TWO BECOME ONE

Not that Foot panicked. An extraordinary and unlikely set of circumstances had deposited him in the role of Director General of the BBC - a role for which he was barely qualified, and which he had only agreed to fill specifically because someone else was going to do the actual BBC-type stuff while he sorted out its corporate structure. Unfortunately that person was actively dying by degrees (although ironically Graves, freed of the BBC's weight on his shoulders, ultimately lived a further fifteen years) and his ability to fulfil that function had decayed over eighteen months before absconding altogether, leaving his half of the buck to stop where the other already did.

He couldn't stay in the role alone, that was certain. His only use to the BBC was as an administrator, a corporate director, and in that role he'd already accomplished his main goals with the reformation of the Corporation's structure. Beyond that, into the realms of actual broadcasting-related matters, he was completely lost. He had to pray that Graves was replaceable, otherwise he'd be following him out the door sooner rather than later.

In truth, he might still need to do that anyway. He was out of his comfort zone and there was no guarantee that he could fashion himself a new one. But he wasn't going to leave the BBC in the lurch. The transition from Reith to Ogilvie had been bumpy, and the one from Ogilvie to Graves and himself had been downright tempest-tossed. Foot was determined, at the very least, to leave in as orderly a fashion as possible. To that end, he took a firm hand in both finding Graves' successor and getting him ready for the job.

The great Tweedledeegee/Tweedledumgee experiment had stalled on the runway; only Minister of Information Brendan Bracken expressed vague support for a continuation of the diarchy structure, assuming Foot could find the right partner. The Board of Governors, however, were unanimous behind their Chairman that the dream was over and Foot should instead find and appoint an "Editor-in-Chief", similar in most ways to Cecil Graves' old job, but subordinate to the Director-General rather than his equal.

The obvious area in which to hold the search was the journalistic sphere, and the Corporation ended up in the offices of legendary news gatherers Reuters, to meet one of their directors, William J. Haley. Haley was also Joint Managing Director of the Manchester Guardian and Evening News Ltd, and a newsman to his marrow. The first meeting between him and Foot was conducted in a hurry, but managed to include an important statement from Haley on his Press credentials:

"*It seems to me that the functions of broadcasting and the Press are complementary. They both*

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have their highly important parts to play in modern civilization."

It may have been brief, but in Foot's words "long enough to convince me without any doubt that he was the man I was looking for." Not least because he expressed willingness bordering on eagerness to take on the role, which from the first of September 1943 was his.

The new setup of Foot as sole DG and Haley as his Editor-In-Chief was unveiled the same day to both the press and the rest of the Corporation. The latter were reassured that he was "in no way a nominee of the Government" and that Foot had been involved in every step of his hiring. The former were treated to an interview with The Times in which Haley set out his guiding principle: "that the BBC by its very nature has one over-riding duty to all spheres: to give its listeners the best in the world".

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