

with the Ministry of Education, the Secretariat of State for Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Culture and Communications and the ORTF - the Office de la radio - diffusion télévision française. About 70% of the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs goes to this Directorate. This is not surprising in view of the fact that France has over 250 cultural agreements with other countries - far more than any other country in the world.

The lessons of French diplomacy in this field are many: the teaching of language; the dissemination of information and knowledge about French civilization; the administration of programs; the negotiation and execution of agreements; the operation of schools, institutes and centres abroad; and effective planning for the future. However, what shines through all this is the French desire to reap the advantages of international cultural relations and to acquire the specialists, counsellors and attachés - often through secondments from the private sector - to translate these advantages into hard realities. Without doubt, France's commitment to cultural diplomacy has already paid, and continues to pay, handsome dividends.

Like France, Great Britain learned early that there were enormous gains to be had from cultural diplomacy. Although the administrative instrument has been different for Great Britain than France, nevertheless, there are some striking similarities between the two countries in terms of the aggressive and strategic approach that has been taken.

In 1934, the Foreign Office set up a British Committee for Relations with other Countries. In 1935, the title of this Committee was changed to British Council for Relations with other Countries or "British Council" for short. This unique agency has been the basic instrument of British diplomacy in this field ever since. Its foundations were laid during World War II when it assumed responsibility for Britain's contacts with other countries. In 1946, a Cultural Relations Department was created in the Foreign Office to deal with the Council's policy, expenditure and orbit of responsibility. As a quasi-independent agency, the Council's relationship to the Government is not always understood. When it received its Royal Charter in 1940, the Council was created as a Body Corporate and its management was vested in an Executive Committee consisting of not less than fifteen and not more than thirty members, although the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Director-General can only be appointed with Government approval. Eight of the Executive Committee members are nominated by ministers, including representatives from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Development Administration, the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Trade and Industry. The remainder are selected by the Committee itself, and include representatives from the universities, literature and publishing, the arts and sciences and the trade unions, as well as Members of Parliament from both sides of the House of commons. The Council is assisted in its work by many advisory committees, composed of leading figures in education, the arts, the sciences and the professions.

Of the Council's annual income of more than 50 million pounds, provided almost entirely from public funds, over one-third is allocated to activities which may be defined as academic in nature, while the balance goes to fostering other types of cultural relations. The Treasury exercises fairly close financial control in order to ensure that the Council applies the same general rules and standards of administration as obtained for government departments. Nevertheless, the Council retains a considerable degree of freedom from Government.