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Meanwhile, back home, the post-Coronation summer was a time of great strutting and preening for the Corporation. One of the biggest (non-violent) events in decades had gone off better than anyone could possibly have expected. Television was the hottest thing around in practice as well as in theory. 97% of the country was ready for it. The Coronation had spurred an almost incomprehensibly vast wave of new adopters just from anticipation, and the experience of the event itself was fuelling even more.

And the BBC was at the forefront of it all. The revolution was televised. In 405 lines (at least in this country). Tomorrow belonged to television and television belonged to the BBC. Best of all, in Sir Ian Jacob, they had a leader who was excited by the possibilities of a whole new medium. Better yet, because he came to business from the military, he had abilities the BBC hadn't even considered.

Corporate planning was not really a thing yet - the term hadn't even been coined - and large operations such as the BBC tended to live in the moment, operating as vast engines of perpetual motion, carefully designed by engineers like Reith and Foot. The military, on the other hand, is all about what happens next. Or could happen next. Or what you want and need to happen next, and how what just happened affects that. That was the background from which Jacob came to the Corporation.

So shortly after the Coronation, with the BBC still developing a deep and even tan from the reflected glory, Jacob unveiled his Ten Year Plan for the future of broadcasting. Or at least the future of the BBC. Which as far as he or anyone else knew was the same thing. Ten years because that was (and is) the span of a BBC Charter Period. The plan had percolated since Jacob's arrival, around the time it had been renewed, and now the Coronation was out of the way, it was made public in June 1953.

The first and most important principle in the Ten Year Plan was the one that had been on everyone's mind for decades: competition. Not *with* the BBC - it was still assumed, at least within the Corporation, that there was no British Broadcasting without it - but within it. Jacob envisioned a second channel to compliment the main service (which by the end of the decade should be "within the reach of virtually the entire population" - an ambition that, with the help of the Coronation, was already more or less fulfilled). This new service would run about five hours a day and provide genuinely alternative viewing to what was on the main service. In this way, the theory went, the two

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channels in friendly competition would keep each other on their toes, resulting in better programming.

Other priorities for the future of television included the introduction of colour inside the decade - ideally, as a USP for the new station. This might have seemed a tall order, and indeed it didn't work out that way, but it wasn't completely ridiculous. Baird was working on, and had even achieved, a version of colour television between the wars, although his version (at a thousand lines) wasn't exactly practical for a national rollout. Britain (and Europe's) first colour service would indeed start on the new station, only a few years wide of Jacob's planned decade.

The last piece of the puzzle was another long-standing concern: regionalism. Specifically, now that practically the entire country had access (if only in potentia) to television, it stood to reason that the medium should start catering to the specific needs and wants of its various transmitter areas, if only occasionally. Local television should become a highly serious thing, with the Regions (with a capital R) "making a substantial contribution of programmes both for national and for local viewing".

For Sound the future was less clear, largely because it was now definitively second-class, but it was still too early to say how wide the gap was going to get. Jacob and the BBC chose to work under the assumption that everyone in Britain wouldn't just hurl their old wireless sets into a big burning bin inside the next ten years, and listening figures would still number in at least one or two of the millions. This being the case, the plan (as with television) was to transition, or at least begin the transition, to new and better technology - in this case VHF.

None of this would be cheap, but Jacob and the BBC confidently predicted they could do it all without increasing the licence fee - which was just as well as the Government had just frozen it. They turned out to be wrong by about £6 million, which is one of the reasons that most of the Corporation's big ambitions took longer than ten years. There were other spanners in the works too, however, which were far less predictable.

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