of a Nation?*, p.14.

was the resumption of a 'mandarin profession' after the war, with its 'apartheid' between experts and administrators.²⁹² The Fulton Commission of 1968, directed by Harold Wilson in 1966 to inquire as to civil service reform, simply echoed the same situation prevailing of 'muddle' and 'mandarins', the lingering obsolescence of the 'generalist' and lack of responsibilities for specialists.²⁹³ Interestingly *Anatomy of Britain* was included among books to be reviewed during the programme *Talking of Books* in 1962, a little time after its publication the previous year. The text is seated among numerous other 'examinations of national conscience' that a contemporary reader might find, as if merely a topic in vogue. The listing focuses on the critiques that prove his opinion, that Britain is run by those 'more concerned with tradition than progress', was 'far from unanimous'.²⁹⁴ Nevertheless, it and Anthony Sampson himself do make appearances in General Overseas and World Service schedules. It also must be noted that programming does not resist the idea of a muddling bureaucracy behind government, although this is almost wholly presented through farce. One such comedy production was *The Clerks*, which told 'of the beginning and end of the "Office of the Privy Council for the Redress of Grievance"; it is quickly added that such a department 'did not really exist!'²⁹⁵ The long-running *Men From the Ministry* brought 'incompetence, misunderstanding and red tape to a number of farcical situations, generated not a hundred miles from Whitehall.'²⁹⁶

Indeed, care and credit ought to be given to the number of opportunities given to dissenting voices such as Sampson. Richard Hoggart, most famously in his 1957 book *Uses of Literacy*, lamented the erosion of working-class traditions and authenticity by the massification of culture, especially its Americanisation, seeing modern consumerism as shallow, destructive and debased.²⁹⁷ Hoggart's traditionalist dismay at the loss of character and individuality in his native Yorkshire, with 'candy-floss' supplanting the 'rougher but more vital culture' of his youth was fully aired in his appearance on *Asian Club* in 1960.²⁹⁸ Another literary commentator who feared the subversive influence of cheap, accessible American culture was Raymond Williams, Marxist and later Welsh nationalist, who speaks on *The Meaning of Progress* on *Asian Club* in 1961.²⁹⁹ The gist of his position is shown with reference to his latest book, *The Long Revolution*, in which massified culture is argued as another strand of the upheavals democratic and economic of the preceding century, and Williams 'deplores

²⁹² Sampson, *Anatomy*, pp.227-28.

²⁹³ Sampson, *New Anatomy*, pp.237-39.

²⁹⁴ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.277 (20 September 1962) p.2.

²⁹⁵ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.218 (3 August 1961) p.2.

²⁹⁶ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.61 (April 1968) p.9.

²⁹⁷ Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good*, pp.182-85.

²⁹⁸ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.178 (27 October 1960) p.1.

²⁹⁹ Potter, *Broadcasting Empire*, p.2.

the divorce of cultural progress from political and industrial advance'. For the author of *Culture and Society* (1958), 'low cultural and intellectual standards' were counterposed with increasing living standards; classism and inequality still dominated an expanding education system of comprehensive schools and new universities; and the arts and media were debased by 'commercial interests'.³⁰⁰ Also noteworthy for his inclusion is Michael Shanks, *Financial Times* industrial editor and author of *The Stagnant Society*, an attack on a 'Janus-faced' Britain, never quite looking up or ahead with its trade unions holding it back, said in *London Calling* to have 'aroused much controversy'.³⁰¹ *The ABC of Economics* promised to impart Shanks' wisdom on the basic principles of economics behind such baffling phrases as "Cost inflation"; "Balance of payments crisis"; "Wage spiral", 'written with the needs of developing peoples in mind'.³⁰² Whether reference was made in the programme itself, there is no direct mention in the listing that Britain provided a case in point for all of these ills.

Further supporting the case that the BBC did in fact provide a 'warts and all' representation of Britain, albeit again with the asterisk that we do not have the audio recording or textual scripts for treatment, was a series of programmes entitled *Life Among the British*. The listing promised an exposition of life on the British Isles through contemporary novels by such 'angry young men' as Kingsley Amis and Alan Sillitoe, with the chosen texts reflecting a Britishness in public and private that was coarse, disconnected and cynical. Taking these thematically, three speak directly to the previous discussion of muddle versus modernity - scientific, technocratic and socially mobile. Charles Percy Snow's *Corridors of Power* (1964) was the ninth book by the novelist and government advisor in his *Strangers and Brothers* series, following its main character over the course of a distinguished career - modelled on the author's own - from provincial England through Cambridge University, becoming a senior civil servant after a wartime spent in Whitehall. A reviewer in *Science* magazine placed Snow among the 'Establishment', part of the country house and members club circuit in which power was exercised. 'Snow is too concerned with showing how the status quo works to criticize it'; the story, whilst an insightful account by an 'insider', is not one of 'good chaps' or 'bad chaps'.³⁰³ It is then more a manual to the facts of power than a manifesto for its redistribution.

William Cooper's *Memoirs of a New Man* (1966) is much to the same effect, himself 'part of the throng of early 20th-century scholarship boys from relatively modest backgrounds who

³⁰⁰ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.211 (15 June 1961) p.1.

³⁰¹ Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good*, p.359.

³⁰² *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.14 (May 1964) p.10.

³⁰³ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.52 (July 67) p.5; John Walsh, 'C.P. Snow: "Corridors of Power" is a Novel about Nuclear Policy and Politics, Closed and Open', *Science*, Vol.146, No.3641 (1964) p.235.

went on to staff the postwar university common rooms and research labs.³⁰⁴ Cooper was also a close compatriot of Snow.³⁰⁵ A reviewer in *Nature* predicted the same 'in group' approach would not give the novel any 'wide appeal'; nor was it a riveting read, since the scientists who 'fight their way to the top in a more urbane fashion than arts men' are shown having now 'all got their K's'.³⁰⁶ The 'new men' of these texts are made men, 'red-brick scientists' whose aspirations for power have been met, if not without certain bureaucratic conflict. Coming closer to a refutation of the narrow, windowless corridors in which power circulated, or even conspired, is *The Hollow Sunday* (1967) by Robert Harling. As a synopsis, it chronicles the birth pangs of a 'new technology' Sunday paper coupled with an investigation of a major political scandal involving an M.P.'s wife, in which the editor, his gossip columnist, the new Minister, and a Life Peer involved in the affair all know each other from college. This can be read as reproof of a society run by cliques and a currency in salacious secrets; sordid and most definitely not meritocratic.

However, a different impression is given in the speech of one character on the very episode that was the book's obvious inspiration. The affair and subsequent perjury in 1963 of John Profumo, Macmillan's Secretary of State for War, and Christine Keeler, also familiar to a Soviet naval attache, 'had all the ingredients of a sensation' and, predictably, became one. The scandal 'undermined conservative attempts to contain postwar affluence within a prewar moral framework', causing resentment of an elite who had posited the behaviour of ordinary citizens as the reason for decline.³⁰⁷ Harold Wilson, then Opposition Leader, took advantage of such a totem to Establishment amateurism, with the £60 million security services being beaten to the punch by the *News of the World*: 'What we are seeing is a diseased excrescence, a corrupted and poisoned appendix of a small and unrepresentative section of society that makes no contribution to what Britain is'.³⁰⁸ The crisis and its assorted intrigues had the lasting effect of giving profile to public concerns over 'espionage and subversion, sexual wantonness, unchecked materialism ... and the nepotism and ineptitude of the Conservative government'.³⁰⁹ Harling's character, while rehearsing the tawdry story for his reader refers to it rather as 'ballyhoo' by the public and press over what was merely a 'lark'. It is argued that all politicians lie, even the irreproachable Winston Churchill, 'Bare-faced' but 'forgotten within a month'; it was simply 'sexual envy ... that set all the moralizing hypocritical hounds

³⁰⁴ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.54 (September 1967) p.8.

³⁰⁵ DJ Taylor, 'The long road to oblivion' (16 December 2002), *New Statesman*, accessed on 29/08/2020 from <https://www.newstatesman.com/node/156846>.

³⁰⁶ Austen Albu, 'Men with their K's', *Nature* (3 September 1966) p.1017.

³⁰⁷ Weight, *Patriots*, pp.368-69.

³⁰⁸ Harold Wilson speaking in Parliament (17 June 1963), quoted in Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good*, pp.650, 660-61.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.671.

baying.³¹⁰ A breach of public confidence and high office is thus minimised - indeed normalised - although not all to the benefit of the propriety of Britishness.³¹¹ The Profumo Affair, unless mentioned in news bulletins would have been otherwise unknown to those who tuned in to the World Service, even then assuming such a link between the scandals both real and fictional was made.

Class is a major theme of the selected texts, be it the coterie of the upper echelons, a crowded and conflicted middle, or the continued want of the bottom. It should be remembered that at the start of the sixties it was widely considered, at least among those with advantages by no means universal, that Britain was evolving beyond caste and socioeconomic exclusion. The election victory of the Conservatives under Macmillan in 1959 spurred the incumbent Prime Minister to declare 'the class war is over and we have won it.' On the other side of the House, Labour under Hugh Gaitskell contemplated removing Clause Four on public ownership and even changing the name of the party to 'Reform'; then Shadow Home Secretary Patrick Gordon Walker believed Labour faced oblivion if it remained bound to a working class that 'no longer exists.'³¹² Looking at the programming of 1960 in *London Calling*, a whiggish belief in the future that confined class conflict to Marxist historiography is substantiated – if imperfect, Britain is undeniably, irreversibly progressing. The magazine sends out the same sure signal as did 'The new thinking', inaugural *Sun* newspaper in 1964: 'People believe, and the Sun believes with them, that the division of Britain into social classes is happily out of date.'³¹³ A Cheshire mule spinner recollects a 'vanished age' of holidays in Morecambe, mills without canteens, local football, strong Methodism and a terraced house 'nearly a century old' as modern engineering replaces 'the boom and depression cycle of the cotton trade'.³¹⁴ A miner's daughter from south Wales speaks of the 'solidarity and community feeling' typical of segregated parts of the country, surviving in spite of new light industries giving the younger generation a 'choice of occupations at the end of their schooldays.'³¹⁵ The York Summer Festival is celebrated through interviews with 'industrialists and prominent citizens' in the

³¹⁰ Robert Harling, *The Hollow Sunday* (London: Pan, 1970) p.209.

³¹¹ Neither is the virtue of probity and its place in British identity, for which English law and order are prominent, aided by Colin MacInnes' *Mr. Love and Justice*. One review concluded that 'all Anglophiles will be disillusioned' by its portrayal of police corruption. *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.53, Aug 67, p.4; Marvin Mudrick, 'Something to Say', *The Hudson Review*, Vol.14, No.2 (1961) p.290.

³¹² Patrick Gordon Walker writing in the summary of a meeting with Hugh Gaitskell after 1959 election, quoted in Ben Pimlott, *Harold Wilson*, taken from Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good*, p.101.

³¹³ The leaders of tomorrow were said to be 'more likely to emerge from a College of Advanced Technology than from Eton or Harrow' and the *Sun* pledged to lobby them, in the name of popular 'ideals' it shared with the public, for 'rapid modernisation' and continued 'emancipation' – most notably of 'The new women'. *The Sun* (15 September 1964) p.1.

³¹⁴ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.145 (11 March 1960) p.1.

³¹⁵ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.141 (12 February 1960) p.2.

'flourishing and progressive' city once infamous for slums, of which the second Rowntree Report showed how 'dramatically conditions had changed.'³¹⁶

Life Among the British does not give the impression, however, that Britain had graduated from the strife and ostracism of class, or was arguably even on such a trajectory. *The Village* (1966) of Thomas Hinde's novel, in the words of the *Spectator's* Peter Vansittart, is depicted through its native 'Resistance', battling against 'the district surveyor, compulsory purchase, chemical sprays' as they are threatened by 'demolition and flooding, doubtless so that commuters elsewhere can strain more quickly at jobs of questionable value.' These are no sunlit uplands and absorption into London's orbit does not promise any better, while the characters, 'feuding amid social climbs and falls' are, 'in or out of fiction, scarcely unfamiliar.'³¹⁷ The *Second Generation* Raymond Williams' wrote of is that which has risen through educational opportunity from working class roots above that social strata; characters are torn between family and new-found freedom, university socialism and that of the shop floor.³¹⁸ Williams himself was the son of a railwayman who became instrumental to the liberal and intellectual New Left, openly critical of Harold Wilson's calculated pragmatism but never much recognised or accepted by the working class they supposed themselves to be the true advocates - and emancipators - of.³¹⁹ Contrary to the concerns of Williams – and Hoggart – that working class culture was being decimated by the homogenising force of massification, the heterogeneity of the North is shown to survive in *This Sporting Life* (1960).³²⁰ David Storey portrays the ruthless world of Rugby League, be it 'nasty southern caricature' or celebration of 'Northern masculinity', through the novel's pathological anti-hero who uses the sport as 'a means of transcending the drab, meager existence he sees awaiting him.' Splintering from the more regimented public school Rugby Union, League was itself symbolic of the North's defiant individuality in resistance to the South.³²¹

The fifties and sixties literary scene was full of representations of a cross-section of society believing neither in progressive nor participatory agendas; those left behind and many others staying put, resistant to change and a future of permissiveness, globalism, socialism, or even a common good. Writers of the so-called - corralled according to Kingsley Amis -

³¹⁶ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.160 (24 June 1960) p.1.

³¹⁷ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.54 (September 1967) p.8; Peter Vansittart, 'Ominous Chords', *The Spectator* (28 October 1966) p.28.

³¹⁸ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.54 (September 1967) p.8; David Harvey, 'Militant Particularism and Global Ambition: The Conceptual Politics of Place, Space, and Environment in the Work of Raymond Williams', *Social Text*, No.42 (1995) p.94.

³¹⁹ Sandbrook, *White Heat*, p.530.

³²⁰ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.52 (July 67) p.5.

³²¹ Edward White, 'Northern Powerhouse' (11 February 2016), *The Paris Review*, accessed on 29/08/2020 from <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2016/02/11/northern-powerhouse/>.

Movement and New Wave explored such people and their stories, and are significant for their inclusion in *Life Among the British*. Collectively branded the 'angry young men', these authors frequently took readers on a tour of 'the world of Northern terraces, poverty and violence ... aggressive attitudes to sex and women; a deep suspicion of modernity and mass culture; intense cultural nativism; a persistent strain of nostalgia, particularly for the Edwardian period; and a curious combination of indeterminate anger and political apathy.'³²² One character in Amis' *Take a Girl like You* (1960) may show some decency and optimistic sense in saying

A great British prime minister once remarked that the people were divided into two nations, the rich and the poor, and in effect that these had no knowledge of each other. One might say the same, perhaps, of those who live in parts of the world where segregation by races is practised. But these barriers, or the reasons for them, belong to a part of our history which is fortunately passing away.³²³

But it is the brazenly repugnant narcissism of the main character, an extreme of the likewise slovenly and selfish lead of *Lucky Jim*, that leaves the lasting impression. Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1951) was described in the publicity for its film adaptation (1960) as the story of 'a convention-smashing, working-class Don Juan, who works as a machine operator, and revolts against the squalor and monotony of life in a grimy Midlands' suburb by living louder and faster than everyone else.' Its lead, self-absorbed and anti-establishment, rejects the idea of fighting alongside Germans against Russia or thinking of the world at all, British or otherwise.³²⁴ The Ken Loach-directed docudrama *Cathy Come Home* sought to expose the destitution of an underclass forgotten in Welfare Britain and, according to the *Guardian*, showed the country to be both 'heedless' and 'heartless'.³²⁵

For Richard Weight, the sixties entailed neither embourgeoisement nor proletarianization but rather 'an unprecedented dialogue between the classes' that engendered greater pluralism in British culture.³²⁶ This was evidenced in such breakthrough literature and film as that which the BBC World Service chose to represent *Life Among the*

³²² Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good*, pp.185-86.

³²³ Christian Lorentzen, editor at the *London Review of Books*, writing in the foreword of the New York Review of Books Classics edition. Christian Lorentzen, 'Something Serious' (4 May 2015), *The Paris Review*, accessed on 29/08/2020 from <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2015/05/04/something-serious/>.

³²⁴ Arthur Marwick, 'Room at the Top, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, and the 'Cultural Revolution' in Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (January 1984) pp.143-44.

³²⁵ *The Guardian* (13 January 1967) p.10.

³²⁶ Weight, *Patriots*, p.386.

British. But the programming presented not only this conversation but also mobility within society, new men providing the bright and vital sparks for the 'White Heat' of a modern, competitive Britain. Anthony Sampson saw somnolence and 'a desperate rearguard action against a more professional and less complacent age' when writing at the start of the decade; at its end he remarked on a 'striking scene-change' whereby industrialists had become household names, their heroic exploits and ingenious machines widely pronounced.³²⁷ Buccaneering tycoons were seen battling for their companies and to save the nation from 'unscrupulous sheikhs, witch-hunting Americans or corrupt continentals' in such television serials as *The Troubleshooters*. There was clearly an appetite for promoting a more businesslike Britain, even if – or because – it could be fretted from the nation's persistently low growth-rate that the British did not '*want to grow faster*' out of a 'basic unambition.'³²⁸

The impression given by the BBC in its programming is certainly not of a nation prone to sloth or without aspiration; successful businessmen commonly feature, unconstrained by glass ceilings and unquestionable in their achievements. 'Starting from Scratch' is the headline in *London Calling* for a feature series in which 'captains of industry' coach listeners on *How to Make a Fortune*, striving from 'humble beginnings' to become 'the man who deals in millions'.³²⁹ The graft of 'The man who has worked his way up from the factory floor to the board-room' was evidenced in the reflections for *As I See It* of Sir Frederic Hooper, who 'after the First World War took up a lowly position with one of the country's leading department stores. Twelve years later he was managing director.'³³⁰ 'Kenneth Horne's boyhood ambition was to own a Rolls-Royce', it is said in the listing for an interview with the career company director - and BBC radio comedian - who made good of his goals upon owning one, 'chauffeur-driven and bearing on its number plate the distinctive symbols KH6'.³³¹ The *Chief Executive* (September 1969) remained a favoured subject of programmes throughout the decade, with 'leaders of British industry' punctuating schedules to the effect of reinforcing and raising the profile of both their corporate brands and that of Britishness.³³² A full-page marking the death of William Morris and a programme in tribute of the philanthropic motor magnate, in 1963, is the perfect portrayal of the British businessman and his place in BBC content. Morris presents a story of cycle repair rags, starting his shop 'with a capital of £4', to 'princely munificence' in

³²⁷ Sampson, *Anatomy*, p.637.

³²⁸ Sampson, *New Anatomy*, pp.571-72.

³²⁹ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.139 (29 January 1960) p.1.

³³⁰ Sir Frederic Hooper's 'hard work, skilful advertising and an imaginative policy in every phase of labour-and-management relations' is also praised ahead of his appearance on *African Forum*, in his capacity as Chairman of the Institute of Directors. *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.217 (27 July 1961) p.2; Vol.2, No.279 (4 October 1962) p.1.

³³¹ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.290 (20 December 1962) p.2.

³³² *London Calling*, Vol.4, No.5 (September 1969) p.4.

his Nuffield Foundation from the riches of Morris Motors; a man of 'ability and brilliance' and benefactor of the 'small man' whose 'generosity was not confined to Britain.'³³³ The traits of this paragon are threaded through *London Calling* listings of others, making him the exemplar of a brand continually bolstered.

Another element of this case for Britons as strivers in the vanguard is the rise of youth, venerated for its vigour and invention not only in popular music. In 1962 a typical programme, part of a feature series that made a survey of *Inside Britain*, rounded up this *Rising Generation*. The episode did not pull the punches aimed at 'youth's irresponsibility' and 'materialism', condemning 'its morals, or absence of them, and its lack of purpose', giving voice to critics who believed that social security and consumerism 'have made life since the war too secure and easy.' In this 'nation of tomorrow ... are the future prospects of the nation itself.'³³⁴ Fears of the teenager, appearing well founded in the deviancy of 'Teddy Boy' gangs feverishly reported in the domestic press, are fast surmounted when the British entertainment and fashion industries came of age through adolescents who are shown to secure those prospects. Jane Deverson and Charles Hamblett's *Generation X*, be they demonised Mods or 'self-consciously proletarian and thuggish' skinheads, are footnotes at first and then quickly forgotten in BBC schedules that consciously champion the Beatles and other personalities on brand with British pioneering.³³⁵ 'Britain's, if not the world's, top beat group' make their entrance in the General Overseas Service in 1964 with *Pop Go the Beatles*, a series compiling their appearances on the BBC including the domestic radio show of the same title they hosted.³³⁶ Despite their virtually unassailable popularity, the Liverpool group had detractors who crowned them as false idols of a 'rampant sexuality and soulless commercialism.'³³⁷ On the other hand, while recognising the dubiousness of the musicians' MBEs, the *New Musical Express* printed a commonplace argument that the Beatles had done more than 'a regiment of diplomats' to 'keep the Union Jack fluttering proudly'; with them this 'second-rate class power in politics' could nevertheless lead in 'the field of prestige'.³³⁸ The BBC firmly dealt from the latter hand.

As the General Overseas Service turned into the World Service, *London Calling* used 'The Pop Scene' - its own discrete section in the magazine - to project a British identity as industrious and innovative as generations before, the recording and art studio substituted for

³³³ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.8 (November 1963) p.3.

³³⁴ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.261 (31 May 1962) p.1.

³³⁵ Leese, *Britain Since 1945*, pp.92-93.

³³⁶ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.21 (December 1964) p.11.

³³⁷ Sandbrook, *Never Had it So Good*, p.722.

³³⁸ *New Musical Express* (25 June 1965).

the workshop; the fashion house for the factory in 'this fast-changing world, where Britain now sets the pace'.³³⁹ It is made clear that 'British ideas and artists, and by no means only the Beatles, are predominant.'³⁴⁰ The listing for an investigation of *London Fashion* references 'A recent survey conducted in three capitals [showing] that London has completely overtaken Paris and New York as the world's fashion centre', proving this point through interviews with such instigators as Mary Quant and John Stephens.³⁴¹ *The Young Idea* became increasingly integral to representations of Britishness as the World Service developed through its first five years, complimenting the image of Britain as the world's library and lab with creative vitality and vogue.³⁴² This is seen to crystallise in one programme of particular aptness called *Cool Britannia*, 'sparked off by a BBC World Service correspondent who signed himself "American Teenager" and asked for a programme which told teenagers throughout the world about the music, dress, etc., of British teenagers.' Telling of the whole presentation of 'Pop' and the editorial purpose of it is a spot in this new regular programme, starting in January 1969, named 'We're Backing Britain'.³⁴³ 'I'm Backing Britain' was the rallying slogan of an initiative of five typists in Surbiton, who voluntarily gave up their tea breaks to help increase productivity and inspired a spontaneous, nationwide campaign; Harold Wilson and his Conservative counterpart Edward Heath seized on their 'spirit' to silence those 'knocking' Britain from within and without.³⁴⁴ Riffing on this popular if ephemeral campaign, Britons of global stardom are placed in a succession of patriots who have served and spread British civilisation. They are the emphatic icons of a nation with a cause and the character to meet it. Culture can join science and industry as another of the revolutions in which Britain is centre of the world map.

Commonwealth and race, internationalism and insularity

Equally important to marketing a nation is the market, meaning that representations need not only persuade for the special place, privileges and genius of a people in its past and present, but also why it ought to hold influence with and the appeal of others. In any period, the labels of racism and insularity are plainly poor branding; in this specific decade, Britain was still invested in and dependent on a Commonwealth of Nations that was multi-cultural and multi-racial, because of which becoming increasingly cosmopolitan at home and internationalist abroad. The identity presented of Britain by the BBC sought to, as shall be discussed,

³³⁹ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.28 (July 65) p.14.

³⁴⁰ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.26 (May 1965) p.16.

³⁴¹ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.59 (February 1968) p.3.

³⁴² *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.46 (January 1967) p.8.

³⁴³ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.70 (January 1969) p.8.

³⁴⁴ Harold Wilson in the *Guardian* (9 January 1968), Edward Heath in the *Daily Telegraph* (11 January 1968), quoted in Sandbrook, *White Heat*, pp.608-11.

reconcile this position with evidence to the contrary of its acceptance among Britons. What we do find, however, is that as the political significance of the British Commonwealth waned and the official view became less far-sighted about Britain's future in it, the *World Service* from 1965 gradual phased out the institution in favour of a broader, less 'British' focus. The brief behind the World Service had always openly been for 'encouraging the Englishman to realise that he is part of a new kind of commonwealth', taking 'full cognisance of English-speaking but foreign native audiences.' What is remarkable, to use Gerard Mansell's recollection, is how this 'international flavour was creeping in' and reconstructing for Britain an image 'more in tune with the spirit of the times', a 'disinterested' power now 'a purveyor of truth and a source of practical wisdom', in correlation with the severing of British political and economic ties with its Commonwealth.³⁴⁵

In 1961, the director-general of the Commonwealth Festival, Ian Hunter, previews the event designed to forge an artistic community that will compliment ties recognised in such other areas as commerce and sport; aims, it can be said, 'which in many ways are similar to those of the BBC's General Overseas Service'.³⁴⁶ When the event finally takes place after several years of planning in 1965, R. E. Gregson, who had recently orchestrated the change to a World Service as its Head, still could muse how schedules could reflect 'The gaiety, beauty and richness of a most talented invasion' when every day is something of a Commonwealth Arts Festival for us.³⁴⁷ In reality, while the Commonwealth did remain, whether by affection or affectation of it, it had by 1965 become residual. In December 1964, *Commonwealth Carnival* put on its own selection of talent from the British world for a Christmas special, but whereas such themed feature programmes and strands were prolific earlier in the sixties this stands out as singular in its schedule.³⁴⁸ Commonwealth Day continues to be celebrated through a half-hour programme, first produced by Radio Malaysia in 1966, but *Quiz International* is reflective of a how the 'Commonwealth' is no longer explicit or exclaimed in programmes: teams are made up of citizens from Ceylon, Guyana, Hong Kong, the West Indies, all of whom working for British companies, but the title should not be read simply as a misnomer.³⁴⁹ As a 1969 survey by *New Society* found, when asking a representative sample of demography and politics to reflect on the decade, it was certainly right for a national broadcaster seeking to reflect its nation to shed the mantle it had inherited from the Empire Service: 2 per cent and 5

³⁴⁵ Mansell, *Let Truth Be Told*, pp.245-46.

³⁴⁶ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.212 (22 June 1961) p.1.

³⁴⁷ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.30 (September 1965) p.3.

³⁴⁸ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.21 (December 1964) pp.13 ,17.

³⁴⁹ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.38 (May 1966) p.4; Vol.3, No.70 (January 1969) p.9.

per cent respectively considered being 'centre of the Commonwealth' or 'traditions and history' to be the most important thing about Britain.³⁵⁰

As discussed in chapter two, this did not mean that Britons in the sixties did not feel themselves connected with or tied to the Commonwealth, at least when compared with sentiments toward Europe or the United States. BBC programmes marking the occasions of Commonwealth countries did, however, give an exaggerated if not false impression of British interest. Taking 1960 as an example, *Calling Ghana* conveys the messages of Ghanaians resident in Britain to their countrymen in commemoration of their independence; the 10th anniversary of independent India brings the sounds of Raga music on Republic Day; *Music from Trinidad* scores celebrations of Caribbean Federation Day; a collaborative programme with the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation on the granting of nationhood explores 'the history and culture of the country, its people and resources'.³⁵¹ Acting as a venue for festivities, the BBC presented Britain as the gleeful giver of liberty and granter of freedom; the British are on the side of the picket line with the protestors, rather than inside the factory which they are the foremen of. According to Lawrence James, 'It is hard nowadays to comprehend the optimism which attended the gradual granting of independence to Britain's African colonies during the early 1960s.' If so, then perhaps the 'carnival atmosphere' of BBC broadcasts were credible. However, James contradicts this when stating that 'the mass of British voters were largely indifferent to the loss of colonies whose names were probably best known by stamp collectors.'³⁵² Unless Britons were simply jubilant to be rid of their imperial possessions and the subject peoples therein, it is hard to see how supposed goodwill and apparent ignorance can otherwise combine.

The apathy of average Britons toward Empire and Commonwealth is widely evidenced in historiography of this period and, indeed, the decades preceding it. While 'ignorance does not necessarily indicate indifference' – many cannot name their local M.P., as Richard Weight analogises, but are not impassive about parliamentary democracy – the facts of it are telling, especially given 'more than half a century of imperial propaganda'. Even in the aftermath of the Second World War and Indian independence, vastly significant events in the Commonwealth community, half of Britons could not name one imperial possession and, more

³⁵⁰ Paul Barker and John Hanvey, 'Facing Two Ways: between the 60s and 70s', *New Society* (27 November 1969) p.848.

³⁵¹ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.144 (4 March 1960) p.2; Vol.2, No.138 (22 January 1960) p.1; Vol.2, No.142 (19 February 1960) p.2; Vol.2, No.173 (23 September 1960) p.1.

³⁵² Lawrence James, *The Illustrated Rise and Fall of the British Empire* (London: Little, Brown and Company, 1999) pp.322, 325.

worryingly, 3 per cent believed the United States still to be a colony.³⁵³ At the turn of the sixties, an initiative was begun, the Commonwealth Weeks, which was far more to do with inspiring interest than serving it. As to be expected, the BBC promoted the show as it circulated from city to city around Britain with great fanfare, asking readers of *London Calling* to 'recall the popularity of the first week in Liverpool' as a sign of its treatment.³⁵⁴ It is proudly reflected in the *BBC Handbook 1961* that aside the 'significant opportunity' afforded the General Overseas Service by the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference to cover such themes, 'special effort' had been made 'to reflect and support the Commonwealth Weeks' venture'.³⁵⁵ Writing of the initiative as Secretary of State for the Colonies, 'with typically British understatement', Duncan Sandys would regret it had not 'attracted continuous and enthusiastic support' – Weight calls it 'a dismal failure.' That same year, 1962, 'the Empire Day Movement accepted that a revival was impossible and formally dissolved itself after fifty-nine years of activity'.³⁵⁶ This suggests that there was nothing revelatory about *New Society's* uncovering of how far from British hearts the Commonwealth was, even if Britain remained at *its* centre; news nonetheless to any Commonwealth listener of the BBC.

On the other side of magnanimous grants of independence and accession of new nations into a Commonwealth of equals, as the BBC's telling of the story of decolonisation goes, the sixties also saw acrimony and conflict between Britain and its subjects. 'Just as they found in Tanganyika and Uganda', John Darwin writes, 'the British discovered in Kenya that the offer of internal self-government was a run-away train that refused to stop at the stations they built or to pick up the passengers they meant it to carry'.³⁵⁷ The 'peasant *jacquerie*' of the Kikuyu during the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya, leading to over 150,000 detained in a 'savagely and one-sided' suppression between 1952-56, is an exception that proves the rule for its inclusion in programming. This 'bloodshed in Kenya' forms part of the *Scrapbook for 1952*, albeit before the worst of British recriminations occurred.³⁵⁸ Broadcast before the Kenya Constitutional Conference in London of 1962, *Signposts in Kenya* remembered the Mau Mau while focusing on the 'boom', equal 'if not surpassing that of any other country', experienced since their quelling. It is a land of tribes said only to have been brought together by the Kenya-Uganda railway, owing its present economy to 'the 3,000 white farmers' with whom they must 'bridge their internal differences'.³⁵⁹ Even so framed, this is volumes compared to the silence

³⁵³ Weight, *Patriots*, p.286.

³⁵⁴ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.137 (15 January 1960) p.1.

³⁵⁵ *BBC Handbook 1961*, pp.193-94.

³⁵⁶ Weight, *Patriots*, pp.291-92.

³⁵⁷ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, pp.625-26.

³⁵⁸ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.57 (December 1967) p.9.

³⁵⁹ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.244 (1 February 1962) p.1.

regarding similar confrontations during colonial withdrawal. There is no mention at all of the far more recent and, indeed, continuing crisis in what would become Malawi, then federated under the white rule of Rhodesia. Censorship and the death of demonstrators led an inquiry chaired by Lord Devlin to condemn a state of emergency declared in Nyasaland as the creation of a 'police state'. The racist M.P. Enoch Powell, whom we shall return to in depth, is remembered for a famous attack on those for whom British standards only applied in Britain: 'All Government, all influence of man upon man, rests on opinion.'³⁶⁰ Clearly, what is not spoken of does not require any manufacturing of opinion.

The Reith Lectures, annually inviting an academic to give a series of talks in honour of the BBC's founding Director-General, while produced for the domestic services did provide world audiences with more involved appraisals of contemporary problems by their rebroadcast. One such by Margery Perham concerned *The Colonial Reckoning*, listed in *London Calling* as 'an assessment of the ending of British rule in Africa and of the forces which are replacing it' from the perspective of Britain, 'who has the first right to answer the general anti-colonial charge.'³⁶¹ In the text of the lectures, regularly urging caution against perfidious Communism, there is a clear reservation for the role of the anti-colonial movement: 'It condemns our past record, it weakens our present influence. It also threatens to harm our future relations with many of our former subjects and other coloured peoples.' Perham is straightforward in her apology for the British Empire, believing its record 'to have been misjudged, and misleading tests applied to it'; Britain ought to be judged by a long human history in which imperialism 'has been taken for granted as part of the established order.' The question arising from these novel political and moral demands is 'where, we must ask, were these new standards derived?' National consciousness and notions of self-determination were, Perham lectures, 'purloined from the West' and 'learned very largely from Britain herself.'³⁶² Historically valid or not, these Reith Lectures, existing as they did in a near vacuum of serious coverage of decolonisation, concretely advances the identity of the British as civilizers who have inherited imperialism only to bequeath emancipation.³⁶³

³⁶⁰ Enoch Powell speech to Parliament (27 July 1959), quoted in James, *Rise and Fall*, pp.327-29.

³⁶¹ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.232 (9 November 1961) p.1; Vol.2, No.237 (14 December 1961) p.2.

³⁶² Margery Perham, 'REITH LECTURES 1961: The Colonial Reckoning' (16 November 1961), accessed on 12/09/2020 from https://www.britishempire.co.uk/article/1961_reith1.pdf

³⁶³ *Let My People Go*, a 'musical account' of 'the Negro in America' began its story with the 'English privateer' that first sold slaves to the colonists at Jamestown; this is the closest to an exposition of the British role in the slave trade as programmes come, otherwise professing only the role of Britain in abolishing it, e.g. the settling of former slaves in Sierra Leone, the travels and travails of such abolitionists as David Livingstone. *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.68 (November 1968) p.8; Vol.2, No.150 (15 April 1960) p.2; Vol.3, No.16 (July 1964) p.8.

Elsewhere, other programmes substantiate this progressive history of British imperialism. *The Family of Nations* was a series charting the development of the Commonwealth, with a choice of figures that underpinned its purposeful, principled narrative. The Earl of Durham in 1840 recommends for Canada its own 'responsible government based on the British constitution'; the 'illustrious prose' of 'the great Whig historian' Lord Macaulay on the Crown's acquisition of East India Company holdings in 1833, 'dealt with one of the noblest causes of his time - the advancement of India'; while fighting 'valiantly against Britain' in the Boer War, Jan Christiaan Smuts helped 'dispel the legacy of bitterness' by his actions in the First and Second World Wars; Lord Attlee saw his 'proudest memories' in the independence of India, Pakistan and Ceylon.³⁶⁴ It would have been understandable for the listener of the BBC External Services believe from its programmes that the British acquired their Empire merely by drawing maps from their explorations; representations of Britons from imperial sunrise to high noon are as adventurers and missionaries, not conquerors. Illustrative as an example is *One Man's Journey*, which told the tales of several dauntless Britons who boldly went, Bible in hand, when none had before. There is Michael Symes, who was eventually accepted with 'kindness' into the royal court of Rangoon in 1795, after showing 'tact and forbearance to the initial rebuffs he met'; Thomas Manning, 'the first Englishman to penetrate Tibet as far as the then hidden city of Lhasa', one of the 'principle expounders' of 'Tibetology' if such a science existed; Bishop Heber of Calcutta, who 'held the Hindu faith in great respect', along with the peoples and customs of India.³⁶⁵

British identity is similarly infused with higher morality and purpose by more modern luminaries featured across BBC programming; their charitable internationalism is substituted for civilizing imperialism. Guests of *Asian Club* in 1960, in which a studio audience of Asians living in Britain asked questions of a given interviewee, included one of the 'originators of the idea of a "World Refugee Year"', Christopher Chataway; the Deputy Director-General of the International Refugee Organisation, Sir Arthur Rucker, who ensured that the resettlement required of the 'world's conscience' became U.N. resolution in 1958 also appeared.³⁶⁶ An appreciation of wider British philanthropy and humanitarianism is given by copious coverage of the 'international schemes of co-operation' born of Britain, following the example of 'man's

³⁶⁴ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.219 (10 August 1961) p.2; Vol.2, No.220 (17 August 1961) p.2; Vol.2, No.222 (31 August 1961) p.2; Vol.2, No.225 (21 September 1961) p.2.

³⁶⁵ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.240 (4 January 1962) p.1; Vol.2, No.243 (25 January 1962) p.2; Vol.2, No.244 (1 February 1962) p.2.

³⁶⁶ *Asian Club* was replaced by *Open House* in 1966, with 'interesting personalities ... questioned by a studio audience'; however, that audience would 'no longer be exclusively Asian but will have a distinctly international flavour... So *Asian Club* gives way to a programme which more accurately reflects the truly international nature of the World Service.' *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.147 (25 March 1960) p.2; Vol.2, No.150 (15 April 1960) p.2; Vol.3, No.34 (January 1966) p.9.

help for man' set by the Red Cross and others. Experts working in aid are often followed on their placements and secondments around the world, such as the medical doctors and plant nutritionists and architects observed in *Meeting Ground*, joined by an Oxford student who has 'helped the Amerindians to form a council amongst themselves to run their own community... to build a wharf, improve their cattle pasture, and construct new houses, and he had planned a complete new system of roads and drainage.'³⁶⁷

The model student in question, Colin Henfrey, was dispatched to British Guiana as one of the first cohort of young Britons with Voluntary Service Overseas. This secular aid organisation, launched in 1958 by Alec Dickson and Launcelot Fleming, utilised the same 'powerful combination of guilt and idealism' as Victorian missions. Initial enthusiasm for the Commonwealth project and such voluntarism 'chimed in with widespread British optimism about overseas aid.'³⁶⁸ Voluntary Service Overseas was certainly an asset for the BBC in presenting this moral impulse in British identity, for instance furnishing an appropriate image of a young, white woman teaching black children for the front cover of *London Calling* in March 1965, leading 'International Co-operation Year' by example.³⁶⁹ It also helped that the listing for a documentary on the Service could remind the reader that it 'ante-dates President Kennedy's Peace Corps.'³⁷⁰ Britain is positioned, as previously noted of investment and involvement in international bodies, in the vanguard of voluntarism, aid and assistance. The Colombo Plan for economic development in Asia, created by Ernest Bevin in 1951 after a meeting of Commonwealth ministers, is described in a 10th anniversary programme as the 'nursery of international understanding' that has since welcomed to its cause the contributions of the United States and Japan.³⁷¹ Sandbrook considers internationalism to be 'overstated' in accounts of sixties Britain, pointing to indifference about colonial deployments and the, in reality, underwhelming and ephemeral activism of 1968.³⁷² Writing in 1967, Herbert Wiseman agreed with the charge that 'the present Commonwealth ceased to be a British family of nations' when Britons chose 'to disown it, even if a little reluctantly.'³⁷³ Their knowledge of the world is based 'on rumours, half-truths, or prejudice' and, while being the figurehead of a 'fantasy Empire' had consoled them, 'there is great relief when, momentarily, a gunboat is used again.'

³⁶⁷ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.220 (17 August 1961) p.1; Vol.2, No.222 (31 August 1961) p.2.

³⁶⁸ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, p.108.

³⁶⁹ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.24 (March 1965) p.10.

³⁷⁰ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.262 (7 June 1962) p.1.

³⁷¹ Incidentally, the title of the programme is insightful of how, again, Britain could be presented as the actor for post-colonial change: *The Quiet Revolution*. *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.213 (29 June 1961) p.2.

³⁷² Sandbrook, *White Heat*, pp.532-37.

³⁷³ Wiseman, *Britain and the Commonwealth*, pp.64-65.

A false impression of British internationalism given by BBC programming is perhaps excusable for the fact that such coverage was often warranted and would naturally reflect a certain type of person, empathetic and educated about the world; the illiterate understandably do not appear in programmes on British writing, but the producer has not chosen his subjects, e.g. William Wordsworth, so as to mislead the audience into imagining all Britons to be wordsmiths. However, repetition creates a pattern. Concerning insularity, immigration presented a greater chance, in theory, for the BBC to illuminate its listeners about Britishness through Britons in 'Blighty'. A documentary of 1962 entitled *The Immigrants* sought to answer whether 'our reputed insularity' had been 'confirmed or transformed by more direct contact with others?' The listing regarded 'epithets of distaste' for the 'new Britons' as 'relatively superficial reactions', weaving 'modern settlers' from across the Commonwealth into its narrative of a nation built by 'as great a variety of peoples as any other land-mass in the world'.³⁷⁵ In 1966, *The Newcomers* explored the continuity of current immigration as 'no new phenomenon. It is as old as the country itself.'³⁷⁶ As Professor of Sociology Michael Banton concluded in *New Society* in 1967, it was common of earlier analyses to suppose from past experience that immigrants of colour were assimilable, 'even if it took longer for them than it had for Huguenots, Jews and Irish'; but regardless of whether 'Jamaicans have more in common with the British than with the Pakistanis', the crude distinction of complexion and not culture would matter most. As Brian Harrison sees in the 1958 Notting Hill race riots and Carnival that followed – neither referenced in *London Calling* – British 'lumpers' corralled immigrants, initially amorphous 'splitters' as cautious of other groups as Britons of them, into categories that actually 'manufactured the ethnic solidarity they claimed to fear.'³⁷⁷

Identities based on colour were thus constructed in Britain, rather than brought to it. Groups banded and were blended together after arrival, their preconceived and often quite orthodox Britishness made into discrete denominations that increasingly decoupled with the mainstream. The idea that these 'new settlers' were 'strangers' still, regardless of speaking the same language and following similar customs, no less being known through centuries of shared history, was prevalent. But whereas it was not necessarily novel for immigrants from the Commonwealth to be thought of by what they were not, in relation to normative Britishness, and as 'bottom of the social hierarchy whose presence is linked with trouble of one kind or another', their assimilation did not proceed comparably to their predecessors, or contemporaries, from Europe. Keith Robbins finds that Europeans did not encounter 'undue

³⁷⁵ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.254 (12 April 1962) p.1.

³⁷⁶ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.36 (March 1966) p.3.

³⁷⁷ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, pp.225-26.

difficulty' in 'becoming British' and could maintain foreign heritages that were not held to be mutually exclusive with Britishness.³⁷⁸ While *What the Poles Have Done for You* helped smooth the settlement of Polish emigres, no similar leaflet was circulated to Britons fearful of black and Asian miscegenation that convinced of any shared civilisation with New Commonwealth arrivals.³⁷⁹ While a general xenophobia meant Germans and Jews did not fare much better, eight in ten Britons rejected the idea of having a West Indian son-in-law and almost four in ten as a neighbour or friend.³⁸⁰

While the reader of *London Calling* and, it is taken, the listener of the BBC External Services is not given the impression that Britishness does or can include black or Asian identities, given no 'British' person of colour makes an appearance, Britain is nonetheless taken to be a place of 'tolerance and humanity' for all – at odds with leaflets for arrivals such as the Ministry of Labour's *How to Adjust Yourself in Britain* that warned them to expect housing discrimination.³⁸¹ When one looks at images of the BBC's own black and Asian correspondents happily going about their business of reporting in Britain, demonstrating 'how fundamentally alike all people are, even though they may live at opposite ends of the earth', it is suggestive that such a disposition and welcoming receptivity is representative.³⁸² The inhabitants of the village of Greyshott are said to have been respectfully 'intrigued' by the arrival of black reporters, pictured on a leafy street 'armed with microphones and midget tape recorders', on a Commonwealth trainee scheme – without any hint of euphemism.³⁸³ Richard Weight contends that the ideal of a Commonwealth, multi-racial yet mutual, ultimately depended on proximity and permanence. In essence, 'the inclusivity of Britishness depended on the remoteness of the Queen's coloured subjects from the UK.' The ceremonial performance of multi-cultural identity and common traditions on Royal tours bore no resemblance to a very common monocultural identity at home; in reality it was a charm offensive that reaffirmed the rightful order of things, *in their right place*.³⁸⁴ Earlier in the sixties the only immigrant appearing in programmes adheres to this fundamental structure, such as the Jamaican working in Birmingham for the money to marry his *Girl in Kingston Town*.³⁸⁵ The Commonwealth Day programme of 1961 interviewed various citizens in Britain, gauging 'how

³⁷⁸ Robbins, *Great Britain*, p.325.

³⁷⁹ Weight, *Patriots*, p.138.

³⁸⁰ Michael Banton, 'Integration into What Society?', *New Society* (9 November 1967) pp.662-65.

³⁸¹ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.3 (June 1963) p.11; Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good*, pp.330-31.

³⁸² *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.6 (September 1963) pp.6-7.

³⁸³ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.18 (September 1964) p.2.

³⁸⁴ Weight, *Patriots*, p.425.

³⁸⁵ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.172 (16 September 1960) p.1.

they see their experience here in terms of what it can do for them and their countries when they go back.'³⁸⁶

The contentious issue of immigration into Britain is not entirely avoided by the BBC in its General Overseas and World Service broadcasting, however in titling one such programme *Our Vital Immigrants* it answers the question of whether such 'brain and brawn' is 'offset by adverse effects in other directions?'.³⁸⁷ The controls on immigration set by both Conservative and Labour governments in this period, however, told a different story that, in spite of the landmark significance of both Commonwealth Immigrants Acts, goes unmentioned in *London Calling*. As with other omissions, it may be presumed that it was discussed in news bulletins and current affairs programming, but did not receive treatment in any dedicated, specific programme. It was an open secret at the time of the 1962 Act that the restrictions would in effect set a colour bar, something the Home Secretary R. A. Butler privately accepted as its design, and two thirds of Britons polled supported such a discriminatory curb.³⁸⁸ And while the passing of the second Act in 1968 revived for many the same 'disgust not only for the government, or the political party that comprised that government, but for Britain' which they had felt during the Suez Crisis, as many as three quarters of the population were claimed by the Government to back it. It was believed that a majority of 'uncommitted racials' and 'millions of Alf Garnetts' meant Britain remained, inescapably, 'deeply race-prejudiced'.³⁸⁹ Indeed, this belief that 'Casual racism was present at all levels of British society in the sixties' was borne out in in poll after poll, and the *Financial Times* were not alone in seeing in Alf Garnett, the bigoted lead of *Till Death Do Us Part*, 'everything most hateful about our national character – xenophobic, illiberal, racist, anti-semitic, toadying, authoritarian.'³⁹⁰ The enormously successful television series was, for Richard Weight, 'a brave attempt to confront a controversial' – and correct – 'aspect of Englishness which many people would have preferred to ignore.'³⁹¹ The preference of the BBC, evidently, was just that.

Two surveys by *New Society*, one of 'The nation's mood' in advance of the 1964 election and the other looking back on the decade from the end of 1969, are insightful of the changes and continuities of thought in Britain and a growing consensus on the 'Other'. While

³⁸⁶ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.207 (18 May 1961) p.2.

³⁸⁷ *London Calling*, Vol.4, No.1 (May 1969) p.4.

³⁸⁸ Even the Institute for Race Relations, founded in response to the Notting Hill riots, set out in its report *Colour in Britain* that Commonwealth nations ought to work together to restrict immigration in fear of social breakdown in Britain. Levine, *The British Empire*, p.226; Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good*, pp.339-41.

³⁸⁹ Richard Boston, 'How the Immigrants Act was Passed', *New Society* (28 March 1968) pp.448, 451.

³⁹⁰ Peter Worsley writing in the *Financial Times*, quoted in Sandbrook, *White Heat*, pp.662-64.

³⁹¹ Weight, *Patriots*, p.431.

the results of a Gallup poll preceding the 1964 survey had found that around half of Britons were dissatisfied with Britain's position and wished it to remain a great power, four of five respondents to *New Society* ranked 'individual happiness' above 'national greatness'. A retreat from imperial duty and a global role into domesticity in a Little, if not lesser, England appeared complete. At the time of polling the nation was almost equally split on whether 'unrestricted immigration' into this personal paradise was 'Consistent with the kind of Britain you want'.³⁹² From the perspective of 1969, only the moral affront of permissiveness in 'easier laws for homosexuality, divorce, abortion, etc' was more objectionable than immigration. Proving official speculations on support for controls in 1968, 73 per cent considered there to be 'too many coloured immigrants in the country now'.³⁹³ Such prejudice was dealt with sparingly and in isolation by programmes on the BBC External Services. When the more candid stories of immigrants are explored, it is interesting that the idea of them as 'strangers' to the British is endorsed: an East End schoolteacher from British Guiana in *Stranger at the Blackboard*; Indian communities in Ulster in *Strangers in Our Midst*; Midlands schoolchildren in *Generation of Strangers*.³⁹⁴ The last of these, broadcast in 1965, described of these 'strangers' the 'hard choice between white friends and white values that may in the end reject or betray him, and the safety of the culture he was born to'; 'a search for identity'.³⁹⁵ Such a, literally, black and white dichotomy supports Philippa Levine's assertion that assimilation 'was very much a one-way street'. The umbrella of Britishness did not extend to its colonies, however anglicised; there was no association or denomination, only 'contamination' and heterodoxy.³⁹⁶

Remaining in the Midlands, the overbearing presence of Enoch Powell in this period and his lack thereof in BBC programming must be addressed. The Conservative M.P. for Wolverhampton South West appears in 1960 as the speaker in an episode of a series on *Central Government* about the House of Lords.³⁹⁷ Later he would be attributed by Anthony Sampson to 'that special class of politicians ... who claim to represent the dark, secret heart of the nation', upon becoming the born-again messiah of the anti-immigration camp that argued, giving Paul Gilroy the title of his opus, 'There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack'.³⁹⁸ The 'Rivers of Blood' speech in Birmingham, which prophesied an apocalypse for multi-racial

³⁹² 'Election Year Britain', *New Society*, pp.6-7.

³⁹³ Barker and Hanvey, 'Facing Two Ways', *New Society*, pp.847, 849.

³⁹⁴ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.142 (19 February 1960) p.2; Vol.2, No.171 (9 September 1960) p.2.

³⁹⁵ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.23 (February 1965) p.7.

³⁹⁶ Levine, *The British Empire*, p.119.

³⁹⁷ Incidentally, he testifies to 'the strength of this seemingly outmoded Upper House and the necessary part it plays in British constitutional government'. *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.151 (22 April 1960) p.2.

³⁹⁸ Sampson, *New Anatomy*, p.111.

Britain, led the Establishment to 'label Powell's championing of national identity as Fascist' – polling into the 1970s showed a majority agreed with his racist position.³⁹⁹ While instances of outright racism were small in a sample of the 100,000 letters of support – versus just 800 in opposition – received by Powell in reaction to his sacking by Edward Heath from the Conservative Shadow Cabinet, 'foreign or black or coloured invasion are freely used'.⁴⁰⁰ While it was thought false to overstate the force of avowed racist groups, such as the out-and-out Nazi 'Greater Britain Movement', sympathy for their cause was proven in electoral returns that led to predictions that the 'Union Movement may grow and the [British National Party] will almost certainly grow.'⁴⁰¹ The sociologist Ruth Glass had questioned the news narrative after the race riots of Notting Hill and Nottingham, honing attention as it did on a popularly scapegoated fifth column of 'Teddy Boys', by recognising racism to be 'latent in all social strata'.⁴⁰² The victory of Peter Griffiths as Conservative M.P. for Smethwick in 1964, who refused to condemn the unofficial slogan of his campaign – 'if you want a nigger for a neighbour, vote Liberal or Labour' – proved a deeper rot of racism in society; statements like 'Rhodesia is as Britain was ... in its halcyon days', made by Tory backbencher Harold Soref after the colony's Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965, proved Powell's extremism was not anomalous.⁴⁰³

Again, as with the *The Colonial Reckoning*, it is a Reith Lecture – rebroadcast on the World Service rather than produced for its audience – that takes near sole responsibility for airing the uncomfortable, off-brand truths of Britain and Britishness. However, Robert K. A. Gardiner's disquisition on *A World of Peoples* in 1965, in his capacity as an Oxford social anthropologist and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa – and a Ghanaian – fit the model instead of breaking the mould.⁴⁰⁴ Careful scrutiny was compromised to such abstract studies as *The Science of Race*, asking how the social and natural sciences could assuage 'violent passions' in the 'present-day world'; almost express

³⁹⁹ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, pp.221-22.

⁴⁰⁰ The vast majority, where reasons were given, could be categorised under 'fears for British culture'. Within this are academics, businessmen and other members of professions. 'An ex-colonial civil servant, while he expresses admiration and respect for the Sikh, Moslem and Hindu cultures, says that "the Hindus never integrated and never will integrate with any other race." An ex-missionary from Africa takes the same attitude to Africans, declaring that although he has respect and love for the people among whom he worked, they cannot be assimilated into English society in any large numbers.' Diana Spearman, 'Enoch Powell's Postbag', *New Society* (9 May 1968) pp.667-69.

⁴⁰¹ The wisdom of the pollsters and sociologists, after the BNP's John Bean won a record 9% of the 1964 vote in Southall as a racist candidate, was 'that racial prejudice in Britain has increased in the past three or four years and is likely to continue to do so in the near future.' Colin Cross, 'Britain's Racialists', *New Society* (3 June 1965) pp.9-12.

⁴⁰² Ruth Glass, *Newcomers: The West Indians in London*, quoted in Leese, *Britain Since 1945*, p.50.

⁴⁰³ Sandbrook, *White Heat*, pp.668-69; James, *Rise and Fall*, p.333.

⁴⁰⁴ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.32 (November 1965) p.3.

emphasis on *The Negro in America's* struggle for civil rights made concessions for the British record.⁴⁰⁵ Gardiner's lectures similarly withdraw into concept and wider context. When his eye passes over Britain from a distance, it is 'the centre of an inter-racial Commonwealth ... which until recently could boast of freedom from prejudice.' Such a boast appears to confine the scientific and vulgar racism of imperialism in situ, disconnected from the mainland – which gets merest mention – and its evolution into mainstream ethnocultural biases.⁴⁰⁶ Smethwick, which Gardiner does refer to directly, is warning that a 'lunatic fringe' can 'make an impression on innocent minds' – not prey on preconceptions. Studies of attitudes are necessary so that Britain can recognise its 'involvement in a world-wide problem' – actual findings of which are never cited. Britons are said to react to other races with 'curiosity and wonderment at obvious differences; pleasure in the exotic; indifference; resentment and occasional hostility; a proper, but cold, formality; acceptance and genuine friendliness.' There is no sense that a consensus exists on closing their door, and border, to 'strangers', only that immigration is a live issue on which it is Britain's sovereign right to decide – it is not an issue of citizenship, as Kathleen Paul relates. On balance, excusing characteristic frigidity and inevitable friction, the British fare well by global comparison and benefit from Gardiner's gaze on America, Rhodesia and South Africa.⁴⁰⁷

Common Market and continentalism, war and exceptionalism

A potential clash of identity and interest could also be foreseen with regard to Europe, our final theme. While in the sixties, civil servants and policymakers came around to 'the idea that Britain did not simply have vital interests *in* Europe but was an integral part *of* Europe', with no Government in power ever questioning *The Grand Design* of Macmillan until the departure of Brexit, it was and has ever since been very 'publicly controversial'.⁴⁰⁸ In recognition of the magnitude of the first British application to joining to the E.E.C., discussion of *Britain and the Common Market* is given ample coverage – without ignoring the widespread view of 'collapsing' rather than acceding into Europe. Early programmes explore, through such critics of British stagnation as Michael Shanks, 'the existence of a European spirit', even while juxtaposing 'Europa and John Bull', and 'the relevance of Catholic and Protestant traditions in a technical age'.⁴⁰⁹ Conspiracy theories about a 'Black International' remained rife, suggesting

⁴⁰⁵ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.14 (May 1964) p.10; Vol.3, No.21 (December 1964) p.2.

⁴⁰⁶ Gilroy, 'There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack', p.40.

⁴⁰⁷ Robert K. A. Gardiner, *A World of Peoples: The Reith Lectures 1965* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966) pp.16, 19, 22-23.

⁴⁰⁸ Stephen Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Vol. II: From Rejection to Referendum, 1963-1975* (London: Routledge, 2012) pp.73-74.

⁴⁰⁹ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.229 (19 October 1961) p.1.

centuries old suspicions persisted, hence Macmillan's first ever visit of a U.K. Prime Minister to the Vatican.⁴¹⁰ A definition is sought for *The Meaning of Europe* in a programme of 1962, where 'a deeper foundation' based on 'shared values which arise out of a common inheritance' is said to be argued by many in favour of a natural unity – 'a European personality'.⁴¹¹ Europe and Europeanness is presented as an open – if leading – question, without ever counterposing the two sides; framed in such a way that the debate tends toward the positive, however unpopular. With negotiations ongoing, *British Writing Today* asked readers to consider whether a better title might be "'Writing in Europe Today"?' After all, English does not belong to Britain and 'we live on a small island only just detached from the continent of Europe.'⁴¹² An understanding of the contemporary conservatism of literature, fearful of femininity and contemptuous of 'abroad' – there was 'a plot by foreigners', said Al Alvarez, to destroy tradition through Frenchified modernists – leads one to predict that the set Larkin and Amis belonged to would have been characteristically acerbic but in no way contrarian.⁴¹³

However, conversations around the Common Market peter out in programmes through the sixties, even while they did not in the domain of public debate; the World Service offered no coverage at all of the second application in 1967 or its aftermath.⁴¹⁴ It is especially interesting to note that the edition of *London Calling* for the English-language European Service – it being closely similar to if separate from the World Service until 1969 – made no mention at all in the run up to either application, recusing itself of any programming whatsoever. The stated reasons for the services in English being merged were technical; speculatively, it could also suggest that Europe was no longer deemed to warrant its former special treatment, not that its programming had substantially or substantively differed, or that keeping apart the two services supported the accusations of French President Charles de Gaulle that Britain was itself of two minds. Instead, there is one service for all regardless of region, and without special regard to the British world. But where there is coverage of the Common Market between 1961-1963, the BBC were clearly of the mind – along with a majority of British politicians and people – that the 'vital concern' of the Commonwealth must be the

⁴¹⁰ The 'Black International' was a secret organisation linked to Rome which brought together the leaders of the Catholic committees in nine European countries to stem the tide of liberalism, socialism and nationalism that threatened the Church at the end of the 19th century. Weight, *Patriots*, p.335.

⁴¹¹ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.291 (27 December 1962) p.1.

⁴¹² *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.251 (22 March 1962) p.1.

⁴¹³ Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good*, pp.172-76.

⁴¹⁴ With the addendum, again, that *London Calling* sheds no light on items in news and current affairs programmes, the only proof that the Common Market featured is in the form of a listener's letter: "Dear Sir, One often hears that Britain is negotiating to enter the Common Market, but when the Six next meet France vetoes Britain's entry on the matter of agricultural prices and products. Does this mean that Britain's survival depends on joining the Common Market?" Questions like this one, from a listener in Ghana, provide talking-points for the programme Letters from the World...'. *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.44 (November 1966) p.4.

focal point. The decision could lead to a world where 'Britain abandoned her old traditional position by going into Europe' and is not made lightly; listings talk up British efforts to 'safeguard' and 'represent to her nearest neighbours the far-reaching implications of Commonwealth unity.'⁴¹⁵ The phrase 'going into Europe', alluding to the idea that Britain was somehow based elsewhere, is consistently employed.⁴¹⁶

Somewhat surprisingly, data from polling on attitudes to Europe showed that 63 per cent did, at least, think Britain to be a European country. Although arguably a simple matter of fact rather than opinion, there was wide if not wholehearted acceptance. When questioned on identity rather than geography, however, less than half believed Britain could ever be 'wholly European'. Britons tended to view the Soviet Union more favourably than their actual allies in Western Europe, with whom they wished to trade more freely but imposed a heavy tariff in terms of trust – a cynicism and suspicion that was endemic, with only the Australians seemingly absolved, but nevertheless extreme in the case of Germany and France.⁴¹⁷ By focusing on the political and economic case and ramifications of E.E.C. membership, BBC programming could be defended for having properly represented the unsentimental attachment Britons could at best be said to have. 'As momentous a step as any government has ever had to take' – 'had' being the operative word – the portrayal of inevitability based on practicality chimes with the 76 per cent who effectively saw British entry as an irresistible conclusion.⁴¹⁸ But roughly the same proportion, not always as overwhelming yet rarely reversed, remained unpersuaded if not positively opposed.⁴¹⁹ Looking to the future from 1969, only nine per cent thought that joining the Common Market ought to be among the top four objectives for Britain in the next decade, compared with almost double (16 per cent) that prioritising for building more motorways.⁴²⁰ In the final analysis, coverage of the Common Market by the General Overseas Service is cursory, confined to its challenge to the Commonwealth rather than Britishness; the World Service excuses itself from commentary and the implications of Europhobe identity altogether. Programming prefers to talk up such pan-European endeavours as Concorde, 'the cornerstone of collaboration between Great Britain and the rest of Europe', without ever giving any impression of the ill-feeling inflicted by the French rebuttals of 1963 and 1967 – or the unease generally felt at the prospect of association to start with.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁵ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.227 (5 October 1961) p.1; Vol.2, No.208 (25 May 1961) p.1.

⁴¹⁶ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.228 (12 October 1961) p.1.

⁴¹⁷ Humphrey Taylor and Timothy Raison, 'Britain into Europe? - General Attitudes', *New Society* (16 June 1966) pp.6-8; 'Election Year Britain', *New Society*, pp.6-7.

⁴¹⁸ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.227 (5 October 1961) p.1.

⁴¹⁹ Wall, *From Rejection to Referendum*, p.353.

⁴²⁰ Barker and Hanvey, 'Facing Two Ways', *New Society*, p.850.

⁴²¹ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.58 (January 1968) p.3.

As explored in chapter three, the experience of war in Europe – in particular though not only 1939-1945 – was foundational to British identity. While reservations about Britain’s European partners and resistance to any deeper partnership with them show that emotions had not softened, if perhaps losing their edge, an incremental editing out of the Second World War from broadcast schedules is revealing. The twentieth anniversary of the Battle of Britain in 1960 is marked with a myriad different programme strands. Covering the occasion are selections of music about the Allied airmen – *The Lion Had Wings* – dramatic portrayals of figures ‘in whom the heroic qualities of “the Few” could not have been more clearly personified’ – *With Courage* – and interviews with civilians and ex-servicemen involved in the defence of the British Isles from Nazi invasion.⁴²² A *Scrapbook for 1940* recounted how ‘the fighter pilots of the R.A.F. had destroyed Hitler’s aerial armada’ in what was *Their Finest Hour*, the biographical account of one airman saved by plastic surgery to fly again exemplified ‘the quality of which Britain’s 1940 pilots - the few - were made.’⁴²³ On the ground, schedules in the early sixties are punctuated with references to the Blitz – Allied strategic bombing and the devastation of Dresden go without remark. When cities such as Plymouth and Hull are the subjects of programmes, the listener is prompted to recall ‘the heavy and persistent Nazi air-raids’ when taking in their audio tour; one cannot forget the ‘saturation bombing by enemy raiders’ that led to the ‘coventration’ coined of the Midlands city, with frequent visits to its cathedral.⁴²⁴ Exacerbated by such destruction, ‘the Continent was perceived as a thoroughly alien place, at best troublesome and at worst hostile.’⁴²⁵ War remained for sixties Britons ‘one of the central experiences of their lives’, reinforced by a ‘cenotaph culture’ in films and books, monuments and exhibitions. It was in large part for this reason that a complacent feeling of exceptionalism was sustained; that association with ‘continentals ... a bombed out, defeated rabble’ remained ‘unthinkable.’⁴²⁶

By the coming of the World Service in 1965, it is testament to detachment concerning the ‘modern national myth’, always at some variance from local legend by its inclusion of ‘Sikhs, Punjabis, Gurkhas, Baluchs and Rajputs’, that the death of Winston Churchill is not cause for chauvinism or Commonwealth reaffirmation.⁴²⁷ Rather than solely paying tribute to Churchill as the ‘great defender’ of the English-speaking world, an article by Tangye Lean

⁴²² *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.171 (9 September 1960) pp.1-2.

⁴²³ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.186 (22 December 1960) p.2; Vol.2, No.168 (19 August 1960) p.2.

⁴²⁴ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.264 (21 June 1962) p.2; Vol.2, No.266 (5 July 1962) p.2; Vol.2, No.270 (2 August 1962) p.2.

⁴²⁵ Weight, *Patriots*, p.101.

⁴²⁶ To the frustration of Roy Denman, a civil servant who helped negotiate Britain’s entry into the EEC. Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good*, pp.46-47.

⁴²⁷ *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.205 (4 May 1961) p.1.

draws on letters received 'from ordinary listeners in sixty countries' that demonstrate 'it was the world which recognized him as its hero.' His legacy is even tempered by recognition of his opposition to the independence of Indian and Pakistani well-wishers. More striking still, through letters 'in great numbers' from Germans, Italians, French and Czechs, as well as Japanese, that legacy is made universal – even continental.⁴²⁸ When the 50th anniversary of 'The Great War' arrived in 1964, the participation of the Empire is remembered in a special programme for having 'paved the way for the ultimate independence within the Commonwealth that others enjoy today.' But it is the promotion of the 'biggest television documentary ever', promised to be distributed around the world, that takes centre place in *London Calling*. In it, the producer relates, 'There are no all-villains or all-heroes. Our aim has been to show what the Great War was really like, on all fronts and in all countries. We do not pass judgment or comment. *The Great War* series has no "enemy".'⁴²⁹ When the time comes to mark the 30th anniversary of *The War That Changed the World*, the same non-partisan attempt at telling its collective history is made through sixteen episodes on and from every front. The service and sacrifice of Britain and its Commonwealth receive no supplementary treatment, contained within a single narrative of a series with an eye on Europe in explaining the war's 'relevance to the political scene of 1969.'⁴³⁰

Whether intended for the benefit of a Commonwealth audience whose ties were sustained through remembrance of shared struggle, or simply reflecting the continued influence of war on British identity, an initial preoccupation with the fight against Fascism figures less and less as the sixties progress. Pre-World Service, wartime records are regularly proclaimed of the contributors listed in *London Calling*, and as late as 1967 can still crop up on occasion. But as an example, the announcement of Charles Curran as the new Director of External Broadcasting in February 1967 includes the fact of his service in the Indian Army, whereas this is omitted from a biography for him when readers are told of his elevation to Director-General in November 1968.⁴³¹ A convention for introducing a man by his rank and role in wartime is gradually broken; the war itself moves from living, walking memory to something that documentarians sift through archives to recollect. Meanwhile, a change as symbolic as that of the renaming of the World Service occurred within the BBC's Henry Wood Promenade Concerts (colloquially the Proms), its bills featuring foreign artists for the first time

⁴²⁸ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.26 (May 1965) p.5.

⁴²⁹ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.18 (September 1964) pp.1, 4-5; Vol.3, No.20 (November 1964) p.8; Vol.3, No.18 (September 1964) p.5.

⁴³⁰ *London Calling*, Vol.4, No.5 (September 1969) p.4.

⁴³¹ Even when limited to two or three lines in introducing a violinist, Denis Stevens, for a music programme in 1961, the listing finds room to inform readers of his service 'with R.A.F. Intelligence in India and Burma'. *London Calling*, Vol.2, No.202 (13 April 1961) p.2; Vol.3, No.47 (February 1967) p.3; Vol.3, No.68 (November 1968) p.2.

as of 1964. This flag-waving festival of Britishness could now, *London Calling* declared, offer listeners the finest European talents.⁴³² Where once British and Commonwealth artistry were pointedly central to BBC schedules, *Let the Peoples Sing* was a sign of increasing receptivity to and engagement with Europe, in a similar vein to the Eurovision Song Contest. A choir competition, the programme promised such face-offs in its tournament as Germany versus Switzerland, Norway versus Denmark, and Belgium versus Yugoslavia.⁴³³ Britain through the BBC becomes an entrepot for cultural exchange, inviting in its non-British neighbours

Changing World Patterns in 1967 proved a shift underway in the BBC's own status quo, the listing standing out for its inclusion of speakers not attributable to the English-speaking world: Richard Loewenthal, Professor of International Relations at Free University in Berlin, on 'World Politics'; Raymond Aron, Professor of Sociology at Paris University, on 'The Economic Organization of the Future.'⁴³⁴ In the following year, a series of programmes on *The Newspapers of the World* did not mislead, lacking the space to be truly all-encompassing but nevertheless casting a wider net than the former and informal Empire. Along with Vadim Nekrasov, Deputy Chief Editor of Russian *Pravda*, the Foreign Editor of French *Le Monde*, André Fontaine, speaks on the 'enormous influence for good or evil' permeating from the presses of 'the world's best-known newspapers.'⁴³⁵ Far more pronounced Europeanisation of World Service output is demonstrable in its dramatic repertoire. In the first half of the decade, Head of Sound Drama Val Gielgud described as 'Utopia' the task of representing 'the whole theatrical scene'; all the writers showcased as having been exposed through BBC patronage are British.⁴³⁶ Gielgud's successor, Martin Esslin, boasts upon his promotion in *London Calling* that his department's investment 'is no mean public service in the laborious task of opening windows on the outside world', drawing attention to the decisive success of Jean Anouilh and Ugo Betti after BBC debut. The 'little known' fact that Eugène Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* had its premiere on the Third Programme prior to performance in Paris is proudly touted.⁴³⁷ An impression is made that only rings true for the World Service some years later.

⁴³² *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.17 (August 1964) p.4.

⁴³³ Cliff Richard makes an appearance for an episode of *Meet...* in 1968 with reference to his participation as 'Britain's entry for "A Song for Europe" on TV', which one might imagine to be of little or no interest to listeners without recourse to a channel showing it, but does signify an openness about Britain taking a part *in* Europe. *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.73 (April 69) p.7; Vol.3, No.60 (March 1968) p.8.

⁴³⁴ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.55 (October 1967) p.8.

⁴³⁵ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.61 (April 1968) p.3; Vol.3, No.62 (May 1968) p.4.

⁴³⁶ The list in full is Lance Sieveking, Tyrone Guthrie, Louis MacNeice, Douglas Cleverdon, Mary Hope Allen, Harold Pinter and Robert Bolt. *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.8 (November 1963) pp.6-7.

⁴³⁷ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.13 (April 1964) p.6.

While the occasional translation of a European play provides the exception that proves the rule pre-1965, that year brings an 'International Drama Season' and a regular 'World Theatre' section of the listings where continental playwrights stake increasing claim.⁴³⁸ And by the time one looks through the pages of *London Calling* in 1968 and 1969, programming is suffused with Scandinavian, Swiss, Ukrainian, French, German, Austrian, Italian, Dutch, Spanish, Czech, as well as Russian names. A window that was at best left ajar is indeed swung open with stagings of scripts by Federico Garcia Lorca and the brothers Serafin and Joaquín Álvarez Quintero, Jean Giraudoux and Molière, Gerhart Hauptmann and Bertolt Brecht.⁴³⁹ As companion to this surge of interest in European theatre, the World Service listener of 1969 is actually accompanied through programmes across the Channel. *The Vienna State Opera* was explored in a visit to its 'great opera house', at which one can hear 'the English tenor Piccaver as well as many of today's stars.'⁴⁴⁰ *The Folies Bergère* was the destination of another programme, gathering the reminiscences of several French 'personalities of the great show world of Paris' in order to tell its history.⁴⁴¹ The *Music of Finland* is broadcast on the occasion of the state visit of President Kekkonen, a welcome last warranted of a non-Commonwealth dignitary in 1960 – a concert celebrating the *L'Entente Cordiale* greeting Charles de Gaulle.⁴⁴² Tapping or stepping along to the tunes of European *National Dances* – 'Dowland's pavaues, Dvorak's Slavonic dances and Brahms' Hungarian, Strauss' waltzes, Smetana's polkas and Skalkotta's Greek dances' – listeners could not reasonably consider that the joining of the BBC's English-language services had entailed a subordination, worse still elimination of Europe from broadcasts.⁴⁴³ Concurrent to the removal, cut by cut, of the Commonwealth from programme output, a process of Europeanisation was completed in which a bitter past – living and breathing still – was buried.

⁴³⁸ *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.26 (May 1965) p.12; Vol.3, No.31 (October 1965) p.3.

⁴³⁹ The longlist in full for 1968/69 includes French Emile Zola, Edmond Rostand, François Mauriac and, of course, Jean Anouilh; Germans Christa Winsloe and Georg Büchner; Russians Aleksei Arbusov, Turgenev and Ostrovsky; Scandinavians Henrik Ibsen, Tauno Vilruusi, Kaj Munk, Kirsti Hakkarainen and Helge Krog; Czech Karel Čapek and Swiss Friedrich Dürrenmatt; Dutch Herman Heijermans, Austrian Fritz Hochwälder and Ukrainian Samuel Spewack. *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.58-73 (January 1968 – April 1969); Vol.4, No.1-8 (May 1969 – December 1969).

⁴⁴⁰ *London Calling*, Vol.4, No.1 (May 1969) p.5.

⁴⁴¹ *London Calling*, Vol.4, No.8 (December 1969) p.5.

⁴⁴² *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.3 (July 1969) pp.6-7; Vol.2, No.148 (1 April 1960) p.1.

⁴⁴³ *London Calling*, Vol.4, No.1 (May 1969) p.5.

Conclusion

It seems absurd to suggest that England is a comfortable place ... Countries in this century have become provinces, and if provincial life is always difficult and stifling for some, it is especially tough when you live in a demoted capital. Like Alice, we have taken the mixture and grown smaller... We shouldn't pretend to like this, and we shouldn't pretend that only colonels care about losing our empire and being a second-class power (*second-class?*). We all care. And the frantic and strident business of how swinging we were, which seemed so important two or three years ago, was only an attempt to hang on, to suggest that we weren't the provinces really, because we were still the capital of *something*. We don't believe that any more, I think. The scepticism with which the backing of Britain was received, the lack of jingoism in response to the British heart transplant (in spite of encouragement from flag-waving surgeons), were signs of a more relaxed sense of our national identity, of a start in coming to terms with our new, small status... The reverse side of what seems to me a relaxation of our worries is the anguish of Enoch Powell's supporters about our vanishing way of life, which can be ruined, apparently, by a lot of people wearing saris and eating rice. What this means, of course, is that Powell's fans don't know what our way of life is, although they need to, and this is their worry. They feel their identity escaping them. But they don't have to look that far to find it again. They might find it, for example, in behaving sanely and decently when voices like Mr Powell's prompt them to do otherwise.⁴⁴⁴

In this mournful meditation on Britishness of 1968, critic and cultural historian Michael Wood summarised the driving themes of both our period and the BBC programmes broadcast during it. The sense of confusion and dejection, conflict and desperation is vivid and, as we have explored, unsensational in its perception. Britain existed within a globalised world of 'provinces', which it was a part of rather than apart from. Without an imperial monopoly on resources and trade, Stephen Tallents had campaigned for the projection of the nation to preserve – in some cases repair – its influence. This did not differ substantively from nation branding, designed to create and inculcate an identity that would through its personality give its 'client' the persuasive power to compete in a decentralised, market system, developing channels of publicity that enable the nation to control its image. Any nation 'must present what makes it so distinctive', employing the 'cunning of recognition' – as Elizabeth Povinelli calls it – to sell itself to the 'various interlocutors' of the global marketplace; diversity becomes a 'currency' traded upon, says George Yúdice, internal difference acknowledged 'only insofar as it corresponds to patterns of consumption.'⁴⁴⁵ The individuality and division inherent of all identity, 'imagined' and interpreted by those 'belonging' to it, distracts and, indeed, damages the brand by which a nation sells itself. As this dissertation has explored through its catalogue of programmes, there were patterns and preferences to representations of Britishness that,

⁴⁴⁴ Michael Wood, 'This England', *New Society* (5 September 1968) pp.342-43.

⁴⁴⁵ Aronczyk, *Branding the Nation*, p.31.

while it could never be expected to reflect the nation in its entirety or variety, prove a brief. Identity was curated, compiled into a 'montage', that together and through its core themes was directly supportive of national interests. 'Touting for custom' involved more than merely providing a brochure for Britain and its business; all content advertised certain 'aspects of identity' that acted to market the nation itself, its vigour and verve and values.

If we take Michael Wood's critique as reference, the BBC certainly promoted the absurdity of Britain as a 'comfortable place'. It was not a 'demoted capital' frantically trying to count for '*something*', but the centre of a civilisation that had served as an archetype and continued through science and culture to forge the future. If the 'backing of Britain' – the We're Backing Britain phenomenon – was in fact lackluster, that is not the impression the listener of the World Service gets from its parade of pop icons and youthful innovators, collectively fighting for British prestige as if it were their form of national service. While Britain had 'grown smaller' it had not forfeited its status as a great power; its part in world politics was greater than ever, as the grown-up in the room between the precariously opposed, pubescent rivals of East and West. Britain was presented as a leader of the global community, humanitarianism and internationalism played up as hallmarks of the British. If the success of a breakthrough cardiovascular procedure was not occasion for patriotism, then the routine 'flag-waving' of the BBC in programmes on astronomical, atomic, automotive and aeronautic achievements gives the sense not of a 'coming to terms' but an assuredness of self and purpose. If the support for Enoch Powell suggested his concern for the extinction of cherished traditions – even of the British as a people – by immigration was commonplace, then the BBC's celebration of a cosmopolitan Commonwealth was at odds with such xenophobic cultural protectionism. In a similar vein, the exception taken to and exceptionalism felt about Europe is nowhere to be seen; what was instead heard were the translated plays of European writers, performances of its musicians, sounds of its cities, accents of its academics.

Hugh Carleton Greene was right in asserting to the Foreign Press Association, as reprinted in *London Calling*, the BBC's commitment to provide an 'accurate and acceptable picture of Britain' – acceptability implied there was still a certain economy with the truth, which this paper concludes served economic, and other, interests.⁴⁴⁶ A nation brand must trade on facts, but there is a flexibility and selectivity in its construction of them. BBC programmes undoubtedly selected their themes and were flexible in the treatment of them. In place of the loaded language of propaganda, this propagation of certain ideas of an ideal Britishness, never ignorant of racism or other social ills but inclined almost wholly toward the praiseworthy,

⁴⁴⁶ BBC, *London Calling*, Vol.3, No.12, Mar 1964, pp.6-7.

is better and far less debatably understood as branding. It seizes and substantiates a narrative in which the British legacy is civilisation not colonisation, its Commonwealth the mission of the masses. When the Common Market became the target consumer, identity changed to suit those 'patterns of consumption' – the British are receptive of European culture, with collaboration on Concorde taking the place in schedules of previously promoted projects in cooperation with former subjects. Conversations on Britishness were steered to follow a path that runs parallel with Britain's geopolitical pivot in the sixties. With the change from General Overseas to World Service marking the midway point of this decade-long shift, we find a new chapter in the story of Britishness as told by the BBC, its canon revised to evangelise to a world beyond the choir it had previously preached to. Much of the brand remained the same, its unique selling points still core to the pitch, but with a changing market we see this branding in action as Britain was adapted to persuade for its appeal to a new audience.

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