**THE EXPANSIONISTS (I)**

With the War clearly not going anywhere anytime soon, 1941, and much of 1942 - the remainder of Ogilvie's tenure and beyond - would be dominated by a massive sprawling argument over the Corporation's foreign policy. The Ministry of Information first became concerned in the autumn of 1940, when it first became apparent that the amount of foreign-language broadcasting coming out of the BBC was in serious danger of falling - and not just because more and more of the rest of the continent was speaking German. In fact, that was part of the problem: more and more of Europe was falling to the Nazis, and the broadcast word (to use Priestley's term) was the only way for the Allied world to communicate with most of them. And there was still an Empire to hold together through the chaos. As Britain gradually became very nearly the only non-Nazi country left in Europe, foreign-language broadcasting was more important now than ever.

Hence the policy of "Triple Expansion" - an attempt to increase the BBC's overseas output by a factor of three. To achieve this would have been ambitious in peacetime: it required the building of around eighteen new transmitters throughout the war-torn continent, thousands of new staff to run them and dozens of huge new buildings to put them in. With World War II raging through the continent, and the consequent labour shortage, this was going to be a tricky sell. A conservative estimate was that it was going to cost at least £500,000 - which today would translate to around £25 million. The Ministry's main representative in considering these proposals was Sir Walter Monckton, a lawyer and proto-PR man who'd helped Edward VIII through his abdication and was now directing propaganda at the MInistry.

It was Monckton who had the idea of selling Triple Expansion through the notion that it might shorten the war by a month or more - and also to lobby separate parts of the Cabinet, both to make the cost seem smaller by partitioning it out, and to hopefully tangle the policy up between departments such that some progress was unavoidable. With a bit of prodding from both Monckton and Ogilvie, the Treasury eventually approved the plan, and Ogilvie now had to figure out how to actually get it done.

The Overseas Expansion committee created for this purpose - headed by Ogilvie's deputy and BBC lifer Cecil Graves - went ahead and ordered the new transmitters and started drawing up schedules, but immediately faced difficulties in getting the buildings and workers together. Once again the BBC and Parliament were at loggerheads, although this time the Ministry of Information was on their side - or, at least, the Minister himself thought they were. From 1940 to mid 1941 this was Alfred Duff Cooper (always known simply by

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the latter two names), former War Secretary until his resignation over the Munich agreement. Now Churchill had made him Minister of Information in succession to Reith, partly in order to keep him around, although he had no idea what he was doing there and disliked the job immensely. Still, he had nothing against the Corporation, and when its representatives complained to him that the Government still wasn't recognising the importance of broadcasting to the war effort or doing anything to help them out, he readily agreed. Upon taking it back to Parliament, he discovered that many MPs were even more annoyed at how long this was taking than the BBC themselves were, but clearly believed the whole thing was the Corporation's fault more than their own. Chief voice against them was Labour's Phillip Noel-Baker, who stated in Parliament:

"*Our whole propaganda energies, especially through wireless, should be multiplied tenfold at whatever cost*."

With which the BBC and Duff Cooper were in agreement, and indeed had been saying themselves. The difference was that Noel-Baker shifted the blame back on to the BBC themselves, with a long (and largely justified) rant about working conditions that included the term "black hole of Tooting Bec" being used to describe the cramped, overcrowded World Service headquarters at Bush House (which incidentally is not located in Tooting Bec; Noel-Baker named it such for security reasons: "that is near enough for Field Marshal Goering").

For whatever reason, the BBC took Noel-Baker's statements and, in particular, his attitude personally, as an attempt either to sabotage them in some way, or at least to embarrass Frederick Ogilvie, against whom Noel-Baker presumably had something unspecified. It was certainly a challenge that required, even demanded a response in their own defence.

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