From the report by TASS employee, D.F. Kraminov, ‘Organization of English external propaganda’, 2 October 1945

Secret

[…]

2. Organizations carrying out active external propaganda

[…]

Foreign Publicity Department was set up in June this year to co-ordinate and control external propaganda during peacetime[[1]](#footnote-1). It is supposed that this Department will consolidate the entire external propaganda apparatus of the Ministry of Information. The Department is still being formed. The only thing known about its activity is that it has organised an anti-Soviet campaign in the English press focusing on the issue of the "Sovietisation" of Bulgaria, Romania, and Yugoslavia. It has also issued a directive to the BBC to feed anti-Soviet information - in moderate amounts, but as frequently as possible, and without providing any comments. Ivone Kirkpatrick[[2]](#footnote-2), a Catholic, pro-fascist, long-term colleague of Chamberlain and a friend of Hess[[3]](#footnote-3), has been appointed the head of the Department. While being the Head of BBC broadcasting in Germany, he supported Goebbels in his propaganda of "bolshevist" atrocities.

The Ministry of Information. [...] All external propaganda is controlled by a special Foreign Publicity Department, headed by the intelligence agent General Ronald Charles[[4]](#footnote-4), who was then replaced by Professor Carr[[5]](#footnote-5), and his deputy, professional intelligence agent Lieutenant-Colonel Bridge[[6]](#footnote-6). [...] During the War the Ministry of Information has been sending to Moscow not only "Soviet" material, that is, material somehow related to the Soviet Union, but also some other material, which the staff of the Ministry of Information thought might be interesting for Moscow. The Ministry of Information was competing with the TASS department in London in terms of who will be the first to send ordinary newspaper material: newspaper articles, whole front-page stories. They diligently telegraphed entire articles, the aim being to omit one or two phrases from the article, to slightly soften the wording, or sometimes to drop an entire unpleasant paragraph. The press secretaries’ apparatus which officially reports to the Department of Press within the Foreign Office is in fact controlled by the Ministry of Information. The Ministry of Information supplies them with all the propaganda materials; it also supplies information to newspapers which are published by embassies in many countries. In the countries that are dependent on the English media, the press secretaries are controlling and actually editing the newspapers. The best example of this would be Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries. [...]

The budget of the Ministry of Information is colossal: in 1944 it was 3,500,000 sterling which equals 70,000,000 gold roubles.

The British external propaganda apparatus has been completely destroyed. For this reason the Ministry of Information has launched into frenzied activity in the liberated countries. In Paris the press secretary of the British Embassy could not fit his staff in a huge building, which was much larger than the building of the Embassy itself. According to an American diplomat in Paris, the English have a larger budget for “conquering France” than they had for liberating France from the German occupation. In Italy the Ministry of Information, already headed by a Labour Minister, has opened, existing separately from the press department of the British Embassy in Rome, and additional branches of the Embassy's press department in Milan, Turin, Genoa, Naples, and Palermo. […] Furthermore, as Italy is still actually occupied by the Anglo-American troops, these branches even provide paper to the newspapers that are useful for the English. This way, the multi-faceted press department of the British Embassy in Rome moulds Italian “public opinion” in a direction required by the English Foreign Office.

The British Council was set up in July 1935 with the aim of strengthening international cultural relations, as well as to promote British culture, industry and “democracy”. Formally, the Council is an independent charitable organisation; however, it receives huge subsidies from the state that are paid from the budgets of the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office. This subsidy grew from 5,000 sterling in 1935 to 3,500,000 in 1944. In spite of the wild propaganda in Beaverbrook's[[7]](#footnote-7) newspapers, this subsidy was not decreased in 1945. Although the Council is formally headed by a special committee comprising representatives of different parties, all its activity is in fact controlled by the Foreign Office. [...]

The practical work is carried out through two subcommittees and eight functional committees. The subcommittees are for (1) Middle East and (2) Ibero-American. This demonstrates a special interest of the British Council for the Middle East and America.

The Middle East is the first in importance and the Chairman of this subcommittee is the Chairman of the Council.

[…]

There is a press department at the Council, which publishes special information bulletins and a lot of small leaflets in numerous languages. It also organises trips to England for the journalists in some countries. During the War, the press department of the British Council helped British diplomats to woo the neutrals and invited first a group of Swedish journalist and then Turkish journalists. The British Ambassador in Ankara[[8]](#footnote-8) reported to the Foreign Office that a visit by a group of influential Turkish editors and journalists had helped to keep Turkey out of war. The British Council has allocated funds to set up a club for the international journalist federation in London and is actively using it for pro-British propaganda.

The main activity of the British Council abroad is carried out through the so-called British Institutes, where those willing can study the English language, history, and literature; at the Institutes in the Middle East they can even learn a trade. Various commercial and management organisations willingly employ the graduates of these Institutes; therefore the indigenous population consider these Institutes as a route to success in life. The English readily accept them, as it gives them the opportunity to prepare cheap and devoted personnel for initial colonial work or to create an intelligence agent network. In 1944 there were 34 British Institutes, 25 of which were in the Middle Eastern countries. During this war the British Council have driven out its German and French competitors in Turkey; the number of people studying English is five times larger than the number of people studying all other languages taken together. After the war the British Council, as suggested by the Government, has turned its attention to Greece and Italy. [...]

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is the most active weapon of the British external propaganda. The BBC broadcasts one hundred and seventy nine programmes for overseas countries in twenty-four European languages. Special attention is being paid to Germany, with a broadcasting on thirty-six wavelengths. Until recently the broadcasting for individual countries was carried out by the representatives of these countries in London under the guidance of the BBC. Now some of the broadcasting, such as the Yugoslav and Czech, is closed. The BBC only broadcasts news to these countries. Special broadcasting is still carried out for France, Germany, Italy, Belgium and Holland. There is no Russian broadcasting yet, but there is apparatus ready for such broadcasting. The literary group of this broadcasting is headed by P.B. Struve's son[[9]](#footnote-9), who had been expelled from Reuters where he was known for his anti-Soviet tricks. There is a group of Russian White Guard working with him, who up until 1943 had prepared special reviews of the Soviet press for the Foreign Office for internal information of the Government and the ruling bodies, these reviews being full of anti-Soviet generalisations. The European broadcasting of the BBC has recently received a directive to provide, as frequently as possible, the facts that may discredit Soviet global policy and to demonstrate day after day “Soviet imperialism”. The directive was issued by the Department of Foreign Propaganda of the Foreign Office. This directive was initially sent to those broadcasting to Germany, then it was extended to other departments as well. [...]

The English press plays a very active role in the external propaganda. Inspired and directed by the external propaganda organisations, the English press not only ulds British public opinion, but it also represents the position of the British Government on the current international affairs, or conceals this position, depending on the need. The English press publications are sometimes perceived abroad as a representation of British public opinion. This is wrong. With very rare exemptions, the press is absolutely stripped of independence in terms of expressing its views on external policy. The institute of diplomatic correspondents allows the Foreign Office to control the press coverage of international affairs in the press and also to cover these in a way that is necessary for British diplomacy. Some discrepancies in wordings do not impede and even help British diplomacy to fool English readers, and sometimes to perplex foreign readers as well. The English newspapers have a huge number of foreign correspondents, who usually submit to the newspapers material that is required by the Foreign Office. When *Pravda* published “rumours from Cairo” about the negotiations between the British and the Germans on a separate peace treaty, the Foreign Office suggested that the correspondents in Istanbul, Stockholm, and Bern, to publish counter-material. The *News* *Chronicle* correspondent in Istanbul has sent a telegram saying that von Papen[[10]](#footnote-10) was reportedly called in Istanbul “the German Ambassador of the Soviet Government”, and that there seems to be a room in a certain restaurant which is never given to anyone, because von Papen and the Soviet Ambassador Vinogradov[[11]](#footnote-11) often meet there. The *Daily* *Herald* correspondent reported from Bern that there were negotiations between von Ribbentrop and a Soviet diplomat. It was reported from Stockholm that German-Russian co-operation was so advanced that the inventor of V1 (flying bomb) has allegedly travelled via Stockholm to Moscow.

The same type of propaganda in various countries discusses “sovietisation” of the countries occupied by Soviet troops. The press sows daily the seeds of mistrust with regard to the intentions and the behaviour of the Soviet Union. Given the huge readership of the British press abroad, especially of the Sunday editions, this propaganda is extended to other countries. [...]

Numerous Anglophile societies do not require special discussion, as they are organised in the same way as various pro-Soviet cultural societies set up by our VOKS[[12]](#footnote-12). However, the scope with which the British operate is truly impressive. Before the war the British Council supported and provided with material one hundred and ninety six Anglophile societies in Europe alone. During the German occupation these societies disintegrated, and the British Council is hastily reinstating these societies, and restarting them on a wider scale. The newly set up French-English society[[13]](#footnote-13) has the Foreign Secretary for its vice-president and the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Bidault[[14]](#footnote-14) is the vice-president of the society in Paris. There are forty Anglophile societies in Latin America. They are in constant contact, and they are being provided with various propaganda materials.

3. Bodies Facilitating External Propaganda.

The Royal Institute of International Affairs is a kind of a research centre, which provides the slogans and arguments thereof for the English external propaganda. The Institute unites a large group of people who are interested in international affairs and are working on certain problems. The group includes former and current politicians, who have some experience in international affairs, journalists covering international affairs, rich amateur diplomats, and simply rich idlers. […] It is impossible to identify any important international problem that would not have been discussed and worked out by this Institute. Sometimes the Institute works on the problems specifically tasked to do so by the Foreign Office.

The Political and Economic Planning (PEP) Group was set up in the autumn of 1939 with the knowledge of and blessing from the Foreign Secretary Halifax[[15]](#footnote-15) in order to investigate in-depth the problems of British external and internal policies. […] In 1939, following the international political crisis, the Group extended its framework of activities and set up a special international section headed by Professor Carr, who is now deputy editor of *The* *Times*.

Apart from him the section members were Labour theorist Cole[[16]](#footnote-16), liberal publicist and one of the owners of *The Economist,* Layton[[17]](#footnote-17), left publicist Kingsley Martin[[18]](#footnote-18), current German theorist of the Labour Party, Crossman[[19]](#footnote-19), MP Kenneth Lindsay[[20]](#footnote-20), Nicolson[[21]](#footnote-21) and others. The foreign section of the Political and Economic Planning Group has developed two major issues: Britain’s military goals, which in fact were the subordination of all Western and Central Europe to the English dominance under the pretext of English-Western bloc[[22]](#footnote-22); and the relationship with the Soviet Union, which should be built on the presumption that the Soviet Union should not be admitted to the centre of Europe. If this nevertheless happens, British diplomacy should expel the Soviet Union from Europe, using resurrected and “sanitised” Germany. These two theses were then widely and actively used in the British external propaganda, as British diplomacy does indeed aim to implement the idea of creating a Western block to counterbalance the significantly grown influence of the Soviet Union and the USA.

The Foreign Department of the Labour Party, whose activity until lately had been restricted to sending out anti-Soviet pamphlets or publishing books with an anti-Soviet tinge, has sharply increased its activity after the Labour Party came to power. Apart from contacting and inspiring German emigrants, the Foreign Department of the Labour Party tries to influence representatives of the Labour newspapers in London. Recently, the department convened a meeting of the correspondents from dominion Labour newspapers and set the following guideline for them: the Labour readership in England, the dominions, and in the whole world should not expect any “revolutionary steps” in British foreign policy, because the English now have to expect their great allies to weaken: America will not avoid an internal crisis, and Russia is facing an external crisis, as it had allegedly bitten more than it can chew. The correspondents were advised to frequently refer to the situation in America and in the Soviet Union along these lines, and to pay less attention to Bevin. It is said that the British Labour Party, together with the socialist parties in the continent, is ready to embark on a lengthy and deep anti-Soviet and anti-Communist campaign. The Foreign department of the Labour Party is preparing accordingly. [...]

The Propaganda Department within the International Federation of Trade Unions is trying to conduct British propaganda within the workers' movement. After the liberation of Europe this department provides certain information materials to the reviving trade unions of the European countries. In the latest pamphlet that was sent to Germany it was directly stated that the Soviet socialism has allegedly transformed into Soviet imperialism, therefore the workers' movement in Germany should not expect any help from the Soviet Union, which is exactly the same thesis that is already propagated by all bodies of the English external propaganda, including the Foreign Department of the Labour Party.

* 1. Co-ordination of Propaganda

Until very recently the British did not manage to create a single controlling centre of the external propaganda. The separate agencies carrying out external propaganda were at fight with each other, because the British Council would not accept the authority of the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Information was fighting against the prevalence of diplomacy in external propaganda, the BBC was aspiring to become independent etc. [...]

The Political Warfare Executive was set up as a body co-ordinating the British propaganda for occupied Europe and enemy countries. Two ministers, the Foreign Secretary and the Minister of Information, both of them close collaborators and friends of the Prime Minister, were entrusted by the Government to control this propaganda.

[…]

They were supported by this Executive, which included a special directorate headed by the General Director Bruce Lockhart[[23]](#footnote-23). His assistants were General Brooks[[24]](#footnote-24), one of the heads of military intelligence, Rex Leeper[[25]](#footnote-25), an old staff member of the Foreign Office intelligence, current English Ambassador to Greece, the organiser of the persecution of leftist organisations in the country, and Ivone Kirkpatrick, whom we have already described. This Directorate of the Political Warfare, secret and reporting to the two ministers only, was controlling all the propaganda against the enemy and against ... friends – the Soviet Union. [...]

* 1. Connection between Intelligence Service and Propaganda

Studying the activities of the English external propaganda bodies indicates that their information and propaganda activity goes hand in hand with the intelligence activity, these activities are closely related, and complement rather than impede each other. External propaganda is managed by intelligence officers (Bruce Lockhart, Kirkpatrick, Brooks, earlier – Vansittart[[26]](#footnote-26), Charles, Campbell[[27]](#footnote-27), etc.), the propaganda apparatus abroad and in the country is staffed nearly 100% with intelligence agents. The British Institutes are not only the intelligence nests, they are also used as points where agents are recruited and educated. The character of work itself allows the propagandists, lecturers, journalists, etc. to deeply penetrate the country, get to know the people, earmark the persons that may be useful for the intelligence purposes.

2.10.45 D. Kraminov[[28]](#footnote-28)

[RSASPH, f. 17, inv. 125, file 383, pp. 71–85]

Keywords: inter-allied relations, propaganda, post-war Western Europe, post-war Eastern Europe, post-war Middle East, Turkey, France

1. An analogous department had been formed earlier, in June 1939, within the Foreign Office structure. It was openly discussed in Parliament. See, for example: Hansard. Parliamentary Debates. 5th Ser. Vol. 348. Col. 1829W (House of Commons, 19/06/1939). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Kirkpatrick, Ivone Augustine (1897 – 1964) – British diplomat, political adviser at Supreme Allied Headquarters (1944 – 1945), Permanent Under-Secretary for the German Section at the Foreign Office (1949 – 1950), British High Commissioner for Germany (1950 – 1953), Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1953 – 1957). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Such an opinion was connected to the fact that Kirkpatrick interviewed Hess in 1941 and compiled an account for the top leadership in Great Britain. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Charles, Ronald (1875 - 1955) - British officer in the Royal Engineers and intelligence agent. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. To all appearances, the reference is to Carr, Edward Hallet (1892 – 1982) – British historian and diplomat, and an editorial writer for *The Times* during the war. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Probably refers to Edward Ettingdene Bridges, 1st Baron Bridges (1892 – 1969) – Cabinet Secretary (1938 – 1946), Head of the Home Civil Service (1945 – 1956), Chair of The British Council (1959 – 1967). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Beaverbrook, William Maxwell “Max” Aitken (1879 – 1964) – British statesman and newspaper proprietor (“Daily Express”, “London Evening Standard”, “Sunday Express”) of Canadian origin, Lord Privy Seal (1943 – 1945). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Peterson, Maurice Drummond (1889 – 1952) – British diplomat, Ambassador to Turkey (1944 – 1946), Ambassador to USSR (1946 – 1949). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. This appears to mean Struve, Gleb Petrovich (1898 – 1985), son of the political figure and philosopher Petr Berngardovich Struve (1870 – 1944), Russian poet and literary critic, in 1932 – 1947 гг. he was teaching at University College London. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Papen, Franz von (1879 – 1969) – German statesman and diplomat, former Chancellor of Germany, during the war Ambassador to Turkey (1939 – 1944). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Vinogradov, Sergei Aleksandrovich (1907 – 1970) – Soviet diplomat and statesman, Ambassador of the USSR in Turkey (1940 – 1948), head of the Section for UN Affairs (1948 – 1949), I European Section (1949 – 1950) in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Chairman of Radio Broadcasting in the Council of Ministers of the USSR (1950 – 1953.). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. All-Union Society of Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Appears to refer to the Franco-British Society, founded in 1924. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Bidault, Georges (1899 – 1983) – French statesman and politician, Minister for Foreign Affairs (1944 – 1946, 1946 – 1947), President of the Provisional Government of the French Republic (1946), Prime-Minister (1949 – 1950), Deputy Prime-Minister (1950, 1951 – 1952), Minister of Defence (1951 – 1952). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Halifax, Edward Wood (1881 – 1951) – British statesman and diplomat, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1938 – 1940), Ambassador to USA (1940 – 1946). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Appears to refer to: Cole, George Douglas Howard (1889 – 1959) – British political theorist and historian. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. The reference appears to be to: Layton, Walter Thomas (1884 – 1966) – British economist and editor, chairman of The Economist Newspaper Ltd (1944 – 1963). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Martin, Basil Kingsley (1897 – 1964) – British journalist, editor of *New Statesman* magazine (1931 – 1960). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Crossman, Richard Howard Stafford (1907 – 1964) – British statesman and politician, during the war a member of the Political Warfare Executive, held numerous posts in the Cabinet during 1960s. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Lindsay, Kenneth Martin (1897 – 1991) – British politician, former Labour MP (1935 – 1945), independent MP (1945 – 1950). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Nicolson, Harold George (1886 – 1968) – British diplomat and civil servant, during the war Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Information (1940 – 1941), member of the Board of Governors of the BBC (1941 – 1946). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. A similar idea was formulated earlier in a note by Shtein on 22 September 1943: ‘Questions Concerning International Alliances and Blocs in Europe’. Comparing British plans for different federations in Europe with the Pan-Europa project of the interwar French Foreign Minister A. Briand, the Soviet diplomat came to the following conclusion: ‘if Briand’s Pan-Europa was an attempt to establish and consolidate French hegemony, the European federation that has been designed now could objectively be a mere weapon of English hegemony on the continent of Europe’ (FPARF. F. 0512. Op. 4. P. 31. D. 307. L. 10). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Bruce Lockhart, Robert Hamilton (1887 – 1970) – British diplomat and intelligence officer, Director-General of the Political Warfare Executive (1941 – 1945). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Brooks, Reginald Alexander Dallas (1896 – 1966) – British General, Deputy Director-General of the Political Warfare Executive (1943 – 1944), Commandant General Royal Marines (1946 – 1949), Governor of Victoria (1949 – 1963). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Leeper, Reginald (Rex) (1888 – 1968) – British diplomat and civil servant, head of Political Intelligence Department of Foreign Office (1939 – 1943), Ambassador to Greece (1943 – 1946, till 1944 to Greek Government-in-Exile in Cairo), Ambassador to Argentina (1946 – 1948). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Vansittart, Robert Gilbert (1881 – 1957) – British diplomat and civil servant, Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs (1930 – 1938), Chief Diplomatic Adviser to His Majesty's Government (1938 – 1941), during the war prominent supporter of a strong anti-German line (Litvinov characterized him in October 1943 as ‘the most extreme anti-Germanist’; See: SSSR i germanskii vopros. Т. 1. S. 288). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Appears to refer to: Campbell Stuart, Collin (1885 – 1972) – British newspaper magnate of Canadian origin, active in political warfare during the First World War (Deputy Director of Propaganda in Enemy Countries, 1918), and one of the founders of so-called Department EH (1938) which became part of Special Operations Executive in 1940. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Kraminov, Daniil Fedorovich (1910 – 1994) – Soviet writer and journalist, TASS correspondent in Great Britain (1943 – 1944), TASS correspondent at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe (1944 – 1945), from 1945 he worked as the head of the TASS bureau in Berlin, then as an editor as Gosteleradio (until 1952), editor of the Americas section of *Pravda* (1952 – 1959). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)