

MM

31 March, 2004

The Prime Minister
The Rt Hon Tony Blair, MP
10 Downing Street
London, SW1A 2AA.

TV licence
DCMS
(59)

Dear Prime Minister,

THE FUTURE OF THE BBC AND TV LICENSING: CHARTER REVIEW

I enclose for your information a copy of a letter which I have been obliged to send to TV Licensing. The contents are self-explanatory - I have paid my license fee but TV Licensing have no budgetary trail of the payment and are pursuing me with their enforcement procedures. There is a clear lack of proper accounting by the authority, and my experience highlights how the existing "Gastapo-style, mid-night knock at the door" powers which it can exercise can all too readily be misapplied due to their incompetency.

The totally unjustified harassment which I have suffered at the hands of TV Licensing has been an eye opener to me in terms of the on-going debate about the future, and funding, of an independent broadcasting company in the UK. Such elaborate detection and 'interview' procedures may be necessary to catch the genuine licence dodgers, but does this really make sense in terms of a cost effective system which can be administered without victimising the innocent - particularly perhaps the elderly.

I have written to the Broadcasting Policy Division of DCMS flagging up the main policy issues which my experience highlights. I have also cited the latest advertisement campaign which TV Licensing has launched - presumably in an attempt to demonstrate that TV Licensing has a grip on the issue and that the question of licence fee collection should not be a material one in the forthcoming 'charter debate'. A copy of my letter to DCMS is also enclosed for your information, together with copies of some of the threatening notices I have received from TV Licensing. I have also copied my letter to TV Licensing to the constituency MP - Iain Duncan Smith - for his information.

Yours sincerely,

Alec J. Gusterson
Alec J. Gusterson

Department for Culture, Media and Sport	
DATE RECEIVED:	21 APR 2004
Treat Official (TOs) Correspondence	
Deadline:	18 / 05 / 04 (Tick)
Action	Treat Official Reply <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
BF	Treat As Appropriate <input type="checkbox"/>
	For information only <input type="checkbox"/>
FCU REF:	04 • 1388