

To BBC Charter Review,
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From Rob Alp,

REASONS FOR NOT PAYING THE BBC LICENCE FEE

The BBC has a strong Labour bias, puts on too many repeats and dumbed down programmes and it vastly overpays its mostly incompetent executives and top staff who mismanage the Corporation.

POOR PROGRAMMES.

- Immediately after Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell urged the BBC to improve standards it showed blatant pornography at 9.15 in the morning in a series called Britain's Streets of Vice, which included naked homosexuals at an orgy.
- * Former BBC director general Alasdair Milne blamed the domination by women executives for the poor content of programmes and for so many "dumb, dumb, dumb" copycat cookery, gardening and makeover shows.
- Even the jovial Terry Wogan criticised the BBC television for its continuous use of makeover and reality shows. He said once it had found a successful formula it "beats it to death until we're all heartily sick of it."
- The actor David Jason also attacked the Corporation for continually showing repeats, including showing Only Fools and Horses so much.
- BBC2 screened the controversial blasphemous two-hour Jerry Springer Opera, complete with all its foul obscene language, despite 50,000 protests. Even the producer of the stage show, Allan McKeown, agreed it was "entirely unsuitable" for television audiences.
- Last year BBC1's share of viewers was less than 25 percent and BBC2's less than 10 percent – their worst year on record.
- The BBC's initial coverage of the Asian tsunami was appalling, partly because the BBC's "bigwigs" chose not to disturb their Christmas holidays and fly back to the Corporation's headquarters in London.

- Its coverage of the Allied invasion of Iraq was knocked into a cocked hat by ITN, Sky and CNN.
- * Its once respected Panorama programme is so typically dumbed down it now discusses the plots for EastEnders.
- A serious and well-filmed programme like British Isles: A Natural History, spent more time focussing on Alan Titchmarsh than the landscape. Great lengths were spent filming this gardener turned palaeontologist eating strawberry and cream scones in Devon.
- Repeats rose on all BBC channels by 2,000 hours last year, according to a survey commissioned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. This represents a ten percent increase, or 22,745 hours of programmes that have been aired before.
- The survey found that two-thirds of viewers believed the licence fee should be scrapped.
- Respected newspaper columnist Stephen Glover wrote: "There is absolutely no point to the BBC if it merely replicates the worst of commercial television – mindless gameshows, vulgar and exhibitionist "reality television", and third-rate soap operas."

MISMANAGEMENT.

- The BBC paid £4,500 of the public's money to serial criminal Brendon Fearson who broke into Tony Martin's farmhouse. Even the Lord Chancellor, Lord Falconer, described the payment as "awful and a disgusting warping of our values."
- It gives £60,000 to the controversial Tracey Emin to make a sculpture of a small bird on a pole.
- It gives £500,000 of licence-payers' money to Tracey Emin to make a ridiculous film about teenage girls in Margate discussing their sex lives.
- Former Director General Greg Dyke describes the governors of the BBC as "gutless, hopeless bastards, who know little about broadcasting, little about how to be independent from government and little about how to motivate staff."
- The Corporation blew £200,000 renting a flat overlooking the Vatican for a vantage point when the Pope dies, only to cancel it just weeks before he was rushed into hospital. The BBC paid £2,500 a month for the flat and a one-off payment of £10,000. However it was presumably a splendid holiday flat in Rome for BBC executives?
- The BBC's "leadership" courses cost £35 million. The £5,000-a-head courses in Hertfordshire have been described as a "misuse of the licence fee" by independent

training consultant Paul Kearns. He said the course had "no link whatsoever to any performance objectives of the BBC." Despite this, the BBC said it is sending almost all its staff on the course.

- The BBC's 7,000 journalists are more than all Britain's daily and Sunday newspapers combined.
- The BBC paid £2 million for a cartoon series ridiculing the Pope and the Catholic Church that it then decided too offensive to show.
- The Corporation spent £60 million on taxi fares during the last five years, or £33,000 of licence payers' money on cabs every year since 1999. Sometimes staff are ferried 500 yards from car parks to their office.
- * The BBC hires the head of Osama bin Laden's mouthpiece TV channel Al-Jazeera, Ibrahim Helal, who quit Al-Jazeera after receiving a "tempting offer" from the BBC World Service Trust.
- * The Corporation ignores normal rules that, unlike all other television channels and newspapers, family members of its staff can compete in its own competitions. Ann Knowles won £65,000 in the show In It To Win It while her daughter, BBC managing editor Jane Booth, yelled her delight in the studio audience.
- The hiccup with the Hutton Report after the Alistair Campbell contrived row over Iraq led to more bureaucracy. The Corporation now insists everyone involved in producing programmes have to complete two "interactive training modules" on their computers – whatever that gobbledegook means.

LABOUR BIAS,

- The BBC continually attacks on Michael Howard.
- It screens the pro-Labour drama Faith, about the miners' strike, to circumvent the rules on political impartiality before a General Election.
- A report the BBC commissioned itself confirmed it is biased in favour of the European Union – and therefore the Labour Party. The damning indictment said that most viewers believed the BBC to be pro-Labour and pro-EU and they felt it "was in the government's pocket".
- Selective coverage meant viewers saw little of the police bashing anti-hunt ban protesters on the head in Westminster last year.
- When Evan Davies, the Corporation's Economic Editor, reported on the Tories' new spending plans on BBCI News he did not even attempt to keep the smirk of incredulity of his face and at one stage even broke out into a guffaw of disbelief.
- James Naughtie used the phrase "if we win the election" when interviewing Gordon Brown's former adviser Ed Balls on Radio 4's Today programme.

- BBC Newsnight presenter Kirsty Wark has never hidden her close friendship to Labour politicians and her business connections with the Labour Party in Scotland. Yet, in her position of power as an interviewer on Newsnight, she is meant to be whiter than white.
- Nick Clarke, on BBC Radio 4, implied NHS victim Margaret Dixon was playing party politics after the publicity over her shoulder operation being delayed seven times. He was shot down when she told him she was a Labour voter.
- A survey of the BBC's top 50 executives confirmed they were invariably Left-wing, read the Guardian, usually lived in Islington or Camden and hated sport.
- The Report after the Alistair Campbell contrived row over Iraq leads to more bureaucracy within the Corporation. It now insists that everyone involved in producing programmes have to complete two "interactive training modules" on their computers – whatever that gobbledegook means.

OVER-PAID.

- The BBC receives £2.6 billion every year from licence fees? No wonder huge bonuses are standard practice in the Corporation. Last July the BBC awarded cash bonanzas of nearly £1 million, despite it suffering the worst year in its history and showing a loss of £245 million.
- Pay-outs included £43,000 to Director of News Richard Sambrook, on top of his £235,000 salary and despite the Gilligan affair and savage criticism in the Hutton Report.
- Deputy Director General Mark Byford was given an extra £100,000 for taking the helm for a short time after Greg Dyke quit.
- Alan Yentob, Head of Drama and Entertainment, received £45,000 on top of his £321,000 salary, despite an investigation into his expenses.
- At the same time the wage bill for BBC's 18 top brass rose by about £100,000 to £5.2 million.

The BBC Royal Charter does not come up for renewal until 2006. However the licence fee should be scrapped immediately, despite Tessa Jowell's current conclusions. It has only itself to blame as it has shot itself in the foot.

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