



London Calling: Britain, the BBC World Service and the Cold War

Alban Webb

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From its inception in 1932, overseas broadcasting by the BBC quickly became an essential adjunct to British diplomatic and foreign policy objectives. For this reason, the World Service was considered the primary means of engaging with attitudes and opinions behind the Iron Curtain during the Cold War. Although funded by government Grant-in-Aid, the Service's editorial independence was enshrined in the BBC's Charter, Licence and Agreement. *London Calling* explores the delicate balance of power that lay in the relations between Whitehall and the World Service during the Cold War.

This book also assesses the nature and impact of the World Service's programmes on listeners living in the Eastern bloc countries. In doing so, it traces the evolution of overseas broadcasting from Britain alongside the political, diplomatic and fiscal challenges that the country faced right up to the Suez crisis and the 1956 Hungarian uprising. These were defining experiences for the United Kingdom's international broadcaster that, as a consequence, helped shape and define the BBC World Service as we know it today. *London Calling* is an important study for anyone interested in the media and foreign policy histories of Great Britain or the history of the Cold War more generally.

Winner of the Longman *History Today* Book of the Year Award 2015

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