

22nd February 2004

Dear Sirs

In response to your request for my views on the BBC, I submit my comments. In my view, the BBC is no longer a national asset. I believe that its impact on our national life is negative, its journalism characterised by cynicism, intellectual laziness and the selective use of information to support favoured 'themes'. Happily, I do not believe that, in this age of global communications, a national broadcasting service is an essential. I believe that we could dispense with the BBC. If a publicly-funded broadcasting service is considered essential, then the BBC should be broken up within the UK into national broadcasting services i.e. the English should fund an English broadcasting service.

I will specify more closely my criticisms of the BBC.

News coverage

The BBC's reporting of the news is very distorted. It is based on the fiction that everything in Britain is a shambles (Third-World) while everything in every other country runs like clockwork. In order to maintain this theme the BBC news editors are keen to avoid news items such as major train-crashes in Germany, Spain, Italy, Austria etc. In the same vein, major crises in health provision in Sweden, Denmark, Holland and other countries are happily ignored in order not to reduce the impact of 'our failing Health-Service' stories. Statistics are frequently presented without reference to an international context.

'Celt good - English bad'

The BBC's journalist-force is unbalanced; the English are under-represented. This shows in the news-coverage. Celtic teams are always 'brave' or 'passionate'. The most common adjective applied by Ceefax to English teams is 'sad'. The impact of recent constitutional changes on the English are virtually ignored. Celtic nationalism is treated with reverence, Englishness and English nationalism are sneered at and frequently introduced with the phrase 'the ugly face of' I do not think that the BBC should fail to report incidences of English football-hooliganism of which the vast majority of Englishmen are deeply ashamed. I am, however, concerned that instances of Celtic football-hooliganism are simply ignored. I will quote two examples:-

1) In the summer of 2000, Scottish football fans on their way to Holland for a friendly match prior to Euro 2000, caused mayhem in Newcastle and on a North-Sea ferry. The Dutch arrested and deported many. The BBC ignored it.

2) In the autumn of 2003, Welsh football fans were involved in fighting in Milan. There were many arrests. The BBC ignored it.

Following English teams on the BBC engenders vague feelings of guilt. Contrast this with the sporting coverage offered by *Talksport* and *Channel 4* where one is allowed to rejoice in being English.

Sports coverage

Tedious. Why do Alan Green and Mike Ingham think that I'm interested in:-

- The trouble that they had getting to the ground
- How cold/wet/windy it is (unless it affects play)
- How boring the game is
- How stupid the referee is ?

'Talksport' do it much better and sound as if they are enjoying it.

Do the silly old buffers on *'Test Match Special'* really think I'm interested in cakes, buses, aeroplanes or supporting the 'other chap'. [' I'm sure we'd all like to see Tendulker/Lara/Ponting get his double-century! ' Of course I wouldn't! I want him out!]

Irresponsible use of licence-payers' money

Can the BBC really justify spending my money on environmentally- and socially- irresponsible programmes such as *Top Gear*? Can the payment of money to criminals such as the Hamiltons and Ingrams be justified in order to 'spice-up' *Have I Got News Fro You* etc. ?

Damage to Britain's image abroad

What possible justification can there be for broadcasting on BBC World a programme in which Jeremy Clarkson invited union-wreckers from the former British Leyland to describe in great detail, and with glee, how they sabotaged production of motor cars. That is not objective broadcasting. I can't imagine the German or the French doing anything remotely similar.

Descent into populism

'Listeners Law' was in bad-taste (if not an abuse of Parliament). Likewise, running a poll on the *Today* Programme on 'who would you kick out of Britain?' was nothing more than a piece of populist nastiness.

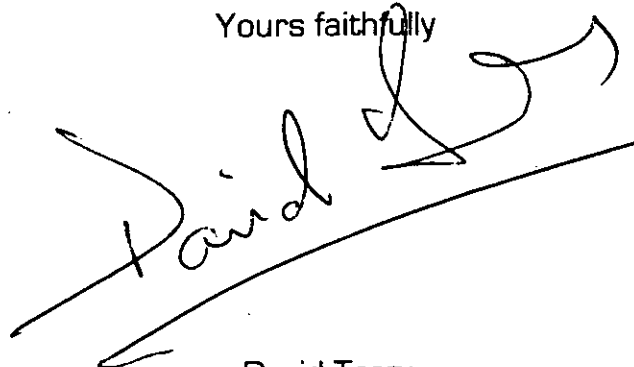
What does one listen to if one is not a natural whinger?

The consumer affairs programmes *You and Yours* and *Money-box* have become vehicles for pushing the absurd view that nothing bad or uncomfortable should ever happen to us and, if it does, it must be 'their' fault. *Money-box* does not seem to appreciate that I'm not interested in the disappointment of people who thought that they were cleverer than the rest of us and ignored the basic law that 'high returns mean high risk'.

The BBC must take a great deal of responsibility for the 'Victim Society' which we now have to endure.

I attach correspondence which addresses more specifically some of the problems which I have raised with the BBC in recent years.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Terry', written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

David Terry

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