

BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY, 1945-56

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and liaised with the BBC over the coverage of British foreign policy on the Home, Overseas and European News Services. The British press also played its part in national projection, often unwittingly. William Clark, a former diplomat who became diplomatic correspondent for the *Observer* in the 1950s, pointed out that

by its control of the sources of information, with the implied threat that criticism of policies would lead to a less full flow to that correspondent, by co-opting all of us diplomatic correspondents into a cosy club of those in the know, I fear that the government. . . . did manage the news of our foreign policy.³⁰

There was also a Cultural Relations Department in the Foreign Office which advised and instructed the British Council, as well as advising on other cultural matters relating to the Council of Europe and UNESCO. The Information Policy Department – the purely propaganda section – supplied the information officers abroad with suitable material and liaised with the COI.³¹ To illustrate the importance which the Foreign Office now attached to information policy, a further six regional information departments were created: the European Information Department (divided into East and West Europe), Middle Eastern, Far Eastern, Latin American and, perhaps most important of all, the American Information Department. There was also a German Information Department which dealt specifically with the question of re-education in the British zone.³²

The COI's own foreign sections fell into various categories. The Overseas Press Services Division prepared daily general information résumés for morse-code transmission in English from Rugby which could be picked up by anyone. Inaugurated in August 1945, this service of 'slow news' replaced the old prewar British Official Wireless and was called the London Press Service, transmitting about 50 000 words a week and costing about £40 000 a year in 1947–48.³³

In addition, five regional services of about 2000 words daily were transmitted to Latin America, India and Pakistan, the Far East, Moscow and the Middle East. Fleet Street journalists were commissioned to write feature articles for transmission or postal distribution abroad, and British journal or newspaper articles were also disseminated and, if necessary, translated. All this material was designed to provide 'an account of significant British events and attitudes and achievements in the field of government, social welfare, industry and science'.³⁴ The Photographic Services Division of the COI distributed 180 000 prints in its first year and just under 50 per