



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council

BBC Monitoring Collection AHRC Research Network

## **BBC Monitoring and the Second World War workshop**

**Tuesday 19 January 2016**

**Orpen Boardroom, IWM London, Lambeth Road, London SE1 6HZ**

Workshop Leaders: Suzanne Bardgett and Dr Laura Johnson

### **Programme**

**9:00am**

#### **Registration**

*Tea and coffee will be served on arrival*

**9:30am**

#### **Panel 1: BBC Monitoring and Western Europe**

**Chair: Professor Richard Overy**

Professor Jo Fox (Durham University): *'Somewhere in Europe': the BBC Monitoring Service and 'Black' propaganda broadcasting*

Professor Olivier Wieviorka (École Normale Supérieure de Cachan): *Information and propaganda: new sources, new perspectives*

Dr Karine Varley (University of Strathclyde): *Vichy France's radio propaganda on collaboration: insights from the BBC Monitoring collection*

Dr Erik Somers (NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies): *The BBC Monitoring collection: comparing similar activities by the Dutch Government in Exile in London, 1940-1945*

**11:15am**

**Break for tea and coffee**

**11:45am**

**Brief overview of the future of the BBC Monitoring archive from Radha Satkunam and Hilary Bishop**

#### **Panel 2: BBC Monitoring, FBIS (Foreign Broadcasting Information Service) and the Second World War**

**Chair: Professor Hilary Footitt**

Dr Laura Johnson (Bodleian Libraries): *What can an understanding of the operation of the BBC Monitoring Service during the Second World War tell us about the value of the transcripts?*

August A. Imholtz, Jr. (Readex): *The American (FBIS) side of the story.*

**1:00pm**

**Lunch**

- 2:00pm**      **Panel 3: Poland and Romania**  
**Chair: Professor Jean Seaton**
- Dr Joanna Michlic (University of Bristol): *The representations of Jews and the Holocaust in Poland in the BBC Monitoring collection, 1944—1946*
- Agnieszka Morriss (City University London): *Broadcasts from the Blyskawica station during the Warsaw Uprising, 1944.*
- Maria Ferenc (Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw): *The Ringelblum historians' use of radio as a source on the progress of the war*
- Professor Dan Stone (Royal Holloway University of London): *Romania from War to Postwar in the BBC Monitoring transcripts*
- 3:15pm**      **Break for tea and coffee**
- 3:45pm**      **Panel 4: Empire**  
**Chair: Suzanne Bardgett**
- Diya Gupta (King's College London): *Propaganda wars: India as a contested site between rival imperialist powers*
- Professor Ashley Jackson (King's College London): *Axis and local broadcasts relating to Australia, India, Iran, and Iraq*
- 4:45pm**      **General discussion of the value of the BBC Monitoring collection: Professor Richard Overy, Professor Hilary Footitt, Dr Alban Webb, Professor Jean Seaton, Suzanne Bardgett, Professor Jo Fox**
- 5:30pm**      **Close**

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## **Background note**

IWM (Imperial War Museums) has been granted funding by the Arts and Humanities Research Council to address the potential value to academics of the BBC Monitoring Service Transcript Collection. The Research Network project, led by Suzanne Bardgett (Head of Research and Academic Partnerships, IWM) and Professor Jean Seaton (University of Westminster), is hosting a series of workshops from June 2015 to January 2016 to bring together experts in translation studies, twentieth century history, media and propaganda history, war studies and digital humanities. The network is the first major initiative to explore this publicly-funded asset.

The BBC Monitoring Service was established in 1939 and was initially accommodated near Evesham, Worcestershire. While it was initially intended to simply feed information to the BBC's own news desks, the Ministry of Information quickly realised the benefits of monitoring foreign broadcasts, and began using BBC Monitoring's output as a continuous supply of 'open-source intelligence'.

BBC Monitoring expanded rapidly, and saw thousands of international radio programmes, in over 30 different languages, monitored, translated and transcribed around the clock.

The collection consists of some 15 million pages of typed transcripts, documenting international radio outputs during the Second World War and the Cold War. It comprises the raw, unedited documents transcribed from live radio broadcasts, as well as the working index, 'Monitoring Reports' and 'Daily Digests of World Broadcasts' – the summaries that were circulated to government departments and media outlets.

The first workshop – on Translation and Intelligence – brought several dozen former Monitors – highly trained linguists – back to BBC Monitoring's headquarters at Caversham, bringing a 'witness testimony' dimension to the project. The second addressed BBC Monitoring as an Institution and was attended by a number of users of the service, including former diplomats, government specialists, and journalists as well as academics. The third brought historians of the Cold War together to address how the collection brings a deeper understanding of Cold War events.