

IS GORDON HAPPY.

RADIO at 7:00-8:30 AM.

WHAT ABOUT LIBERALS?

SECRET

SOME GUIDELINES ON THE MEDIA IN A GENERAL ELECTION

It is axiomatic that our principal purpose in our approach to the media is to influence those voters who might conceivably change their vote in our favour.

There are of course important secondary purposes - to reassure our own supporters, inspire lack of confidence in our opponents in their policies and organisation etc.

Lord Fraser suggested in 1974 that there were 9 million voters who would support the Labour Party regardless of policy or leadership, and 7½ million voters who would support the Conservatives in a similar way.

I suggest that the one attribute that the substantial remaining group has in common is a low interest in politics, and that anyone who follows current events in anything more than a casual way is likely to be in the 16½ million quoted by Lord Fraser.

They do not read the Times, the Daily Telegraph, the Guardian, the Financial Times, the Sunday Times, the Sunday Telegraph or the Observer, and never see a political magazine.

They do not watch Panorama, This Week, World in Action, or any regional political television programme. They are reluctant viewers of party political programmes which they watch inattentively if at all.

They never listen to the radio in the evenings.

It would therefore seem prudent for the Party to gear the campaign to reach the uncommitted voters through the newspapers they read, the television programmes they watch and the radio programmes they listen to, to study the disciplines of these media and plan the campaign around them.

THE NATIONAL PRESS

The national press for this purpose are those morning papers printed in London or Manchester for national distribution. They have a combined sale of 13 million. Readership is usually assessed by multiplying sales figures by 2½ or 3.

Of the national dailies only one reaches our primary target. Readership surveys of all the other nationals show a very marked political allegiance with the one exception of The Sun (circulation by sales of 4½ million)

The Sun's first edition goes to press at 6 p.m. News received later than 4.30 will not get in. News can be put on Page 1 later but The Sun does not print in Manchester and the main editions for the north and north west and Yorkshire go down in the early evening. No pictures received in the office later than 1 p.m. can get into the paper at all. If a function or speech is to be reported in The Sun it must take place in the morning or a transcript of the speech handed to them by 4.30.

And it should be remembered that the deadline is the last chance to get into the paper. Newspaper sub-editors like most other people prefer material that arrives before the last possible minute so that they can work in reasonable time on headlines and lay-out. Material received early always gets preference.

THE EVENING PRESS

The major characteristic of the regional evening press is that they are nearly all monopolies in their own parishes with fringe competition in certain overlap towns. London is not typical. The combined sale is 7½ million.

But unlike the national dailies, all evening papers with the exception of the Evening Standard in London reach our primary target. Local editors usually have complete freedom of action regardless of the proprietorship. It is also a curious fact that while National dailies often follow the evenings for their main lead, the evenings never follow the morning papers in their principal lead story.

Evening newspapers all over Britain are in the middle of the change to new technology. With technical and union problems they are very reluctant to change anything in the paper, except for planned slip pages, sports results etc after the first edition has gone down.

First editions go down at about noon. Pictures received later than 10 a.m. will not get in. Copy received later than 11.30 will not get in. I recently did a test at the Press Association (which supplies the evening newspaper with their national coverage). Remarks made by Mrs Thatcher at 10.46 were actually put on the tapes at 11.33. Not only does the event to be covered have to take place but time must be allowed for the reporter to make his report and the photographer to get his picture back to the office and develop it.

How RECEIVED?

Of course the evening and morning papers make exceptions and do a complete re-plate for a major news story up to 3 p.m. But we are concerned here with the normal practices.

THE WEEKLY PRESS

For the purposes of these guidelines while the weeklies are a very important source of information, they are really a matter for the constituencies.

RADIO

Commercial radio and more important local radio have revolutionised listening habits in the last few months.

Reliable statistics are hard to come by. The one certainty is that radio is listened to early in the day with prime listening between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m., substantial audiences throughout the morning tapering off to near zero by the evening swelled a little by insomniacs and radio freaks in the late evening.

Radio has to carry forward the stories in the morning newspapers, and they tend to follow the morning nationals. Therefore overnight 'stockpiling' is rare. Radio seeks immediacy by talking to the man or woman in the news early that morning for direct transmission. They are prepared to work on the telephone but give preference in time and consideration to anyone who will make the journey to the studio for the interview. Time given is usually double or more for anyone who puts up with the inconvenience. But with briefing and travel, radio means a very early start.

After the talk/news programmes are over say at 10 a.m. there are many Jimmy Young style programmes up to 12.30. After that hour radio listening falls off. There is some car listening particularly in the evening rush hours but on the evidence available, there is nothing to suggest that any substantial numbers of our primary targets are listening.

TELEVISION is the principal occupation after sleeping and working of our primary target. The average viewing time is around 4 hours daily.

A major switch has occurred since the last election in the viewing of the News. The News on both channels is the chief medium of communication for our primary group. There has been a drop in viewing of the 9 p.m. (BBC) and 10 p.m. (ITN) news, probably because there is an alternative entertainment programme on the other channel. There has been a corresponding increase in viewing of 5.40 (BBC) and 5.45 p.m. (ITN) bulletins. The ITN early evening news has the biggest viewing figure for any news programme in Britain, below the BBC in London and the South East but making up through big penetration in the West Midlands, North West, Yorkshire, the North-East and Scotland. Unlike 1974, our principal news impact will be made before 6 p.m.

There is a technical innovation called ENG which would enable TV stations to photograph events right up to and including the news time but it is bedevilled by union disputes.

We must assume that most television coverage will be on film.

Film received by 3.30 p.m. can be inserted into the early bulletins, so that events which are over by 2 p.m. can appear. But the same rule of convenience applies and news film received by 1 p.m. will be preferentially treated by editors who like time to work in.

Precisely the same limitations operate for the only other available television slot which is watched by our target group - the early evening regional magazine programmes which immediately follow the early news in all parts of the country.

The use of outside broadcast units, which is expensive and sparingly used (probably only the Leader of the Party could expect it and then rarely) would make the deadline later.

The election programmes mounted by both BBC and ITN are probably not watched by our primary targets. I have no research evidence to support this claim but the programmes usually come on late after 10.30 sometimes after 11. British television watching tails off dramatically after 10.30. As our group has a low interest level in politics it is unlikely that they will spend time watching any political programmes, especially election programmes.

If there is one lesson to be learned from the new viewing habits it is that any event to reach our primary targets must be completed by noon to be sure of favourable treatment in the bulletins and news magazines programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Evidence suggests that the prime campaigning hours in 1978/79 will be 7 a.m. to noon. //

We are proposing to waste over half of it in preparing for, and taking part in a press conference. When the conference is over we are proposing to maroon the Leader in central London with no chance of reaching newsworthy or pictureworthy sites before the deadline close.

The morning conferences are unpopular with the press ("We are used to television fodder. It is too early in the day for the nationals, too late in the day for the evenings")

The morning conferences are unpopular with television companies because they are boring television ("We cover them because you don't give us anything else to cover.")

Television in the past has tended to use the conference for early bulletins until they could get something better for their main bulletins. But now that viewing habits have changed and the early evening news has become the prime information source we shall be locked into a basically unattractive format which does not enable the Leader of our party to be seen to her best advantage.

The television audience needs to see a relaxed woman in "soft" situations, recognisable surroundings - supermarkets, factories, streets - out in the country. Press conferences, however well they might to go in the hall, are seen on television to be strident, defensive, angry occasions where on hostile questioner after another puts 'objections'. A one to one interview is far better for Mrs Thatcher.

Would our coverage suffer if our opponents held a morning conference if we did not? No. Why should they? We would receive exactly the same time-slots (TV stations work by stop watches in elections) But we would be seen in the 'real Britain' in an intimate format talking to the viewer in his home. Television is an intimate medium, is better for impressions than messages. Interviews in real locations will always score.

Will the television companies particularly ITN and BBC News agree to this? Yes.

When would Mrs Thatcher see the national press? Occasionally at the 2 p.m. print conference. Otherwise at on the record briefing to journalists assigned to her for the tour.

What about the evening press, and when do they get a briefing? Ideally a senior spokesman should be available to the provincial press and the PA at say 9 a.m.

Radio? Radio needs access to the senior party spokesman including on occasions the Leader between 7 a.m. and 8.30 a.m.

Does anyone actually like the conferences? Yes, foreign journalist who otherwise get no chance to talk to the Leader.

The key is television. Whatever our opponents do, it will be no advantage to us if the Leader of our party is isolated in central London during all campaigning hours.

GENERAL ELECTION - PERSONNEL AND RESPONSIBILITIES

	<u>1974</u>	<u>NEXT TIME</u>
1 Responsible for all broadcasting activities, supervision of election broadcasts, attendance at daily meetings, and daily liaison with Chief Whip	John Lindsey	John Lindsey
2 Daily liaison with television and radio programmes.	David Davies	David Davies
3 Supervision of monitoring	Mary Thorold	Mary Thorold
4 Monitoring in C.C.O.		
5 Operation of studio, including recording of press conferences.	Peter Garrard	Peter Garrard
6 Production of election broadcasts (radio)	Tim Brinton*	Howell Thomas
7 Editing of " " "	Colin Beaumont	
8 C.R.D. liaison officers	Stephen Sherbourne Michael Jones	John Houston Richard Norton
9 Operation of "Escort Service" TV	Gordon Reece**	
10 Operation of "Escort Service" Radio	Howell Thomas	
11 Secretaries (To Head of Dept.)	Kate Ainslie Williams	Anna Weldon
(monitoring)	Sue Lowring*	
(escort services)	Sylvia Chapman*	
(general duties)	Elizabeth Zaecker*	
(radio broadcasts)	Valerie Greenfield*	
12 Messenger	Desmond O'Dea* (HofC)	

** Temporary staff, unpaid

* Temporary staff, paid

Publicity by definition is a news operation. Any plans for the publicity coverage of a General Election must therefore be capable of exploiting situations as they arise. We shall be staffed and equipped for Mrs Thatcher's tours and her personal publicity - which is very likely to attract about $\frac{2}{3}$ of publicity attracted by the entire party during the campaign.

RADIO

As I explained in an earlier paper, radio will be an essentially morning exercise and preferably very early morning at that. The BBC Today and IBA "AM" programmes should be, with their regional opt-outs, our prime targets not only because of their substantial audience but because of the opportunities and at a time when it is still possible to reach the inside pages of the afternoon papers.

Shadows, MPs, and candidates should be asked NOT to record studio programmes the previous evening for transmission the following day. However disagreeable the early start may be, it seems to us essential that contributions should be made live during the General Election.

There will be various election phone-ins, available to us and we shall be recommending participation in these programmes through the Chairman as soon as the Broadcasting Authorities offer us more detail - time, date etc.

NEWSPAPERS

We propose to place greater emphasis on the regional newspapers than we have done in the past for reasons outlined in a previous paper. We shall be drawing up a list of the newspaper groups and suggest to them that they might like features by Shadow Ministers and we shall be taking more efforts than on previous occasions to create events in the areas which will call for coverage by regional newspapers. During the course of regional visits made by members of the Publicity Department, we have been particularly struck by the friendliness of Editors, particularly in the newspapers circulating in urban areas.

I shall be keeping in touch personally with the Editors of the Sun, Daily Mail, Daily Express, Daily Telegraph, Sunday Express, News of the World, Sunday Telegraph and Sunday Mirror frequently during

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the campaign and I shall circulate their views on the progress of the campaign to the Leader and Chairman.

TELEVISION

PPBs will be made by our Advertising Agency to our pre-determined input strategy recommended by the Leader, Chairman and Research Department. Participation in election programmes will, of course, be the major opportunity for Party Spokesmen and our problem here in the past has tended to be organisational rather than creative - getting the right people for the right programme into the studio at the right time etc. It would obviously be to our advantage if those senior members of the Party who communicated well on TV could be used across the board regardless of their portfolio responsibilities. If this one feature could be agreed it would make the effect of our TV contributions very much better.

Gordon Reece

24.3.78