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Cultural propaganda

**The British Council's activities in neutral
Europe 1939-1945**

Edward Corse

History PhD thesis
University of Kent

Final version submitted May 2011



F221495

Contents

	Page
<i>Abbreviations</i>	4
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	5
<i>Abstract</i>	7
1. Introduction	8
1.1 Foreword	8
1.2 Propaganda theories and definition of ‘cultural propaganda’	13
1.3 Domestic roots and antecedents of the British Council 1914-1934	25
1.4 Interwar European influences on the British Council	33
1.5 The early years of the British Council	37
1.6 The British Council and the approach of war	41
1.7 Conclusion	52
2. Operational environments: the British Council’s relations with British organisations and individuals	55
2.1 Relations with the British Government	55
2.2 Relations with British non-Government organisations and individuals	76
2.3 Relations with the British Embassies	88
2.3.1 Spain: Sir Samuel Hoare and Professor Walter Starkie	89
2.3.2 Turkey: Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen and Michael Grant	99
2.3.3 Portugal: Sir Ronald Campbell and Professor S George West	107
2.3.4 Sweden: Sir Victor Mallet and Ronald Bottrall	113
2.4 Conclusion	117
3. Methods of cultural propaganda on the front line	120
3.1 The ‘one size fits all’ approach versus the bespoke approach to propaganda	120
3.2 Institutions	122
3.3 Teaching	128
3.4 Reaching out to a wider audience	146
3.5 Exhibitions and word-of-mouth propaganda	156
3.6 Language issues	174
3.7 Conclusion	180
4. The view from the other side	183
4.1 Issues in assessing the view from the other side	183
4.2 Official views of the British Council	186
4.3 Non-official views of the British Council	215

4.4 Newspaper reports of British Council activities	229
4.5 Conclusion	237
5. Conclusion: towards a model of cultural propaganda	239
5.1 The British Council's vital role	239
5.2 How the British Council operated and how this affected its cultural propaganda work	240
5.3 Factors critical for the success of the British Council	245
5.4 The success of the British Council	252
5.5 Towards a model of cultural propaganda	258
5.5.1 Perception pillar	259
5.5.2 Substance pillar	263
5.5.3 Organisation pillar	267
5.6 Contribution to existing literature	271
<i>Appendices and Bibliography:</i>	274
<i>Appendix A: British Council Expenditure</i>	275
<i>Appendix B: Key People in the British Council during the Second World War</i>	277
<i>Appendix C: The Portuguese Press and the British Council</i>	280
<i>Appendix D: Pupils at the British Institute School, Madrid, 17 January, 1945</i>	281
<i>Appendix E: Pupils at St Julian's School, Carcavelos, Portugal, October, 1944; and Queen Elizabeth's School, Lisbon, Portugal, February 1945</i>	283
<i>Appendix F: The British Graphic Art Exhibition in Portugal, 1942</i>	285
<i>Appendix G: The British Life and Thought collection published by the British Council - English and Spanish titles</i>	292
<i>Appendix H: Reproduction of conditions imposed on the British Council for establishing a British Institute in Madrid - 1940</i>	293
<i>Appendix I: Articles mentioning cultural Institutes in ABC (Madrid and Seville editions) and La Vanguardia española (Barcelona)</i>	295
<i>Appendix J: Original language quotations that have been used in translation</i>	296
<i>Bibliography</i>	300

Abbreviations

ABF	Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund (Workers' Education Association)
AGA	Archivo General de la Administracion, Madrid, Spain
APN	<i>Anglo-Portuguese News</i>
BCPHA	British Council Portugal, Historical Archive CD-ROM
BLM	<i>Bonniers Litterära Magasin</i>
CAC	The Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College, University of Cambridge
- BRCO	Day Files of Sir Malcolm Robertson, Chairman of the British Council, 1942-5
- KNAT	The Papers of Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen
- MALT	The Papers of Sir Victor Mallet
- RBTN	The Papers of Sir Malcolm Robertson
HKRC	Hyman Kreitman Research Centre, Tate Britain, London
- TGA	Tate Gallery Archive
KCA	King's College Archive, King's College, University of Cambridge
- JDH	The Papers of John Davy Hayward
- STE	The Papers of John Steegman
MAEC	Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación, Madrid, Spain
- AG	Archivo General
MEW	Ministry of Economic Warfare
MOI	Ministry of Information
MSN	<i>Medical Science News</i>
OPAJ	Original Portuguese in Appendix J
OSpAJ	Original Spanish in Appendix J
OSwAJ	Original Swedish in Appendix J
PWE	Political Warfare Executive
RAS	Riksarkivet, Stockholm, Sweden
RI	Royal Institution Archive, Royal Institution, London
- W L BRAGG	The Papers of Sir Lawrence Bragg, 1890-1971
RNCM	Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester
- PN	The Papers of Philip Newman
SIS	Secret Intelligence Service (MI6)
SOE	Special Operations Executive
TNA	The National Archives, Kew (formerly the Public Record Office)
- BT	Records of the Board of Trade and successor and related bodies
- BW	Records of the British Council
- DO	Records created or inherited by the Dominions Office and of the Commonwealth Relations and Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- FD	Records created and inherited by the Medical Research Council
- FO	Records created and inherited by the Foreign Office
- HLG	Records created and inherited by the Ministry for Housing and Local Government and of successor and related bodies
- HO	Records created and inherited by the Home Office, Ministry of Home Security and related bodies
- HS	Records of the Special Operations Executive
- INF	Records created and inherited by the Central Office of Information
- KV	Records of the Secret Service
- MAF	Records created and inherited by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Departments and of related bodies
- MEPO	Records of the Metropolitan Police Office
- PREM	Records of the Prime Minister's Office
- T	Records created and inherited by HM Treasury

Acknowledgements

This thesis has taken considerable research at a number of British and overseas archives and I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the work and help provided by the staff of those archives. Their help has been invaluable in tracking down new sources, providing photocopying services as well as permissions to quote and use visual material. I have also been fortunate to be in contact with individuals who were connected with the work of the British Council during the Second World War as well as friends and relatives of those individuals. All of these contacts have helped to make this thesis a thorough examination of the British Council's work in this period from a variety of different perspectives.

In particular, I would like to note the help from the following individuals, in alphabetical order: Henrik Arnstad (Swedish journalist and author of *Spelaren Christian Günther*), Dr Robin Baker (formerly British Council, now University of Chichester), Manuel Balson (pupil at the British Institute School, Madrid, during the Second World War), Chris Bastock (Hyman Kreitman Research Centre, Tate Britain), Alexandra Blair (granddaughter of Sir Malcolm Robertson), Peter Bloor (British Council), Anthony Bottrall (son of Ronald Bottrall), Jane Bramwell (Hyman Kreitman Research Centre, Tate Britain), Sue Breakell (Hyman Kreitman Research Centre, Tate Britain), Leonora Collins (British Council employee during Second World War), Mary Ann Davison (Royal Northern College of Music), Elizabeth Ennion (King's College Archive, King's College, Cambridge), Angela Faunch (University of Kent Document Delivery Service), Andrew Gent (Hyman Kreitman Research Centre, Tate Britain), David Gordon (friend and colleague of Walter Starkie), Antony Grant (son of Michael Grant), Jane Harrison (Royal Institution Archive), Caroline Herbert (Churchill Archives Centre, University of Cambridge), Professor Frank James (Royal Institution Archive), Peter Jones (King's College Library, King's College, Cambridge), Kerstin Jonsson (Riksarkivet, Stockholm), Ingrid Eriksson Karth (Riksarkivet, Stockholm), Britt-Marie Lagerqvist (Riksarkivet, Stockholm), Sofia Leitão (British Council in Lisbon, Portugal), Pilar Casado Liso (Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y Cooperación, Madrid), Lucinda Mahony (granddaughter of Sir Malcolm Robertson), Philip Mallet (son of Sir Victor Mallet), Patricia McGuire (King's College Archive, King's College, Cambridge), Luis Mesas (Documentacion Historica, Madrid), Tim Pate (Hyman Kreitman Research Centre, Tate Britain), Raúl Lopez Renau (Documentacion Historica, Madrid), Alison Roberts (British journalist based in Portugal, author of *Um Toque Decisivo*), Nicola Roberts (Hyman Kreitman Research Centre, Tate Britain), Lynsey Robertson (Churchill Archives Centre,

University of Cambridge), Betty Thirsk (British Council employee during Second World War), Elizabeth Wells (Churchill Archives Centre, University of Cambridge), Emily White (Hyman Kreitman Research Centre, Tate Britain), Claire Whitfield (British Council) and Lars Wickström (Riksarkivet, Stockholm).

I would also like to thank my supervisors Professor David Welch and Professor Ulf Schmidt for their guidance over the past few years as well as the History Office staff at the University of Kent, other History academic staff and other postgraduate students for useful and thought-provoking discussions.

I should also thank my colleagues at my employer – the British Government (at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) until October 2008 and then at Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC)) – for their flexibility and understanding whilst undertaking research alongside my day job of playing a small part in saving the world.

Special thanks to my family who have given me unwavering moral support and encouragement throughout my studies.

Finally, I should point out that all the translations in this thesis are my own – with the originals available in Appendix J for anyone who wishes to check the original language quotations.¹

Edward Corse
Paddock Wood, Kent
May 2011

¹ These translations are denoted by the following acronyms – OPAJ (Original Portuguese in Appendix J), OSpAJ (Original Spanish in Appendix J) and OSwAJ (Original Swedish in Appendix J) – which follow quotations.

Abstract

This thesis outlines, describes and analyses the activities of the British Council – the British Government’s organisation for promoting ‘British life and thought’ abroad – in neutral Europe during the Second World War and is divided thematically into five chapters. The first chapter takes a conceptual view of the British Council’s work and compares the aims and objectives of the British Council with a number of theories and definitions of propaganda, particularly the term ‘cultural propaganda’ that was often applied to its work by contemporary observers and staff of the Council. It also considers the roots and antecedents of the British Council, as well as the history of the British Council itself from its establishment in 1934, until the outbreak of war in 1939. The second chapter looks in detail about how the Council operated within the context of the British propaganda machinery, how it was viewed by other Government Departments and how it interacted with non-Governmental organisations and individuals within Britain. In particular, this chapter examines the interactions between the Council’s offices abroad in Spain, Portugal, Sweden and Turkey with the British Embassies in those respective countries. Chapter three considers the propaganda work of the British Council itself, with a detailed examination of its activities abroad, how it operated and what techniques it used on the ground to promote British life and thought. Chapter four then looks at how the British Council was viewed by foreign Governments in the countries where it operated as well as the views of the non-official elites. The final chapter draws all of the main points from the previous chapters together in an attempt to construct a model of cultural propaganda which could be applied to different, but similar, organisations in a variety of time periods.

1. Introduction

1.1 Foreword

When research for this thesis began in the summer of 2007 the British Council was an organisation that many people in Britain had never heard about. It was far better known outside Britain through its work teaching the English language and promoting British culture abroad that in many places it was, and remains, the most tangible British asset overseas – rivalled only by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Since the summer of 2007, however, the British Council has become much more of a household name in Britain, but not in ways the British Council would have chosen. In December 2007 the Russian Government demanded the closure of the Council's offices in Yekaterinburg and St Petersburg, claiming that the Council had not paid adequate taxes. The closures were widely suspected, in Britain at least, to be part of the wider diplomatic tension between Britain and Russia at the time. This tension had stemmed from the murder of Alexander Litvinenko in London in November 2006, the refusal of the Russian Government to extradite the KGB agent Andrei Lugovoi, who was suspected of murdering Litvinenko, and the ensuing expulsion of diplomats from the two countries' respective Embassies. The British Council suddenly became known across Britain as its name and role became displayed on the front pages of British newspapers and in the headlines of television news.¹ Just over a year later events in February 2009 provided a similar story of the British Council's staff and offices being threatened because of a wider tension between Britain and a foreign country – this time Iran.² The events in Russia and Iran in the late 2000s demonstrate some of the many tensions in the British Council's role which have been present ever since it was established in 1934, and will be familiar themes examined during the course of the following chapters.

In this thesis the British Council's role and activities in neutral Europe during the Second World War will be examined in detail. The British Council's broad aim was to

¹ 'Russia to limit British Council', (BBC News Website, 12 December, 2007) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/7139959.stm>; 'British Council in Russian test' (BBC News Website, 3 January 2008); <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/europe/7169940.stm>; 'In full: British Council statement' (BBC News Website, 17 January 2008) http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/uk_politics/7193954.stm; 'Russia row offices "to stay shut"' (BBC News Website, 17 January 2008) http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/uk_politics/7193186.stm

² 'British Council in Iran 'illegal'' (BBC News Website, 5 February 2009) http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/7872525.stm

promote British life and thought abroad – and it set out in 1935 an official statement of its aims and objectives, which will be examined in more detail in section 1.5:

To promote abroad a wider appreciation of British culture and civilisation, by encouraging the study and use of the English language, and thereby, to extend a knowledge of British literature and of the British contributions to music and the fine arts, the sciences, philosophic thought and political practice. To encourage both cultural and educational interchanges between the United Kingdom and other countries and, as regards the latter, to assist the free flow of students from overseas to British seats of learning, technical institutions and factories, and of the United Kingdom in the reverse direction. To provide opportunities for maintaining and strengthening the bonds of the British cultural tradition throughout the self-governing Dominions. To ensure continuity of British education in the Crown Colonies and Dependencies.³

As will be shown, often the term ‘cultural propaganda’ was associated with its work as it attempted to promote British culture through institutions and other media to foreign countries. Philip Taylor studied the role of the pre-Second World War British Council in the early 1980s in his *The Projection of Britain* which was the first time that a study on the British Council had been undertaken in detail. Taylor’s work, referenced particularly in the Introduction chapter of this thesis, was groundbreaking in its attempt to understand why the Council was established, what its role was meant to be, and how it operated within the machinery of the British Government.⁴ Shortly after Taylor’s study, D W Ellwood and Diana Eastment focused on the war period itself with a similar scope to Taylor’s work, centring on the operations of the Council in a British organisational context and then in 1984 Frances Donaldson wrote the British Council’s official history covering the first fifty years of its existence.⁵ All of the studies mentioned above focused primarily on the plans that the Council drew up for implementing its work, agreements reached between various Government bodies, the struggle that the Council had to secure funding and the struggle for recognition

³ Donaldson, Frances, *The British Council: the first fifty years*, (Jonathan Cape, London, 1984) p.1-2 citing the foreword to *The British Council. Speeches delivered on the occasion of the Inaugural Meeting at St. James’s Palace on 2nd July, 1935*, privately printed by the British Council, 1935

⁴ Taylor, Philip, *The Projection of Britain: British overseas publicity and propaganda 1919-1939*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981)

⁵ Ellwood, D W, “‘Showing the world what it owed to Britain’: foreign policy and “cultural propaganda””, in Pronay, Nicholas and Spring D W (eds), *Propaganda, Politics and Film, 1918-45*, (Macmillan, London/Basingstoke, 1982); Eastment, Diana. ‘The policies and position of the British Council from the outbreak of war to 1950’, (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Leeds, 1982); Donaldson, *The British Council*.

amongst certain influential individuals – primarily Lord Beaverbrook – that its work was not a waste of money. Other studies conducted by authors overseas have focused on particular countries and aspects of the British Council's work during the Second World War such as Jacqueline Hurlley's *José Janés: editor de literatura inglesa*, Jean-François Berdah's *La "Propaganda" Cultural Británica en España durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial a través de la acción del "British Council"* and Samuel Llano's *Starkie y el British Council en España*) and have relied heavily on British sources from the National Archives in Kew, rather than files from the local country's national archives.⁶ Studies of related organisations such as Ian McLaine's *Ministry of Morale* – studying the work of the Ministry of Information – do not mention the British Council's work, largely because the focus has been on home front propaganda rather than work overseas.⁷

All of these aspects of study are important – the value for money of all public sector organisations is particularly pertinent in today's political climate – but none of the studies above really focused on the propaganda work of the British Council itself, how it operated on the ground, or how that propaganda work was received – particularly across all of the European countries that the Council operated in. For example, Ellwood confidently concluded, having taken little time to analyse how the Council's work in Turkey, that

Turkey took the largest single slice of the Council's budget, and in fact it seems reasonable to suggest that nowhere outside the Empire itself was so much British influence concentrated in any one spot for such a sustained length of time. And all to very little avail. Neither the threat of Hitler nor the blustering of Churchill nor the systematic blandishments of the British Council were enough to get the Turks' co-operation when it mattered.⁸

It is this misunderstanding of the achievements and importance of the British Council's cultural propaganda work that this thesis attempts to challenge and

⁶ Hurlley, Jacqueline, *José Janés : Editor de Literatura Inglesa*, (PPU, Barcelona, 1992); Berdah, Jean François, 'La "Propaganda" Cultural Británica en España durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial a través de la acción del "British Council": Un aspecto de las relaciones Hispano-Británicas (1939-1946)' in Tusell, Javier, Susana Sueiro, José María Marín, Marina Casanova (eds.), *El Régimen de Franco (1936-1975) Congreso Internacional Madrid, Mayo 1993: Tomo II*, (Departamento de Historia Contemporánea UNED, Madrid, 1993); Llano, Samuel, 'Starkie y el British Council en España: Música, Cultura y Propaganda', in Suarez-Pajares, Javier (ed), *Música Española entre dos Guerras, 1914-1945*, (Publicaciones del archive Manuel de Falla, Granada, 2002)

⁷ McLaine, Ian, *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information*, (George Allen & Unwin, 1979)

⁸ Ellwood, 'Showing the world', p.61

overturn. The British Council's work was about creating sympathy and spreading British influence amongst the neutral elites not to bring those neutral countries into the military war.

This thesis by contrast focuses on the propaganda work of the Council and has reached out beyond the National Archives (though highly important) to examine the private papers of individuals such as the correspondence of Sir Malcolm Robertson (Chairman of the British Council, 1941-1945) in the archives of Churchill College at the University of Cambridge, the diaries of John Steegman at King's College, Cambridge, the Hyman Kreitman Archive Centre at Tate Britain and the Royal Institution's archive in Albermarle Street in London for the papers of Sir Lawrence Bragg. Also examined have been Spanish, Portuguese and Swedish newspapers at the British Library's Newspaper Archive at Colindale, London, as well as archival material from the *Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación* and the *Archivo General de la Administracion* in Madrid and the *Riksarkivet* in Stockholm to gauge the 'view from the other side'. Not until now has the 'view from the other side' been examined at all. Access to the Swedish secret police file on Ronald Bottrall, the British Council's representative in Sweden, has uncovered a number of interesting, previously unknown points. For example, that the Swedish secret police followed Ronald Bottrall and other British Council personnel, the Swedes' awareness of the German view of the Council being used as a centre for the secret services, as well as the anti-Semitic prejudices in their descriptions of Bottrall himself. On the Spanish side this access to the previously unseen files has shown how the Spanish Foreign Ministry agonised over whether to allow Walter Starkie, the British Council's representative in Spain, to be appointed and to travel to Madrid. They needed the recommendation of the Duque de Alba, the Spanish Ambassador in London, to invite him and there were attempts by Ramon Serrano Suñer, the Spanish Foreign Minister, to prevent any publicity reaching the Council during his tenure of the post of Foreign Minister.

Archival material has been analysed in conjunction with published memoirs such as those written by Michael Grant, the British Council's representative in Turkey during the war period, and Peter Tennant, the British press attaché in Stockholm as well as my own correspondence with people who were involved with the Council's work at the time, and relatives and friends of the main actors in this thesis. This broad basis for the thesis, particularly on primary sources, I believe makes this thesis robust

and substantial and enables the model of cultural propaganda, developed in the final chapter, to be built on a strong foundation.

The contribution of this thesis will not be limited to showing how the British Council operated and the analysis of the Council's work in Europe in isolation, but also through demonstrating how the British Council's cultural propaganda work can be put within a wider context. This will range from putting the Council's work on a higher level of importance within the wider framework of propaganda carried out by Britain during the Second World War, but also by attempting to examine the Council's work in the context of existing propaganda and social transmission theories. This thesis examines the work of Jacques Ellul and Leonard Doob in particular in terms of propaganda analysis - pre and sub propaganda, sociological propaganda and rumour-spreading - but will also look at theories outside the discipline of academic history, to identify and examine linkages with meme theory, the Zahavi Handicap Principle and the Reputation Reflex and the social cognitivism work of Rosaria Conte.⁹ It will show that the cultural propaganda work of the British Council, seen in this wider academic context, was far more important for Britain's war effort, through effective and profound influence of the elites of neutral countries, than it has been given credit for. The techniques it employed - particularly word-of-mouth propaganda in the margins of cultural events - were perhaps the most effective form of propaganda deployed by Britain to neutral Europe during the war.

Firstly, the thesis will consider the Council's work from a conceptual point of view - what cultural propaganda is with an examination of previous research on cultural propaganda, what the British Council's aims were, what broad constraints the Council faced, and how it planned to operate. Secondly, how the Council interacted with other British organisations and individuals will be discussed - for example, its interaction with other Government Departments (the Foreign Office and Ministry of Information in particular), British cultural figures and how its institutions and personnel interacted with British Embassies on the ground. Thirdly, the thesis will look at the cultural propaganda work of the Council itself and consider what techniques the

⁹ Ellul, Jacques, *Propaganda: the formation of men's attitudes*, (Vintage Books, February 1973); Doob, Leonard, *Public Opinion and Propaganda*, (Henry Holt and Company Inc, New York, 1950) ; Blackmore, Susan, *The Meme Machine*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999); Zahavi, Amotz and Avishag Zahavi, *The Handicap Principle: the missing piece of Darwin's puzzle*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford / New York, 1997); Wight, Robin, *The Peacock's Tail and the Reputation Reflex*, (Arts and Business, London, 2007); and Conte, Rosaria, 'Memes through (social) minds', in Aunger, Robert (ed.), *Darwinizing Culture: the status of memetics as a science* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000)

Council employed when promoting British culture. This will focus on the exhibitions the Council organised, the touring lecturers who were sent out to foreign countries, as well as the ways in which the Council got its aim of sympathy creation across to neutral peoples. Films, though they became an increasingly important part of the Council's work, will not be studied in any particular detail partly because of lack of space in this thesis but also because films were not unique to the Council's operation. The Ministry of Information was also involved in this area and resources were often shared between the Council and the MOI. Instead the thesis focuses primarily on what the Council did that was unique to its way of operating. Next the thesis will, for the first time, examine how the Council was viewed by people in the countries where it operated - whether it was viewed as a haven for pro-British elites, how it compared with other belligerents' cultural work and how the changing course of the war affected how the Council was treated. Lastly, the thesis will be summarised with an assessment of the level of success that the Council was able to obtain, with an attempt to draw together a model of cultural propaganda that can be applied to other situations and time periods.

1.2 Propaganda theories and definition of 'cultural propaganda'

A key point that will appear many times in this thesis regarding the British Council's work of 'cultural propaganda' and its method of operation was its aim of being notably different in tone and forcefulness compared firstly with other types of propaganda, and secondly with other nations' cultural propaganda. The Council often shied away from using the word 'propaganda', as the word already had negative connotations associated with it stemming particularly from the First World War, the Bolshevik Revolution and Nazi and Fascist use of the word in the 1930s. The word 'propaganda' in the English language had (and still has) a much darker undertone than it does in the Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese languages (where it translates more neutrally as 'publicity' or 'promotion') and this difference in definition should always be kept in mind when analysing the use of the word. This difference has roots all the way back to the effects of the Protestant Reformation when the word 'propaganda' was first used in a positive sense in 1622 by the Roman Catholic Church for propagating the Catholic faith.¹⁰ The fact that Spain, Italy and Portugal are primarily Catholic countries, and Britain has had a history over the past few hundred years of being anti-Catholic, or

¹⁰ Jowett, Garth S, and O'Donnell, Victoria, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, (3rd edition, Sage Publications, 1999), p.2-3

at least being suspicious of Catholicism, accounts in a large part to the different understandings of what the word 'propaganda' means. Sir Malcolm Robertson, the British Council's chairman from 1941 to 1945, was one of the greatest advocates of avoiding the use of the word propaganda altogether to describe its work. In 1943, he was furious with the Treasury for viewing the Council's work as propaganda, and wrote to a fellow MP:

The Treasury's idea that the British Council is "itself a part of the immediate 'propaganda offensive'" is complete anathema to me. "Propaganda" is exactly and precisely what we are not doing. Our aims are essentially long-term. We are endeavouring at long last to explain abroad the British attitude towards life and we are urging other nations to explain to us their attitude towards life. The general idea is solely to build up the basis for a real understanding of the peoples by the peoples of the world.¹¹

It, of course, all depends on how one defines the word 'propaganda' as to whether the British Council's work can fit into its definition. It is somewhat futile, therefore, to argue for or against whether the Council's work can be described as propaganda or not, because the definition of the word is relatively loose. In this thesis the word propaganda is used in very broad terms to cover any attempt to influence others and reinforce or change opinions of other people. The British Council's work clearly falls into this definition. Robertson himself had accepted in 1942 that the work of the Council in supplying articles on British culture to the neutral press, could be seen as propaganda but not

in the generally accepted derogatory sense of that word. They [the articles] aim at holding up a mirror to British ways of life and thought, and are making overseas readers better acquainted with the "make-up" of the British people. Whenever possible, these articles are accompanied by sets of first-class illustrations, since the picture makes an almost greater appeal to the imaginations than the written word, especially when readers are comparatively unfamiliar with the subject discussed in print.¹²

What is clear from Robertson's statements is that he was aiming for the Council to be very different from the political propaganda bodies that had made the word propaganda so repulsive. The phrase 'cultural propaganda' has often been used to

¹¹ CAC BRCO 1/2. Sir Malcolm Robertson. Letter to Richard Law MP, 15 July 1943

¹² CAC BRCO 1/1. Sir Malcolm Robertson. Letter to Air-Marshall Sir Philip Game, 17 July 1942

describe the Council's work in order to distinguish it from political propaganda. As the phrase 'cultural propaganda' still contained the word 'propaganda' the Council was also wary of its use to describe its work - but what exactly is 'cultural propaganda'? Philip Taylor, in his study of the Council in the 1930s, defined cultural propaganda as

the promotion and dissemination of national aims and achievements in a general rather than specifically economic or political form, although it is ultimately designed to promote economic and political interests.¹³

Whilst Taylor was right to state that cultural propaganda 'is ultimately designed to promote economic and political interests' (i.e. it is very much aligned to the aims of political propaganda), his definition did not demonstrate the difference that exists between cultural and political propaganda in style, tone, pervasiveness and intended time to produce an effect, and which Robertson was trying to promote in the quotes above. This difference is also absent from the definition given by Nicholas J Cull, David Culbert and David Welch in their encyclopaedia of propaganda and mass persuasion, though the emphasis on the long term nature of cultural propaganda is recognised:

Cultural propaganda is a long-term process intended to promote a better understanding of the nation that is sponsoring the activity... Such activity involves the dissemination of cultural products - films, magazines, radio and television programs, art exhibitions, traveling [sic] theater [sic] groups and orchestras - as well as the promotion of language teaching and a wide range of "educational" activities, such as student exchange schemes. Over a period of time, these activities are designed to enhance the nation's image among the populations of other countries, with a view to creating goodwill and influencing the policies [sic] of their governments through the pressure of public opinion.¹⁴

It is this difference in style, tone and pervasiveness that is very important in the definition of cultural propaganda. Nevertheless, as Cull, Culbert and Welch note, the aim of cultural propaganda, as opposed to political propaganda, was to create sympathy on a long-term basis through a range of techniques designed to make that sympathy profound, rather than aiming for a desired short-term action on the part of the propagandee. The avoidance of the word 'propaganda' so as to avoid negative

¹³ Taylor, *The Projection*, p.125-6

¹⁴ Cull, Nicholas J, David Culbert and David Welch, *Propaganda and mass persuasion: a historical encyclopedia, 1500 to the present*, (ABC-CLIO, California, 2003) p.101

connotations, and the aims of political propaganda, made the Council's tone of propaganda significantly different. Lord Lloyd, the Council's previous chairman (from 1937 to 1941) had been less worried about the term cultural propaganda than Robertson, but was still keen to demonstrate its difference from political propaganda.¹⁵ Lord Lloyd stated early on in the war that

As a race we [the British] have too long been content to remain aloof and misunderstood. Our strength and our wealth have in the past won us respect; we have never sought sympathy or understanding... We have in many places a critical audience to convert, but our opponents' lack of discretion has worked largely in our favour. Everywhere we find people turning in relief from the harshly dominant tones of totalitarian propaganda to the less insistent but more responsible cadences of Britain. We do not force them to 'think British'; we offer them the opportunity to learn what the British think.¹⁶

Speaking in 'responsible cadences' was clearly a key part of the British Council's image. The aims of the Council should not just therefore be seen in terms of *what* it was trying to promote but also *how* it was trying to promote it. The *what* and the *how* are intrinsically linked in all propaganda forms - it is very important that if someone wishes to persuade someone else to think or act in a certain way, they must speak in a manner to which the other person is receptive. The *what* must determine the *how* but the *how* also affects the *what*. Lloyd was clear here that the Council's propaganda was being promoted as an offer only and foreign people could take it or leave it. It is also clear that Lloyd was setting no timeframe in which people had to 'take' the Council's propaganda and there was a deliberate lack of immediacy. This lack of immediacy meant that the Council's work would be a specific and important departure from political propaganda which is often far more prominent as it needs an instant (or at least short-term) action. Also, the short term nature of political propaganda is, in the words of William Mackenzie, the historian of the Special Operations Executive, a 'writ in water' as the circumstances in which it is disseminated are only there at that particular time and the propaganda only makes sense for a short period.¹⁷ As the Council's work was aiming to be incremental, on a 'gently, gently' approach accumulating sympathy on a long-term basis, the cultural propaganda it produced had to be designed to make sense over that longer period of time and not just there for a

¹⁵ See, for example, TNA FO 800/322. Lord Lloyd. Letter to Lord Halifax, 13 September 1939

¹⁶ Forbes Adam, Colin, *Life of Lord Lloyd*, (Macmillan, London, 1948) p.284-5

¹⁷ Mackenzie, W J M, *A Secret History of S.O.E.: The Special Operations Executive 1940-1945*, (St Ermin's Press, London, 2002) p.142

particular moment in time. It had, therefore, to be timeless. Bombastic and fast-moving political propaganda was more obvious perhaps, but not necessarily more effective. Looking for short-term action meant the effect of political propaganda was limited to a superficial level. Cultural propaganda, on the other hand, may be slower to produce results, but should have a more profound effect. Being timeless also means that cultural propaganda has by necessity to be to a large extent historically based and telescopically inspired, in the sense that it has to show a road to the present through various milestones of progress. Views about a country's history and place in the world were likely therefore to be tried and tested, old-fashioned and conservative, making it even more likely to be received well by an audience of conservative elites rather than the masses. As will be shown in the following chapter, the appointment of a Communist as Head of the Council's Science Department sent shock waves through the conservative elites in Britain, but fortunately he was non-political in his role and so the cultural propaganda was not affected.¹⁸

There is an interesting link here to the Bolsheviks' use of agitators and the definition of propaganda, both in terms of nomenclature and the applicability of the word 'propaganda'. The Bolsheviks made a distinction between 'propaganda' and 'agitation', initially in Tsarist Russia prior to 1917, but also beyond the Revolution into the Soviet Union. 'Agitation' in the Bolshevik model meant preparing a group vigorously, on a short-term basis, for a particular action. 'Propaganda', on the other hand, meant a long-term educational programme to prepare the ground for agitation.¹⁹ This is a somewhat different definition to the meaning that is usually associated with the word 'propaganda' as if it is something prior to, but essential for, propaganda (in today's sense) to take place. Essentially, in the Bolshevik model, 'agitation' takes the place of what would usually be recognised today as being propaganda. In terms of word-of-mouth propaganda, therefore, the Bolsheviks used oral agitators to spread messages drawing on sympathies and prejudices that had already been instilled through a long-term educational programme promoting Marxist-Leninist doctrine. However, the British Council could be seen as covering aspects of both roles in the Bolshevik model. On the one hand its official aims were to teach the English language, provide schooling, and organise cultural events, all of which were aimed at long-term sympathy-creation (i.e. 'propaganda' in the Bolshevik model). Yet on the other it could

¹⁸ CAC BRCO 1/4 Anonymous MP. Note about J G Crowther. Attached to letter from Eugene Ramsden, MP to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 16 December, 1944; and Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Eugene Ramsden MP, 20 December, 1944

¹⁹ See Ellul, *Propaganda*, p.32n5, 70-71

also be seen to be aiming to directly influence those same people that attended the cultural events through word-of-mouth propaganda about life (particularly cultural life) in wartime Britain using those cultural events as a conduit for direct influence (i.e. 'agitation' in the Bolshevik model). Whether it can be said to have influenced them directly 'to action', as the Bolshevik model suggests it should, is perhaps less clear and depends on the action that the British Council was expecting to induce and the type of action demanded by the Bolshevik model. In many cases the scope for action in neutral countries was rather limited. Action could simply mean that sympathetic elites took on the role of influencing other elites and masses within the neutral countries - in places where the British Council or British influence generally could not reach directly.

A more appropriate model to how the British Council operated is perhaps provided by Leonard Doob's analysis of propaganda techniques. Doob effectively expanded the Bolshevik model and made a distinction between 'sub-propaganda' and 'main propaganda', stating that:

Many sub-propaganda campaigns are postulated on the assumption that final action must be postponed until the propagandees are psychologically prepared or find themselves in a situation which provides the appropriate stimuli.... No action need be indicated in a sub-propaganda campaign, for here the aim is simply the learning of an attitude to facilitate the main propaganda itself.²⁰

There is a subtle difference here between the Bolshevik model in the sense that in the Bolshevik model, word-of-mouth propaganda only really fits with 'agitation' and is perhaps outside the scope of the educational programme defined in 'propaganda'. In Doob's analysis, there is no attempt to rule out the role of an agitative method of propaganda (such as word-of-mouth propaganda) in the psychological preparation of the propagandees. Instead Doob simply describes the two layers of propaganda - in reality, propaganda aiming for long-term and short-term effects - rather than the methods employed to achieve those effects. Because of this subtle difference, Doob's model is closer than the Bolshevik model to how the British Council planned to operate. He also described a formal disconnection between the 'main propaganda' and the 'sub-propaganda' by stating that 'the aim is simply the learning of an attitude' which can be taken to mean that the sympathy-creation aim of the Council could fit into the description of 'sub-propaganda' without being directly related to how that sympathy was going to be manipulated. The two concepts of 'main propaganda' and

²⁰ Doob, *Public Opinion and Propaganda*, p399 and 403

'sub-propaganda' are still related however, if more remotely, and Doob implies that the main propaganda requires the sub-propaganda to have embedded within the audience, in order to be effective and therefore works on currents and themes which are already familiar to the audience.

Jacques Ellul's concept of 'sociological propaganda' is also worth considering in this context. Ellul himself started his description of sociological propaganda by stating that sociological propaganda is a type of propaganda that does not have an organisation directing it - it is something built into the culture of a country about how people in that country should live their lives. He stated:

Sociological propaganda springs up spontaneously; it is not the result of deliberate propaganda action. No propagandists deliberately use this method, though many practice it unwittingly, and tend in this direction without realizing it.²¹

What Ellul has suggested here is that sociological propaganda provides the themes of existing currents of thought in a culture which are constantly being reinforced by that culture. Propagandists must comply with this sociological propaganda in order to make their propaganda effective. This idea that there is a current of self-perpetuating propaganda within a society which helps hold a culture together links strongly with what Richard Dawkins and Susan Blackmore have described as 'memes' - cultural equivalents to genes in the sense that they evolve over time through a process of natural selection. Memes are defined as units of a culture which replicate within a society from one person to the next, slowly becoming more and more refined (unintentionally) to meet the needs of the succeeding generations.²² Dawkins originally gave the following examples that could be described as memes: 'tunes, ideas, catchphrases, clothes fashions, and ways of making pots and arches.'²³ Blackmore has developed the idea and has stated:

²¹ Ellul, *Propaganda*, p.64

²² Dawkins, Richard, *The God Delusion*, (Bantam Press, London / Toronto / Sydney / Auckland / Johannesburg, 2006) p.190-201; also see Blackmore, *The Meme Machine* and Williams, Bernard, *Truth and Truthfulness*, (Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 2002 paperback 2004) p.29-30 - Williams does not appear to agree with meme theory, but does not, in my opinion, give a convincing reason why his arguments against memetics actually disagree with them. Williams looks at memes as if they are identifiable units, which in many cases they are not.

²³ Blackmore, *The Meme Machine*, p.63; Dawkins, Richard, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1976)

Everything that is passed from person to person in this way is a meme. This includes all the words in your vocabulary, the stories you know, the skills and habits you have picked up from others and the games you like to play. It includes the songs you sing and the rules you obey. So, for example, whenever you drive on the left (or the right!), eat curry with lager or pizza and coke, whistle the theme tune from *Neighbours* or even shake hands, you are dealing in memes. Each of these memes has evolved in its own unique way with its own history, but each of them is using your behaviour to get itself copied.²⁴

Meme theory (or memetics) takes the view that all units of culture are constantly competing against each other and only the useful ones or the 'fittest' ones get replicated. There is not, however, a grand design or designer orchestrating the process, and it continues unintentionally (or at least without purposeful direction). Blackmore states that not all thoughts and learning should be considered as memes, but only those that can be copied by imitation and therefore passed on to someone else.²⁵ It would be hard to argue that the British Council's actions were unintentional and undirected, but there is an interesting connection here between sociological propaganda and the spreading of units of culture, which should be explored further. Social psychologists, such as Rosaria Conte, have criticised Blackmore's theory for ignoring other forms of social transmission, and focusing solely on imitation and so perhaps a future definition of memetics will fit the British Council's work better than that provided by Blackmore.²⁶ Hearing a story and passing it on, very much in the way in which the model of influence works, is something which propaganda – particularly word-of-mouth propaganda – relies on to a huge extent. It is conceivable that the Council's work could be seen as being a conduit for feeding memes into a new society and that they had to compete with other memes already existing in that society, together with memes being introduced by the Axis countries – and there is a term for this too in memetics: 'meme vehicles' which will be returned to in just a moment.²⁷ Other theories connected to memetics and genetics are also worth a mention at this point – that of the 'Handicap Principle' developed by Amotz and Avishag Zahavi and the 'Peacock's Tail and the Reputation Reflex' put forward by Robin Wight. Both Wight and the Zahavis have questioned why in nature certain characteristics, such as the peacock's tail, have developed without appearing to have any practical use, and indeed handicap the

²⁴ Blackmore, *The Meme Machine*, p.7

²⁵ *Ibid*, p.42-43

²⁶ Conte, 'Memes through (social) minds' p.98-109

²⁷ Blackmore, *The Meme Machine*, p.65-66

animal which has developed it. The answer put forward is that the ability to 'waste' resources on a feature which has no practical use is a way of signalling genetic or cultural fitness and enhancing reputation. Both the peacock's tail and the sponsorship of art are considered in this context – in the sense that neither have practical uses, but both produce responses in what Wight terms the 'Reputation Reflex' in the amygdala part of the brain.²⁸ The British Council's work could be seen as having no practical value, but highly important in terms of maintaining and advancing the reputation of Britain. This is a new and interesting concept and perhaps could be used as an element in a model of cultural propaganda, and will be returned to in chapters four and five.

Ellul combined his view of there being existing sociological propaganda within a society, with the view of Doob that sub-propaganda (or, in Ellul's words, 'pre-propaganda') was essential for direct propaganda to work. Sub-propaganda, Ellul believed, must complement the existing sociological situation if it were to be successful. He postulated:

Direct propaganda, aimed at modifying opinions and attitudes, must be preceded by propaganda that is sociological in character, slow, general, seeking to create a climate, an atmosphere of favo[u]rable preliminary attitudes. No direct propaganda can be effective without pre-propaganda.... Sociological propaganda can be compared to plowing [sic], direct propaganda to sowing; you cannot do the one without doing the other first.²⁹

Sociological propaganda is therefore not just something circulating around a society which cannot be influenced by propaganda organisations, but it is already there in existence and has to be worked with and moulded (in Blackmore's description, this would be a 'memeplex' – a group of memes complementing each other).³⁰ Sociological propaganda cannot be invented solely from scratch by a propaganda organisation to meet its own purposes. Nevertheless, Ellul went on to state that there are complex issues surrounding the implanting of sociologically based propaganda themes into a different society: 'The more conscious sociological propaganda is, the more it tends to express itself externally, and hence to expand its influence abroad.'³¹ Ellul was specifically referencing the influence of post-war American culture on Europe (and

²⁸ Zahavi and Zahavi, *The Handicap Principle*, p.xiv-xv, 223-5; Wight, *The Peacock's Tail*, particularly p.10-11, 14-15

²⁹ Ellul, *Propaganda*, p.15

³⁰ Blackmore, *The Meme Machine*, p.19

³¹ Ellul, *Propaganda*, p.69

particularly France) and the fact that the American culture was not intended to be propagandistic in a political sense – it was merely showing America in the way that Americans believed to be accurate (there is clearly a link here with Robertson’s belief, stated above, that the British Council did not do propaganda – the Council simply tried to show Britain for what it was). The complexity arose when the French saw this American culture partly as a good thing – where technological advantages, in particular, were obvious – but also exasperating where they sensed an American ‘superiority complex’ that seemed to express the opinion that the American way of life was the *only* way of life.³² In other words, true sociological propaganda, replicating a way of life without the need for a propaganda organisation, can only work successfully within societies where there is an existing, or perhaps latent, acceptance of its benefits promulgated by that propaganda. The people within those societies do not regard it as propaganda because they see it just as their way of life (or a way of life which they wish to emulate) and have no reason to question its propagandistic nature. Generally outside that society, it cannot work as pure sociological propaganda, because the context is not right and there is much more need for a directing organisation to ensure it can be accepted, or at least understood, in another culture.

In a recent study of types of advertising and what forms of media people are most likely to be influenced by when considering to purchase a product, it was found that over 40% of people are likely to be influenced by people that they know personally and had been influenced by word-of-mouth. Whilst not a majority, it is significantly higher than any other form of influence – magazine articles were the next most influential at around 15%, television adverts were under 5%, as were advertising billboards.³³ These figures clearly suggest that personal influence and influence by word-of-mouth has a far more pervasive effect than can be achieved through any single form of mass communication media, and the British Council’s plan to concentrate on elites could allow this effect to work very successfully. In recent years, particularly in relation to the internet, companies selling products have been very keen to utilise ‘viral’ advertising – i.e. to begin a chain reaction of people talking about their product (hopefully in a positive way) which spreads from person to person by word-of-mouth (or word-of-blog) like a virus to increase sales. They are in effect trying to take advantage of the fact that people are more likely to purchase a product based on a

³² *Ibid*, p.70

³³ Ewen, Sam, ‘The Changing Face of Consumer Marketing’, part of a lecture series entitled *Where the Truth Lies: a symposium on propaganda today* (School of Visual Arts in New York, iTunes, 2008). Graph shown at 8 minutes 11 seconds into Part 1 after research by Euro RSCG. Also see <http://www.wherethetruthlies.org>

report from a fellow customer (someone they think they can trust) rather than on the company's own overt information (perhaps perceived as 'propaganda' in a derogatory sense) about its product. Companies such as Amazon, the online retailer, have long known that positive customer reviews increase sales and there have been reports in the media recently of how companies trying to sell products through Amazon particularly have posted bogus positive reviews to try to increase sales - so-called 'shrill reviewing.'³⁴ Whilst it would be incongruous to link the British Council's work in the Second World War directly with viral advertising on the internet today, the Council would, by targeting its audience in a personal way and by seeking secondary and

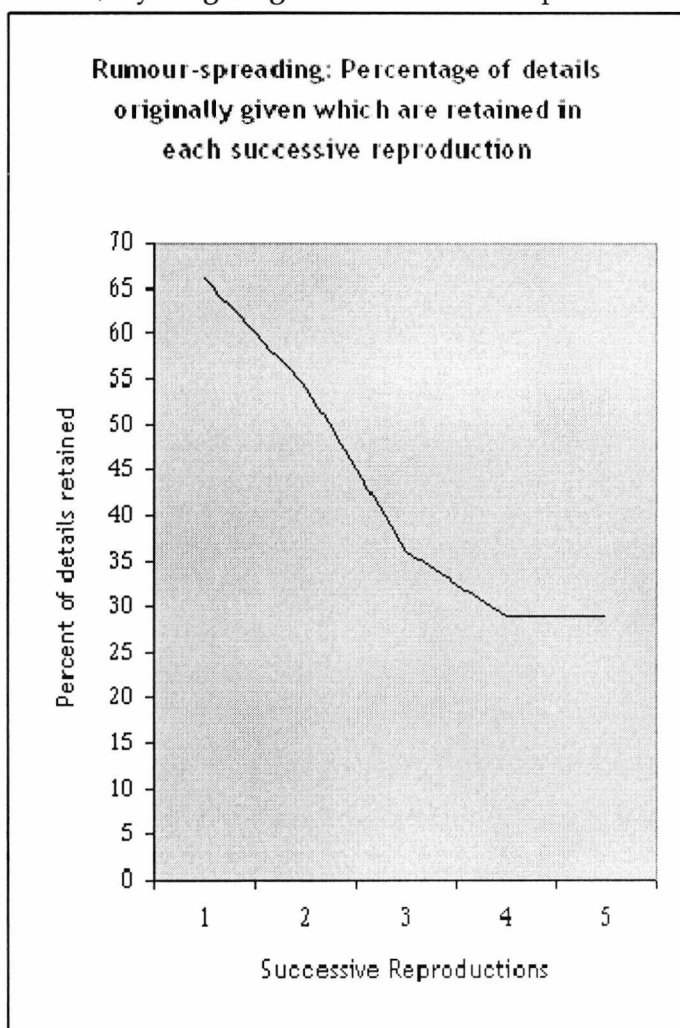


Figure 1: Reproduced from Figure 2 of Gordon W Allport and Leo J Postman's 'The Basic Psychology of Rumor' in Katz, et al, *Public Opinion and Propaganda*, p.398

tertiary effects of that word-of-mouth propaganda to reach a wider mass audience, aim to make use of very similar propaganda techniques to viral advertising. Indeed, it would be at the very forefront of pioneering this technique.

To an extent, the Council would have a loss of control through word-of-mouth propaganda as it would be difficult, if not impossible, to direct the content of the secondary and tertiary (and so on) contacts that are made to wider groups. One theoretical study suggested about 70% of the detail in rumours are lost in just five to six transmissions, but that this amount of content then stabilises and a core percentage

³⁴ Rohrer, Finlo, 'The perils of five-star reviews', *BBC News Magazine*, (25 June 2009) at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/8118577.stm>; Recently, the historian Orlando Figes has been caught out in this way by writing negative reviews of other historians' work and by glorifying reviews of his own books - see "I penned negative Amazon reviews" - *Historian Figes*, BBC News website (24 April 2010) at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8641515.stm>

of the original rumour (around 30%) continues to be transmitted many more times (see Figure 1).³⁵ Whilst it is arguable that the Council would not be disseminating 'rumours' as such, the rumour-effect is still applicable when talking about word-of-mouth propaganda, and it can be assumed if this study on rumour psychology is correct that about a third of the content of the word-of-mouth propaganda that was passed on to other groups, could have been accurately represented. Admittedly, this is to view rumour-spreading very much in a vacuum -the study mentioned above was conducted in what could be described as 'laboratory conditions' rather than 'in the field'. As mentioned earlier, the British Council would have to be constantly coping and dealing with propaganda and rumours being spread by agents of the Axis countries primarily, but also by Axis sympathisers in the countries where they were operating. Viral advertisers also have this problem and many negative customer reviews and comments (perhaps placed by rival competitors) which they are unable to counter can have a devastating effect on product sales. Nevertheless, it is perhaps reasonable to state that a certain percentage of the original rumour is likely to have permeated a certain distance down the chain of transmissions, even if that percentage was not as high as 30%. Reports from the PWE during the Second World War seem to suggest that 'comebacks' (i.e. rumours that could be detected to have been successful by the rumour-spreading organisation by spotting the story in an enemy or neutral newspaper or overhearing it being repeated independently) were relatively high, though an actual percentage is difficult to estimate.³⁶

To go back to memetics for a moment, the idea that units of culture will compete with each other and the successful ones will be the ones that get replicated is fine in one society, but in another society, for new units of culture to stand a chance of competing with units already embedded within another society's memplex, they need a directing organisation to make their survival viable. A directing organisation can work as a meme vehicle, as mentioned above. Dawkins defined a vehicle, in this sense, as something 'which houses a collection of replicators [in this case memes - i.e. units of culture] and which works as a unit for the preservation and propagation of those replicators.'³⁷ The British Council's work fits this idea of a vehicle very well - the

³⁵ Allport, Gordon W. and Postman, Leo J., 'The Basic Psychology of Rumor', in Daniel Katz, Dorwin Cartwright, Samuel Eldersveld, Alfred McClung Lee (eds), *Public Opinion and Propaganda*, (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, Chicago and San Francisco, 1964), p.398-9

³⁶ See TNA FO 898/71 File entitled 'PWE-Sibs (Rumours & Whispers) campaign - comebacks 1940-1943'

³⁷ Blackmore, *The Meme Machine*, p.65; Dawkins, Richard, *The Extended Phenotype*, (Oxford, Freeman, 1982) p.114

Council was there specifically for propagating British culture (a group of memes complementing each other). I would like to suggest that specifically, this is where cultural propaganda comes into play. Cultural propaganda differs from sociological propaganda because it needs a vehicle to perpetuate it. Sociological propaganda becomes cultural propaganda once it is outside of the society where it originates and is being directed to penetrate a different society. This idea of needing an organising body will be developed further in chapter five when this thesis attempts to draw together a model of cultural propaganda by considering how it works in practice in the intervening chapters.

1.3 Domestic roots and antecedents of the British Council 1914-1934

The British Council's establishment in 1934 was overdue. It had been recognised by the British Government in the First World War that aiming cultural propaganda at opinion-forming elites in neutral countries was effective if done well. Pressure during the 1920s and early 1930s for the establishment of an organisation like the British Council to promote cultural propaganda abroad was something that the Foreign Office in London could not put off forever. Prior to the First World War the British Government had taken the view that British achievements were self-evident - the British Empire's size and diversity was unprecedented and could be simply illustrated by the reddish-pink colour on the world map - no one, it was argued, need go any further in telling foreign people how great Great Britain was.³⁸

That view changed with the outbreak of war in 1914 as Britain showed for the first time since the days of Napoleon just how vulnerable it was on its own doorstep. The reddish-pink colouring-in of India, Australia, Canada and much of Africa meant very little when the guns of the Somme could be heard, quite literally, in southeast England. As the war drew on and the stalemate of the western front became seemingly more and more permanent, Britain needed to find ways in bringing in resources from outside of the Empire in order to win the war - that area outside the Empire, of course, being primarily the United States of America. Isolationist, over the other side of the Atlantic and far from being in the special relationship with Britain that existed in the post-Second World War period, the United States was not an easy partner to woo. But clearly there was a way as in 1917 the formerly-neutral Americans joined the war on the side of Britain and France. Though it would be incongruous to state that it was

³⁸ Taylor, *The Projection*, p. 127

wholly responsible for making the United States sympathetic to Britain and the British way of life, the organisation known as Wellington House – a secret wartime propaganda office under Charles Masterman – played a significant and important role in creating sympathy for British culture in American minds.³⁹ As Philip Taylor has stated

[i]t was ... decided that the best propagandists for the Allied cause were sympathetic Americans, particularly those in influential positions in government, business, education, and the media. The principle here, as one document put it, was 'that it is better to influence those who can influence others than attempt a direct appeal to the mass of the population.'⁴⁰

This principle, as will be shown in the following chapters, is one which could very easily be applied to the work of the British Council during the Second World War. Wellington House set many of the precedents that the British Council would eventually pick up at its establishment in 1934 and its memory lived on in the minds of Foreign Office officials during the 1920s as an example of using effective techniques for influencing opinion-forming elites. Even some of those involved with the work of Wellington House, such as Eric Maclagen and Muirhead Bone, later became involved in British Council activity.⁴¹

Work at Wellington House was directed primarily at neutral countries and was split into sections on a linguistic basis – Scandinavia, Holland, Italy and Switzerland, and Spain, Portugal and South America, and lastly, with a special focus, the United States of America.⁴² 'Any recipients of official British propaganda were to receive it through unofficial sources. It was a general policy that a definite nexus should exist between sender and recipient, thus avoiding any impersonal or wholesale distribution', noted M L Sanders who wrote an account of the work of Wellington House in 1975.⁴³ Wellington House may have initially employed some traditional techniques of propaganda such as the creation of pamphlets and cartoons and dealt with the war situation more directly than was the case with the British Council –

³⁹ Taylor, Philip, *Munitions of the Mind: a history of propaganda from the ancient world to the present day*, (Manchester University Press, 3rd edition, Manchester/New York, 2003) p.177

⁴⁰ *Ibid*

⁴¹ Sanders, M L, 'Wellington House and the British Propaganda during the First World War', *The Historical Journal*, XVIII, I (1975) Appendix A, p.144

⁴² *Ibid*, p.120

⁴³ *Ibid*

although 'conventional literary propaganda' was still deemed to be dominant⁴⁴ – but the principle of creating sympathy amongst neutral elites through promoting British culture was a proto-example that Wellington House provided for the Council to emulate. Wellington House started to arrange lecture tours for Britons on specialist subjects, but the lecturers were 'not to reveal their connexion [sic] with the British Government.'⁴⁵ Trips for British theatrical companies, educational exchanges, the fostering of the Boy Scout movement abroad and the establishment of Anglophile societies were all supported by Wellington House, as were the establishment of propaganda bureaux in foreign countries.⁴⁶ Masterman stated that the materials were

[n]ot circulated promiscuously but ... either ... sold or sent with a personal letter to some man or woman of importance, placed in public libraries or distributed amongst a selected list of those to whom the particular literature was suitable.⁴⁷

All of these methods of propaganda have, as we shall see, clear parallels to the work of the Council a few decades later, although the British Council was more open about the source of the materials it was distributing.⁴⁸

Masterman was keenly aware of the potential criticism that his propaganda organisation could attract due to its focus on cultural and understated propaganda techniques and stated that '[i]t is in the nature of the case that we cannot expect to be rewarded to any great extent by realizing definite and overt results.'⁴⁹ As Masterman predicted Wellington House received significant criticism. For example, Sanders stated '[t]he person-to-person distribution of propaganda in North America was considered inferior, as the recipient were selected from Britain', and 'the report condemned as unnecessarily wasteful the policy of Wellington House of buying published works for distribution as propaganda.'⁵⁰ According to Sanders, towards the end of the war, the

⁴⁴ Reeves, Nicholas, *Official British film propaganda during the First World War*, (Croom Helm, London, 1986) p.14

⁴⁵ Sanders, 'Wellington House,' p.139

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p.141-2

⁴⁷ Messinger, Gary S, *British propaganda and the state in the First World War*, (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1992) p.40 citing Masterman, Lucy, *C.F.G. Masterman*, (London, 1939) p.261

⁴⁸ Kenneth Clark, the art historian, also saw the parallels between the work of Wellington House and the British Council in November 1939 – see Foss, Brian, *War paint: art, war, state and identity in Britain, 1939-1945*, (Yale University Press, New Haven / London, 2007) p.160

⁴⁹ Sanders, 'Wellington House', p.131

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p.126

new Ministry of Information (formed in March 1918) under Lord Beaverbrook decided that the secret nature of Wellington House was

no longer believed to be necessary. Instead of the indirect appeal, the ministry sought to be direct in every way. To Beaverbrook and those around him, the most direct and effective forms of publicity were propaganda by films, by wireless and cable and by the press. It was very much a newspaperman's view of propaganda. Where Wellington House had largely aimed at an intellectual élite, the Ministry of Information sought mass response.⁵¹

This view of Beaverbrook, as we shall see, affected how he viewed the creation and development of the British Council - campaigning almost tirelessly for its closure because he believed it wasted money on ineffective propaganda. But overall the work of Wellington House was deemed successful, at least by the Foreign Office, and the reforms enacted by Beaverbrook were in effect too late to make any impact on the part Wellington House played on influencing the United States to enter the war. As Taylor stated

In sharp contrast to the methods employed in 1918 [by Beaverbrook's Ministry], direct mass activity was not considered to be an effective approach [by the Foreign Office]. Yet it was entirely compatible with the Foreign Office's somewhat limited concept of 'public opinion' and its preference for allowing others to conduct propaganda on its behalf; the emphasis upon secrecy was not simply a device to prevent clean hands from getting dirty, but derived from a genuine belief in the value of disguised, indirect propaganda.⁵²

Outside the realms of wartime propaganda, the First World War also prompted British policymakers in Government to examine the state of Britain's reputation at a cultural level in foreign countries more generally. A committee was established in August 1917 under Sir Henry Newbolt to examine the state of the circulation of British books and periodicals abroad. It also drew conclusions about the level of knowledge of British cultural achievements overseas. The committee members noted in their report that:

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p.143

⁵² Taylor, Philip, 'The Foreign Office and British Propaganda during the First World War', *The Historical Journal*, Vol 23, No. 4 (Dec 1980) p.896-7

Apart from the inadequate methods of [book] distribution, we have been impressed by other causes of the general depreciation of the intellectual impulse which British thought can claim to have given the world at large, and of the general misapprehension of the facilities which British invention and enterprise can offer to the trade and manufacture of foreign countries.⁵³

Clearly the committee was stating that there was a general need for promoting British culture abroad which was not just limited to the war needs being serviced by Wellington House. There was a general lack of understanding of Britain outside of the British Empire which not only meant British cultural achievements were not widely known, but was beginning to affect Britain's commercial and economic interests with the wider world. Britain's Empire now not only meant very little with hostilities on Britain's doorstep, but they also had little meaning generally to a world that was unengaged with the British Empire on a cultural level.

If only Beaverbrook or the Treasury had seen the commercial and economic arguments for promoting British culture abroad, it could be speculated that there could have been enough momentum at the end of the First World War for a British cultural propaganda organisation to be established. But they had not, and in 1919 it promptly ruled that cultural propaganda was too wide and too vague to be of any profitable value.⁵⁴ This ruling, however, has to be seen in the wider context of the post-First World War atmosphere. There were three broad points to understand here. Firstly, propaganda had become a dirty word during and particularly soon after the war, largely because of the spread of atrocity stories during the war period which turned out not to be true - exposed more fully by Lord Ponsonby in 1926. Secondly, there was a lack of money and a seemingly less urgent need to spend money on propaganda of any type, when Britain had spent so much of its wealth on winning the war. Thirdly, Britain had won the war and the mind-set of the British Government quickly turned back to the understandable, but flawed, position that the Empire again spoke for itself - and now, of course, with the defeat of Germany, covering an even larger geographical area.⁵⁵ Even when the Foreign Office attempted in 1920, supported by the committee of Sir John Tilley, to consider it had a moral obligation to support British

⁵³ TNA INF 4/5, Report of committee of Department of Information, 9 April 1918

⁵⁴ Taylor, *The Projection*, p.131-2

⁵⁵ Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind*, p.196-7

communities abroad and to promote British culture within its own Empire, Treasury officials were still not interested in changing their position.⁵⁶

For the Foreign Office, a raw disparity of funding between French, Italian, German and British cultural propaganda was obvious. The fact was that the French Government was spending around £500,000 per annum, and the German and Italian Governments around £300,000 each per annum, on cultural propaganda activities was rather shocking when compared to the British Government which was only permitted to spend up to £10 – yes, just ten pounds. And this was only allowed in exceptional circumstances, which usually meant only being able to send a few books to Central and South America, despite the continual requests from British communities abroad to the Foreign Office for more cultural activities to take place.⁵⁷ The Foreign Office was unable, without hard evidence on the effect that this shocking statistic was having on British fortunes abroad, to make any progress on cultural propaganda until the end of the decade. The Treasury's intransigence was broken finally in 1929 when it at last opened its eyes to the fact that a lack of promotion of British culture was damaging British commercial and economic interests and that foreign opinion-forming elites were unaware of developments in Britain which might make them more sympathetic to British interests. The impetus for this change came from an official in the Foreign Office's News Department, and one of the founding fathers of the British Council – Rex Leeper.

In 1929 a highly influential report landed on Leeper's desk. It was a godsend for Leeper. And it was damning for the British Government. The report was authored by Viscount D'Abernon who had just returned from a trade mission to South America, and tore to shreds the Government's negative attitude towards cultural propaganda. D'Abernon's report recommended a clear case for the interdependency of commercial and cultural interests, stating:

To those who say that this extension in influence has no connection with commerce, we reply that they are totally wrong; the reaction of trade to the more deliberate inculcation of British culture which we advocate is definitely certain and will be swift.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Taylor, *The Projection*, p.132-3

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p.138-9

⁵⁸ TNA FO 371/14178 'Report of the British Economic Mission to South America' (18 January 1930) p.6; Also see Donaldson, *The British Council*, p.18; Also see Taylor, *The Projection*, p.139

Frances Donaldson, who wrote the official history of the British Council for its fiftieth anniversary, noted that the final chapter of the D'Abernon Report entitled 'The Commercial Importance of Cultural Influence' was particularly hard-hitting for Government officials and had 'far-reaching consequences.'⁵⁹ D'Abernon expanded on his views at an address given on 29 October 1929 at the Royal Institute of International Affairs:

Turning now to propaganda, I refer mainly to propaganda in the commercial sphere rather than in the political sphere, for, after all, our interests in these countries are, and should be, economic rather than anything else. It is common ground that more active propaganda by England is required, but propaganda needs not only to be more active but more subtle. The "puff" direct is not sufficient, you have to begin further back; you must train your public to appreciate English taste and English goods. For this purpose, cultural influence is also important. Other nations are working hard in this direction. America is offering free education in engineering and other departments to South American youths who will go to the United States for three to four years; France has developed an intensive cultural propaganda, sending every year distinguished professors to South America to carry out a course of lectures on literary and scientific subjects. All this intellectual propaganda, or so-called intellectual propaganda, is intended to have, and will have, wide commercial results. We must not be behindhand....⁶⁰

The effect of the report on changing opinions in the British Government cannot be overstated. It was not the only report to have influence, but most definitely led the way. Further evidence was later supplied from a young British lecturer who had just taken up a post at the University of Coimbra in Portugal. He could not believe that though the Portuguese were willing to engage with Britain, the British had made no attempt to extend cultural relations to Portugal and any British influence was crowded out by German, French and Italian concerns. He went to the British Ambassador in Lisbon, Sir Claud Russell, to make his views known and supplied a written report of which forty copies eventually arrived at the Foreign Office from the different sources that Russell's staff had sent on to Universities in Britain. The lecturer, Sidney George

⁵⁹ Donaldson, *The British Council*, p.18, 21

⁶⁰ D'Abernon, Viscount, 'The Economic Mission to South America: Address given on October 29th, 1929,' *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 6 (November, 1929) p.570-1

West, would later become the British Council's representative to Portugal, and Lisbon would be one of the first foreign cities to host a British Institute under the auspices of the Council.⁶¹

Rex Leeper collated the evidence from the D'Abernon Report and made the case for increasing the grant for cultural activities to support British commercial interests and to counter the 'aggressive propaganda of other countries', to the Labour Foreign Secretary Arthur Henderson. Henderson in turn approached the Treasury for £10,000 per annum – a significant increase on that £10 previously allowed though still minute compared with the expenditure of France, Germany and Italy. In late 1930, the Treasury agreed to a sum of £2,500 per annum – not what the Foreign Office had asked for, but it was a start and the principle of the Treasury's 1919 ruling had been overturned.⁶² Even the £2,500 was not safe though, as the economic crisis unfolding at the time meant that the decision was reversed in 1931, though one third of the money had already been spent. Instead the Foreign Office's News Department went into planning mode for when the money returned in the 1932/1933 financial year. There was enough confidence to do this as the News Department believed that the value of British cultural propaganda work had been recognised together with the cost of other countries' cultural propaganda on British commercial interests. It was now just a matter of time before their cultural propaganda work began in earnest.

In June 1934, after some detailed planning work and some initial cultural propaganda work itself, Leeper proposed the establishment of a Cultural Relations Committee to co-ordinate the work of various bodies already in existence within and outside the Foreign Office – such as the Board of Trade, the Travel Association and the Empire Marketing Board – to be funded by private sources. He proposed that its work, aimed at promoting British culture abroad, be divided into five categories:

- (1) the provision of prizes and scholarships to foreign schools and universities in order to increase the study of the English language;
- (2) the establishment of British libraries abroad;
- (3) the arrangement of lecture tours by distinguished British speakers;

⁶¹ Donaldson, *The British Council*, p.23-24; Roberts, Alison, *Um Toque Decisivo: A Small But Crucial Push. British Council – 70 Years with Portugal*, (Medialivros, Actividades Editoriais SA, Lisbon, 2008) p.9-10

⁶² Taylor, *The Projection*, p.139-40

(4) sponsored visits to England of prominent journalists and professional men;

(5) films.⁶³

These five areas of work do not match exactly with the British Council's statement of aims the following year, but they are very close to it and are a good reflection of what the British Council actually did in practical terms, with the same broad aim of promoting British culture abroad in a general sense. The exception, as we shall see, was the focus on films, which the Council did not really concentrate on until well into the Second World War and often in collaboration with the MOI. The Cultural Relations Committee was established, then closed due to a debate over its constitution and some 'office politics' regarding whose vision of the committee would prevail. The majority of those involved, led by Leeper, wanted to see the Foreign Office as the leading actor in the committee instead of private, commercial interests. The Committee was re-established into what was initially called the 'Advisory Committee for the Promotion of International Relations' in November 1934 with a stronger emphasis on Foreign Office control over the committee. Lord Tyrell, the recently retired British Ambassador to France and former head of the Foreign Office's News Department, was invited to chair the first meeting held on 5 December 1934 which then changed its name at the meeting itself to 'The British Committee for Relations with Other Countries.' This committee was still firmly a committee amongst many other committees in the Foreign Office, and an annex of the News Department, but soon became more independent of its master - adopting the name 'British Council' in 1936.⁶⁴

1.4 Interwar European influences on the British Council

The French, through the *Alliance Française*, had been operating in foreign countries since the nineteenth century and it had been expanding its work throughout the period of the French Third Republic. The French Government, noted Philip Taylor in his analysis and comparison of how Britain projected an image of itself abroad in the 1930s,

regarded cultural relations as an effective method of creating an atmosphere favourable to the extension of political and commercial interests by bringing

⁶³ *Ibid*, p.145

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p.149-50

the full weight of the national cultural heritage to bear in support of its foreign and economic policies and of its political prestige abroad.⁶⁵

All of the major European powers, as well as Japan, had similar organisations to the *Alliance Française* by the time of the Second World War, and the British Council, representing Britain in a similar capacity, had to be there fighting Britain's corner against the backdrop of a range of competing national interests. Germany had the *Auslandsschulen* and the *Deutsche Akademie*; the Soviet Union had the VOKS (All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries); Italy had the *Dante Alighieri* Society; and Japan had the *Kokusai Bunkwa Shinko Kwai* (Society for the Promotion of International Cultural Relations).⁶⁶ All of these cultural organisations had been established prior to the British Council's inauguration in December 1934 and so the Council was always playing a game of catch-up in fighting Britain's corner. Just to give a sense of the scale of the British Council's task, the *Deutsche Akademie* had over 250 language schools in Europe during the Second World War.⁶⁷ Admittedly, it had a lot more of Europe available in which it could operate and most of it was not neutral territory, but still it gives a good feel for the extent of the German cultural propaganda at this time. The Germans already had four language institutions in the Franco-controlled areas of Spain by 1938, during the civil war, well before the British Council arrived with just one institute in 1940.⁶⁸ The Germans had been heavily influenced by the French model of firstly promoting its language with the aim of following that knowledge of its language abroad with the promotion of other forms of its culture. A German study of French cultural propaganda by Karl Remme and Margarete Esch, published in 1927, had been highly significant in the German development of cultural propaganda, even prior to the Nazi takeover of power in 1933.⁶⁹ Ironically, the German expansion of cultural propaganda actually slowed down in the mid to late 1930s, as the Nazi Government did not see it as a priority against other spending demands (particularly the money being spent on rearmament). It was the expansion of the British Council's work in the late 1930s, as well as continued French influence, that spurred the Nazi Government into expanding its cultural work exponentially again. In 1940 the former head of the *Deutsche Akademie*, Franz Thierfelder, wrote a booklet

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p.125-6

⁶⁶ See *Ibid*, pgs.127, 136, 143

⁶⁷ Michels, Eckard, 'Deutsch als Weltsprache? Franz Thierfelder, the Deutsche Akademie in Munich and the Promotion of the German Language Abroad, 1923-1945', *German History*, (2004; 22) p.207

⁶⁸ *Ibid* p.224

⁶⁹ *Ibid* p.212. Michels references Remme, Karl and Esch, Margarete, *Die französische Kulturpropaganda*, (Berlin, 1927), p.21

entitled *Englischer Kulturimperialismus: Der "British Council" als Werkzeug der geistigen Einkreisung Deutschlands* (translated as: 'English⁷⁰ Cultural Imperialism: The "British Council" as a tool for the mental encirclement of Germany') in an attempt to demonstrate the threat posed by the British Council to Germany which Thierfelder thought was politically inspired.⁷¹ Thierfelder had been sidelined by the Nazis in 1937, and was restricted to only writing publications at this time, so this booklet should be viewed partially as an attempt to reassert his influence in the field of German cultural diplomacy. Nevertheless it also must be viewed as having the tacit agreement of the Nazi Government, otherwise it would not have been published nor had such influence in (re)forming Nazi cultural policy.⁷² Clearly the British Council was seen within Nazi Germany as a force to be reckoned with and in response, during the Second World War, the Deutsche Akademie's budget rose from 1 million Reichmarks (RM) in 1940 to 7 million RM in 1944.⁷³ The Council, though feared by the Nazi Government, was clearly not going to be operating in a vacuum in any of the neutral countries in Europe.

As the biographer of Lord Lloyd, Colin Forbes Adam, concluded, the British Council's rise, though helping to promote an understanding of Britain in the period just prior to the war, had not begun early enough to make a real difference in the lead up to the Second World War. Forbes Adam stated:

[t]he important and melancholy fact was that the Council started too late in the day in a race where the competitors, Germany and Italy, had several laps start and infinitely greater resources.⁷⁴

Clearly, in Forbes Adam's view the procrastination and delays evident after the First World War in establishing a British Council-like organisation, as described earlier in this chapter, failed to provide a basis on which the British Council could succeed in helping to prevent the Second World War. Harold Nicolson, the Member of Parliament and someone who later went on lecture tours under the auspices of the British Council, summed up the reason for the delay in an article for the British Council's twenty-first

⁷⁰ The words 'English' and 'British' were often interchangeable in the German language at this time.

⁷¹ Thierfelder, Franz, *Englischer Kulturimperialismus: Der "British Council" als Werkzeug der geistigen Einkreisung Deutschlands*, (Berlin, 1940) p.64-65

⁷² Michels, 'Deutsch als Weltsprache?' p.222 Interestingly, Thierfelder managed to reassert his influence on German cultural policy after the Second World War by demonstrating that the Deutsche Akademie was not a Nazi institution. Thierfelder was the driving force behind the reformation of the Deutsche Akademie, renamed the Goethe-Institut, in 1951.

⁷³ *Ibid* p.223-4

⁷⁴ Forbes Adam, *Lord Lloyd*, p.285

anniversary in 1955. His words, even with a bit too much artistic licence, help summarise this introduction to the situation the British Council found itself in, in 1939:

In the nineteenth century there may have been some justification for this imperturbability. Great Britain was regarded abroad as the champion of liberal institutions and the pioneer of technical progress and invention.... The excellence of our institutions, the honesty of our middle class, the contentment of our proletariat, the amicable tolerance of all our ways, persuaded us that we were universally liked, respected and admired....

Our complacency was pierced by intimations that our best markets were being invaded by persistent and ingenious competition; even our self-assurance became clouded by the suspicion that foreigners did not invariably regard us as either so charming or so intelligent as we seemed to ourselves; and once aeroplanes came to crowd the sky above our island we realised that we had ceased to be the most invulnerable of the Great Powers and had become one of the most vulnerable.... It was then that we first realised that our foreign competitors had been devoting effort, skill and large sums of money to rendering their languages, their type of civility, their scientific or technical resources and inventions, and the desirability of their exports, familiar to students and buyers overseas.⁷⁵

However, it was as clear to the British Government as it was to many observers, that both the Axis powers and France (firstly as a British ally, then under the guise of the Vichy Regime) were going to be conducting propaganda in neutral countries in a variety of ways – both politically and culturally. Just by being there, located on neutral territory, would be very much a political statement that they expected to be listened to, which would have an impact in some way on the local populations. The Axis powers were very keen to take the initiative and take their message to neutral peoples in this way, and either convince them to join the war or ensure their neutrality was benevolent towards the Axis. The British, through the guise of the British Council, simply had to do the same – even if they were latecomers compared with the Axis powers. To use a well-worn phrase that it was there to ‘fly the flag’ does not begin to describe its role of cultural relations, but this concept did play a role in its existence and purpose. Of course there were other organisations, not least the British Embassies

⁷⁵ Nicolson, Harold, ‘The British Council 1934-1955’, *The British Council: 1934-1955 – Twenty-first Anniversary Report*, (The British Council, London, 1935) p.4-5

and Consulates, that were also part of this role and the British Council was there as part of that wider machinery of British presence in foreign countries. It was not just a matter of being seen to be there that was important. Ensuring (or at least trying to ensure) that British interests in the cultural field were treated in the same way as Axis interests, and preferably given favourable treatment, was a vital task. Britain had to be seen to be winning the (non-military) struggles against the Axis on neutral territory on the cultural battlefield.

1.5 The early years of the British Council

The British Council's establishment in 1934, though a direct result of the fear of and the need to counter German and Italian cultural propaganda, was still in a time of peace. In 1934 the threat from Germany in a military sense did not appear particularly great to the vast majority of observers. The Council's official statement of aims reproduced earlier in section 1.1 dating from soon after its establishment in 1935 may therefore seem to emanate from a period which had little in common with the wartime situation the Council found itself a few years later. Indeed, although Britain's declaration of war on Germany in September 1939 had only a very modest effect militarily until the following spring, it had two direct effects on the British Council. Firstly, through the changing of the machinery of British Government with the establishment of the Ministry of Information (MOI) in particular, the propaganda landscape within Whitehall was transformed overnight and the British Council's position was precarious and its continued existence in doubt. This situation, as shall be shown in later, was resolved through intra-Governmental negotiations even though the decision to maintain the British Council in existence was to be revisited a number of times during the war. The second direct effect, and a more important effect from a conceptual point of view, was that the British Council necessarily became part of the British wartime propaganda armoury. Whether the Council liked it or not the collective aim of that armoury, of which it was part, was to ensure everything necessary was done from a propaganda point of view to secure Britain's victory in the war against Germany. The outbreak of war, it seems, had changed everything.

An official statement of aims from 1935 may at first then seem somewhat irrelevant in September 1939 as the national political landscape had changed so significantly, yet it was this statement of aims that the Council tried to keep to throughout its wartime existence. In fact it did not just stop with the Second World War. In 1984, Frances Donaldson, the author of the official version of the British

Council's first fifty years, noted that the official statement would 'still serve as a fair description of the aims and objects of the British Council' with the exception of the terms 'Crown Colonies and Dependencies'.⁷⁶ As another point of comparison, in 2010 the British Council's purpose was stated in just one sentence - 'We build engagement and trust for the UK through the exchange of knowledge and ideas between people worldwide' - which reflects the age of the 'sound bite', but was still along the same lines, if more generalised, as the statement from 1935.⁷⁷ It can be concluded that although the 1935 statement was lengthier than the statement of aims today, it was clearly not detailed enough to act as a blueprint for action relevant only to the year 1935, and deliberately so. The aims as expressed here were primarily aspirational and could be juxtaposed into a multitude of situations and time periods. By stating a high-level framework such as this, the Council gave itself inherent flexibility. That is not to say that this high-level statement is not important, or that the British Council assumed that its working environment would change so significantly in less than half a decade. However, it made its statement intentionally flexible enough to be applicable to the majority of countries in the world and gives important clues to the overall strategy that the British Council aimed to follow and the type of person the British Council was aiming at then, and indeed throughout much of its history. But it does not provide a list of aims specific to the conditions of the Second World War. To understand these it is essential to look at its target audience, the conditions it was working in, and its proposed methods of operation.

The British Council's history from its establishment in late 1934 to the outbreak of war in 1939 is one of expansion in terms of grant increases, scope and geographical remit, and the influence of its third Chairman, Lord Lloyd, who dramatically changed the course of the Council in the late 1930s, after his appointment in 1937. The Council initially established sub-committees and advisory panels on special subjects to draw in expertise from British cultural figures who were asked to become members. The first committees to be established in 1935 were: the Students committee - designed to bring foreign students to Britain; the Lectures committee - for organising lecture tours on a range of cultural subjects in foreign countries by prominent British figures; the Fine Arts committee - for organising British art exhibitions abroad; the Music Advisory committee - for organising music concerts abroad involving the likes of distinguished

⁷⁶ Donaldson, *The British Council*, p.2

⁷⁷ 'Our vision, purpose and values', British Council website

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/new/freedom-of-information/information-guide/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/vision-purpose-and-values/>

British composers Ralph Vaughan Williams and Arthur Bliss; the Books and Periodicals committee - not only for supplying books abroad but also to try to promote positive reviews of British books in foreign newspapers; the British Education Abroad committee (which closed in 1936, shortly after it had been established); and the Ibero-American committee stressing the emphasis at the time on Latin America, taking over the Ibero-American Institute of Great Britain. Before or just after the outbreak of war these were joined by the Near East committee led by Lord Lloyd before becoming Chairman in 1937, Drama and Dance committee, Films committee (preceded by a joint venture between the Travel Association and the British Council) and the Resident Foreigners committee.⁷⁸ All of these were aligned to the official statement of aims set in 1935 outlined earlier.

The appointment of Lord Lloyd as Chairman in 1937 turned the Council from being a Committee of the Foreign Office to an independent body secured by Royal Charter in the autumn of 1940. Lloyd organised the Council into a structure that was capable of supporting its own work and no longer needed to rely on the Foreign Office. Under his tenure of the Chairmanship, the Council became far more active and went out into the world by establishing institutes in Cairo and Lisbon in 1938. A J S White, the Secretary-General of the British Council during the Second World War, stated that

the cause of the British Council attracted him [Lord Lloyd] above all other causes because of his deep belief in the value of British influence overseas and his realisation that this influence could be exerted no longer politically but only through such work as that of the Council. Lord Lloyd had a great capacity for infecting others with his own enthusiasm and it can be understood that with his own deep belief in the Council's aims, his great drive and his powerful contacts both at home and overseas, he was an almost ideal head of the Council in its youthful days. It is difficult to overestimate the stimulus given to the Council and its cause from having a man of Lord Lloyd's stature as its leader and most devoted adherent.⁷⁹

As will be shown later in the thesis, Lord Lloyd's enthusiasm and drive for success were key reasons for the Council's survival at the outbreak of the Second World War. At this time, it was becoming increasingly clear that the threat from the

⁷⁸ Donaldson, *The British Council*, Appendix 4 p.377-81; Taylor, *The Projection*, p.154-160

⁷⁹ White, A J S, *The British Council, the first 25 years: 1934-1959 - a personal account*, (The British Council, London, 1965) p.19-20

Fascist powers was real and that the British point of view needed to be argued against the cultural propaganda expenditure of other countries. Apparent Italian ascendancy in the Mediterranean around the time of and following the Abyssinian Crisis alarmed Britain. Britain was particularly concerned that its influence in its own possessions – Egypt, Palestine, Malta and Cyprus – was under threat from Italian cultural propaganda. Appeals to the Treasury were now more successful in increasing its grant from £5,000 in the 1935-1936 financial year steadily increasing during this period to £330,249 in the 1939-1940 financial year (see Appendix A). The Council made its arguments on the basis that cultural relations were necessary for promoting an understanding between countries which would, in turn, be crucial in preventing a repeat of the First World War. It was an argument that seems to have gone down well with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Neville Chamberlain.⁸⁰ Though it would be wrong to equate the rise of the British Council during this period with the rise of the policy of Appeasement – the details of the two were very different in many ways – their overall aim of promoting British interests through non-aggressive and non-military means can be seen as complementary. The Council's approach to the Treasury could be said to reflect Chamberlain's desire to find innovative ways to avoid conflict with Germany and an increase in the grant was always going to be likely with Chamberlain as Chancellor, even though he always took a cautious approach whenever the word 'propaganda' was involved.⁸¹ Lloyd himself was certainly no fan of Appeasement despite being on good terms with Chamberlain, having advocated rearmament since the early 1930s and seeing the British Council as another weapon in the armoury of British defences.⁸² Anthony Eden too was one of the key players arguing for an increase in the Council's grant and influence in both his pre-war and wartime stints as Foreign Secretary, as will be shown later in the thesis.⁸³ Eden's support for the Council is perhaps the best illustration of the difference between the Council's approach and the policy of Appeasement, but the arguments made to the Treasury during the late 1930s for an increase in the British Council's budget rested firmly on the basis that the Council could help prevent wars, not that it was an alternative weapon of war. This was an argument that changed, of course, as soon as the Munich Conference had failed and war broke out in September 1939.

⁸⁰ Taylor, *The Projection*, p.162

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p.165, 168

⁸² *Ibid*, p.167-8

⁸³ *Ibid*, p.165; TNA FO 370/634. Eden, Anthony. Minute to Winston Churchill, 20 May 1941

1.6 The British Council and the approach of war

The war situation necessarily limited the field of operation for the British Council in a geographical sense. Having opened its first overseas institute in Egypt in 1938, followed closely by others in Portugal, Poland and Romania in the same year, the Council had had plans to expand rapidly across the Middle East, Europe and South America.⁸⁴ Though the war had not changed the aspirations of the Council, the war most definitely changed the extent to which those aspirations were achievable. Firstly the Council could not operate in what were now enemy countries – Germany firstly, then Italy and Japan – and had to quickly withdraw operations in countries that were invaded by the Axis powers. Table 1 outlines the institutes that were opened and closed in Europe during the war period. It shows that the Council's work ceased in the institutes it had already established in Poland, Yugoslavia, Greece, Bulgaria and Romania in quick succession as those countries were invaded or submitted to Axis influence. British Council staff had to be evacuated along with the staff of the British Embassies. In Europe this left nine countries where the Council could possibly operate: Spain, Portugal, Sweden, Turkey⁸⁵, Switzerland, Malta, Cyprus, Iceland and Eire (the part of the island of Ireland today constituting the Republic of Ireland). Malta, Cyprus and Iceland were all either part of the British Empire or were under British control during the war, and so were not, or cannot be regarded as neutral. They are consequently not within the scope of this thesis except in passing. Eire, though regarded by the British Government as part of its Empire, *was* officially neutral but, as we shall see, was not considered by the British Council to the same extent as other neutral countries because of the political difficulties that existed there particularly with regard to Anglo-Irish relations. These difficulties arose especially as a result of the Irish Civil War and the Partition between Northern Ireland and Eire. Switzerland was very difficult to travel to owing to the fact that it was surrounded by Axis and Axis-occupied countries, and consequently the Council's work there was restricted to utilising British materials already in the country (lantern slides, literature etc) and notionally supporting the work of pro-British communities to promote the British cause.⁸⁶ This left only four countries in Europe – Spain, Portugal, Sweden and Turkey – where the Council could and did operate in any meaningful way for the majority of the war period. All four of which, of course, were neutral countries but being neutral did

⁸⁴ See White, *The British Council*, p.26-29

⁸⁵ There is often an argument about whether Turkey should be regarded as a European or Asian nation – for the purposes of this thesis, I have defined it as European.

⁸⁶ TNA BW 82/9. 'The British Council: Report for Fourth Quarter, 1940', January 1941 p.17

not mean that they were in any way immune from the effects of the Second World War. Neutrality was rarely a passive notion and had to be enforced through censorship restrictions and trade agreements. Spain, for example, had recently emerged from a civil war and its new leadership, under General Franco, had relied on German and Italian assistance in order to be victorious. Spain, it appeared at least, looked on the verge of joining the Axis a number of times during the Second World War, though Spanish-Axis relations were far more complex than is often realised.⁸⁷ Turkey feared that it would go the same way as much of the Balkans and be invaded by German or Italian forces which it was not in a position militarily to resist.⁸⁸ Sweden had only been spared invasion by Germany during the Scandinavian campaign in early 1940 because it did not have a North Sea coast (and therefore unlikely to be invaded by Britain) and Germany considered that it would be easier to obtain the raw materials it needed for its war effort (of which Sweden had many) from a 'free' country than from an occupied

Table 1: The British Council's presence in Europe (1938-1945)	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
Countries in which the British Council opened an institute	3 Poland Portugal Romania	3 Greece Italy Malta	6 Bulgaria Cyprus Iceland Spain Turkey Yugo- slavia	1 Sweden	0 -	0 -	4 Belgium France Gibraltar Greece	3 Italy USSR Yugo- slavia
Countries from which the British Council had to withdraw staff and close institutes	0 -	1 Poland	2 Italy Romania	3 Bulgaria Greece Yugo- slavia	0 -	0 -	0 -	0 -
Net opened	3	2	4	-2	0	0	4	3
Total number open	3	5	9	7	7	7	11	14

⁸⁷ See Stone, Glyn A, *Spain, Portugal & the Great Powers, 1931-1941*, (Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2005) p.127-147

⁸⁸ Knatchbull-Hugessen, Sir Hughe, *Diplomat in Peace and War*, (John Murray, London, 1949) p.146-7; Hale, William, *Turkish Foreign Policy 1774-2000*, (Frank Cass, London, 2000) p.79

country. By being surrounded by Axis-occupied or aligned countries (in the case of Finland), Sweden was always going to be wary of irritating Germany so it could maintain its neutral position. Sweden also feared the Soviet Union, which until 1941, was a German ally.⁸⁹ Only Portugal can be said to be in a position geographically where the Council could operate without fear of German troops marching across the border directly. However, politically Portugal was still wary of antagonising Germany and Portugal's leader, António Oliveira Salazar, had sympathies with many aspects of Nazi political thought. Within each of these four countries there were also separatist movements (for example Catalans and Basques in Spain, and Armenians and Kurds in Turkey) and an array of internal political and social differences which meant the Council had to act very carefully and have a good understanding of the position on the ground to ensure it did not antagonise these different elements to the detriment of the British cause.

The Council's field of operation in Europe therefore did not look particularly propitious. Its choice of audience was severely limited by circumstances, both geographically and politically. Not only were there merely four countries where it could operate, therefore, but it was evident that within all four there were always likely to be restrictions in the way the Council could operate. Yet there was pro-British sympathy in all four countries – partly from an ideological point of view and partly because of commercial and trade reasons.⁹⁰ The British Council could and had to nurture that pro-British sympathy if it was to make any headway in these countries. It is also reasonable to assume that extreme anti-British feeling was rare and indifferent feeling was more common. Indifferent feeling could be reached if propaganda was directed carefully.⁹¹ The Council had to think very carefully about its methods of operation in order to make a pervasive impact which could contribute significantly to the war effort through keeping those four countries out of the war.

By stating in 1935 that it was choosing to concentrate on 'British literature ... music and fine arts, the sciences, philosophic thought and political practice' the British Council was showing that it was aiming at people who had the time to appreciate that kind of culture. To a great extent the Council had little choice about its target audience – it was largely determined by the circumstances of war that the only people who were

⁸⁹ See Tennant, Peter, *Touchlines of War*, (Hull University Press, Hull, 1992) p.14-15, 20-22, 25-29

⁹⁰ See, for example, Roberts, *Um Toque Decisivo*, p.29

⁹¹ See Bogart, Leo, *Cool Words, Cold War: a new look at USIA's premises for propaganda*, (revised edition, abridged by Agnes Bogart, The American University Press, Washington/London, 1995) p.62

going to have the time to think about being pro-British actively in any meaningful way in neutral countries were the elites. The masses, partly through censorship restrictions and partly because of the need to survive in whatever circumstances they found themselves, either did not have the time to think about where their sympathies lay or if they did, did not have the influence or resources to act upon their sympathies. The people who had the time were necessarily elites and it can readily be assumed, therefore, that the Council was aiming at elites in preference to the masses.⁹² If not, where (to cite one obvious example missing from its list) was the greatest and newest cultural mass medium phenomenon of the 1920s and 1930s – film – in its list of cultural forms? To be fair, the Council did sponsor a number of short films during the war, but it appears very much as an afterthought compared with music and fine arts (the Films committee was established in 1939 whereas the Music Advisory committee and the Fine Arts committee were both established in 1935).⁹³ Again, were the working classes in foreign countries really going to be interested in British ‘philosophic thought’ and ‘fine arts’? Some may well have been, but it seems clear (at least from the official statement) that this was not who the British Council was aiming at, and ‘cultural propaganda’ as defined by the British Council itself was not intended to be propaganda about popular culture, but so-called ‘high culture’. Good (i.e. effective) propagandists always keep their audience (the ‘propagandees’) in mind and try to see how their propaganda will be viewed by the propagandees. Of course, it is actually unclear at this stage whether the Council’s promotion of ‘high culture’ was determined by the aim of targeting elites, or whether the aim of promoting ‘high culture’ determined which audience (i.e. the elites) would be receptive to it, but whichever is the case (and it is probable that it was a mixture of the two) the Council had to keep the two together in order to be effective. There was little point in trying to promote popular culture to elites or high culture to the masses as the propaganda would sit uncomfortably with the audience. It can be deduced that the elites were the key audience for the British Council to target and the Council’s aim of promoting high culture sat very well with the target audience. It will be tested throughout this thesis whether this assumption about its audience is a reasonable assumption to make, and how closely the 1935 official statement of aims can be said to have been followed.

From certain points of view, to aim solely at elites does seem somewhat surprising because the British Council was, from very early on, supported across all

⁹² Donaldson, *The British Council*, p.1

⁹³ *Ibid*, p.377-378 (Appendix 4)

political parties. Clement Attlee, the leader of the Labour Party, for example, was on its Executive Board from 1936 to 1940 as were a number of Conservative MPs.⁹⁴ It was deliberately non-political in a partisan sense. Perhaps a pragmatic approach was taken by Attlee and other Labour politicians who realised that the leaders of many of the countries in Europe at the time (particularly Franco in Spain, and Salazar in Portugal) were unlikely to be appreciative of purportedly left-wing propaganda. In the war there was the more important aim of keeping these right-wing dictators out of the war, rather than presenting a full picture of British culture – both high and popular – to the diverse audiences in the countries where the Council operated. Whilst this pragmatism would be understandable during the war itself, it does seem to be somewhat paradoxical that Labour MPs would support an elite targeting organisation during the pre-war period. Perhaps Labour MPs thought it best to work with an organisation which may not immediately correspond with their aims but could be morphed over time to be a more mass targeting establishment once they were in a position of power. It is certainly important not to look at Labour's position solely from a twenty-first century viewpoint with the knowledge that they would win the 1945 general election by a landslide – in the mid-1930s Labour was still a young and inexperienced party that had held power only twice for very brief periods and could not be said to be a credible 'alternative Government' at this point. Labour MPs had to work with what existed in the mid-1930s. To examine this paradox in detail would take this thesis off at a tangent and out of its scope of concentrating on the war period. The important point to note here is that all political parties supported the British Council and clearly saw value in the Council having the aim purportedly of targeting elites for foreign countries and to spread British high culture abroad. So what value was there in targeting the elites?

Concentrating on the elites had a number of advantages. It had been already noted in the First World War by British propagandists that 'it [was] better to influence those who can influence others than attempt a direct appeal to the mass of the population' when the British were trying to influence neutral American opinion.⁹⁵ It was 'better' in three senses. Firstly, as has already been shown, if there was pre-existing pro-British sympathy in neutral countries it was likely to be residing in the elites. But there are some more positive reasons to target elites as well, other than just being one

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p.368 (Appendix 2)

⁹⁵ Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind*, p.178; Also see Malvern, Sue, *Modern Art, Britain and the Great War: Witnessing, Testimony and Remembrance*, (Yale University Press, New Haven / London, 2004) p.21-2

of the few groups who were likely to listen. The second reason was that those pro-British elites were likely to have networks of influence which they already used and knew worked (otherwise they were unlikely to be in the position of an elite – elites generally, by definition, are influential and opinion-forming) – if one can persuade an elite, they can generally induce sympathy elsewhere in the population both in terms of the indifferent and hostile elites as well as the masses. The model of influence that I have constructed in Figure 2 demonstrates how influencing the pro-British elites could have a chain reaction effect to influence these other groups, and demonstrates how the memetic and, in effect, the rumour spreading theories that were described earlier could work in practice. The primary audience here was viewed as a channel to reach a wider audience rather than solely as a receptacle itself.⁹⁶ The third reason why it was better to influence the elites was that, as elites were by definition less numerous than the masses, concentrating on a small number of people would allow a very effective method of propaganda to be utilised – propaganda by word-of-mouth. The effectiveness and appropriateness of word-of-mouth propaganda, as we have seen from the theories of propaganda, are often considered to be key components of a propaganda campaign.

A model of influence for the British Council's work in neutral Europe

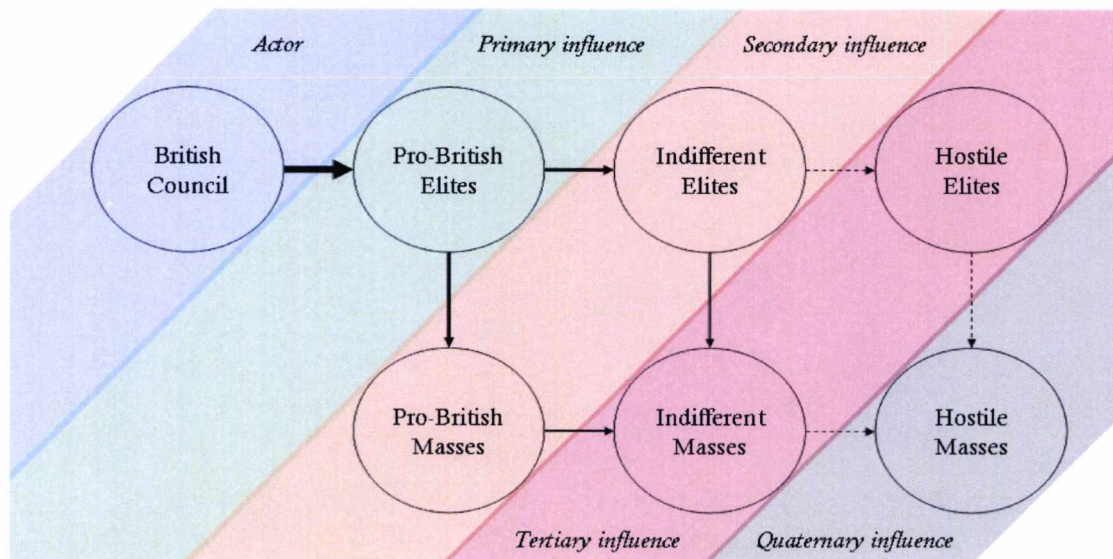


Figure 2

⁹⁶ See Bogart, *Cool Words*, p.56

The Council has often been under pressure throughout its history with regard to the image of Britain that it is trying to promote, usually from those areas of society which do not feel they are being adequately represented by the Council or think other areas of society are being over-represented. In chapter two this issue will be explored in detail with regard to how the Council dealt with the competing array of interests that were vying for influence. This will particularly reference the criticisms levied by Lord Beaverbrook, both newspaper proprietor and Minister of Aircraft Production (May 1940-May 1941) - and a former Minister of Information from the First World War period. The Council's concentration on the elites produced one consistent theme of criticism. Many have viewed this concentration as a problem because it missed out a large section, indeed the majority section, of British society and therefore produces a distorted image of Britain to foreign countries. Other critics have usually questioned the value of cultural propaganda in any sense, high or popular. The *Daily Mirror*, which was aimed at a mass working class readership, ran an article in November 1944 which crystallised the essence of many of the complaints about the British Council's work at this time and reinforced the impression that the British Council was providing a skewed 'high culture' image of Britain to foreign elites, and was not worth supporting. The article is worth quoting at some length:

...they [The British Council] have in the past week rendered yeoman service to the Empire by finding a deerstalking expert willing to teach his art to the Spaniards, and a scholar from Brighton ready to enlighten the natives of Cyprus on the works of Aristotle on which he is an authority...

The Swedes have had some real treats. Here are a few of them:

Mr. T.S. Eliot lectured to them on "Poetry, Speech and Music."

Professor Holford delivered five lectures on British architecture.

Dr. Darlington spoke on "Cylology" and "For more general audiences, on Darwinism."

Even Iceland was not forgotten. The Council sent a pianist there who gave "five very successful concerts."

The Council is probably the only institution which has ever been paid by a Government to propagate snobbery. If you don't believe me, listen to this statement by one of its ex-chairmen:

"We are not catering for the lower type who might like a cup of cocoa or a sing-song. We are proposing to entertain the more intellectual... those who would appreciate and understand a higher type of British culture."

I know that our export trade is in a dreadful state, but snobbery is the one thing we cannot afford to send abroad. Not even as reverse Lend Lease.⁹⁷

It is not possible to verify the accuracy of the 'ex-chairman's statement' as this is not documented elsewhere and if said, is unlikely to have been a written statement. Secondly the writer clearly was not aware of the history of cultural propaganda in a wider sense when stating that '[t]he Council is probably the only institution which has ever been paid by a Government to propagate snobbery' - as we shall see, if this type of work was indeed 'snobbery', the *Alliance Française* had been at it since the 1880s. However, the point of view held by the *Daily Mirror* was one that was commonly uttered by the mass press. Newspaper proprietors believed that propaganda was better focused on the enemy directly and that sympathy for the British cause in neutral countries would be created naturally by the awe of military success against the enemy. There was no need, in their view, to spend money talking about British culture (high or popular) to neutral countries, as it would have little effect compared to that sympathy created by military success. Admittedly cultural propaganda, as we shall see, is primarily a long term phenomenon and cannot expect to have the same immediate effect as military success in changing opinions, but its effect can be more profound in the long term. It was mentioned above that effective propagandists keep their audiences in mind when creating propaganda. High culture being promoted to elites could be effective (on the assumption that it was promoted well). Mass audiences (in Britain or indeed abroad) were unlikely ever to see the value of the British Council promoting high culture however well it was presented as they were not the intended audience. Lord Beaverbrook in particular and the late Lord Northcliffe's family (both Lords had been active in the British propaganda campaign in the First World War) knew this perfectly well. Beaverbrook in particular knew that focusing on the 'snobbish' elements of the Council's work was more likely to sell newspapers to a mass audience (an audience to whom the Council's propaganda was not aimed and would

⁹⁷ Greig, Bill, 'It's funny, but it's rather foolish, too', *The Daily Mirror*, (November 20, 1944) p.2

therefore irritate) and provide momentum to his view that the Council should be closed down. If the Council was promoting snobbery, it is equally true that it was aiming at snobs, not the masses. As one analysis of targeting intellectuals through propaganda has concluded,

There are not many intellectuals in the world, and therefore an intellectual is flattered by intellectual approaches... They can be approached with more subtle arguments, greater candor, more direct discussion of the opponent's ideology, longer commentaries, more discussion of the relative credibility of courses, and distinctions between what is certain and what is merely probable.⁹⁸

In other words, though the terms 'elites', 'intellectuals' and 'snobs' are arguably not entirely synonymous, the Council's propaganda had to be designed to fit with the needs of its elitist audience, and could not be fully understood by the masses as its propaganda was not designed to be received by them. Many of the Council's critics took the Council's work out of context and did not give credit to the wider benefits of its work. For example stating the rather bland fact that 'Mr. T.S. Eliot lectured to them [the Swedes] on "Poetry, Speech, and Music"' does not even attempt to describe the impact that his visit made on Swedish opinion. It does not describe the tone of the Council's work and how this tone compared with what the Swedes were used to receiving in terms of propaganda from other sources. Nor does it begin to allow the reader to understand how his visit, whilst not turning the tide of Swedish opinion on its own, was one of many, by a variety of different British personalities, which incrementally accumulated increasing pro-British feeling amongst the Swedish population. Eliot's visit will be examined in detail in chapter three, but the important point here to note is that the Council's aims cannot simply be described as wanting to 'entertain' neutral elites. There was a far deeper aim of sympathy-creation which was a key, if under-recognised, part of the British propaganda effort and war effort in general. Targeting elites in the 'language' they understood was the cornerstone of that effort.

Just existing on neutral territory was clearly not enough from both the point of view that it needed to compete with other countries and also the need to actively sell the image of Britain abroad. It had to organise cultural events in order to be noticed

⁹⁸ Bogart, *Cool Words*, p.104

and to win those propaganda battles against the Axis powers. Its organisation of cultural events was an attempt to meet two key separate, though linked, objectives. Firstly, it genuinely wanted to satisfy interest (and create it if it did not already exist) in British culture within the neutral populations. It has already been discussed what type of neutral person the Council was aiming at – i.e. the elites – and it will be discussed in chapter four how far that interest already existed in neutral populations and how those populations reacted to the British Council's activities. As has already been mentioned, it was a reasonable assumption that there would be some kind of interest in the background of Britain as the only country holding out militarily against Germany for much of the war. It may not necessarily have been entirely a sympathetic interest, and that interest may have been shaped by a whole range of other influences – historical knowledge, political propaganda, censorship etc. – but it was an interest that would most definitely have been there. As was mentioned earlier, George West, who became the British Council's representative in Portugal, had for some time been urging the British Government that there was a need amongst the Portuguese population for cultural interchange with Britain.⁹⁹ The opening of the British Council's institute in Lisbon prior to the outbreak of war showed that this need had already been recognised in Portugal. There were similar needs elsewhere, although less obvious than they had been in Portugal. The main events that the Council would organise were lecture tours (from eminent figures in British academic life – historians, scientists, musicians and artists in particular), art exhibitions, music concerts, book exhibitions and the teaching of the English language (which gave neutral peoples the tool to find out more about Britain and the English-speaking world). The type of cultural event that would be organised stemmed directly from its 1935 statement of aims and these events will be examined in detail in chapter three.

The second objective that the Council had to meet in organising cultural events was to draw people together. The Council well understood that the cultural events created the perfect excuse for British people to meet with neutral peoples to discuss a wide range of issues. Indeed, it would not really matter what the cultural events actually consisted of and could be lacking in a specific theme (a cocktail party to welcome a particular lecturer to the country was as good a cultural event as an art exhibition or music concert), as long as it achieved the objective of drawing people together. This objective can be split into two sub-sections. Firstly, by establishing institutes and organising events, the Council could provide a much needed focus for

⁹⁹ Roberts, *Um Toque Decisivo*, p.29

people who were already sympathetic to Britain, and those who became sympathetic during the war, to meet. Secondly, it was mentioned earlier that targeting elites allowed word-of-mouth propaganda to be utilised by the Council staff because of the small numbers of people involved, and the rumour spreading model showed that this could be very effective. The British Council has not been the only organisation to see its advantage. As stated in a report on a similar organisation in the post-war period (the United States Information Agency – USIA),

[t]he most effective way to influence people is word-of-mouth. It can accomplish a great deal for a little money. A person is more apt to believe another person. There is a certain warmth of relationship, a certain credibility that you get, more than for a printed piece of material.¹⁰⁰

It is simply not possible to reach an entire population directly by word-of-mouth, but as demonstrated earlier it is possible to start off a chain reaction of word-of-mouth propaganda by talking to the most influential people and expecting them to talk to others who are more difficult to reach directly and eventually through tertiary and further contacts, to reach the whole population. Word-of-mouth propaganda is also useful because it is incremental and uncensorable. In a previous study, I concluded that the most predominant form of British propaganda in Eire during the Second World War was through word-of-mouth as it circumvented the Irish Censorship so effectively. Little by little the conversations that British people had in Eire (or indeed, Irishmen had in Britain) accumulated into a large information stream which theoretically could only be stopped if British people were stopped from going to Eire (or vice versa), which did not happen except just prior to D-Day.¹⁰¹ Although the British Council itself barely operated in Eire the principle remains the same, and word-of-mouth propaganda was utilised successfully by John Betjeman, the British Press Attaché in Dublin (and later Poet Laureate).¹⁰² The Special Operations Executive (SOE) and the Political Warfare Executive (PWE) used a ‘sib’ campaign (from the Latin *sibilare* – ‘to hiss’¹⁰³) which was essentially a rumour-spreading campaign by whispering rumours in certain key places (primarily in neutral countries) by word-of-mouth, so

¹⁰⁰ Bogart, *Cool Words*, p.185

¹⁰¹ Ó Drisceoil, Donal, *Censorship in Ireland 1939-1945: Neutrality, Politics and Society*, (Cork University Press, Cork, 1996) p.89

¹⁰² Corse, Edward, ‘British Propaganda in Neutral Eire after the fall of France, 1940’, *Contemporary British History*, (22:2, 2008)

¹⁰³ Richards, Lee, ‘Whispers of War – the British World War II rumour campaign’ in the Psywar.Org website: <http://www.psywar.org/sibs.php>.

that they could be spread from one person to the next.¹⁰⁴ In February 1942 it was reported that over 2,000 'sibs' had been disseminated in neutral and occupied Europe during the previous twelve months and 'already in France oral propaganda was the most important medium'. 'Although the enemy may suspect that a certain rumour has been started by the British Government' the report continued, 'they can never prove it.'¹⁰⁵ The Germans, too, had a similar campaign of '*Flüsterpropaganda*' (literally translated from German as 'whisper-propaganda') operating in Spain as well as elsewhere, known to the Spaniards as '*boca a boca*' (mouth-to-mouth) propaganda where rumours were spread 'in shop queues, at bus stops, in bars, restaurants etc' [OSpAJ].¹⁰⁶ Indeed the idea of using a network of personal agitators in this way has antecedents dating back at least to the Bolshevik Revolution, and probably proto-examples can be found long before 1917.¹⁰⁷ It has been estimated that by 1946, there were around three million personal agitators active in the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁸ Clearly the British Council's aim to spread propaganda via word-of-mouth was not a new, nor a unique idea, but the SOE and German *Flüsterpropaganda*, campaigns were clandestine and often aimed at the masses to try to spread discontent amongst them. Word-of-mouth propaganda is not a technique just restricted to political or cultural spheres, but can be used successfully in both. The British Council's audience, as we have seen, was an elitist one, and so the word-of-mouth propaganda could be more overt, though restricted to a smaller initial audience (which also meant there was more control over the initial message), and designed to spread a more positive image of British culture abroad.

1.7 Conclusion

There are a number of themes in this chapter which need to be summarised and drawn into a framework in which the work of the British Council can be analysed over the following chapters. It can be concluded that the 1935 statement of aims outlined at the beginning, although a useful aspirational summary that was just as relevant to the Second World War period as to 1935, does not give enough detail to be seen as a blueprint for wartime objectives. Nevertheless it gives important clues as to the type of

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ TNA FO 898/69 'Political Warfare Executive - Rumours' (author unclear), 7 February, 1942

¹⁰⁶ Schneider, Ingrid Schulze, 'La propaganda alemana en España 1942-1944', *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma*, (Serie V, H.a Contemporánea, t. 7, 1994) p.376

¹⁰⁷ See Inkeles, Alex, 'The Bolshevik Agitator' in Katz et al, *Public Opinion*, p.404-413; also see Doob, Leonard, 'Goebbels' Principles of Propaganda' in Katz et al, *Public Opinion*, p.516-7 for an example of how Joseph Goebbels used the technique within Germany itself.

¹⁰⁸ Inkeles, 'The Bolshevik Agitator' p.405

propaganda that the British Council was aiming to produce and the type of person it was aiming at. Its aim was to present an image of Britain to neutral countries which the Council thought was a truthful and accurate one and was not seen as 'propaganda' in a derogatory sense - they were presenting Britain as they thought it actually existed. This links very well with the sociological propaganda model that Ellul produced in which he demonstrated that cultures are already made up of self-perpetuating currents of thought which do not need a propaganda organisation to promote them as the people within that society just think of it as their way of life. The British Council employees were clearly not naïve enough to think that British culture had only to be exposed abroad, and would be readily consumed without any direction and promotion by the Council itself. The Council was not working in a vacuum and there were plenty of other cultural organisations promoting other nations in the neutral countries. Neutrality in those countries, too, was not a passive policy and the Council would have to actively fight against it as well as Axis influence to become successful. The British Council had to fight Britain's corner on the cultural battlefield and make sure the culture that the Council was presenting was heard above the furore of other interests. Having said that, the Council was going to have to produce propaganda that was acceptable to the audience it was trying to persuade. Its propaganda had to mould into the existing sociological contexts. By aiming for influential pro-British elites and in order to reach indifferent and hostile elites who effectively ran the neutral countries (as well as eventually reaching the masses through a chain of secondary influences) the Council was going to have to create propaganda that they would be interested in. This would mean that the projection of timeless, conservative themes of high culture was absolutely necessary to reaching these elites. The elites were the people who had the time to appreciate the propaganda and creating propaganda that they were interested in was essential. Those high culture events could then also be used for word-of-mouth propaganda which, as has been shown, is one of the most effective forms of propaganda both in terms of ability to persuade, but also in circumventing censorship restrictions and being difficult to trace. The cultural propaganda of the British Council, if conducted effectively, was going to be instrumental in persuading the elites of the neutral countries to take a more sympathetic view of wartime Britain through the range of techniques that the Council was aiming to deploy. The Council's story, which will unfold in the following chapters, is one of battling on a long-term, incremental basis for the hearts and minds of neutral Europe, with an attempt to achieve a widespread influence slowly penetrating more deeply into the existing sociological situations. Other more direct and immediate propaganda may be better known and

more impressive in terms of being more tangible and having an immediate and visual impact. The Council, as has been shown and will continue to be shown, has often been criticised for carrying out propaganda that was only 'entertaining snobs'. Its work is seen as a waste of taxpayers' money at any time, let alone at a time of war, but those critics had only a very narrow understanding of the Council's work during the war. Its wider implications had the potential to be profound. Political and more immediate and visual propaganda could not have been as successful in neutral Europe at critical points in the Second World War without the work of the British Council behind the scenes preparing the ground for direct action.

2. Operational environments: the British Council's relations with British organisations and individuals

2.1 Relations with the British Government

The Foreign Office was the British Council's patron. In a letter to the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, in August 1942 the British Council's Chairman, Sir Malcolm Robertson, described Eden as the British Council's 'godfather'.¹ And it was true – the Foreign Office had created the British Council in 1934 and had championed its cause ever since its creation. The Foreign Secretary had the role of appointing the Council's Chairman, many of their staff were seconded from the Foreign Office, and the Foreign Office had a dedicated member of staff responsible for overseeing the Council's affairs.² The extent to which it supported the Council is evidenced by the role that the Foreign Office played in particular in September 1939 and February 1941 when its very existence appeared in doubt.

In September 1939, at the outbreak of war, the Council was in danger of being swallowed up by the newly created Ministry of Information. Detailed planning for the Ministry's formation had begun a number of months prior to the outbreak of war, and relations between the British Council and the embryonic Ministry got off to a bad start – and got worse before they improved later in the war.³ When rumours started spreading in June 1939 of its intended formation, Lord Lloyd (Chairman of the British Council from 1937 to 1941) was embarrassed to admit to his Executive Committee that he 'had not in fact been informed or consulted on the subject by anyone', to which his Committee 'expressed surprise' that the Council 'should not have been consulted'.⁴ Worse still for the Council, it was far from guaranteed that it would survive and even if it did there was a real possibility that it would only survive as a shadow of its former self. It was generally assumed that with the outbreak of war there would be an immediate bombing campaign by Germany over Britain and London in particular, and that the Council would be unable to carry on its work independently as its staff would be on Territorial Army duty. The most likely outcome, it was assumed, would be a

¹ CAC BRCO 2/2. Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Anthony Eden, 14 August 1942.

² There were four Foreign Office staff with responsibility for overseeing the Council's affairs: Charles Peake (to December 1939), Reginald Leeper (December 1939 to early 1940), Stephen Gaselee (early 1940 to May 1941) and Kenneth T Gurney (May 1941 onwards).

³ For further references on the establishment of the Ministry of Information, see McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, p. 12-33

⁴ TNA, FO 800/322. Lord Lloyd. Letter to Lord Halifax. 13 June 1939.

mothballing of the Council until after the war.⁵ A minute by a Treasury official in September 1939 assumed that the 'best course would be for the Ministry [of Information] to assume effective control over the Council's expenditure' and that the Foreign Office would be 'acting on the advice of the Ministry'.⁶ A couple of weeks later the same Treasury official formally acknowledged that 'the Ministry are now the Department responsible for the Council'.⁷ Lord Lloyd, however, was having none of it. A few days after the outbreak of war he was back in the Council's offices determined not only to ensure the survival of the Council but to actually expand its activities during the war.⁸ He even had the audacity to suggest to Lord Macmillan, the first Minister of Information, that far from the Ministry absorbing the British Council, the British Council should take over parts of the Ministry.⁹ At any rate, Lloyd was anxious for the Council not to be 'under' the Ministry (to the dismay of the Treasury), even if it had to work with it.¹⁰

Many months of political haggling followed involving the Ministry of Information, the British Council, the Foreign Office and the Treasury. Lord Lloyd was fully supported by the Foreign Office in defending the Council's remit.¹¹ Lord Halifax, the Foreign Secretary at this time, made his views clear when he wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Simon, stating that he and the Foreign Office were not only fully behind the continued existence of the British Council, but that the British Council was a major weapon in the war:

To my mind the Council's cultural work is just as important as the political propaganda of the Ministry of Information. Our cultural achievements are one of our greatest assets in presenting our case against Nazi Germany: and it is surely vital that we should keep them constantly in evidence in neutral countries, so that they can see that we are able to maintain, and even to extend, our cultural influence in spite of the strain of war. The British Council is the proper body to do this, and I think that they should be given every encouragement in their task.¹²

⁵ White, *The British Council*, p.30

⁶ TNA INF 1/443. Hale, E. Letter to Mr Welch, 13 September 1939

⁷ TNA INF 1/443. Hale, E. Letter to E St J Bamford, 29 September, 1939

⁸ White, *The British Council*, p.30

⁹ TNA INF 1/443. Lord Lloyd. Letter to Lord Macmillan, 20 September, 1939.

¹⁰ TNA INF 1/443. Note by E St J Bamford dated 7 October 1939 on a minute by A P Waterford to H V Hodson, 3 October 1939.

¹¹ White, *The British Council*, p.31

¹² TNA INF 1/443. Lord Halifax. Letter to Sir John Simon, 12 January, 1940

Halifax's view that there was a difference between political and cultural propaganda and that these two elements of propaganda should not be mixed became the focus of the negotiations and also the main tenet of the Foreign Office's defence of the British Council's continued existence throughout the war. Halifax, however, left Lloyd to settle the issue with Sir John (and soon to be, from October 1940, Lord) Reith (who replaced Lord Macmillan as Minister of Information in January 1940). Halifax regarded Lloyd and Reith as 'two wasps... fighting one another' due to their equally matched ferocity when defending their territory, and had no wish to get involved with the detail.¹³ Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart, a Foreign Office official, noted in his diary that 'Reith's terms were too hot for Lloyd', and that Lloyd feared that there would never be an agreement when there was such a lack of goodwill from Reith.¹⁴ Without an agreement, the whole of the Council's work in the 1940/41 Financial Year was under threat, as the Treasury took 'the line that they [would] not settle his [Lord Lloyd's] estimate... until agreement [had] been reached as to the respective spheres of the Ministry and the Council.'¹⁵ With this in mind no doubt, eventually Lloyd and Reith did reach an agreement. They agreed that there would be a demarcation of duties between them with the Ministry in charge of political propaganda, and the Council in charge of cultural propaganda, just as Halifax had suggested. There always remained 'boundary disputes' (as has been noted in chapter one, the definition of 'cultural propaganda' was not clear cut so the split between cultural and political propaganda would always be somewhat arbitrary), but these were settled through close liaison and regular meetings between the Council and the Ministry throughout the war.¹⁶ Figure 3 shows the complicated relationship between the MOI and the British Council, and indeed, other organisations within the British Government's structure with an interest in propaganda, and is useful to refer to during the remainder of this chapter.

¹³ White, *The British Council*, p.31

¹⁴ Bruce Lockhart, Sir Robert. Diary entry for 11 March 1940 in Young, Kenneth (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart - Volume Two: 1939-1965*, (Macmillan, London, 1980) p.48

¹⁵ TNA INF 1/444 & TNA T 161/1104. Barlow, J Alan. Letter to A P Waterford. 12 April 1940. The 'would' and 'had' in parentheses replace 'will' and 'has' in the original to make the sentence flow.

¹⁶ White, *The British Council*, p.32

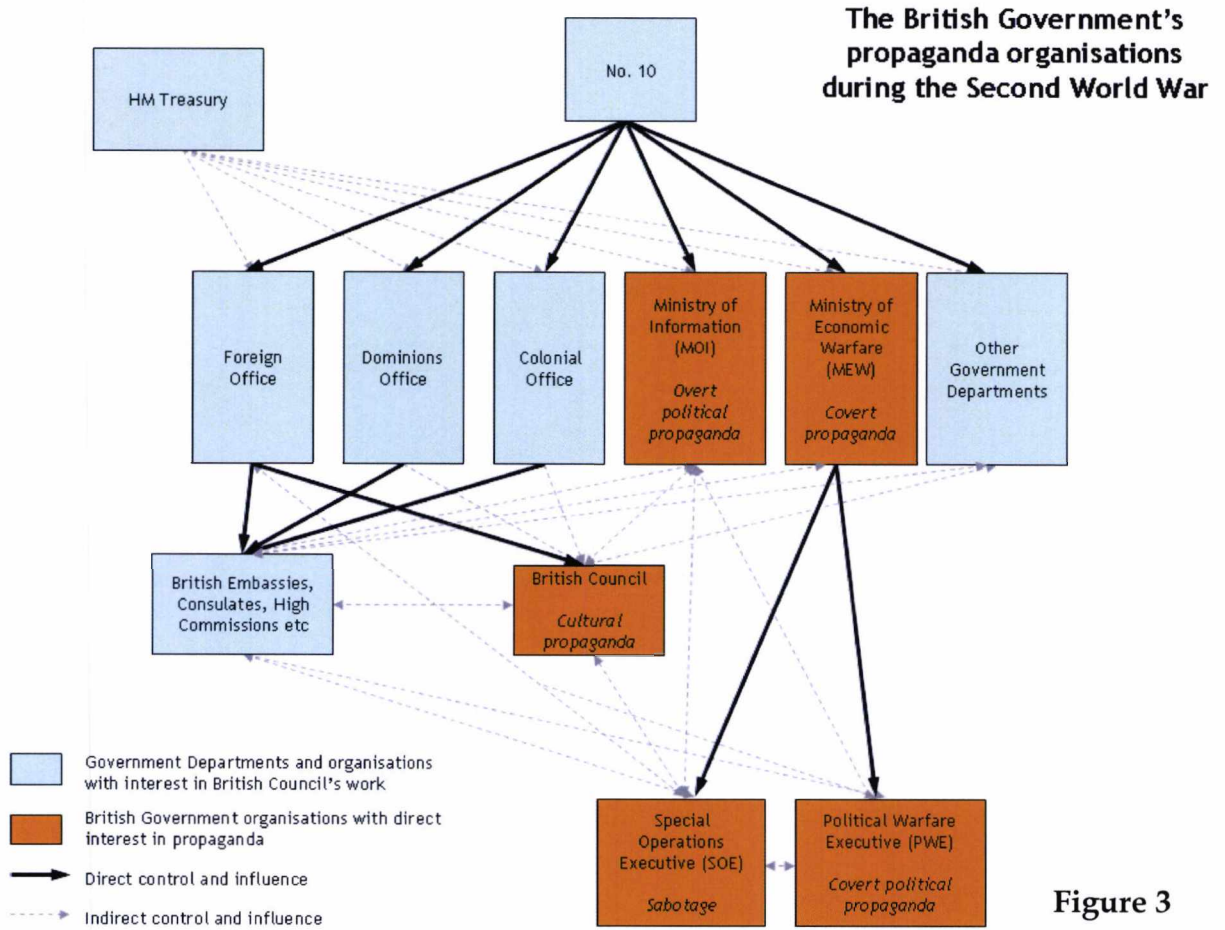


Figure 3

Between this agreement and the British Council's next threat to its survival in February 1941, there were many varying views within the British Government as to the value of maintaining the Council. For example, a number of powerful personalities such as Lord Beaverbrook who, as mentioned in chapter one, campaigned for the Council to be closed down. Bruce Lockhart noted that '[c]ultural propaganda, admittedly not much use in wartime - is beyond [Beaverbrook's] comprehension and attitude to life!¹⁷ As is clear from Bruce Lockhart's quotation, he too had his doubts as to the value of the British Council's work. Both Beaverbrook's and Bruce Lockhart's views reflected a wider unease about the British Council within the British Government. The problem was that during the summer of 1940 when Britain's very survival was at stake, spending money on cultural propaganda did not seem the best use of Britain's resources - as cultural propaganda was something for the long-term it should take a lower priority in the short-term. Clearly the Zahavi and Wight theories mentioned in the previous chapter would have meant nothing to Lord Beaverbrook. The Beaverbrook newspaper, *Daily Express*, wrote just prior to the outbreak of war that:

¹⁷ Bruce Lockhart, Sir Robert. Diary entry for 9 July 1940 in Young, *The Diaries*, p.66

Which is the best propaganda for us – the roar of ... British bombers and fighters, or the melody of madrigals broadcast by the British Council? If we save the money wasted by the Council, we could have three extra squadrons of fighters to join the display.¹⁸

Beaverbrook's opinions about the Council which were reflected in his newspapers had a profound effect on the Council's work throughout its history, not just during the Second World War. Frances Donaldson, who wrote the official history of the Council's first fifty years in 1984 noted that

throughout its history it [the Council] has been able to attract the services of original and talented people who have been unconcerned with this consistent, cleverly-directed attack [by the Beaverbrook press]; but the [Beaverbrook] propaganda has in general had an appallingly weakening effect. Lord Beaverbrook died twenty years ago, but at the time of writing it is almost impossible to be in the company of a British Council officer of any length of service without his name coming up.¹⁹

Donaldson outlined the criticisms made by Lord Beaverbrook in her book, who she described as 'one of the few deliberately wicked men in British history', so there is no need to detail them here.²⁰ It is important to note that it is ironic that one of the greatest propaganda advocates from the First World War should be the Council's greatest critic for carrying out cultural propaganda work. But it was something the Council would have to learn to bear and deal with. Of course, it was not just Beaverbrook who was opposed to the Council's work, and other newspapers certainly made their anti-Council views known as the article from the *Daily Mirror* in the previous chapter demonstrated, but he was the most vocal opponent.²¹ Some non-Beaverbrook papers like the *Daily Telegraph* noted, however, that 'reports of the [British] Council being possibly absorbed by the war-time Propaganda Ministry in London have produced most unfavourable reactions in a number of foreign countries where British institutes are already in being.'²² This view was echoed within many areas of the Government – and increasingly in the Ministry itself, as one of its officials

¹⁸ *Daily Express*, 4 August 1939 also cited in Donaldson, *The British Council*, p. 65

¹⁹ Donaldson, *The British Council*, p.67

²⁰ *Ibid*, p.63-7, 142-5, 306, 329 for an outline of Beaverbrook's anti-British Council campaign – covering both wartime and the post-war British Council.

²¹ See, for example, Greig, Bill, 'It's funny, but it's rather foolish, too', *The Daily Mirror*, (20 November, 1944) p.2

²² 'London Day', *Daily Telegraph*, 8 March 1940 – reproduced in TNA INF 1/444

commented '[w]e must remember that the name of the British Council is established and that it may be a good cover for activities parallel to those of the Ministry of Information.'²³ It was this view, that it would be an own-goal in propaganda terms to close down a British institution that was becoming firmly established abroad (and it could be an advantage to the MOI to keep the British Council separate), and the steadfast nature of Lord Lloyd's personality, that saw the British Council survive through its first year of war. In October 1940 the British Council's existence was secured (at least in theory) by a Royal Charter.²⁴

The sudden death of Lord Lloyd in February 1941 deprived the Council of its greatest asset particularly with regard to its defence against the likes of Beaverbrook, but also in advocating an expansion of its work. Once again, the Council's future appeared precarious - and this was only four months after its Royal Charter had been published, which was meant to secure its future. The Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, was sceptical of the British Council's continued worth, stating 'I should have thought that with the M[inistry of] E[conomic] W[arfare] on one side and the M[inistry] of I[nformation] on the other there was very little place for it [the British Council]'.²⁵ 'On the whole', Churchill went on, 'I am inclined to think that its usefulness ended with the death of Lord Lloyd'.²⁶ Churchill was considerate enough, however, to seek the views of Eden, now Foreign Secretary, and a number of other Cabinet members, and was not going to close down the Council unilaterally. In reply to Churchill's letter to him, Eden stated

I attach great importance to the work of the British Council. I was responsible for the early development of its work when I was last Foreign Secretary. In my view it would be a grave error to close it down now after all the effort that has been put into it.²⁷

Without the Foreign Office's support and in particular Eden's support, the British Council was unlikely to have survived. The Foreign Office's defence of the British Council had many reasons, and was not merely a personal 'pet project' of the Foreign Secretary, as the above quotation could suggest. There was a genuine belief in the Foreign Office that the British Council was an organisation worth patronising owing to

²³ TNA INF 1/443. Hodson, H V. Minute to A P Waterford. 4 October 1939.

²⁴ White, *The British Council*, p.32, 33

²⁵ TNA PREM 4/20/3. Churchill, Winston. Letter to Sir Edward Bridges, 15 February, 1941.

²⁶ TNA FO 370/634. Churchill, Winston. Minute to Anthony Eden, 18 May 1941.

²⁷ TNA FO 370/634. Eden, Anthony. Minute to Winston Churchill, 20 May 1941

its attempts and apparent success in promoting good relations with foreign countries through a cultural exchange. As a minute by R A Butler, Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, described:

...the success of the Council's work in Greece, where a cultural convention has been signed between our two countries, in Turkey, in Portugal and in Spain, to take only four examples, makes the Foreign Office attach vital importance to the distinction between cultural propaganda and education on the one hand and political propaganda on the other. We think it essential that the former kind of activity, if it is to maintain its influence, should be carried out independently of the wartime political propaganda, and in close association with the general lines of our foreign policy.²⁸

There are clearly strong similarities here between what Butler was describing and the models of propaganda examined in chapter one – specifically the Bolshevik, Doob's sub-propaganda and Ellul's sociological propaganda models – where it is proposed that short-term propaganda should build on the foundations laid by long-term propaganda if it is to be successful.

Yet, genuine though Butler's views were, there was also a strong element of a power struggle within the British Government which influenced the Foreign Office's hand. The Foreign Office believed that as it was the British Government's primary actor abroad, it should control all of Britain's publicity and propaganda abroad, particularly in wartime, to ensure that a coherent British point-of-view was communicated to foreign countries. However, with the creation of the Ministry of Information, as well as other organisations that played a role in propaganda abroad – such as the Ministry of Economic Warfare, the Political Warfare Executive and the Special Operations Executive – the Foreign Office's control over propaganda became diluted. The British Council, therefore, was the Foreign Office's only organisation of which it had complete ownership and it fought fiercely to protect it and its interests from other Government Departments. The complicated nature of the British propaganda machine is clearly demonstrated in Figure 3.

Perhaps instrumental in persuading Churchill not to close down the Council, were the views of the new (and third) Minister of Information, Alfred Duff Cooper,

²⁸ TNA PREM 4/20/3 Butler, R A, 'Enclosure B. Note by the Foreign Office on Demarcation of functions between British Council and the Ministry of Information'. Included in Bridges, Edward. Minute entitled 'British Council' to Winston Churchill, 19 February, 1941.

who was also against its abolition. Duff Cooper's basis for arguing that the Council should be maintained was that 'it has built up a good working organisation' and conversely shutting it down would send out all the wrong messages – a view that had been aired by an increasing number of ministers and officials. Nevertheless, he did not agree that the British Council should be independent of the Ministry, stating that '[t]he supposition... that the British Council exists only for cultural, and not for political propaganda... [is] at the best of times mere camouflage since no country would be justified in spending public money on cultural propaganda unless it had also a political or a commercial significance.'²⁹ Duff Cooper's view of cultural propaganda being ultimately to support commercial or political interests dovetails with Philip Taylor's definition of cultural propaganda in the previous chapter. The two bodies, Duff Cooper argued, should be brought 'under one control' – i.e. 'the Minister of Information should in future be ex officio Chairman of the British Council.'³⁰ (Late in the war, as the British Ambassador in Paris, Duff Cooper had changed his mind, stating unequivocally: 'I have the lowest possible opinion of the British Council, which I should like to see abolished',³¹ but this was owing to the composer (and conscientious objector) Benjamin Britten's visit to Paris under British Council auspices which will be considered later). Churchill's protégé, Eden, however, had the casting vote on the independence and survival of the Council, deeming the Ministry 'as a body quite unsuited for this type of work.'³² Eden also appointed the new Chairman of the Council, Sir Malcolm Robertson, as was his duty under Article 20 of the British Council's Royal Charter. Reports in the *Daily Express*, *Evening Standard* and the *Daily Mirror* clearly saw the Foreign Office's appointment of Robertson as a coup for the Foreign Office over the Ministry of Information, as the press believed it was done 'without any consultation.'³³

The British Council's relations were not always smooth with the Foreign Office however, and on a number of occasions relations teetered on the brink of collapse. In July 1943, after a tour that Sir Malcolm Robertson made to the Middle East a few months previously, Robertson came to his Executive Committee with proposals for a 'Middle East Review' of the British Council's work in that region. The Foreign Office

²⁹ TNA PREM 4/20/3 Duff Cooper, Alfred. Letter to Winston Churchill. 7 February, 1941.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ TNA FO 954/9B. Duff Cooper, Alfred. Letter to Nicholas Lawford, 21 March, 1945.

³² TNA FO 370/634 Eden, Anthony. Minute to Winston Churchill, 20 May 1941

³³ 'Min. of Inf. is angry', *Daily Express*, (12 June 1941); *Evening Standard* (14 June 1941) – described the Foreign Office-Ministry of Information dispute as a 'War of Nerves'; 'Cassandra', *The Daily Mirror*, (14 June 1941). Cuttings of these articles also are in TNA FO 370/634.

official on the Executive Committee, Kenneth Gurney, who was responsible for overseeing the work of the Council from the Foreign Office's perspective, flatly turned down his proposals in such a way that Robertson seriously considered his position. 'Never in a long life', Robertson exclaimed,

have I received such a rebuff, let alone so discourteous a one. No Chairman that I know of would retain his position in such circumstances.... I am too old and too experienced a man now to be willing to continue in a position which apparently carries with it no authority, and in which my considered and supported opinions are just turned down.³⁴

Clearly still smarting after this rebuff, the next day Robertson lashed out against the Treasury and the Ministry of Information in a letter to Richard Law, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The Treasury's ideas, Robertson stated, were a 'complete anathema' to him and that the Treasury had 'only the very haziest notion of the effect that the work of the British Council is, in point of fact, having on foreign minds.' The Treasury's suggestion that the Council's work was 'philanthropy' really lit Robertson's touch-paper. He even point blank refused to work with the Ministry of Information abroad claiming that 'we shall eternally be tarred with the political propaganda brush and shall lay ourselves open to the suspicions which the cultural propaganda of the Germans and Italians have really justly brought upon them.'³⁵ Robertson was evidently perturbed and exasperated by how he was treated by other Government Departments.

It is a little unclear exactly what happened next, but plainly Robertson was persuaded to remain as Chairman and it appears that such rebuffs were only associated with certain sections of the Foreign Office. A couple of months later, Robertson began distinguishing in his letters between the 'sceptics' and the 'more enlightened spirits in the Foreign Office.'³⁶ He retained a particular dislike for 'young Gurney' as he dismissively called Kenneth Gurney,³⁷ but his letters were noticeably less strongly worded. Perhaps it was more of a 'civil war' within the Foreign Office between the sceptics and the more enlightened officials, that led to the downturn in relations, rather than a Foreign Office-British Council quarrel, but nonetheless Robertson appeared far more wary of the British Council's patron from that point on.

³⁴ CAC BRCO 2/5 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Lord Riverdale. 14 July, 1943.

³⁵ CAC BRCO 1/2 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Sir Richard Law, MP. 15 July, 1943

³⁶ CAC BRCO 1/2 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Michael Grant, 7 September 1943.

³⁷ CAC BRCO 1/2 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Sir Richard Law, MP. 15 July, 1943.

In a letter to Eden in December 1943, Robertson described some of his reasons for his continuing frustration with the bureaucratic nature of the Council's relationship with the Foreign Office, his apparent disenfranchisement, and suggested that the British Council should become a Government Department:

At present I am Chairman of the Executive Committee without any authority at all or any powers of decision. I have to refer practically everything either to the Foreign Office, the Treasury, the British Council's Finance and Agenda Committee or the Council's Executive Committee, or all four. The result is that questions are dealt with piecemeal and decisions are interminably delayed. There is no real plan, no order of priority as between parts of the world or countries.... In these circumstances I would urge you to consider whether the time has now come for the setting up of a special Cabinet Committee to consider the whole organisation and future of the Council and whether it should not become a Department of His Majesty's Government annexed to the Foreign Office like the Department of Overseas Trade.³⁸

Robertson appears to have been confused about what he really wanted for the Council. One Foreign Office official noted that this was 'most surprising' as it was out of step with Robertson's previous views, and would pose 'the danger of its [the British Council's] activities being dismissed as propagandist'³⁹ - clearly something which Robertson had been working hard to avoid. Indeed, in his unpublished autobiography written soon after the Second World War, Robertson pleaded the case for the Council to remain independent of politics and *not* become a Government Department. In fact his autobiography makes it clear that he now agreed with the views of that Foreign Office official

It is ... vital for the [British] Council's aims and ideals that it should never become a Government Department manned by Civil Servants, and still more that it should never be absorbed by the Foreign Office. It would then be universally regarded as a mere "propaganda" Agency, which it is not now and never must be allowed to be.... The functions of the F[oreign] O[ffice] in regard to it are supervisory only.... [A]ll political influences should be eliminated.⁴⁰

³⁸ TNA FO 370/782. Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Anthony Eden, 23 December 1943.

³⁹ TNA FO 370/782. Author's name illegible. Minute to Sir Alexander Cadogan - attached to Sir Malcolm Robertson's letter to Anthony Eden on 23 December 1943.

⁴⁰ CAC RBTN 1. Draft autobiography of Sir Malcolm Robertson. Chapter entitled 'The British Council 1941-1945: A Plea', p.15, 16 and 18.

Robertson's letter to Eden, therefore can be seen as an aberration – but an important one. He clearly was having great difficulties with parts of the Foreign Office around 1943, and his suggestion to make the Council a Government Department shows just how low relations had become with certain areas of British Council's 'patron'.

As for the British Council's relations with the Ministry of Information, they generally improved within the machinery of Whitehall. This was partly due to the more positive relationship that ensued with Brendan Bracken, the new and more lasting Minister of Information. Bracken was less interventionist in his relations with organisations like the British Council and the BBC, though as Ian McLaine shows in his book *Ministry of Morale*, relations with the Foreign Office always remained somewhat difficult.⁴¹ As will be shown later, Bracken had also helped in securing Professor Walter Starkie's agreement to be the British Council's representative in Madrid, prior to becoming Minister of Information, which probably helped a great deal in his general feeling towards the Council.⁴² But the improvement in London was nothing compared to the improvement in relations in the countries within which they operated. Indeed, '[o]verseas, the Council and the MOI acted so closely together in some areas that they became almost indistinguishable.'⁴³ In Sweden, the British Council representative until 1941 and the Press Attaché (employed by the MOI) were the same person – Peter Tennant.⁴⁴ Largely this was due to the need to pool a limited amount of resources and to ensure that there was as little waste as possible in both organisations in making similar products, such as films.⁴⁵ In Tennant's case, difficulties in travelling to and from Sweden made the sending of a full time representative impossible until late 1941.⁴⁶ Clearly, Robertson's point-blank refusal to work with the MOI in July 1943 did not materialise in the countries in which they operated. Relations had become so good, in fact, that the Foreign Office was concerned and the Council was instructed not to become too closely identified with the MOI.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Lysaght, Charles Edward, *Brendan Bracken*, (Allen Lane, London, 1979) p.202-3; McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, p.189, 242-249

⁴² Lysaght, *Brendan Bracken*, p.163-4

⁴³ Eastment, 'The policies', p.36

⁴⁴ Tennant, *Touchlines*, p.109

⁴⁵ TNA INF 1/444 Hodson, H V. Minute to the Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Information. 15 October 1940.

⁴⁶ CAC MALT 1 Mallet, Victor. Copy of an unpublished memoir, 1919-46 p.75 (Note: There are two different page numbers on each page of the unpublished memoir – one for the whole work, and one for the particular chapter. Page numbers used here are for the whole work).

⁴⁷ Eastment, 'The policies', p.36

The British Council's relations with the Treasury centred around the Council's budgets for each Financial Year. This involved each of the Council's Representatives in the operational countries supplying cost estimates. These were to be combined with the estimates of the Council's costs in Britain, to be challenged firstly within the Council itself and the Foreign Office and then by the Treasury who would agree the Council's budget.⁴⁸ The Council's budget increased considerably during the war, costing the Treasury in total over £6 million (see Appendix A, Table 1). Partly this can be explained by inflation which was significant throughout the war period (using the Government's inflation index, the British Council's expenditure in 2005 prices is shown in Appendix A, Table 2. 2005 prices have been chosen as they are the latest figures available).⁴⁹ The increase in expenditure is not, therefore, quite as rampant as it may appear at first, but it is nevertheless sizeable and reflects the huge expansion in the Council's work. Taking inflation into consideration, the Council's expenditure increased by between 20% and 50% from one year to the next, during the war. It should be noted, however, that this expansion rate was less than the pre-war period when the Council's expenditure increased by over 100% from one year to the next. Throughout the war period, the Treasury was the main provider of funds for the Council - only in one year did the Treasury's proportion of the British Council's funding fall below 90% - and therefore the Council was heavily dependent on its relations with the Treasury. Just as a point of comparison, the British Council today is far less dependent on the Treasury, with the majority of funds coming from fees and services it provides - particularly the provision of English language classes.⁵⁰ Also it should be noted that much of the Treasury's grant to the British Council was unallocated to specific projects, to enable the British Council to respond quickly to changing events with the required funds.⁵¹ Its expenditure was considerably less than its grant and any amounts not used were returned to the Treasury.⁵²

As mentioned already it was the Treasury's insistence that the British Council's budget for the 1940/41 Financial Year would not be settled until there had been an agreement with the Ministry of Information over their respective spheres of influence

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p.39

⁴⁹ Webb, Dominic, 'Inflation: the value of the pound 1750-2005', (House of Commons Library, Research Paper 06/09, 13 February 2006) at <http://www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp2006/rp06-009.pdf>

⁵⁰ British Council, *Annual Report 2006/07* (London, British Council, 2007), p.88 at <http://www.britishcouncil.org/annual-report/pdfs/BC-Annual-Report-2006-07.PDF>

⁵¹ Eastment, 'The policies', p.39

⁵² White, *The British Council*, p.123 (Appendix C)

that ultimately drove Lord Lloyd to an agreement with Sir John Reith.⁵³ The Treasury noted that lack of settlement was 'handicapping him [Lord Lloyd] seriously.'⁵⁴ However, the Treasury were also keen to tighten the controls on the Council's expenditure – the procedures that the Foreign Office and the British Council had in place for monitoring expenditure were not designed for such a large increase in budget or increase in responsibility. The Treasury's view was that the Council kept on asking it for more and more funds with the excuse that as Germany was expanding its influence in neutral countries Britain should too, without any strategic thinking about whether spending extra money would be of benefit to Britain.⁵⁵ Though this was part of 'flying the flag', the Treasury did not want that aspect to trump all consideration of value for money. Part of the problem with cultural propaganda was that it did not give a tangible return for the money invested and, as one of its Representatives pointed out, has always dogged the British Council throughout its history, whether in times of war or peace.⁵⁶ The Treasury was acutely aware 'that the activities of the [British] Council are watched with a jealous eye by some of the organs of the Press and by Lord Beaverbrook, who has consistently attacked the Council in his papers...', and that any suggestion that the Council was frittering away money on unproductive propaganda would be instantly seized upon.⁵⁷ Their aim, C G L Syers, an official in the Treasury stated, was 'to produce a figure which will present the least surface to attack.'⁵⁸ However, the Treasury also did not trust the Foreign Office's scrutiny of the British Council's expenditure plans – '[t]his is, of course, the familiar Foreign Office rubber stamp,' noted another Treasury official.⁵⁹ They quizzed Reginald Leeper, who was the Foreign Office's official responsible for the British Council, as to why 'prima facie, it seemed odd that there should be so large an increase when the disappearance of neutrals alone must restrict the activities of the British Council and the general International situation must end to restrict them still more.'⁶⁰ Leeper gave reasons along the lines that if a neutral was overrun by Germany, the British Council's budget

⁵³ TNA INF 1/444 & TNA T 161/1104. Barlow, J Alan. Letter to A P Waterford. 12 April 1940.

⁵⁴ TNA T 161/1104. Syers, C G L. Untitled note about a meeting between Syers and Lord Lloyd on 4 March 1940, note undated.

⁵⁵ Eastment, 'The policies', p.39

⁵⁶ Tennant, *Touchlines*, p.263

⁵⁷ TNA T 161/1104 Syers, C G L. Memorandum to J A Barlow entitled 'British Council for Foreign Relations', 12 February, 1940.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ TNA T 161/1104 Barlow, J A. Note appended to C G L Syers' untitled note about a meeting between Syers and Lord Lloyd on 4 March 1940, note undated. Barlow's comments dated 5 March 1940.

⁶⁰ TNA T 161/1104 Syers, C G L. Note of a meeting with Reginald Leeper, 18 April, 1940

would be directed to supporting refugees of those countries, so there would only be a minor saving.⁶¹ The Treasury seemed to be satisfied with this excuse but got Leeper to agree that the Foreign Office would watch the Council more closely, to ensure that funds allocated for expenditure in one country were not diverted elsewhere without the Treasury's prior agreement, and to ensure the Treasury sanctioned any large projects.⁶² The Treasury got its way and under the direction of a new Finance Officer, Reginald Davies, the British Council's expenditure was much more rigorously controlled and the Treasury was involved at all the necessary decision points.⁶³

By 1943, the Treasury even began to see the British Council as a vital part of the 'immediate "propaganda offensive",' much, as was shown earlier, to Sir Malcolm Robertson's annoyance - 'our aims are essentially long-term' - but it goes to show how essential the Treasury had begun to see the British Council's work by this time.⁶⁴ The Treasury defended the British Council at the Public Accounts Committee in July 1944 which claimed that there were 'serious defects in the control of the Foreign Office and of the [British] Council over its own organisation', by stating that the Council had improved its financial procedures and that financial control was 'fairly watertight'⁶⁵ - the most flattering a statement the Treasury was likely to give. Robertson had recognised the problems of the Council's financial management and had worked hard to turn around the finances in 1943 and 1944. Tellingly he stated 'the Treasury ... constantly complain, and confess, *with some justice*, that our finances have been badly managed and that we are unnecessarily wasting public money in a dozen almost minor ways.'⁶⁶ He knew he had to act, and he did. However, towards the end of the war it became clear that the Treasury and other departments including the Foreign Office were still not satisfied with how the British Council was being run and its budget controlled. During the war this was left largely unchecked, barring the efforts of Robertson, due to the exceptional circumstances of the war, but with the end of the war in sight, there were calls for the British Council to be restructured, and its future became uncertain once again.⁶⁷

⁶¹ *Ibid*; also see Cole, Robert, *Britain and the War of Words in Neutral Europe, 1939-45: The Art of the Possible*, (Macmillan, 1990) p.39-40 for relations between the British Council and the Treasury.

⁶² Eastment, 'The policies', p.40

⁶³ *Ibid*, p.42

⁶⁴ CAC BRCO 1/2 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Sir Richard Law, MP. 15 July, 1943

⁶⁵ Minutes of evidence taken before the Committee of Public Accounts, 13 July 1944, paragraphs 4810 and 4816 cited in Eastment, 'The policies', p.44-5

⁶⁶ CAC BRCO 1/3 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Michael Grant, 5 October, 1943. My italics.

⁶⁷ Eastment, 'The policies', p.45-9

On a number of occasions there is evidence that the Foreign Office and the Special Operations Executive (SOE) attempted to persuade the British Council to take a more secretive role in the war. As stated before, one official in the Ministry of Information had suggested that as the British Council was already established, it would be a 'good cover' for other activities.⁶⁸ Gladwyn Jebb, the SOE's Chief Executive Officer, wanted to take this a step further and in late 1941 or early 1942 he asked the Foreign Office to pursue any possible avenues for using the British Council as a cover for infiltrating Turkey with secret agents.⁶⁹ Around this time there were increasing fears that Germany would invade Turkey, and records in the British Council files show that the Council were seeking assurances from the Foreign Office that its staff would be evacuated in the same manner as Embassy staff.⁷⁰ Jebb's plans, however, involved the British Council carrying out intelligence work ranging from weather reporting to more direct reporting on the state of mind of the Turkish Government, as well as 'whispering' - the technique of spreading rumours or 'sibs' in neutral countries to influence both neutral opinion and the opinions of enemy personnel within the neutral countries.⁷¹ He was, however, to be disappointed on this occasion - at least in terms of persuading the British Council to act as a conduit for clandestine activity as an organisation. G L Clutton, of the Foreign Office, stated that '[t]hrough acting as centres of British culture and influence British Council institutions abroad have never indulged in political propaganda. A short while ago we tried to induce them to depart a fraction from this standpoint in Turkey but with no success.'⁷² Kenneth Gurney agreed with this and noted on a minute 'I presume that Mr Jebb will be told (ref R 10854/G) our decision about the B[ritish] Council'.⁷³ This did not stop the SOE and the Foreign Office trying, however. Nor did it stop the British Council being suspicious that it was being used as a cover for other activities. And its suspicions were not without foundation.

Around this time, Michael Grant, the British Council's representative in Turkey, noted in his autobiography that he was asked by 'someone in authority' to send a

⁶⁸ TNA INF 1/443 Hodson, H V. Minute to A P Waterford. 4 October 1939.

⁶⁹ TNA FO 371/33880 Clutton, G L. Minute entitled 'The British Council in Turkey', 26 January 1942.

⁷⁰ TNA BW 61/12 See in particular Cadogan, Alec. Letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 6 November 1941, which states the main areas of concern. There are a number of other documents in the same file dealing with the same issue.

⁷¹ Richards, 'Whispers of War'.

⁷² TNA FO 371/33880 Clutton, G L. Minute entitled 'The British Council in Turkey', 26 January 1942.

⁷³ TNA FO 371/33880 Gurney, Kenneth T. Note on minute entitled 'The British Council in Turkey' by Clutton, G L, 28 January 1942.

football team 'consisting of service personnel from Cairo with fine football records' to 'assist our relations with the Turks'.⁷⁴ The football tour from a cultural propaganda perspective will be discussed in more detail in chapter three, but it should be noted here the issues surrounding the appointment of a football trainer seconded from the Royal Air Force to the British Council. According to a report in a Foreign Office file, the trainer called Mr Prior 'had received instructions from the Air Attaché [the British Embassy in Ankara] to take photographs and that he had indeed been selected for the post for his qualifications as a photographer.'⁷⁵ The Embassy denied this particular case stating that the Council was 'unjustified in alarm.... There is no question of political, intelligence or clandestine activities',⁷⁶ but a Foreign Office official, in an internal memorandum, nevertheless noted that this kind of appointment was actually routine:

[T]he Embassy (with our approval) are giving instructions to all British subjects (a) to furnish them with regular reports on political events, enemy activities etc., (b) to act as sources of dissemination of Allied views among the Turks. A start on these lines has been made with the British Council in Turkey.... Though from the British Council's point of view there can be no objection to (b) they may jib at (a) if they were told what has happened.⁷⁷

It would seem, therefore, that *as an organisation*, the British Council was not involved in clandestine activity, but the people it sent to the neutral countries were given other jobs to complete by other organisations such as the Special Operations Executive whilst they were in those countries. It was an effective cover to get agents in and out of neutral countries, and an obvious conduit for the intelligence services to use during wartime. It would seem, however, that the British Council was never told explicitly. Prior, the trainer, was on the British Council's books for some time.⁷⁸

Now that the British Council had expressed its alarm that its activities were being seen as a cover for other purposes, it was dubious about accepting new teachers to be appointed to Turkish Halkevleri⁷⁹ (Colleges for which the British Council were

⁷⁴ Grant, Michael, *My first eighty years*, (Aidan Ellis Publishing, Henley-on-Thames, 1994) p.79

⁷⁵ TNA FO 371/33880 Clutton, G L. Minute entitled 'The British Council in Turkey', 26 January 1942.

⁷⁶ TNA FO 371/33880 Knatchbull-Hugessen, Sir Hughe. Telegram to Foreign Office. 14 February 1942.

⁷⁷ TNA FO 371/33880 Clutton, G L. Minute entitled 'The British Council in Turkey', 26 January 1942.

⁷⁸ See file on British Council staff in Turkey, 1942 - TNA BW 61/13

⁷⁹ Singular Halkevi, Plural Halkevleri. However, many English texts will use Halkevis as the plural.

supplying lecturers – to be discussed in more detail later and in chapter three). It had suspicions that they would be British agents who could potentially damage the influence that the British Council was building up in cultural circles, by being seen as just another intelligence agency.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, there was little the British Council could do to prevent their employees taking on secondary roles except stressing on every occasion possible that it objected to such activity. There were reliable reports from Romania and Greece at the outbreak of war that British Council employees were instructed to observe and report troop movements and conduct naval intelligence, but the British Council did not discover that this activity had taken place until three years after the event.⁸¹ In Yugoslavia too, where the Council operated until early 1941, there is some evidence in Sebastian Ritchie's *Our Man in Yugoslavia* that the Council 'provided one avenue by which SIS [Secret Intelligence Service – MI6] broadened its influence.'⁸²

A J S White, Secretary-General of the British Council from 1941 to 1947, suggested in his personal account of the Council's work on its twenty-fifth anniversary that the Council was aware of attempts to use the Council as a cover for other activities and even co-operated where necessary (but did not elaborate on specifics), but it was not happy about doing so and resisted pressure wherever possible. White stated

Pressure to broaden its [the British Council's] activities, which came from Government and other quarters, would on occasions have involved the Council in assignments that would have stretched the terms of its Charter unduly to include political propaganda or the use of its organisation to provide cover for 'shady' undertakings. But on the whole the F[oreign] O[ffice] supported the Council in its determination to go straight.⁸³

In Turkey there has been no suggestion that the British Council representative, Michael Grant, was personally involved in any clandestine activity. In Spain, conversely, there is a suggestion that Professor Walter Starkie, the Council's representative in Madrid, was involved in more-than-cultural activity. It must be stressed that there are only *inferences* that the British intelligence services persuaded

⁸⁰ TNA FO 371/33880 Clutton, G L. Minute entitled 'The British Council in Turkey', 26 January 1942.

⁸¹ Eastment, 'The policies', p.10. Eastment references TNA BW 29/13 Dundas, C A F. Letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 7 October 1942.

⁸² Ritchie, Sebastian, *Our Man in Yugoslavia: the Story of a Secret Service Operative*, (Taylor and Francis, 2004) p.42-3

⁸³ White, *The British Council*, p.34-5

Starkie to act under their auspices, and the Starkie family have always denied the claim. On 22 February 1986, the Spanish newspaper *El Pais* published an article that stated the following:

Some doctors [at the Hospital Hispano-Inglés (later the Anglo-American hospital)] pointed out yesterday the possibility that Walter Starkie, a Hispanist, who was cultural attaché of the British Embassy and member of the intelligence services of that country, was the person responsible for contacting members of the Allied Army passing through Spain. [OSpAJ].⁸⁴

The Starkie family was outraged by such a suggestion. His daughter, Alma Starkie de Herrero stated a week later '[t]his sentence... constitutes a serious insult to the honour and good name of my father... I categorically reject such an allegation which is absolutely and totally unfounded, and really grotesque... [it is] mere slander and contemptible' [OSpAJ].⁸⁵ Another author has claimed that Starkie was one of many 'unofficial collaborators' in Spain who worked for the British secret services to help refugees who escaped to Spain from occupied Europe continue on to Britain.⁸⁶ Recently, in a book by Jimmy Burns - the son of Tom Burns, the British Press Attaché in Madrid - it has again been claimed that 'Starkie was a British agent, his eccentric public persona belying a background of discreet service to His Majesty's Government.'⁸⁷ Although the word 'agent' is implied to mean 'secret agent', Burns does not provide any evidence that there was anything particularly secret about his work, or what that work might have been. It may be that it was just because of the 'whispering gallery' nature of Madrid (i.e. that there were many spies from all sides working there spreading rumours as well as undertaking intelligence work) that Starkie's name has been mixed up with the rumours. However, as was mentioned in chapter one, cultural events were organised partly for neutral people to meet British people to allow word-of-mouth propaganda to be spread. What is certain is that there was clearly a fine line between being a British official with a duty to spread the British point of view, and being an intelligence agent in time of war. In one poignant paragraph in a letter in the autumn of 1941, Starkie stated

⁸⁴ Gardner, Ava, Loren, Sofía and Heston, Charlton, 'El hospital Anglo-Americano pasará a depender del Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia', *El Pais* (22 February, 1986)

⁸⁵ Starkie de Herrero, Alma, 'Aclaración sobre Walter Starkie', *El Pais* (1 March 1986)

⁸⁶ Martínez de Vicente, Patricia, 'The secret Spanish evasion routes to save refugee Jews from the holocaust', *The International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation* website, 28 June 2005.

<http://www.raoulwallenberg.net/?en/highlights/secret-spanish-evasion-routes.2898.htm>

⁸⁷ Burns, Jimmy, *Papa Spy: Love, Faith and Betrayal in Wartime Spain*, (Bloomsbury, London / Berlin / New York, 2009) p.252

The best tribute to the growing sympathy for England among all classes in Spain is the ceaseless Gestapo watchfulness against us. We are full of spies and counter-spies and hardly a day passes without the Embassy informing me that I am being followed and tracked. Some tell me that I am regarded as a spy, others that we are fomenting plots in the Institute.⁸⁸

In such circumstances, it is not surprising that some of the accusations that Starkie was a spy have stuck.

In Sweden, before the full-time British Council representative, Ronald Bottrall, was installed in Stockholm, the British Council had asked the British Press Attaché in Sweden, Peter Tennant, to 'hold a watching brief for them'.⁸⁹ This is a good example, as mentioned above, of how the Ministry of Information and the British Council worked well together - as they both supplied materials (books, photographs etc) to Tennant. Neither the British Council nor the MOI knew, however, that Tennant was also working for the Special Operations Executive. Tennant was not merely working for the SOE, but he was actually the SOE's top man in Sweden.⁹⁰ Ronald Bottrall and Peter Tennant were old friends from Cambridge University, and it is likely that it was through this friendship that the SOE managed to arrange for Sir Kenneth Clark, the National Gallery's Director (and former employee of the Ministry of Information), to travel to Sweden. As Clark reminisced, however, lecturing on art for the British Council was not his only role. He went

as a sort of advertisement for English culture.... Sweden was important to us on account of the ball-bearings made in Gothenberg. But I was told nothing of this: mine was to be purely a cultural visit.... My journeys to Gothenberg were made uneasy by the fact that I had to take with me various secret documents relating to the shipment of ball-bearings. This turned out to be one of the chief justifications of my visit.⁹¹

Bottrall himself was often perceived as something more than just the British Council's representative. Many Swedes were convinced he was the Head of the Secret Service but that was due more to his appearance than any evidence that he was

⁸⁸ TNA BW 56/3 Starkie, Walter. Letter to Carmen Wiggin, 10 October, 1941.

⁸⁹ Tennant, *Touchlines*, p.109

⁹⁰ Foot, M R D, 'Preface' in Tennant, *Touchlines*, p.xi; Also see Mackenzie, *The Secret History of S.O.E.*, p.200

⁹¹ Clark, Kenneth, *The Other Half: A Self-Portrait*, (John Murray, London, 1977) p48, 49 and 51

personally involved in clandestine activity. As Tennant noted: '[t]he Swedes found it difficult to accept this giant who looked more like a retired boxer with his broken nose, than an emissary of British culture.'⁹² Perhaps, as with Starkie in Madrid, Bottrall's name was merely mixed up with the rumours in the whispering galleries of Stockholm.

The British Council also worked with a number of Government Departments that had a less obvious connection to propaganda. One example of this is its liaison with Sir Stephen Tallents at the Ministry of Town and Country Planning which had models and photographs on various subjects such as the plans to rebuild London after the war, airports, small English villages and coalmines. The British Council wanted to use such models and photographs in exhibitions in its institutes abroad. It had already received requests from Turkey and Spain for displays on town planning, but wanted to use the displays across many of its institutes in Europe and South America.⁹³ Plans for Turkey were drawn up first, and were encouraged by Michael Grant who stated that 'the Turks were very keen on architectural things.'⁹⁴ Negotiations began with London County Council in July 1943 to create a plaster-cast model of the designs for South Bank Project, Bermondsey, Shoreditch and Bethnal Green and find suitable aerial photography.⁹⁵ Negotiations also involved a whole range of organisations such as the Air Ministry in order to supply the model of an airport, the Miners Welfare Commission, West Sussex County Council for photographs of a school, Welwyn Garden City housing centre for photographs and drawings of the new town to be built after the war, and the Royal Air Force for a mechanised model with moving parts.⁹⁶ As the models could be used for a number of different organisations, negotiations started around how the costs could be shared between the British Council, the Ministry of Town and Country Planning and the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA), which wanted to use similar models.⁹⁷ The British Council hoped to purchase eight models for about £100 each though expected costs to be slightly higher.⁹⁸ If insurance had been paid for transportation this would have been on top of

⁹² Tennant, *Touchlines*, p.262

⁹³ TNA HLG 52/1174. Note on a meeting between Major Alfred Longden and Sir Stephen Tallents, 20 July, 1943; Minutes of a meeting between Major Longden, Sir Stephen Tallents and Professor Holford entitled 'British Council - Turkey Exhibition' 22 October, 1943.

⁹⁴ TNA HLG 52/1174 Tallents, Sir Stephen. Note of meeting with Michael Grant and Major Alfred Longden on 30 November 1943, dated 1 December 1943.

⁹⁵ TNA HLG 52/1174 Note on a meeting between Major Alfred Longden and Sir Stephen Tallents, 20 July, 1943; and Tallents, Stephen. 'L.C.C. Exhibition', 29 July, 1943

⁹⁶ TNA HLG 52/1174 Minutes by Stephen Tallents and Professor Holford 16 August 1943 and 28 August 1943; Note by Stephen Tallents, 22 October 1943.

⁹⁷ TNA HLG 52/1174 Longden, Alfred. Letter to Sir Stephen Tallents, 29 December, 1943.

⁹⁸ TNA HLG 52/1174 Longden, Alfred. Letter to Sir Stephen Tallents, 2 December, 1943.

this, which was £400-500 per model.⁹⁹ In total the cost was potentially equivalent to the annual pay of four to five of the Council's Representatives, so it was not an inexpensive venture.

The exhibition was due to be sent to Turkey in the spring of 1944, but negotiations rumbled on for many months for a number of reasons.¹⁰⁰ They involved many different people and organisations who had new ideas on what might be suitable for display in Turkey (something, as will be shown, that was an inherent problem with the Council's relations with non-Governmental organisations); there were difficulties with insurance and transport; time had to be allowed for the photographs to be passed by the censorship; and there were also difficulties in arranging filming of some of the models. In short, the exhibition took a long time to materialise. In fact the records about the exhibition in the Ministry of Town and Country Planning stop in November 1944 with no further records – there is a suggestion that the exhibition would leave the country to go to Turkey in early 1945, but there is no evidence that it ever materialised.¹⁰¹ Eighteen months of planning, it appears, had gone to waste. It is inevitable that not all of the ideas and plans for exhibitions would actually be realised – new and better ideas would come along, costs would be deemed too expensive, and the changing fortunes in the war would mean that some would be sacrificed. However, it does seem surprising that it took so long for this exhibition to be organised. Perhaps it was certain peculiarities with this exhibition – the fact that models had to be made and were difficult to transport – that made it more difficult than other exhibitions to organise. Nevertheless, it demonstrates how time-consuming it could be to organise cultural propaganda and negotiate with other Government Departments to realise plans and how much effort and money was required. In light of this it is hardly surprising that the Treasury and MOI in particular were always concerned about how much the Council was costing the Government, and there were often calls to close the organisation. Ultimately, however, its relations within Government could always find resolution in some way through escalation to the Chairman of the Council and the Foreign Secretary as they were colleagues working in the same machinery of Government. Negotiations with Non-Governmental Organisations were not so straightforward, and it is these relationships that will be examined next.

⁹⁹ TNA HLG 52/1174 Tallents, Sir Stephen. Minute to Mr Kendrew, 2 November 1944.

¹⁰⁰ TNA HLG 52/1174 Tallents, Sir Stephen. Minute entitled 'Planning Exhibition for Turkey' 3 September 1943

¹⁰¹ TNA HLG 52/1174 Holt, Kathleen H. Letter to Sir Stephen Tallents, 30 October 1944.

2.2 Relations with British non-Government organisations and individuals

Relations with British organisations outside of Government and individuals, such as teachers, artists, scientists and musicians, were complicated. It is true that the vast majority of British organisations and individuals were in favour of helping the war effort in some way and if the British Council asked for their co-operation, most of them were very helpful. Requests from the British Council varied from asking for expertise and guidance as well as writing pamphlets on British life and thought, to seeking lecturers or performers for touring and recruiting representatives and teachers to be sent out to neutral countries on a longer-term basis. In contrast to the relative cohesion that existed in Government (and as demonstrated in the previous section that cohesion was not particularly strong even in Government), each external organisation had its own view on how the Council's work should be carried out, and this severely hampered the Council's organisation of propaganda. As will be shown, some people who were asked to help the Council only did so out of a sense of duty during the war, rather than being enthusiastic recruits to the Council's cause. The British Council often had to strike a difficult balance between presenting the image of Britain that British organisations and individuals wanted to be presented, and the image of Britain that people in the neutral countries wanted presented to them. Sometimes they were the same images, but there were clear tensions here that the Council had to grapple with throughout the war.

In terms of recruiting teachers and university lecturers (to stay in the neutral country for a long period, rather than as a touring lecturer), the Council often worked on an 'agency basis' for foreign institutions for recruiting staff in Britain to work abroad. The Halkevleri in Turkey were a good example of where this took place, but it also operated as an agent for foreign schools, universities and Anglophile societies.¹⁰² Interest for these posts was generally very good, especially amongst women teachers for posts in schools. It has been suggested that interest was high because the women saw the roles 'as an opportunity to undertake wartime work of national importance while continuing in the teaching profession rather than going into one of the armed services.'¹⁰³ One advert for a Girls' School in Karabuk in Turkey received nearly 400 completed application forms which kept the Registry Clerks busy for a long time - Council employees from the recruitment department remember this particular advert very well. Perhaps this vast number was a little out of the ordinary, but still, interest

¹⁰² Thirsk, Betty. Letter to Edward Corse, 16 September, 2008.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

was also good for other posts which they advertised, though interest in a post did not necessarily mean suitability.¹⁰⁴ The Council's recruitment for posts such as these took one of three approaches. The first approach was to advertise in one of the public newspapers which owing to the shortage of paper and newsprint could only, by necessity, be a short advert. The second approach, particularly for university-level posts, was to register the vacancy with scholastic agencies such as Truman & Knightley and Gabbitas Thring and with university appointment boards - mainly Oxford and Cambridge. The third approach was to consider the so-called 'chance' enquiries about employment overseas, of which there were a considerable number.¹⁰⁵ Application forms were filled in and two sets of interviews were conducted: firstly by the recruitment department alongside a regional representative for the country where the vacancy was; and secondly, shortlisted candidates were again interviewed by a regional representative and a representative from the Council's education department with a chairperson - often a Deputy Secretary-General. With Lord Lloyd as Chairman until 1941, a third interview would take place with him for particularly important posts. The British Council worked hard to build a good relationship with the scholastic agencies and university appointments boards, and they were well-disposed and helpful towards the Council.¹⁰⁶

A J S White (the Secretary-General of the British Council) wrote in his personal account of the Council's work that filling the junior posts within the Council itself was a 'very hard task' because suitable candidates were 'very scarce.'¹⁰⁷ It was also very difficult when interviewing candidates in London to make a good judgment about how candidates would fare overseas. Many good candidates were found, but it was often the case that a candidate was the 'only runner... for a post that had been too long unfilled,' and the Council had little choice but to employ them if they wanted to expand their work.¹⁰⁸ It was hardly surprisingly then, that a few unsuitable candidates were posted overseas. Though White gives no specific examples, he noted that the trouble was that

there were many people besides the *Daily Express* who fastened on one of two poor specimens as confirming their belief that a new-fangled cultural organisation would be bound to recruit the wrong type: men with long hair

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ White, *The British Council*, p.46

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

and purple corduroys. Thus the few bad choices that were made stood out and were exaggerated; and although most of the criticisms were unfair there is no doubt that the Council's public relations were harmed by them.¹⁰⁹

Sir Stanley Unwin, a publisher who chaired the Council's Books and Periodicals Committee, also recognised this as a major issue in his autobiography, but expressed the view that the publicity surrounding the appointment of a few poor candidates 'was to be expected in pioneer work' and it had to be recognised as inevitable that 'not a word was heard about the painstaking, conscientious and successful work accomplished by the rest of the staff in scores of other places.'¹¹⁰ As has been mentioned a number of times, Lord Beaverbrook was no fan of the British Council, and his newspapers were always looking for ways to attack it in some way. The appointment of candidates who they disliked was a perfect excuse for them to sharpen their knives.¹¹¹

The British Council was constantly under pressure from outside individuals and organisations about what image of Britain they should be projecting to neutral countries. This extended from who they employed in the Council (as mentioned in White's quote above), to who was on the Committees and what type of person should be sent as a cultural representative of the nation as well as how they operated abroad. When it was discovered by MPs in late 1944 that J G Crowther, Head of the Council's Science Department, was an open communist, there was an uproar in some quarters, particularly in Parliament amongst Conservative MPs. An anonymous MP's note was sent on to Sir Malcolm Robertson which stated

[I]t seems very unfortunate that the British Council, which is financed by HM Government for the purpose of spreading throughout the world a knowledge of the best of British thought and culture, should have appointed as the Head of one of its chief departments, the Science Department, a man who is a Communist.... Mr. Crowther is understood to be the officer of the British Council who is responsible for helping foreign scientists of all grades to establish personal contact with their counterparts in the British scientific world.... It would not be surprising if he were found to use extensively for this

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Unwin, Sir Stanley, *The Truth About a Publisher*, (Allen & Unwin Ltd, London, 1960) p.417-18

¹¹¹ See Bruce Lockhart, Sir Robert. Diary entry for 9 July 1940 in Young, *The Diaries*, p.66

purpose individual British scientists who have a leaning towards Communism....¹¹²

Robertson, though a Conservative MP himself and perhaps sharing some of the political outlook of his fellow MP, dismissed the call for Crowther to be replaced, arguing that the Council was a non-political body and therefore people could not be hired or sacked for political reasons. He stated

Crowther's personal integrity is undoubted. He is a man of considerable ability. He has never aired his Communist views to me, nor, to my certain knowledge to anybody else in the office. It would be difficult for the Executive Committee to get rid of him without a stream of undesirable publicity and adverse comment on the Council.... Our staff consists of people of diverse political views as is right and natural. Provided that those views are not pressed to the detriment of our non political ideals, I do not feel that we should enquire into them too closely...¹¹³

Robertson was in a difficult position. He had to steer the course between the Scylla (on this occasion uproar from Conservatives by not dismissing Crowther) and the Charybdis (uproar from the press from dismissing Crowther for political reasons) and it would seem to be an impossible undertaking where he could not win, whatever he did. On this occasion, largely because Crowther had integrity and did not mix his work and politics, the matter died down without much further issue, but it demonstrates the inherent tensions that the Council had to deal with on a day-to-day basis by being a non-political body. It is ironic that a non-political body had to spend so much time defending itself from political interference.

A similar problem occurred a few months later when the Council sent the composer Benjamin Britten to Paris in early 1945 along with the singer Peter Pears. Britten, as was mentioned earlier was a conscientious objector. Astra Desmond, a contralto singer, who had visited Portugal and Spain for the British Council earlier in the war, wrote to Robertson to complain that two men who had done so little to help the war effort (Britten and Pears had gone to neutral America earlier in the war to avoid being called up for National Service), should be sent to the recently liberated French capital as ambassadors of British culture. She believed also that it was an 'insult

¹¹² CAC BRCO 1/4 Anonymous MP. Note about J G Crowther. Attached to letter from Eugene Ramsden, MP to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 16 December, 1944

¹¹³ CAC BRCO 1/4 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Eugene Ramsden MP, 20 December, 1944

to France to send them'.¹¹⁴ Robertson claimed that it was in fact the French Government who had invited Britten and Pears, a request to which the Council had simply acquiesced. Robertson noted in reply to Desmond 'it would hardly have been proper for the Council to stand in the way of a visit on which the French themselves were so keen.'¹¹⁵ Although this may have been technically the case, the way the Council was perceived to have acted was what was important to observers and critics, and it was consistently scrutinised to ascertain what type of Britain was being projected abroad.¹¹⁶

The Council's Music Advisory Committee often had views on which musicians would be the best ambassadors of British music and musical talent, but was not always successful in preventing people that they deemed unsuitable from touring on behalf of the Council. For example in October 1941 the Committee received a request from the Regional Officer for Portugal for a grant to be made to Philip Newman, a violinist (who most of the Committee confessed they had not heard about), to enable him to accept an invitation from the Lisbon Conservatoire of Music to become Professor of Violin there. The Committee originally accepted, noting that 'it was so important to have an Englishman on the staff of the Lisbon Conservatoire that they were prepared to recommend that the suggested grant should be made.'¹¹⁷ However, a year later, Pamela Henn-Collins, the Committee's secretary, reported that 'she had had several interviews with Mr. Philip Newman who was now in this country, and she felt he was an unsuitable person to represent British music in Portugal, though doubtless valuable as a professor at the Conservatoire.'¹¹⁸ The Committee did not think highly enough of Newman's musicianship to allow him to be an ambassador of Britain's musical abilities. By 1943, however, Newman was still promoting the ability of British musicians in Portugal, much to the dismay of Henn-Collins. She noted 'I am afraid Mr [David] Shillan [at the British Institute in Lisbon] has been entirely deluded by Newman and is, I know, a great admirer of his playing.'¹¹⁹ Shillan wrote of Newman's performance in Lisbon:

¹¹⁴ CAC BRCO 1/4 Desmond, Astra. Letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 2 April, 1945

¹¹⁵ CAC BRCO 1/4 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Astra Desmond, 10 April, 1945

¹¹⁶ It seems doubtful that the French Government's invitation was the only reason why Britten and Pears were sent to Paris. The Council had tried to send them to Brussels a few months earlier but 'owing to the fact that the dates would not fit this had to be cancelled' and it seems plausible that the Council may have been looking to send them to Paris anyway as a substitute for the cancelled Brussels visit - see TNA BW 80/1 Draft Minutes of the 49th Meeting of the Music Committee, 20 February, 1945

¹¹⁷ TNA BW 80/1 Minutes of the 26th Meeting of the Music Committee, 24 October, 1941

¹¹⁸ TNA BW 80/1 Minutes of the 33rd Meeting of the Music Committee, 27 October, 1942

¹¹⁹ TNA BW 52/9 Minute by Pamela Henn-Collins, 3 June, 1943

The interest was exceptional for a recital in this series, and the warmth of reception by the audience before a note was played put Newman more at ease than he might have been in that unsuitable hall, and on very good form.... There was on all sides a very favourable impression, and talk of "a great night".¹²⁰

Henn-Collins, on receipt of Shillan's letter, wrote to George West, the Council's representative in Portugal to stress her and the Music Committee's views:

Whether and to what extent Newman should continue to be used by the Council [in Portugal] is, of course, a matter of policy on which you must decide, but in case you are tempted by reports of this concert to alter your view of Newman's musicianship I think I ought to let you know that my own opinion remains unchanged.¹²¹

It seems the advice of the Committee had been overruled – the Portuguese liked Newman too much, and the propaganda value was too great not to allow Newman to play to Portuguese audiences. The *Diário de Manhã* reported in 1943 after one of Newman's concerts for the Portuguese Red Cross that 'Philip Newman has the exceptional powers of a soloist: amazing handling of the bow, a technically perfect left hand, voluminous sounds and sweet, variety of tone and the effect of surprise attack' [OPA].¹²² With reports in the Portuguese press such as this it is clear to see why West would not dispose of Newman easily. Newman's violin-playing fitted in well with the existing sociological situation in Portugal and its influence penetrated deep into Portuguese society. He played on well into 1944.¹²³

Robertson himself made some judgments in favour of preventing certain personalities from touring on the Council's behalf. For example he was keen to prevent Noël Coward from travelling to Portugal. Coward had personally granted permission for one of his plays, *Private Lives*, to be translated into Spanish and performed in Madrid under the auspices of the Council, but Robertson had apparent reservations as

¹²⁰ TNA BW 52/9 Shillan, David. Letter to Pamela Henn-Collins, 28 May, 1943

¹²¹ TNA BW 52/9 Henn-Collins, Pamela. Letter to S George West, 7 June, 1943. Henn-Collins's underlining.

¹²² Liborio, Eduardo, 'O Recital Philippe Newman a favor da Cruz Vermelha Portuguesa', *Diário de Manhã*, 3 July 1943 (cutting in TNA BW 52/9).

¹²³ 'O Violinista Philippe Newman No Instituto Britânico', *Jornal do Comércio*, (19 March 1944). Available on BCPHA: Reference c4401460

to his suitability for being physically sent to the Iberian peninsula.¹²⁴ Robertson stated to Henry Hopkinson at the British Embassy in Lisbon in November 1943

to be candid we are a little doubtful whether Noël Coward would be altogether suitable in that capacity. I am well aware that he enjoys a world-wide reputation, and that his appearance, particularly if timed to coincide with the release of one of his films in Portugal, might arouse great enthusiasm... I confess I am not quite satisfied that Noël Coward, for all his great gifts and personal charm, could do that [give lectures], or indeed figure adequately in the category of British Council lecturers.¹²⁵

To be fair to both Coward and Robertson, Robertson was not saying Coward could not go to Portugal at all, but he did not want him going under Council auspices. Part of the reason may have been that Leslie Howard, the world-famous filmstar who had recently performed in *Gone with the Wind* had visited Portugal earlier that year and had been killed on his return from a visit to Spain and Portugal, when his plane was shot down over the Bay of Biscay. Perhaps Robertson, to some extent, felt the British Council was somewhat responsible for Howard's death and was not willing to take the risk of sending another high profile actor, such as Coward, to Portugal in 1943. He certainly compared Howard's visit to the prospective visit of Coward in his letter to Hopkinson stating '[w]e went perhaps a little outside our scope in sending you Leslie Howard,'¹²⁶ indicating perhaps that he wished he had never sent Howard to Portugal.

When the Council did decide that it wished to send individuals abroad for a short period, usually to tour the country and lecture or perform, the Council often used informal networks to access these people. Requests were usually raised at one of the Council's advisory committees who were usually made up of people who would know a lecturer or performer personally, and approaches were made on an informal basis to be formalised later. On occasion, a member of a committee may also have made a visit. There were fourteen different committees or panels that existed at some point during the war including a Fine Arts Committee, a Science Committee, a Books and Periodicals Committee and a Films Committee (A full list of committees and their chairmen are included in Appendix B).¹²⁷

¹²⁴ TNA BW 56/9 Coward, Noël. Letter to W Bridge-Adams, 23 May, 1942

¹²⁵ CAC BRCO 1/3 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Henry Hopkinson, 5 November, 1943

¹²⁶ *Ibid*

¹²⁷ The British Council, *The British Council 1934-1955: Twenty-first Anniversary Report*, (London, British Council, 1955) Appendices A, B and C p.47-52

Many famous personalities agreed to tour for the British Council and whether one is in favour of its work or not, it would have to be agreed that it was a very impressive list. In alphabetical order, the most famous were probably Sir Lawrence Bragg (scientist), Benjamin Britten (composer), Sir Kenneth Clark (art critic), Astra Desmond (contralto singer), T S Eliot (poet), Leslie Howard (filmstar), Sir Malcolm Sargent (conductor) and Harold Spencer-Jones (astronomer). Arranging for all of these people (and many less famous personalities) to tour was a difficult task in terms of persuading them to tour in the first place and then matching their diaries with dates of transport and ensuring that they were suitably entertained in the country that they were to visit. Some were easier than others to work with.

Dr Robert McCance, an expert on nutrition at the University of Cambridge was contacted through the Medical Research Council for a proposed visit to Portugal and Spain. He took some convincing to go by Dr N Howard Jones of the Medical Department of the British Council. McCance stated:

I have consented rather unwillingly to go for I don't really feel that I am the right person if the mission is solely one of improving cultural relationships. I hate dagoes and the picture he [Howard Jones] paints to me of being continually fêted by them simply fills me with gloom.¹²⁸

McCance was particularly keen that his assistant, Miss Widdowson, accompanied him to Spain and Portugal. However, the Council had to remain firm that 'only very special circumstances would justify a dual visit. There is a very great pressure on air travel services to and from Portugal and it is difficult enough for us to arrange for accommodation for single lecturers.'¹²⁹ To be fair to McCance he wanted Miss Widdowson to accompany him for a good reason - to gather information on the nutritional problems in Spain, whilst he was lecturing there - and it was not just a personal whim, but it took the Council some time to persuade him to agree to go without his assistant.¹³⁰ In the end, despite the reservations which he had about going as a cultural representative, and the concerns he had of going alone, his report of his visit gives the impression that he rather enjoyed himself and wrote a nineteen page report about the contacts that he met, praising the arrangements made for him by

¹²⁸ TNA FD 1/6665 McCance, Dr Robert A. Letter to Sir Edward Mellanby, 12 November, 1942

¹²⁹ TNA FD 1/6665 Jones, Dr N Howard. Letter to Sir Edward Mellanby, 28 October, 1942

¹³⁰ *Ibid*; also see TNA FD 1/6665 'Extract from Dr. N. Howard Jones's letter to Sir Edward Mellanby', 4 November, 1942

Professors Starkie and West.¹³¹ McCance's visit will be studied in more detail in the following chapter.

T S Eliot also wanted to make his visits for the British Council conditional on personal grounds. When he returned to Britain from Stockholm, he wrote to Robertson stating that he had discovered on his return that his secretary had been called up into National Service, and that unless this decision was reversed he would never be able to be away from London for such a long period again.¹³² John Gielgud, having played Hamlet in Sweden prior to the outbreak of war, was seen as a good candidate to go again to Sweden, but was simply too busy acting in Britain to find the time.¹³³ And it was the same for many famous people. Visits had to be arranged over a long period of time. When Professor Walter Starkie wrote to the Council in London in June 1942 seeking to arrange a visit for Sir Malcolm Sargent to Spain in the autumn of the same year, he was told by Robertson that 'a busy man such as he makes his engagements from six to nine months ahead' and 'we have already engaged him to go elsewhere for us then.'¹³⁴ Starkie had missed the opportunity of Sargent's visit on this occasion as he was going to Sweden for the British Council.

Even when visits could be arranged, travel issues made visits difficult. Sargent was delayed for over a week waiting at Leuchars airfield, near St Andrew's in Fife in late 1942 on his way to Sweden, along with other passengers including Ronald Bottrall's wife Margaret and son Anthony. Conditions had to be suitably overcast to fly over occupied Norway for security reasons.¹³⁵ Returning home was often even more complicated and dangerous and in Sweden, the Ambassador Sir Victor Mallet noted, 'nobody ever knew how soon they would be given a passage home again and they sometimes stayed for two or three weeks before this happened.'¹³⁶ Leslie Howard's tragic death in 1943 demonstrated just how dangerous it was for people to tour neutral countries in wartime and the event no doubt made people think twice before accepting an invitation from the British Council - there was a notable lack of tours arranged in the months after Howard's death.¹³⁷ It is quite astounding, therefore, that the British

¹³¹ TNA FD 1/6665 McCance, Dr Robert A. 'Report of Dr. R.A. McCance on his visit to the Iberian Peninsula', received 17 June 1943 (reference to Starkie and West p.1)

¹³² CAC BRCO 2/2 Eliot, T S. Letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 9 June 1942.

¹³³ CAC BRCO 1/2 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to John Gielgud, 23 December 1942.

¹³⁴ CAC BRCO 1/1 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Walter Starkie, 2 July 1942.

¹³⁵ Bottrall, Anthony. Email to Edward Corse, 29 September, 2008

¹³⁶ CAC MALT 1 Mallet, Victor. Copy of an unpublished memoir, 1919-46 p.142

¹³⁷ See the differences between the Quarterly Reports on Lectures and Music Tours in early 1943 and later 1943 in TNA BW 82/9. Some of the difference may be due to seasonal changes - there were generally less tours in the summer.

Council persuaded so many people to go, and that it got the vast majority in and out of neutral countries safely.

The Council was often criticised for how it operated abroad, not just in terms of who the Council sent, but also in day-to-day operations. Unwin gave one example of this in his autobiography about the selling of English language books by the British Council representative after they had been exhibited. The MOI gave away books, and was not criticised for doing so. By contrast the Council was 'condemned in Parliament and in a section of the Press for trading at a loss in that they had not covered the cost of air freight, which would have made the price of the books prohibitive.'¹³⁸ Unwin dismissed this argument stating 'anyone with the most elementary knowledge of psychology is aware that a book for which money is paid is more effective in its influence than twenty given away and in consequence dismissed as propaganda.'¹³⁹ It would seem that the Council, even when it took the most effective measures to extend Britain's influence, could never satisfy its critics at home.

Closer to home, the Advisory Committees were made up of groups of interested parties and experts in their field. They were not always the same people, and the different Advisory Committees varied in the frequency of meetings. For example, the Fine Arts Committee only held eleven meetings throughout the whole war with nearly a year between some of the meetings (though there were sub-committees established for specific exhibitions in the intervening periods).¹⁴⁰ By contrast, the Music Advisory Committee met twenty-six times (with over a year between two meetings)¹⁴¹ and the Books and Periodicals Advisory Committee met far more frequently at fifty-four meetings during the war, usually on a monthly basis.¹⁴² Members were often famous in their particular subject. For example, composers William Walton, Arthur Bliss and Ralph Vaughan Williams attended the Music Committee along with Leslie Boosey (of Boosey and Hawkes) and Sir Adrian Boult (conductor). The difficulty with such a high-brow membership was that members did not always agree with each other or fully support the Council's efforts. Sir Kenneth Clark, who had briefly worked for the MOI early in the war but was Director of the National Gallery for most of the war, resigned from the Fine Arts Committee in late 1943. Clark was seen as perhaps the most active member of the Committee and advocate of the Council's work with regard to art prior

¹³⁸ Unwin, *The Truth*, p.421-2

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, p.422

¹⁴⁰ TNA BW 78/1 Minutes from Fine Arts Committee Meetings 15 to 25.

¹⁴¹ TNA BW 80/1 Minutes from Music Committee Meetings 24 to 49.

¹⁴² TNA BW 70/1 and 70/2 Minutes from Books and Periodicals Committee Meetings 14 to 67.

to his resignation. His resignation, therefore, as Major Alfred Longden, the Director of Fine Art stated in his reply to Clark's resignation letter:

...is a great and rumbling blow. I did not realise, until you recently spoke on the wireless [on the BBC's *Brains Trust* programme] that you regarded our work as so lacking in importance. Perhaps I am to blame for not keeping the members of the [Fine Arts] committee more fully informed of the far-reaching use of our efforts and in addition I have not given members enough to do and thus they may, possibly, have lost interest.¹⁴³

The relationships that the various Committees had with British cultural figures and organisations demonstrates perfectly the careful juggling act that the British Council played out, keeping them interested in the Council's work on the one hand, and on the other making effective decisions about what types of materials could be distributed abroad to the neutral countries. The artist Paul Nash was often being contacted by Longden to provide copies of his work or permission for it to be displayed abroad. Usually Nash was happy with Longden's suggestions (though on occasion had to be reminded to answer letters addressed to him), but it must have been a logistical challenge for Longden to keep all the artists interested and maintain their goodwill whilst also trying to find works of art that were suitable for display in Stockholm, Madrid and elsewhere.¹⁴⁴ Longden's letters usually gave the impression that he was trying to cajole the artists that he was writing to and hoping not to let them down. For example, the statement '[w]hile not exactly the type of watercolour we originally had in mind, we are very glad to include this as showing an additional aspect of your work,' hardly promotes the notion that the Committee was entirely in the driving seat for what image of Britain they were promoting - they needed to keep the cultural figures that they depended on 'on side.'¹⁴⁵

On occasion, too, the Advisory Committees - i.e. the people closest to, and who had most influence over the Council - were accused of being too out-of-touch with

¹⁴³ HKRC TGA 8812/1/1/17 Longden, Major Alfred A. Letter to Sir Kenneth Clark, undated but between two related letters dated 6 and 20 December 1943 in the file.

¹⁴⁴ See HKRC TGA 7050/163 Longden, Major Alfred A. Letter to Paul Nash, 11 August, 1938; HKRC TGA 7050/172 Somerville, Lilian. Letter to Paul Nash, 7 May, 1941; HKRC TGA 7050/173 Somerville, Lilian. Letter to Paul Nash, 3 July 1941; HKRC TGA 7050/176 Lindsay, TF. Letter to Paul Nash, 13 February, 1942; HKRC TGA 7050/178 Longden, Alfred. Letter to Paul Nash, 30 November, 1942; HKRC TGA 7050/181 Longden, Alfred. Letter to Paul Nash, 10 May, 1943; HKRC TGA 7050/184 Longden, Alfred. Letter to Paul Nash, 18 September, 1944; HKRC TGA 7050/185 Longden, Alfred. Letter to Paul Nash, 17 October, 1944; HKRC TGA 7050/187 Longden, Alfred. Letter to Paul Nash, 15 November, 1944.

¹⁴⁵ HKRC TGA 7050/187 Longden, Alfred. Letter to Paul Nash, 15 November, 1944

ordinary British life and culture. They were, it was alleged, promoting an image of Britain that may have reflected their own interests, but did not reflect a truthful image of Britain. There is a link here to the sociological propaganda described by Ellul in that those people on the Committees thought they were representing a truthful image of Britain (and not propaganda) but outside of the Committees that image was one not recognised as accurate. The Books and Periodicals Committee, for example, received a number of complaints from Scottish people and organisations that their *British Life and Thought* series of booklets was too Anglocentric.¹⁴⁶ There were booklets promoted in the series called *The Englishman* (by Lord (formerly Prime Minister, Stanley) Baldwin) and *The Englishwoman* (by Cicely Hamilton) but there had been no attempt up until the complaint was received, to write books called *The Scotsman* or *The Scotswoman* (or indeed Welsh or Northern Irish counterparts, but there is no record of complaints from these quarters).¹⁴⁷ The Committee did respond quickly to the complaints and commissioned a number of books reflecting life across the United Kingdom within a month of the complaint, unimaginatively called *Wales and the Welsh*, *Scotland and the Scots* and *Northern Ireland and the Ulsterman* (as well as *England and the English*).¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless it seems clear that the Committee would not have done so without having been pushed in that direction. It was noted in the agenda for the meeting that 'Home Division is very anxious that this group of brochures should be completed as quickly as possible.'¹⁴⁹ Even people on the Committees, such as Kenneth Clark, did not necessarily believe that the Council was influenced by the right people. Clark wrote to a confidante (a former colleague in the Ministry of Information) that he was concerned how much the Council was 'influenced by conservative opinion [in terms of art] and fear of protests by the Royal Academy. Its chairman [Sir Malcolm Robertson] therefore feels bound to include a preponderate number of New English Art Club paintings' which Clark believed would not interest audiences as much as other paintings.¹⁵⁰ The timeless, conservatism of cultural propaganda mentioned in chapter one was,

¹⁴⁶ TNA BW 70/2 Minutes of the 56th Meeting of the Books and Periodicals Committee, 13 January 1944

¹⁴⁷ Baldwin, Lord, *The Englishman*, (Longmans Green & Co, London, 1940); Hamilton, Cicely, *The Englishwoman*, (Longmans Green & Co, London, 1940)

¹⁴⁸ TNA BW 70/2 Minutes of the 57th Meeting of the Books and Periodicals Committee, 10 February 1944; The Northern Irish volume later changed its name to *The Northern Irish and their Country* - see TNA BW 70/2 Minutes of the 65th Meeting of the Books and Periodicals Committee, 8 February, 1945

¹⁴⁹ TNA BW 70/2 Agenda for the 57th Meeting of the Books and Periodicals Committee, 10 February 1944

¹⁵⁰ HKRC TGA 8812/1/1/17 Clark, Sir Kenneth. Letter to Jack Beddington, 24 December, 1943. Clark's reference was actually with regard to American audiences, but can read as his opinion for neutral countries as well.

according to Clark, not always the best way of attracting elites. This letter, written just days after resigning from the Fine Art Committee, probably gives a good idea of the real reason why he resigned – Clark was clearly frustrated at presenting an image of Britain that he thought was not showing Britain in its best light, and that he was lacking influence.

The British Council had an incredibly difficult role as a non-political body in trying to present an image of a country that was so diverse in many different ways – particularly politically, socially and culturally. The Council could not please everyone in Britain and it knew it. After all, it could not please everyone in Government, so it could not hope to please everyone in the country. All it could do was present an image that enough people in the country would be content with and be accepted by the audience they were aiming at (i.e. the elites), and hope that it had done enough to deflect major criticisms through constant written and verbal communication and negotiation with people interested in its work. Sir Kenneth Clark's relationship with the Council is a good example of how the Council kept him 'on side'. Though he resigned from the Fine Arts Committee in late 1943, he still agreed to lecture for the Council in Sweden just over a year later. He had been frustrated by the Council, but not alienated by it. And it was true for many of the Council's stakeholders – they may not have agreed with everything that it did and the image of Britain that it was presenting, but Britain was at war and any image of Britain presented in neutral countries was far better than no image at all. When it came to the crunch, people outside of Government largely supported the Council's work.

2.3 Relations with the British Embassies

The British Council's relationships within Britain, as has been shown, were often tense and strained. However, the British Council's role was not to maintain good relationships in Britain, but to promote British life and thought abroad. In essence apart from needing to keep enough people in Britain interested in the Council's work to keep propaganda materials being produced and lecturers and performers travelling to the neutral countries of Europe, it did not matter whether the Council's work was popular within Britain. What mattered was the role that it played abroad. There was one obvious group of British organisations abroad that the Council had to maintain good relationships with – the British Embassies, Consulates and Legations. If it did not maintain good relationships here, then its real work – promoting Britain abroad – could be in jeopardy. The stakes could not be higher for the Council's relationship with

British Embassies. Ultimately, both the Council and the Embassies were accountable to the Foreign Office, so relations should have been good. However, as has been seen, Robertson's relationship with the Foreign Office was not always smooth in Britain and so Council-Embassy relations were not guaranteed to be positive and productive. As will be shown over the remainder of this chapter through an analysis of the relationship in the four main neutral countries in Europe where the Council operated – Spain, Turkey, Portugal and Sweden – the health of those relationships varied from one country to the next.

2.3.1 Spain: Sir Samuel Hoare and Professor Walter Starkie

Sir Samuel John Gurney Hoare (Lord Templewood from 1944) was Conservative MP for Chelsea from 1910 to 1944, and had been in the British Cabinet during the Conservative and National Government administrations since the early 1920s. From his background, therefore, it could be justifiably claimed that he was the personification of 'The Establishment'. The pinnacle of his career came in 1935 when he accepted the office of Foreign Secretary but within months his career was in tatters after press reports about a pact between himself and the French Foreign Minister, Pierre Laval, to offer the Italian dictator, Benito Mussolini, two-thirds of Abyssinia (modern-day Ethiopia), a country Mussolini had recently invaded, in return for stopping the war. The so-called Hoare-Laval Pact, which was never put into action, caused an outcry in Britain and Hoare was compelled to resign. Although he returned to the Cabinet a number of times he would never recover from this humiliation and his name, like that of Chamberlain, became synonymous with 'Appeasement' and the destruction of collective security.¹⁵¹ With Winston Churchill as Prime Minister he was dispatched to Madrid as a Special Ambassador to Spain – some say into exile; others say the role of Ambassador in Madrid was so crucially important, it required someone of Hoare's stature.¹⁵² Hoare certainly suggested that 'the Spanish Government was flattered at the appointment of a former Foreign Secretary.'¹⁵³ Although he recognised the importance of Spain in the war and carried out the role with a huge sense of duty to his country, he coveted the role of Viceroy of India which he believed was more or less guaranteed for him, but a role he would never undertake.¹⁵⁴ Originally he was only

¹⁵¹ Cross, J A, *Sir Samuel Hoare: A Political Biography*, (Jonathan Cape, London, 1977) p.311

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p.322

¹⁵³ Hoare, Sir Samuel, *Ambassador on Special Mission*, (Collins, St. James's Place, London, 1946) p.17; Also noted in Hurlley, *José Janés*, p.39

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.16; Cross, *Sir Samuel Hoare*, p.324

due to be in Madrid for short while as an extension to a visit he was to pay to Portugal, but he ended up staying almost five years.

By contrast, Walter Fitzwilliam Starkie was an Irish Roman Catholic and Professor of Literature at Trinity College, Dublin and spent much of his time prior to the Second World War in Italy, Eastern Europe and Spain mingling with gypsies and wandering minstrels. It might not seem, therefore, that the words 'Starkie' and 'Establishment' would have been heard in the same sentence. However, like Hoare he had crossed paths with Mussolini and had even been accorded a private audience with the Duce in 1927. Starkie admired Mussolini, later recalling the meeting with some delight: 'I was hypnotized by his large dark eyes which sparkled when his voice became animated.'¹⁵⁵ Throughout the Spanish Civil War he had been a supporter of General Franco, and as late as the autumn of 1939, in correspondence between his two sisters Nancy and Enid, Nancy reported 'Walter looks blooming. Of course he really has great belief in Hitler and Mussolini, and none in the others.... Walter and Italia [Starkie's wife] are of course very pro-German - perhaps I am wrong in saying that - but anyway they are anti-English.'¹⁵⁶ One might be forgiven, therefore, for questioning why on earth Starkie was appointed Director of the British Institute in Madrid only a few months later.

Certainly it is easy to see why Franco would accept him - he was a *persona grata* by virtue of his support for Franco during the Civil War - but it is less clear why he was entrusted with being an emissary of a culture to which apparently he had little fondness. Starkie certainly appeared to have fascist sympathies prior to the war but in the post-war period, Starkie propounded the view that he was a 'West Briton', had always been loyal to the British crown and was more 'rightist' than his background might suggest.¹⁵⁷ He had, after all, been educated at Shrewsbury School. Could it be that his sisters were poor judges of his character (which has been suggested is probably the case by his friends later in life) or is it more probable that after the collapse of the Axis (or perhaps during the war itself) he changed his mind about where his loyalties lay?¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Starkie, Walter, *The Waveless Plain: An Italian Autobiography*, (The Travel Book Club, London, 1940) p.392

¹⁵⁶ Hurlley, Jacqueline, 'Wandering between the Wars: Walter Starkie's Di/Visions', in Tazón-Salces, Juan E and Carrera Suárez, Isabel, *Post-Imperial Encounters: Anglo-Hispanic Cultural Relations*, (Studies in Comparative Literature 45, Amsterdam and New York, Rodopi, 2005) p.61

¹⁵⁷ Gordon, David. Email to Edward Corse, 20 May, 2008.

¹⁵⁸ Gordon, David. Email to Edward Corse, 11 September, 2009.

Being in debt may be a better explanation for his acceptance of the role which overrode any political sympathies that he may have had, as the Director's salary would provide him with a steady income of £1,000 a year.¹⁵⁹ Plus there is some evidence that he simply forgot to tell his employer, Trinity College in Dublin, where he was in the autumn of 1940 a few months after accepting the role of Director which leads to the suspicion that his acceptance was a rather impulsive and perhaps a desperate move for money.¹⁶⁰ The important point here, however, (particularly for this thesis) is that once in post in Madrid he never wavered from promoting British culture, and his contacts in Spanish cultural life were his ticket to appointment as Director. Starkie had previous (though short-lived) experience of establishing a cultural centre in Genoa soon after the end of the First World War to improve Anglo-Italian relations and was the only non-Spanish member of the Royal Spanish Academy of the Language, which 'included the most prominent scholars and writers of Spain.'¹⁶¹ Both of these facts, as well as being a friend of the Duque de Alba (the Spanish Ambassador in London - who was also the Duke of Berwick)¹⁶² made him an attractive candidate for the role of Director of the British Institute in Madrid. He understood Spain better than the vast majority of people from the British Isles and was accepted in Spain - these advantages would enable him to engineer the British Council's cultural propaganda to fit in with the existing sociological situation in Spain and be readily acceptable to the Spanish elites. Starkie recalled that Lloyd gave him 'freedom of action' and stated 'I shall always back you up.'¹⁶³ Lloyd clearly thought Starkie was the ideal candidate, and was probably influenced by positive feedback received from Brendan Bracken in the summer of 1939, who had visited Starkie in Dublin, that Starkie was an Irishman who could be trusted to play a role for Britain in the war.¹⁶⁴

Whatever their backgrounds and the reasons behind their appointments and their acceptance of their respective roles, Hoare and Starkie were both in Madrid to promote a better understanding of Great Britain - Hoare through political and diplomatic

¹⁵⁹ Hurtley, 'Wandering', p.61

¹⁶⁰ TNA BW 56/8 White, A J S. Telegram to Walter Starkie, 4 October, 1940. The telegram states 'Have telegraphed Dublin University explaining your absence.'

¹⁶¹ Starkie, Walter, *Scholars and Gypsies: An Autobiography*, (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1963), p.199, 203-4; TNA BW 56/3 Starkie, Walter. Letter to A J S White, 24 October, 1941.

¹⁶² Starkie dedicated his book *Spanish Raggle-Taggle* 'to His Grace the Duke of Berwick and Alba' - Starkie, Walter, *Spanish Raggle-Taggle: Adventures with a Fiddle in North Spain*, (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1961 (First Published 1934)) p.5

¹⁶³ Starkie, Walter, *In Sara's Tents*, (John Murray, London, 1953) p.7 cited also in Hurtley, *José Janés*, p.72

¹⁶⁴ Lysaght, *Brendan Bracken*, p.163-4 and Burns, *Papa Spy*, p.252 and endnote on p.370

means; Starkie through cultural means. Their roles should have complemented each other. By contrast to how it should have been, it is not an exaggeration to state that they detested each other. It was not that they saw each other's role as conflicting with their own – Hoare for example was reported as having 'expressed great interest and belief in the Council's work and seemed anxious to help it forward in Spain.'¹⁶⁵ And Starkie expressed his hope in 1940 that 'it will be possible for Sir Samuel Hoare to initiate the course of lectures [at the Institute]'.¹⁶⁶ But it was a personality clash which had significant repercussions for how they both operated. Two private documents – one a letter from Lord Lloyd (on Starkie's behalf) to Lord Halifax, the Foreign Secretary, in November 1940 and the second a telegram a year later from Hoare to Sir Malcolm Robertson illustrate the distrust that permeated the Hoare-Starkie relationship. Both are worth quoting at length:

Lord Lloyd to Lord Halifax, 19 November, 1940:

He [Starkie] has just been home and he tells me privately that the Embassy, far from assisting him and the Institute staff in their work, is actually putting obstacles in their way. He alleges that Sam Hoare takes no interest at all and gives no support. To repeat any of this to Sam would, I am sure, only do harm, but if next time you write you could say what importance you attribute to the work of the British Council and the British Institute in Spain, and what good things you hear of Professor Starkie's work, it would, I am sure, do much good.¹⁶⁷

Sir Samuel Hoare to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 12 November, 1941:

I fear that the position I have found here on my return does not justify your report in your letter to me of Professor Starkie's contact with Spanish intellectual life. Institute has undoubtedly gone back in Spanish estimate. Staff are discontented and two at least of them should certainly be replaced. Mrs. Starkie seems to make trouble everywhere. Organisation is from all accounts very bad. As I have no right or wish to interfere in its administration I cannot do more than say that a good inspector should immediately be sent to report to you upon the state of affairs.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ TNA BW 56/3 White, A J S. Letter to Walter Starkie, 3 November, 1941.

¹⁶⁶ TNA BW 82/14 Starkie, Walter. Letter to Lord Lloyd, 11 December 1940.

¹⁶⁷ TNA BW 56/11 Lloyd, Lord. Letter to Lord Halifax, 19 November, 1940.

¹⁶⁸ TNA FO 954/23A Hoare, Sir Samuel. Telegram entitled 'Personal for Sir Malcolm Robertson from Sir S. Hoare', 12 November, 1941.

It has been said that Hoare wanted Starkie sent home on the grounds that he was a drunkard.¹⁶⁹ As alluded to in his telegram above, Hoare did not care much for Starkie's wife either, and it did not help that Starkie's wife was of Italian descent – Italy, of course, being an enemy country at the time. It should be stated that Starkie was going through a particularly difficult time in the period when Hoare's telegram was written. Correspondence between him and the Council in London give the impression that he was exhausted and frustrated. For example, he spent whole days in bed recovering from illness and no doubt was exasperated from the constant pressure of being followed by German agents and Spanish police (on one occasion during the autumn he was almost arrested inside the Madrid Institute in front of some students – but his diplomatic status of 'Cultural Attaché' saved him from arrest¹⁷⁰). In addition to this, press reports about the Council in London giving a luncheon for the exiled Republican leader during the Spanish Civil War (i.e. Franco's main enemy), Juan Negrín could not have helped and he complained bitterly about reports 'in the gutter papers such as the Daily Mirror, growing attacks upon me as an Irishman, a Catholic and so-called Right-Winger.'¹⁷¹ With these issues, the unfortunate situation described in Hoare's telegram to Robertson might be seen as more of a transient phase than a long-term issue. Negrín's presence in London, along with other Spanish Republicans (a disproportionate number of whom seemed to be employed in the Ministry of Information), was also causing a major headache for Hoare in his relations with Franco.¹⁷²

Prior to these events, a number of letters from Starkie to the British Council in London in March and April 1941 show that Starkie and Hoare were getting on rather well and that their differences in the autumn of 1940 were perhaps more due to circumstances than fundamental differences of opinion. Again, the letters are worth quoting at some length:

The Ambassador [Hoare] himself has told members of the Embassy how enthusiastic he is about the work done by our Institute. He likes the

¹⁶⁹ Gordon, David. Email to Edward Corse, 20 May, 2008.

¹⁷⁰ TNA BW 56/3 Starkie, Walter. Letter to A J S White. 2 December, 1941. Starkie was unique among the British Council Representatives in Europe in actually being officially affiliated to the Embassy as 'Cultural Attaché' so that he could receive protection from political inference by the Spanish authorities. See CAC BRCO 1/4 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Sir Michael Palairt, 2 January, 1945

¹⁷¹ TNA BW 56/3 Starkie, Walter. Letter to Carmen Wiggin 10 October, 1941; Howard, Christopher. Letter to Carmen Wiggin, 31 October, 1941.

¹⁷² Hurtley, José Janés, p.40-41, p.46-47

surroundings and he wishes to rely upon us to develop the cultural side of things. Furthermore, he is eager for me to start British Council work in other centres in Spain, especially in Barcelona, Bilbao and Seville. He even told me that he would write back to London to back up proposals to start other Institutes. This attitude of the Ambassador is all the more gratifying to me when I look back on my weeks of depression last autumn [1940] when Lord Lloyd and I talked over relations between Embassy and Institute. Those difficult days are now over and though we still have very great anxieties here on account of the political situation, and the intrigues of our enemies, I yet look with confidence to the future.¹⁷³

...[W]hereas formerly he [Hoare] was inclined to be critical about the Council and even cold-shouldered me in my work. Now he wants to speed up our work and he asked me whether there was any way in which he could possibly help.¹⁷⁴

This letter was written before Hoare started to complain to Robertson about Starkie's inability to run the Institute, but nonetheless it shows that Hoare and Starkie could get on well and that the Hoare-Starkie relationship was not one that always resulted in feelings of animosity on both sides. It was circumstances outside of Hoare's and Starkie's control that often led to problems. For example, Hoare's reversal of his enthusiasm for opening an Institute in Barcelona was directly due to the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 which led to an Anglo-Soviet alliance. The Franco regime despised the Soviet Union (later sending a 'Blue Division' to fight alongside the Germans on the Eastern Front, despite professing neutrality) and the Communist influence on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War was never far from the Spanish Government's mind. With Britain now allied to the Soviet Union, Hoare 'thought this was a bad moment to start Institutes in Barcelona, Malaga and Bilbao.'¹⁷⁵ In particular Hoare was concerned about the opinion of the Spanish Foreign Minister, Ramón Serrano Suñer (who was particularly pro-Axis and anti-Soviet, and brother-in-law of Franco) who 'would refuse to grant permission' and Hoare 'set his mind definitely against opening them.'¹⁷⁶ As will be shown later in chapter four, Serrano Suñer attempted to block the opening of the Institute in Madrid in 1940, so Hoare's opinion of Serrano Suñer's views had significant weight. Starkie no doubt

¹⁷³ TNA BW 56/6 Starkie, Walter. Letter to Carmen Wiggin, 25 March, 1941.

¹⁷⁴ TNA BW 56/6 Starkie, Walter. Letter to Carmen Wiggin, 1 April, 1941.

¹⁷⁵ TNA BW 56/6 Starkie, Walter. Letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 2 July, 1941.

¹⁷⁶ TNA BW 56/6 Starkie, Walter. Letter to Martin Blake, 5 July, 1941.

understood Hoare's concerns, but all the same he must have been disappointed that he could not go ahead in Barcelona – his view surely being that this was the time when an expansion of British cultural influence was most needed.

Only after the initial shock of the Anglo-Soviet alliance had passed and after Serrano Suñer had been replaced as Foreign Minister (in September 1942) by Conde de Jordana (who was more sympathetic to the Allies), that the Hoare-Starkie relationship recovered over the Barcelona institute. In March 1943, Hoare was at last 'willing to allow me [Starkie] to go ahead in Barcelona' and 'agreed to let me prospect any other centres.'¹⁷⁷ Hoare even agreed to open the Barcelona institute personally in October 1943.¹⁷⁸ Although the official opening was delayed owing to the lack of English books that had arrived in the institute, Hoare still visited the new institute on 28 October 1943 remarking on 'the importance of cultural work in the Spanish institutes. In his opinion cultural work of this kind is of immense significance now, and will be still more in the post-war world.'¹⁷⁹ Nevertheless, feelings were still delicate. Hoare remarked only ten days prior to his visit that 'I am surprised Professor Starkie is still absent from Spain [he was in London meeting British Council officials] and seems to have done nothing to arrange for opening of institute in Barcelona about which he talked to me last July.'¹⁸⁰

Any positive moments were always short-lived and differences between Hoare and Starkie kept on cropping up throughout the war. It is clear that they indeed had some very fundamental differences of opinion that went beyond Starkie's alleged drinking habits, his wife's nationality or how he organised the British Institute's work in Madrid. A prime example of this was Starkie's belief that Gibraltar should be returned to Spain.¹⁸¹ For Hoare it was bad enough that German propaganda was promulgating that Hoare had arrived in Madrid to offer Spain Gibraltar (a sign of a weakened and desperate nation),¹⁸² but worse still to have Britons in the country stating their belief that the Rock should be returned to Spain, however 'West' their Britishness might be.

¹⁷⁷ TNA BW 56/6 Starkie, Walter. Letter to A J S White, 29 March, 1943.

¹⁷⁸ TNA BW 56/6 Starkie, Walter. Report entitled 'Professor Starkie's official report on the arrangements made for starting the new Institute in Barcelona', 25 August, 1943.

¹⁷⁹ TNA BW 56/6 Starkie, Walter. Letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 4 November, 1943.

¹⁸⁰ TNA BW 56/6 Hoare, Sir Samuel. Telegram to Foreign Office with a message for Professor Starkie in London, 18 October, 1943.

¹⁸¹ Gordon, David. Email to Edward Corse, 20 May, 2008.

¹⁸² Hoare, *Ambassador*, p. 30

Following Hoare's telegram to Robertson in November 1941, Robertson did indeed take up the suggestion that an inspector should be sent out to Madrid. Professor B Ifor Evans visited the institute in January 1942 (who Starkie disliked and nicknamed "B'for Evans"¹⁸³) and wrote a report with recommendations on how to improve the work of the institute (and thereby the relationship between the institute and the Embassy). The report (which for an unknown reason is only available in a somewhat obscure British Council file regarding an art exhibition in Portugal) and a number of covering letters outlining its context and other comments on the report exist.¹⁸⁴ Evans wrote that there was a "'domestic" atmosphere' in the institute (a reference to the fact that Starkie and his wife were living inside the institute) which was making the institute appear unprofessional. Once this was removed, he stated, this 'should give us an opportunity of developing a genuine, and perhaps in time a valuable British centre in Madrid.'¹⁸⁵ Quite why Starkie was living in the institute is not entirely clear, but Evans was congratulated on his achievement in persuading Starkie to move out.¹⁸⁶ By living within the institute Starkie was taking up two rooms which Evans believed were needed for the school and the institute generally if they were to develop adequately.¹⁸⁷ Evans wrote to Starkie stating '[i]t was becoming, I think, an impossible position by which you should be housed in such cramped quarters, and with the expansion of the Institute all the accommodation will obviously be required for public purposes.'¹⁸⁸ The timetable for the institute and school had to be revised a number of times during the autumn of 1941 due to an influx of new pupils which the institute didn't have space for with the Starkie family living on site.¹⁸⁹ This on its own was not the only reason for tensions between Starkie and Hoare, however. The report also recommended (and accepted by Starkie) that two members of staff at the institute should be removed and returned to London (as Hoare had suggested in his telegram). The problem with them was not entirely clear other than '[t]hey may possibly have had some provocation for the state of restlessness and dissatisfaction which they have

¹⁸³ Gordon, David. Email to Edward Corse, 11 September, 2009.

¹⁸⁴ TNA BW 52/12 'Report by Professor B Ifor Evans on the British Institute, Madrid, January 1942' 28 January 1942; TNA BW 56/4 Evans, Professor Ifor. Letter to Arthur Yencken, 30 January, 1942; Ramsden, Eugene. Letter to Professor Ifor Evans, 30 January, 1942; Evans, Professor Ifor. Letter to Professor Walter Starkie, 2 February, 1942; Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Sir Samuel Hoare, 2 February 1942.

¹⁸⁵ TNA BW 56/4 Evans, Professor Ifor. Letter to Arthur Yencken, 30 January, 1942.

¹⁸⁶ TNA BW 56/4 Ramsden, Eugene. Letter to Professor Ifor Evans, 30 January, 1942.

¹⁸⁷ TNA BW 52/12 'Report by Professor B Ifor Evans on the British Institute, Madrid, January 1942' 28 January 1942

¹⁸⁸ TNA BW 56/4 Evans, Professor Ifor. Letter to Professor Walter Starkie, 2 February, 1942.

¹⁸⁹ TNA BW 56/3 Howard, Christopher. Letter to Carmen Wiggin, 31 October, 1941.

reached.¹⁹⁰ One of the two members of staff had almost been dismissed a few months earlier – again the reason is not clear, though it would seem to be regarding relations between the institute in Madrid and the institute in Lisbon.¹⁹¹ A member of the Council staff in London, Carmen Wiggin, who had been involved with the Madrid institute from London was sent out to replace the two who were being removed. What is clear, however, is that it was not designed to undermine Starkie to the extent that he might consider resigning but instead it was intended ‘most earnestly to strengthen your [Starkie’s] position, particularly in official quarters.... You have friends everywhere, and even in some quarters of which you are unaware.’¹⁹² Nevertheless, Robertson commented to Hoare ‘[t]his report has been worded so that it may be suitable for general circulation, but Ifor Evans has reported to me in greater detail on the actual circumstances in the Institute’¹⁹³ – i.e. Starkie obviously was not told what Evans (and, by proxy, Hoare) really thought about the institute’s work but was given a ‘watered down’ version. The report was keen to stress that the institute had a key role to play as part of the British presence in Madrid but the political circumstances in Spain at the time meant that the institute staff had to play ‘as a single team’ with the Embassy.¹⁹⁴ Apparently the Embassy staff made up one quarter to one third of all British people in Madrid at the time and therefore any indiscretions by the institute would be noticed.¹⁹⁵

Evans’ visit, however, had few long-term effects. A year after Evans’ report, the animosity between Hoare and Starkie were still all too palpable. John Steegman, who was sent to Spain and Portugal in late 1942 to lecture on art, provided another report to the Council in early 1943 and he appeared resigned to the fact that Hoare and Starkie would never get on well:

In Madrid this [the relation between the institute and the Embassy] is largely a question of an undoubted personal antipathy between Sir Samuel Hoare and Professor Starkie, which seems to be reflected, on the Embassy side, down through lower levels.... Obviously nothing can be done about this, except to warn Council visitors to Madrid that they will have need of all their tact.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁰ TNA BW 56/4 Evans, Professor Ifor. Letter to Professor Walter Starkie, 2 February, 1942; BW 52/12 ‘Report by Professor B Ifor Evans on the British Institute, Madrid, January 1942’ 28 January 1942

¹⁹¹ TNA BW 56/3 Evans, Professor Ifor. Minute to Martin Blake, 10 November 1941

¹⁹² TNA BW 56/4 Evans, Professor Ifor. Letter to Professor Walter Starkie, 2 February, 1942.

¹⁹³ TNA BW 56/4 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Sir Samuel Hoare, 2 February 1942.

¹⁹⁴ TNA BW 52/12 ‘Report by Professor B Ifor Evans on the British Institute, Madrid, January 1942’ 28 January 1942

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ TNA BW 56/10 Steegman, John. ‘Visit to Spain and Portugal: Final Report’, 3 March, 1943.

Communication difficulties between Britain and Spain may also have been a contributory factor in the continuing rocky relationship between Hoare and Starkie. Both Hoare and Starkie believed it necessary to follow their own course of action in order to maintain British influence without waiting for instructions from London, and they had different ideas on how that maintenance of British influence should be carried out. Hoare's view was that he had been given plenipotentiary powers stating that 'the British Government realised the urgent and critical nature of the situation, and from the first gave me the free hand that was indispensable if I was to succeed.'¹⁹⁷ Starkie, as one former Council employee has described him, was as a "'one-off" character' who 'ran his own show in Spain, where he was very popular. Even had communication been easier, he would not, I think, have ever kept closely in touch with Headquarters!'¹⁹⁸ He too, therefore, considered it necessary to assume a free hand in his work and would not wait for the 'all clear' from London before proceeding with his ideas. Even so, they could have co-ordinated their activities and aligned their objectives without recourse to London if Hoare and Starkie had seen eye-to-eye. Therefore, it was only their irreconcilable ideas on how to extend British influence in Spain that can be really responsible for their differences, rather than the circumstances of Franco's Spain or communication difficulties in wartime.

Whatever the reasons behind the rocky relationship, it is clear that Hoare and Starkie were still unhappy with each other by the time Hoare returned to London in late 1944. For example, Hoare did not mention the British Council or Starkie once in his autobiography of his wartime mission in Spain entitled *Ambassador on Special Mission* written shortly after the war. Had Hoare had little to do with the institute this would not seem so surprising. However, he lectured there, visited and practically inaugurated the Barcelona institute, and his wife was the patron of the British Institute School. The omission, therefore, speaks volumes about what Hoare really thought about the role of the Council and Starkie in complementing his work as Ambassador. It was not lost on Starkie or on Reuters - who published a special feature on the book and stated '[i]f ever anyone had a "special mission" in Spain it was that scholar gypsy Professor Walter Starkie.'¹⁹⁹ Whether the fact that the wife of Reuters's Madrid correspondent (though

¹⁹⁷ Hoare, *Ambassador*, p.31

¹⁹⁸ Thirsk, Betty. Letter to Edward Corse, 17 August, 2008

¹⁹⁹ TNA BW 56/7 Starkie, Walter. Letter to A J S White, 1 November, 1946; TNA BW 56/7 Brown, Douglas. Feature entitled 'Reuter-Feature No. 3835/D. Should an Ambassador Tell?', 1946; Also see Berdah, 'La "Propaganda" Cultural Británica', p.285-6

admittedly not the author of this special feature) taught at the British Institute had any influence on the article is unclear.²⁰⁰

2.3.2 Turkey: Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen and Michael Grant

Sir Hughe Montgomery Knatchbull-Hugessen was a career diplomat and had extensive experience throughout Europe and Asia of the complexities of maintaining and extending British influence. He had already served once in Turkey (or as it was then, the Ottoman Empire) in Constantinople (now Istanbul), as well as in the Netherlands, Belgium, France, the Baltic States, Persia and China. In China he had been seriously injured during the Japanese attack on Shanghai in 1937 with bullets passing through him close to his spine and took a good year to recover. In later life, however, his injuries would increasingly disable him.²⁰¹ He was, therefore, someone who had first-hand experience of the horrors of war, and the difficulties of diplomacy in a variety of circumstances. Knatchbull-Hugessen was sent to Ankara, the new capital of Turkey after the Turkish revolution and the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, in February 1939. With such a wealth of experience, it is unfortunate that his career should be overshadowed by the 'Cicero affair' where Knatchbull-Hugessen's valet, known as 'Cicero,' passed top secret documents to the Germans. The 'Cicero affair', however, does not appear to have made any appreciable difference to the outcome of military operations in the war, and although Michael Grant, the British Council Representative in Turkey, knew Cicero, there is no evidence that any British Council documents or activities were ever compromised and can therefore be said to be of only passing interest to this thesis.²⁰² Before war broke out and before the British Council had arrived in Turkey, Knatchbull-Hugessen had already negotiated the Anglo-Turkish Declaration on 12 May 1939 in response to the Italian invasion of Albania. Shortly after war had begun he had engineered the Tripartite Treaty between Britain, France and Turkey of October 1939 which was to ensure that should Turkey be attacked, Britain and France would assist her.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Note about the wife of Reuters's Madrid correspondent (Mrs Wells) working for the British Institute is available at TNA BW 52/12 'Report by Professor B Ifor Evans on the British Institute, Madrid, January 1942' 28 January 1942

²⁰¹ Langhorne, Richard, 'Hugessen, Sir Hughe Montgomery Knatchbull- (1886-1971)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford University Press, September 2004; online edn, January 2008) at <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31319>

²⁰² Grant, *My first eighty years*, p.65; Grant, Antony [son of Michael Grant]. Telephone conversation with Edward Corse, 2 July, 2008.

²⁰³ Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat*, p.147

Michael Grant, in contrast to Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, cannot be said to be experienced in foreign affairs or diplomacy at the time he was sent to Turkey in 1940. The lack of experience was not, however, due to inability. He was just simply too young, having been born in 1914, to have been experienced. After going to Harrow School and Cambridge University, he applied to join the Army soon after war broke out.²⁰⁴ His Army career did not last long. He 'had offended against army procedure' by going directly to see a General about the prospect of being a witness for a German friend who was going in front of an internment tribunal, rather than through the army hierarchy. Then he lost his temper at the tribunal - 'a security man at the back of the hall reported my behaviour to the War Office, and I was in disgrace' noted Grant in his autobiography.²⁰⁵ Fortunately for Grant, Lord Lloyd had become interested in him as he was apparently about the only person in the Army who could speak Turkish. He may have been one of the candidates who, in White's view, was the 'only runner' for the post.²⁰⁶ Lloyd whisked Grant out of the Army before Grant even managed to return to the War Office after his meeting with Lloyd, so impressed was Lloyd with Grant's honesty and appropriateness for the role of British Council representative to Turkey.²⁰⁷ Grant first went to Egypt to be trained in the role of Representative by C A F 'Flux' Dundas, the British Council's Representative in Cairo, and then travelled onto Ankara, arriving in the autumn of 1940.²⁰⁸

Unlike the relationship between Hoare and Starkie, the relationship between Grant and Knatchbull-Hugessen was amiable and productive. Though, like Hoare, Knatchbull-Hugessen did not mention the Council in his autobiography, and barely mentions it in his diaries.²⁰⁹ However, in Grant's autobiography, he described Knatchbull-Hugessen as 'friendly, displaying the cheerfulness which proved such an asset to us young British during the subsequent black times of the war.'²¹⁰ The close working relationship between Knatchbull-Hugessen and Grant was undoubtedly helped by the fact that Sir Malcolm Robertson was an old friend of Knatchbull-Hugessen - evidenced by the beginning of all of Robertson's letters to him starting 'My

²⁰⁴ Grant, *My first eighty years*, p.51

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p.58-9

²⁰⁶ White, *The British Council*, p.46

²⁰⁷ Grant, *My first eighty years*, p.59

²⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p.60-64

²⁰⁹ See Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat*; and CAC KNAT 1/13 Diary 1939-40 and KNAT 1/14 Diary 1943-44 (the Diary for 1941-42 either was not written or is not the archive). Sir Hughe's handwriting is not the easiest to read, but I could only find three references to Michael Grant or the British Council in the year 1943 - January 5th, January 6th and March 13th.

²¹⁰ Grant, *My first eighty years*, p.65

dear Snatch' and always cordial in tone, and Knatchbull-Hugessen's replies every so often starting 'My dear Arnold' (being Robertson's middle name by which no one else, at least in the archives, addressed him).²¹¹ Knatchbull-Hugessen even asked Robertson at one point whether the British Council would employ his daughter somewhere in the Middle East, such was the friendship between them.²¹² It was unfortunate then, that the relationship between the Council and Embassy staff in Ankara at lower levels was often not nearly as amiable or productive, and required the strength of the friendship between Knatchbull-Hugessen and Robertson to resolve disputes.

Dundas had already visited Turkey before Grant's arrival and it was clear from his report that any British Council Representative would at best have to live with the scepticism of the Embassy employees. Dundas wrote

The general census [sic] of opinion amongst British officials and the junior Turkish officials whom I have met is that a British Institute such as the Council has sponsored in other countries would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to open, and, if it were successful, it would most probably be either closed down or taken over by the Turks. This opinion is expressed by [James] Morgan [the Minister at the British Embassy] (forcibly), Baker (at great length), Middleton Edwards (rudely), and Turks (unanimously).²¹³

Admittedly, their scepticism here relates to the wisdom of opening an actual institute, rather than having British Council representation in Turkey in some form, but still, it shows that even before Grant's arrival in Turkey there were many in the British Embassy who would need convincing that his role was justified.

Like the Hoare-Starkie relationship, the disquiet in the Embassy-Council relationship in Turkey was a long-term problem. Grant noted 'courteous though Sir Hughe was, the other members of the British Embassy, when I arrived [in 1940], were in some cases dauntingly unhelpful about my job.'²¹⁴ The Embassy staff did not appreciate another British Government organisation invading territory that it regarded

²¹¹ For example CAC BRCO 1/3 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, 1 November 1943; and CAC BRCO 2/3 Knatchbull-Hugessen, Sir Hughe. Letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 4 October 1943.

²¹² CAC BRCO 2/3 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, 30 August, 1943 and Knatchbull-Hugessen, Sir Hughe. Letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 4 October, 1943.

²¹³ TNA BW 61/4 Dundas, C A F. Report entitled 'Mr. C.A.F. Dundas's Report on his tour of Turkey, August, 1940', August 1940.

²¹⁴ Grant, *My first eighty years*, p.65

as its own. Worse still, the Embassy staff were often confounded by strict protocol about what they could and could not do – protocol that the British Council, as a non-Embassy body, did not have to adhere to. For example James Morgan, Minister in the British Embassy, thought it inconceivable that Grant should try to get English teachers into the Turkish Halkevleri and even tried to obstruct Grant from carrying out his work in this regard.²¹⁵ The problem can be described as political from two aspects. Firstly, the Halkevleri were run by the Turkish People's Party (Turkey being a One-Party State at the time) and Morgan was concerned that the Embassy may be seen as supporting the *Party* in Turkey, rather than influencing the *Government* of Turkey. Morgan, Grant noted in February 1941, was 'against all forms of international relationship (cultural, commercial, propagandist) other than the purely diplomatic.'²¹⁶ Secondly, though the People's Party in Turkey was undoubtedly more pro-British than pro-Axis,²¹⁷ they did not want to incur the wrath of the German or Italian military. Opening up as much contact with Britain in the cultural sphere was their way of being pro-British without being seen to be politically pro-British. Inviting a non-Embassy based British Council to supply teachers allowed them to carry out this policy successfully. Morgan and many of the Embassy staff believed, however, that the Turks would not recognise the difference between the Embassy and Council or at the very least, the German Embassy in Turkey may press the argument that they were essentially two organisations of the same British Government and that the Turks should not be supporting either if they were really claiming to be neutral.²¹⁸ An overly successful Council could, therefore, perhaps make Embassy-Turkish Government relations more difficult. Nevertheless, Grant was approached directly by the Director of the Ankara Halkevi to supply him with an English teacher, and later provided many more teachers to many more Halkevleri. Grant stated 'the Party could accept our teachers without seeming to take a political line, which it wanted to avoid, especially during the war.'²¹⁹ Morgan and other Embassy officials were not so convinced on this.

The trouble between the Embassy and the Council was also an extension of the Ministry of Information-British Council disputes mentioned earlier in this chapter. The MOI worked through the Embassy via the British Press Attaché (or Councillor), whilst the Council worked through its own Representative. This was not necessarily a problem if the agreed delineation line between Sir John Reith and Lord Lloyd was kept

²¹⁵ *Ibid*, p.65-7

²¹⁶ TNA BW 61/12 Grant, Michael. Letter to Martin Blake, 19 February, 1941.

²¹⁷ Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Diplomat*, p.204

²¹⁸ Grant, *My first eighty years*, p.65-7

²¹⁹ *Ibid*.

to. However, when Lloyd died in February 1941, debates in London about the Council's future permeated through to the outposts in neutral countries and caused tension between the two organisations. At the Embassy in Ankara the Press Councillor, Leigh Ashton, was a very strong advocate of the view that the MOI should take over the British Council. Ashton and Grant were on amiable personal terms throughout the period and travelled to Smyrna (now Izmir) for an exhibition at the Smyrna Fair, lunched together and discussed ancient coins, but they had fierce differences of opinion at a professional level.²²⁰ Also, owing to communications difficulties between London and Ankara during the war, it took some time before Ashton realised that it had been decided in London that the Council would remain in place after Lloyd's death and that Sir Malcolm Robertson would succeed him. He 'continued to express the view that the Council should come under the Ministry of Information - unaware, apparently, that his battle had been lost in London.'²²¹ Ashton was, however, to cause Grant some more discomfort later in the war.

During 1941 with the fall of Greece and Yugoslavia to Germany and with Bulgaria joining the Axis, it was increasingly feared that Turkey would be the next target for German aggression. Many British Council Representatives from these newly occupied countries had already arrived in Turkey and it was clear that a contingency plan was needed to evacuate British Council staff in Turkey to Egypt or elsewhere in the Middle East or Africa, in the event of a German invasion. Istanbul, where many Embassy and Council staff were based, was clearly the highest priority for a plan owing to its strategic location on the Bosphorus and being the closest large city in Turkey to Axis territory. A plan existed on paper for a tug and a barge to take both Embassy and Council staff on the European side of Istanbul across the Bosphorus to rendezvous on the Asiatic side, but there was no fuel for the boats and indeed, one of the boats had been taken away by the Turkish authorities since the plan had been drawn up. Grant remarked 'no meeting-places have been announced and no instructions whatever given to the Council staff or other residents. Nor has any thought been given to transport through Anatolia if anyone succeeded in crossing the Bosphorus.... It must therefore state with regret but certainty that the Embassy will take no effective measures to evacuate the Council staff from Istanbul in the event of an

²²⁰ *Ibid*, p.77; CAC BRCO 1/2 Grant, Michael. Letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 30 August 1943; and CAC BRCO 1/2 Grant, Michael. Note entitled 'Secret and Confidential: H[is] E[xcellency] (to see personally)' to Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, 30 August, 1943

²²¹ Grant, *My first eighty years*, p.77

emergency.²²² Morgan was again identified as the culprit of many of the Embassy's shortcomings from Grant's point of view. Grant clearly had no faith in relying on the Embassy to help in any evacuation stating that they would 'throw the blame for the loss of staff on the Council' - 'I have time after time begged the Ambassador and Consul-General and their staffs and so-called 'wardens' to get something done.'²²³ It took Sir Malcolm Robertson's intervention, by writing to Sir Alexander Cadogan in the Foreign Office, to get the situation resolved.²²⁴ Cadogan claimed that '[w]e have assumed that the British Council staff and their families have been included in the general scheme [for evacuation], but have not been informed of its details. These must necessarily remain as secret as possible, and it is probable that the Embassy has not communicated them to your representative.'²²⁵ Nevertheless Knatchbull-Hugessen was instructed to 'communicate the general outline of the plans to Mr. Grant confidentially.'²²⁶ It was very fortunate that in the meantime no German invasion of Turkey took place, but trust between the Council and the Embassy was severely tested by this incident, however secret the plans may have been.

Two years later, in the late summer and autumn of 1943, relations had not improved between the Embassy and the Council and appeared, in fact, to have hit an all-time low. Grant wrote a note to Knatchbull-Hugessen on 30 August which is worth quoting at some length, as it demonstrates that Grant was venting a lot of pent up frustration (albeit politely and respectfully) which had clearly been building up over several months:

With regard to the general question of messages, we shall of course be very glad to fall in with your wishes and show you messages before passing them on. I am writing to Sir Malcolm informing him of your request. As you know I am most anxious not to do or say anything that would conflict with your policies vis-à-vis the Turks; although, owing to the greater indirectness of our methods of trying to strengthen British influence (and the extreme desirability of not compromising these methods), it is not practicable for us to appear in any positive way to be guided by such policies. I submit to you the suggestion that it is in accordance with British interests for us to continue on our way

²²² TNA BW 61/12 Grant, Michael. Report entitled 'Mr. M. Grant's Report on the Evacuation of Council staff from Turkey in the event of an emergency,' 22 September, 1941

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ TNA BW 61/12 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Sir Alexander Cadogan, 16 October, 1941

²²⁵ TNA BW 61/12 Cadogan, Sir Alexander. Letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 6 November, 1941.

²²⁶ TNA BW 61/12 Gurney, K T. Telegram to Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, 31 October, 1941

apparently unaffected by the vicissitudes of political and commercial relations. These vicissitudes, and the violent criticism that they are arousing among leading Turks, are not preventing us from continuing to extend our influence at present, and surely it is desirable that they should not do so (providing, of course, that we do and say nothing contrary to Embassy interests), since the concessions that they are giving us in this field will certainly make themselves felt later on. ...

With regard to the accusation of "buttering up" which is levelled against me with monotonous frequency, I should like to point out yet again that any individual cases of apparent "buttering up" that I do are undertaken as a result of deliberate and calculated policy, that is to say to fulfil specific aims (e.g. to secure an appointment) directed solely towards the general purpose of increasing British influence. The assertion that we are "pro-Turk", meant in a pejorative sense, which is heard from time to time in the lower ranks of the Embassy, is in the light of this rather annoying, but I suppose it is more or less inevitable in view of the unwontedly far-reaching system of personal and educational contacts with Turks that we are trying to achieve. It would be a help to me if critics or enquiries on matters of Council policy or business could pass their criticism either straight to Mr. Covington or myself, or through Mr. Busk, rather than allowing them to reach junior members of my staff who are necessarily imperfectly informed on the details of Council policy.²²⁷

Clearly Grant's ability to make good contacts with the Turkish authorities, helped by his position of not being connected directly to the Embassy, was causing some of the Embassy staff to become envious, or alternatively wanted, in Grant's words, to 'cash in' on the Council's successes.²²⁸ Ashton, as might be expected in his position as Press Councillor, was the instigator of Grant's troubles in this event - 'the occasion of this note [to Knatchbull-Hugessen]' Grant wrote to Robertson on the same day attaching a copy of his note, 'was an ill-mannered complaint by Ashton about the amount of publicity that the Council received in the Turkish newspapers.'²²⁹ Ashton was not the only complainant, however. Knox Helm, the Commercial Attaché (and later from 1951

²²⁷ CAC BRCO 1/2 Grant, Michael. Note entitled 'Secret and Confidential: H[is] E[xcellency] (to see personally)' to Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, 30 August, 1943.

²²⁸ CAC BRCO 1/3 Grant, Michael. Note to Sir Malcolm Robertson entitled 'Reference Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen's personal letter of 11th October to the Chairman', 27 October 1943.

²²⁹ CAC BRCO 1/2 Grant, Michael. Letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 30 August 1943

to 1954 Ambassador to Turkey), Grant noted, 'often gets angry because our friendly reception from the Turkish Press, which conflicts strangely with the recurrent crises in commercial and other relations.'²³⁰ And Helm was generally pro-Council.²³¹

Robertson wrote to Knatchbull-Hugessen on 8 September after he had received a copy of Grant's letter to Knatchbull-Hugessen which he said 'disturb[ed] me very much'.²³² No copy of the 8 September letter appears to have survived but Knatchbull-Hugessen took over a month to reply to it, so that he could 'look all round the question' as, he said, 'there appears to be something in it.'²³³ Knatchbull-Hugessen replied on the 11 October agreeing to much of what Robertson had raised in his letter of 8 September. However, Knatchbull-Hugessen disagreed that there should be a real separation between the work of the Embassy and the Council which he 'ha[d] been told' was being pursued by the British Council. He said he wanted to 'confine [his] belief in separation to "ostensible separation"', so that both organisations would not be in the position of 'not knowing what the other was doing while the Turks would still believe that we were working together'. Lastly, he stated, '[a]nother cause of the trouble is the consciousness that the British Council people here have more money to spend than have the Embassy staff; and in fact are better paid generally.'²³⁴ When Grant saw the letter he was fuming stating '[t]he whole letter is obviously drafted by Helm, of whose views every paragraph bears the mark. There are only a few interpolations by the Ambassador.'²³⁵ However, the incident faded after a time, and Grant returned to London in late 1943 to meet Robertson and other Council officials – not about this incident but about funding issues and related future policy which was difficult to communicate by letter and telegram.²³⁶ He returned refreshed and no other major flashpoints appear to have occurred between Embassy and Council during the war.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ CAC BRCO 1/3 Grant, Michael. Note to Sir Malcolm Robertson entitled 'Reference Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen's personal letter of 11th October to the Chairman', 27 October 1943.

²³² CAC BRCO 1/2 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Michael Grant, 7 September 1943.

²³³ CAC BRCO 2/3 Knatchbull-Hugessen, Sir Hughe. Handwritten note at the end of his letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 4 October 1943.

²³⁴ CAC BRCO 1/3 Knatchbull-Hugessen, Sir Hughe. Letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 11 October, 1943.

²³⁵ CAC BRCO 1/3 Grant, Michael. Note to Sir Malcolm Robertson entitled 'Reference Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen's personal letter of 11th October to the Chairman', 27 October 1943.

²³⁶ CAC BRCO 1/3 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Michael Grant, 5 October, 1943

Nonetheless, like the Hoare-Starkie problems, therefore, the difficulties in the Embassy-Council relations were long-term and although there were peaks and troughs, the relations were never very positive. The question is whether it really mattered if the Council and Embassy were able to achieve their objectives. Constant irritations could be tolerable if success was being attained. An assessment of the Council's success will take place in chapter five.

2.3.3 Portugal: Sir Ronald Campbell and Professor S George West

Sir Ronald Hugh Campbell had made his career in the Foreign Office. He did not have the breadth of Ambassadorial experience of Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, having worked his way up through the ranks of the civil service in the Foreign Office. He had, nevertheless, travelled widely and had a very good knowledge of foreign affairs. It was only in 1929 that he was first appointed abroad, as envoy-extraordinary and minister-plenipotentiary in Paris. Then, after a few years as Minister in Belgrade in 1935, he returned to be Ambassador in Paris in July 1939. With the German invasion of France the following year, Campbell had joined the French Government's exodus from Paris to Bordeaux and left France for Britain when the Franco-German armistice had been signed.²³⁷ Campbell was an 'unassuming and gently persuasive Scot' though with 'an unflinching purpose at the back of his non-committal manner.'²³⁸ He had perhaps a more congenial manner about him than Hoare and had a 'meticulous' attention to detail which was perhaps lacking in Knatchbull-Hugessen through his apparent aloofness from the quarrels between Grant and members of his Embassy.²³⁹ Both attributes were good omens for his relationship with the British Council in Portugal. Sir Walford Selby, who was replaced by Campbell as British Ambassador to Portugal in 1940, had already actively supported Professor George West, the Council's representative in Portugal, and 'expressed relief that at long last serious steps were being taken to counter German propaganda.'²⁴⁰ Selby wrote a letter to Charles Bridge, the British Council's Secretary-General until 1940, containing his opinion of the work of the British Institute in Lisbon. Bridge sent it on to the Foreign Office 'to help them in their attack on the Treasury to get authority to spend' - although the letter does not appear to have survived, its content clearly supported the Council's work in

²³⁷ Balfour, John, 'Campbell, Sir Ronald Hugh (1883-1953)', rev. Anthony Adamthwaite, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, January 2008) at <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32273>

²³⁸ *Ibid*; also see Spears, Edward, *Assignment to catastrophe*, (Reprint Society, London, 1956) p.180

²³⁹ 'Meticulous' from Balfour, 'Campbell'.

²⁴⁰ Roberts, *Um Toque Decisivo*, p.56

Portugal.²⁴¹ Campbell was evidently entering a situation in Portugal, where the relationship between the Embassy and the Council was already good.

Professor Sidney George West, known by his second name George, was an expert in Portuguese culture. He had been a lecturer at the University of Coimbra - Portugal's foremost University - since the early 1930s and, according to a friend of his (and later librarian at the British Institute Library) had 'incorporated the spirit of the Coimbra student - he was affable, very sociable.'²⁴² West had also lectured at King's College, London on the Portuguese language where a collection of his Portuguese images from the 1930s is still available at the College's Archives.²⁴³ Throughout the 1930s West had attempted to improve Anglo-Portuguese cultural relations, and was perturbed that the Germans, Italians and French all had institutes in Portugal, but the British did not.²⁴⁴ His advocacy for a British Institute in Portugal was partly responsible for the establishment of the British Council itself in late 1934 (as the British Committee for Relations with Other Countries) together with other advocates for similar institutes around the Mediterranean area.²⁴⁵ West noted in October 1937 in a lecture at the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London that 'Portugal's confidence in Britain's role as protector of the smaller, defenceless countries against aggression was shaken by our attitude over the Italo-Abyssinian dispute, and she is taking no chances.' Nevertheless, he stated, Portugal was still 'genuinely anxious to retain Great Britain's friendship and interest' despite the fact that '[m]isrepresentations in the British Press' regarding Portugal 'have not passed unnoticed.'²⁴⁶ It was these misrepresentations in both countries that West was working in Portugal to overcome during the 1930s. In the mid-1930s he had taken a leading part in setting up an English Institute within the University of Coimbra.²⁴⁷ Though this was not under the aegis of the British Council, the Council began to provide grants for lecturers, books and lantern-lectures at the University through the institute.²⁴⁸ When, in 1938, the British Council decided to

²⁴¹ TNA BW 52/3 Bridge, Charles. Letter to Sir Walford Selby, 29 December, 1939

²⁴² Estorninho, Carlos. Interview by Tony Smith, early 2005. My thanks to Alison Roberts for sending me a copy of the interview transcript. (Also quoted in Roberts, *Um Toque Decisivo*, p.9)

²⁴³ King's College London College Archives: West, Sidney George (1909-1987) Slide collection of Portuguese images 1934 to 1937, 13 September 1934-6 December 1937. GB 0100 KCLCA K/PP109

²⁴⁴ Roberts, *Um Toque Decisivo*, p.9

²⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p.10

²⁴⁶ West, S George, 'The Present Situation in Portugal', *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1931-1939)*, Vol. 17, No 2 (Mar-Apr, 1938) p.215, 221 and 222-3 (Address given at Chatham House on October 28th, 1937 with Sir Claud Russell KCMG, in the Chair)

²⁴⁷ Roberts, *Um Toque Decisivo*, p.29-30

²⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p.32

establish a British Institute in Portugal (the first in Europe, and second only in the world to the one opened in Cairo the year before), West was the obvious choice for the Director of the institute.

Unlike in Spain, Turkey or Sweden, the British Council, as noted above, had started to operate in Portugal before war broke out, and cannot be seen as a knee-jerk reaction to the immediate threat of German troops entering the country. It was more of a move to extend British influence where German and Italian influence was generally more obvious and forthright. Indeed even during the war Portugal was never bordered by an Axis or Axis-occupied country, unlike the other three countries that are being examined in detail here. The Germans were on the Pyrenees not the Douro. Although it would be wrong to assume that the course of the Second World War was not relevant to Anglo-Portuguese relations or that Portugal was unimportant to either side in the war (it clearly had a key strategic position as a refugee transit port), but the lack of pressure for *immediate* action allowed the British Council and the British Embassy in Portugal to plan their actions and ways of maintaining and extending British influence in a more thorough and collaborative manner. One former British Council employee, who met West after the war described him as 'fairly approachable' in comparison to other Representatives who, by contrast, had 'very alarming' personalities.²⁴⁹ Another employee described him as 'devoted to Portugal and all things Portuguese and he was popular and well thought of in that country.'²⁵⁰ There were many reasons for believing that a good relationship between the Embassy and the Council in Portugal were highly likely as both Campbell and West were much more collaborative and tolerant personalities than in some of the other countries studied here and the relationship between the Council and Embassy started before the war on a much firmer basis. Lord Lloyd travelled to Lisbon to open the '*Instituto Britânico*' in November 1938 together with the Portuguese Minister of National Education, Carneiro Pacheco, with both Selby and West attending, showing that the Embassy and Council were united.²⁵¹

However, the Foreign Office and by extension, the Embassy, still wanted to maintain an official separation of duties between the Embassy and the Council, even if logistically it may have seemed more sensible to merge the two. In late 1939 the British Institute was trying to acquire some property and, so as to 'avoid difficulties' with the

²⁴⁹ Collins, Leonora. Letter to Edward Corse, 24 May, 2008.

²⁵⁰ Thirsk, Betty. Letter to Edward Corse, 17 August, 2008.

²⁵¹ '*Instituto Britânico*', *Diário de Notícias*, (19 November 1938). Available on BCPHA: Reference c3800060

Portuguese authorities, 'an enquiry was made to the Foreign Office [by the Embassy] as to whether the Institute could in some way be annexed to His Majesty's Embassy' but was met with 'a categorical negative'.²⁵² There was a clear understanding that

if the cultural work and propaganda of the British Council is to continue its present undoubted successes it must not become associated with the political propaganda of the Ministry of Information, for if it is every activity of the British Council and the Institutes would be the subject of protests from the German Minister in Lisbon and an embarrassment to the Portuguese Government and to our best friends in Portugal.²⁵³

Nevertheless, it was noted that the Portuguese Government certainly viewed the 'Instituto Britânico em Portugal as an offshoot of the British Embassy.... Indeed we believe it is proposed to pass a decree to give legal effect to that view.'²⁵⁴ Lawyers advising on behalf of the institute recommended that the Portuguese Government should be 'allowed (if not invited) to recognise the Instituto Britânico em Portugal as being a part or dependency of the British Embassy, and the property as being necessary for the purpose of the Embassy.'²⁵⁵

Whatever the legal implications for merging or separating the Embassy and the institute, in the end it did not really matter. The important point here is that they certainly worked closely together. In the organisation of the British representation at the centenary celebrations for the Portuguese Youth Movement in 1939, Selby worked closely with West to ensure that there was a single British representation organised by the British Council with the Embassy giving direction.²⁵⁶ Campbell considered the institute in Lisbon to be a model institute remarking that 'its work is far more valuable than that of any other propaganda in Portugal.'²⁵⁷ In fact it is difficult, unlike the numerous examples of animosity between Council and Embassy in Spain and Turkey, to find any example of such difficulties in Portugal. Examples of a good working relationship range from the visit of the Oxford University delegation who travelled to Portugal to confer an degree upon Dr Oliverio Salazar, the Portuguese leader (to which

²⁵² TNA BW 52/3 Cowan, D. Minute to Rupert Pearce, 22 November, 1939

²⁵³ TNA BW 52/3 Harlech, Lord. Letter to Charles Bridge, 10 March, 1940.

²⁵⁴ TNA BW 52/3 Stoneham & Sons. Letter to George West, 26 February, 1940

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ TNA BW 52/3 Author unclear - possibly Professor S George West. Letter to Mr Johnstone, 4 August, 1939

²⁵⁷ TNA BW 52/3 White, A J S. Minute to Assistant Chairman, Professor Ifor Evans. 21 November, 1940 reporting on view of Ambassador and West's general report of activities since 1938.

Anthony Haigh, an employee of the Embassy in Lisbon, stated the Council could be proud of 'having contributed to a first-class propaganda achievement'²⁵⁸; to the co-operation to support the ailing newspaper *Anglo-Portuguese News* (APN) which had been in financial difficulties since the late 1930s. It was agreed that APN should be kept going 'at whatever cost' as the Germans would have 'made great capital out of a cessation of publication' despite it being viewed by one visitor as 'useless as an organ of propaganda.'²⁵⁹ (The APN will be discussed in more detail in chapter three). Whenever lecturers visited from Britain, they usually remarked that Embassy and the institute worked together to provide their hospitality.²⁶⁰ Whether legally one and the same, or separate organisations, there was a clear high level of co-operation between all the British government bodies in Portugal.

Henry Hopkinson, the British Minister in Lisbon summed up the Embassy support for the Council's work at a talk in March 1944. He showed his support for cultural relations when he opened a book exhibition at the British Institute in Lisbon, by stating

I think everyone will agree with me when I say that the best way to learn about foreign countries, their people, their lives and their cultures - is to go there and live there. But if, by misfortune, that is not possible as is now the case because of the conditions imposed by the war, the best thing we can do is study the art of those countries and, above all, familiarise ourselves with their literature. [OPA].²⁶¹

There is one example, however, that delves a little deeper under the surface than all of the examples above, which shows that not everything was quite as rosy as it appeared from the outside. John Steegman, who, as mentioned earlier, visited Spain and Portugal in late 1942 and early 1943 to lecture on art, highlighted a number of problems and improvements that could be made between the Embassy and the institute. True, in comparison to the difficulties between Hoare and Starkie, Steegman stated 'there are no difficulties of that sort... Mr. [S George] West is on good personal terms with the Ambassador, and has constant liberty of access to him whenever he

²⁵⁸ TNA BW 52/3 Haigh, Anthony. Letter to A J S White, 10 May, 1941.

²⁵⁹ Roberts, *Um Toque Decisivo*, p.64; Also see TNA BW 56/10 Steegman, John. 'Visit to Spain and Portugal: Final Report', 3 March, 1943.

²⁶⁰ For example, TNA BW 56/7 McCance, Dr R A, 'Report of Dr. R.A. McCance on his visit to the Iberian Peninsula' received 17 June, 1943 p.8

²⁶¹ 'No Instituto Britânico: Inaugurou-se ontem a exposição de traduções portuguesas de livros Britânicos' *Journal do Comércio*, (14 March 1944). Available on BCPHA: Reference c4401310

wants it.²⁶² However, Steegman noted, 'the Ambassador is not, I think, very much interested in the Council.'²⁶³ That in itself would not be too much of a concern. But, Steegman went on:

[The] Embassy in Lisbon, and some of the colony, are inclined to criticise Mr. and Mrs. West on merely social grounds. I think it might be better if they played a more distinguished part in social life, but they have no intention of doing so, and are probably right; they have not got, and could not be expected to acquire, the social gifts of the Starkies and, in any case, Lisbon is not Madrid. If it were, the criticism would be valid.²⁶⁴

Valid or not, the criticism was still there and relations clearly had some scope for improvement. Steegman also suggested another reason for the lack of interest in the Council's work in Portugal, stating that 'I fancy that the higher levels in the Embassy are not yet sufficiently impressed by the significance of the Council. Possibly they regard the "Anglo-Portuguese News" as typical of the Council's abilities and are discouraged from looking further.'²⁶⁵ In addition to this, Steegman noted, 'relations between the Institutes and the Embassy Press Sections [in both Madrid and Lisbon] are in drastic need of improvement.'²⁶⁶ Whilst the 'prominence given by the [Portuguese] Press to the exhibition and lectures' was good '[t]his must, I think, be regarded as a symptom of the goodwill existing between the British Institute and the Press, rather than as being due to any activity on the part of the Embassy Press Section.'²⁶⁷ There were over 3,000 articles listed in the British Council's Portuguese Historical Archive about the British Institute or Anglo-Portuguese in the Portuguese Press during the war period, which was an average of nearly one and a half each day (see Appendix C). This was a vast number, and is an excellent example of that goodwill. There was evidently some room to improve aspects of the relationship between the Embassy and institute, but this should not detract from their good relations overall, which were clearly lacking in Spain and Turkey, or the good relations which the Embassy and institute collectively forged with the Portuguese authorities, press and people.

²⁶² TNA BW 56/10 Steegman, John. 'Visit to Spain and Portugal: Final Report', 3 March, 1943

²⁶³ *Ibid*

²⁶⁴ *Ibid*

²⁶⁵ TNA BW 56/10 Steegman, John. Minute to Major Alfred A Longden entitled 'Exhibition of Engraved Portraits, and Lectures on English Portrait-Painting: Lisbon', 10 February, 1943

²⁶⁶ TNA BW 56/10 Steegman, John. 'Visit to Spain and Portugal: Final Report', 3 March, 1943

²⁶⁷ TNA BW 56/10 Steegman, John. Minute to Major Alfred A Longden entitled 'Exhibition of Engraved Portraits, and Lectures on English Portrait-Painting: Lisbon', 10 February, 1943

2.3.4 Sweden: Sir Victor Mallet and Ronald Bottrall

Sir Victor Alexander Louis Mallet had a similar length and breadth of diplomatic experience as Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen. After serving in the First World War, he held diplomatic posts in Persia, Argentina, Belgium and the United States of America before being appointed Minister in Stockholm in 1940. From his unpublished autobiography, Mallet appears as a very thoughtful person in the sense that he always tried to see his work in the context of the bigger picture of world events and looked forward to a chance to work with new people and in new situations.²⁶⁸ Stockholm was his first chance to head a British mission, and he was very keen to get a good understanding of Sweden, Scandinavia generally, and how to extend British influence at a time when Germany was already at war with Britain and France.²⁶⁹ He was keen, no doubt, to create a collaborative working environment not only to impress the Swedes, but also to keep the British colony together – they were, after all, practically surrounded by German-occupied territory. For eighteen months after the German invasion of Denmark and Norway in April 1940, there were only five courier flights from Britain to Sweden.²⁷⁰ To try to avoid feelings of isolation, the British colony would have needed to work together.

Francis James Ronald Bottrall, known by his third name Ronald, was a poet who had met the Ministry of Information's man in Stockholm, Peter Tennant, at Cambridge University. Bottrall had already published his *Festivals of Fire* (1934) and *The Turning Path* (1939) before the war, and so was a respected poet when he was in Sweden even before he published his more famous post-war work. Tennant had been asked by the British Council to 'hold a watching brief' for them as Press Attaché in Stockholm, but in the autumn of 1941, because of the lack of time that he had to devote to both the Press Attaché work and British Council representative, he asked the Council if he could be relieved from his Council duties.²⁷¹ He suggested that Bottrall be sent to Sweden, as he had some experience as a lecturer in Finland before the war, but was then 'languishing from boredom as a Principal in the Ministry of Aircraft Production.'²⁷² Within a few weeks Bottrall was flown out to Stockholm with his wife Margaret. Ronald Bottrall and Victor Mallet were clearly good friends. Unlike Knatchbull-

²⁶⁸ *Ibid* – see for example p.61 where he was looking forward to working with Lord Lothian in the United States 'this entirely different type of chief'.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid* p.63

²⁷⁰ *Ibid* p.75

²⁷¹ Tennant, *Touchlines*, p.8 and 262

²⁷² *Ibid* p. 262

Hugessen and Hoare, Mallet mentioned the work of the British Council (and Bottrall's role in particular) in a positive light in his memoirs - this clearly shows that they worked well together in Sweden.²⁷³ The fact that they worked together again after the war in Italy when Mallet was Ambassador there and Bottrall again was British Council Representative, is good evidence that their relationship in Sweden was productive and there could have been no irreconcilable differences between them.²⁷⁴

Bottrall worked as a Cultural Attaché in all but name. Owing to the war there was 'a likely reduction in the B[ritish] C[ouncil]'s capacity to operate as independently of the Embassy as in peacetime' and a need to 'sing to the same hymn sheet when dealing with Swedish officials and other influential people.'²⁷⁵ Bottrall and Tennant collaborated in the production of a weekly newspaper entitled *Nyheter från Storbritannien* (News from Great Britain) - which after D-Day had a circulation of 250,000 per issue.²⁷⁶ Notionally a Ministry of Information publication, it contained all the details of Bottrall's work such as an exhibition of English watercolour paintings in January 1942, summer schools for Swedish teachers of the English language in Sigtuna, Lundsberg and St. Sigfrids, and adverts for a translation of T S Eliot poems by Bottrall and Gunnar Ekelöf.²⁷⁷ Mallet had only good things to say about both Tennant and Bottrall in his memoirs. Tennant, he stated, was a 'first class Swedish scholar. He did wonderful work throughout the war, having contacts in many directions and putting me in touch with two or three extremely pro-British journalists and professors.'²⁷⁸ As for Bottrall, he said he was 'a man of imagination' who 'admirably arranged' cultural events and was 'most active and successful' in doing so.²⁷⁹ The three men clearly had a high regard for each other and worked well together under difficult circumstances and looked after each other's work when they made visits to London.²⁸⁰

In 1945, from Kenneth Clark's diary of his visit to Sweden, it is clear that the Legation and the Council were still closely co-operating. Firstly, Clark was visiting under Council auspices and his lectures and entertainment were organised by the

²⁷³ CAC MALT 1 Mallet, Victor. Copy of an unpublished memoir, 1919-46 p.101, p.142-4, p.153, p.157-8

²⁷⁴ Bottrall, Anthony. Email to Edward Corse, 29 September, 2008

²⁷⁵ *Ibid*

²⁷⁶ Cole, *Britain and the War of Words*, p.153

²⁷⁷ Tennant, *Touchlines*, p.123-4

²⁷⁸ CAC MALT 1 Mallet, Victor. Copy of an unpublished memoir, 1919-46 p.100

²⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p.101, p.157 and p.144.

²⁸⁰ CAC BRCO 1/2 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Sir Victor Mallet, 4 December, 1942.

Council. However, he stayed at the Legation with Sir Victor Mallet.²⁸¹ A press conference was organised by the British Council in Mallet's official residence.²⁸² However, it was not just a matter of Legation-Council co-operation in Stockholm. When Clark visited Gothenburg, Uppsala and Malmö, the local British representatives of many British organisations ensured that he was well entertained through lunches and dinners, and all played their part in arranging meetings to visit local Swedish artists and dignitaries.²⁸³ It no doubt helped that this particular trip was organised at the request of the Crown Prince of Sweden and the Director of Swedish National Museum. Perhaps it would be unthinkable that the two British government bodies would not have co-operated, but nevertheless the level of co-operation was still far higher than occurred in Spain, Turkey or Portugal.²⁸⁴ Ewan Butler, an SOE member who was in Stockholm during the later war years, noted in his autobiography that Bottrall had

struggled manfully to keep the flame alight with such unpromising material as lay to hand. Anybody in the British Legation who happened to have an evening, or better still, a day, off, was recruited by Bottrall to travel, often to a remote part of Sweden, and to deliver a lecture to the local branch of the Swedish-British Society.²⁸⁵

The Council and the Legation were clearly closely connected and worked well together in Sweden. Partly, this was due to the isolation that the British colony felt in Stockholm. Morale needed to be kept high and constant interaction between the members of the British community would have helped. However, it was largely because Bottrall and Mallet got on so well that this friendship permeated down to lower levels in both organisations.

Unlike Ronald Campbell who was on congenial terms with West in Portugal but was perhaps not particularly interested in the Council's work, or Knatchbull-Hugessen who was friendly but aloof from the Embassy-Council problems in Ankara, or indeed Hoare, who was at times set against the Council's work in Spain, Victor Mallet was not

²⁸¹ HKRC TGA 8812/1/4/58 Elton, Leonard. Letter to Sir Kenneth Clark, undated but early 1945.

²⁸² HKRC TGA 9712/5/16 Clark, Sir Kenneth, 'Sir Kenneth Clark's diary during his visit to Sweden, 1945', undated but probably April 1945

²⁸³ *Ibid*

²⁸⁴ HKRC TGA 8812/1/4/58 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Sir Kenneth Clark, 24 May, 1945

²⁸⁵ Butler, Ewan, *Amateur Agent: A Story of Black Propaganda during World War II*, (George G Harrap & Co Ltd, London, 1963) p.221

just on friendly terms with Ronald Bottrall, but actively suggested ways in which the Council could extend its work and encouraged the Council at all times. So much so, in fact, that Sir Malcolm Robertson had to politely turn down many of the requests that Mallet made for visitors to Sweden during the war largely owing to transport difficulties. In September 1942, Mallet was keen to see a visit from a theatrical company, as well as a football team, but Robertson had to decline stating 'I am afraid that we must consider such visits as being impossible for the time being.... I should very deeply appreciate it if you would let me know whether you have any further comments to make upon these two suggestions or whether there are any alternative proposals which you may care to make.'²⁸⁶ Perhaps Mallet did not receive his letter or suggested a way round the difficulties that Robertson had stated, as he asked again on the 20 October for the football team, and Robertson again had to politely turn down his request.²⁸⁷

A year later, however, Mallet was becoming disappointed with the Council's performance as they had turned down so many of his proposals for lecturers to be sent to Sweden. He wanted them to push forward with expanding British influence beyond their capacity to deliver. Robertson, in reply, wrote to Mallet on 1 November 1943 stating

I cannot see that the picture is quite as black as you paint it. Indeed, to be frank with you, we feel here that it was a matter for congratulation that we have been able to do so much for Sweden rather than for complaint because we have failed to do more.... I take it a little hard that we should be trounced because our efforts are not always as successful as we could wish.²⁸⁸

Mallet perhaps realised that he had pushed his wishes a little too far beyond what was actually possible during tough wartime conditions. He was later to express his admiration for the British Council for sending out so many visitors and particularly for organising a watercolour exhibition (having flown all the paintings to Sweden in sixteen different packages).²⁸⁹ Mallet was also keen to purchase some of the paintings that were sent to Sweden, and therefore showed that he held art exhibitions in great esteem, and congratulated Major Alfred A Longden, the British Council's Fine Art

²⁸⁶ CAC BRCO 1/1 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Sir Victor Mallet, 21 September, 1942.

²⁸⁷ CAC BRCO 1/1 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Sir Victor Mallet, 2 November, 1942.

²⁸⁸ CAC BRCO 1/3 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Sir Victor Mallet, 1 November, 1943.

²⁸⁹ TNA BW 57/4 Note entitled 'Parcel No. 16: Exhibition of Modern British Water-Colours, Sweden' with covering note dated 11 January 1943.

Director, for 'all the efforts you have put into sending out these water-colours which are playing their part in the most successful drive which the British Council is making nowadays in Sweden.' [Mallet's underlining]²⁹⁰

In his memoirs, Mallet expressed the view that the British Council had played a major part in helping to convince the Swedish Foreign Minister, Christian Günther, by way of a concert of English songs, of the importance of British culture, to the extent that he agreed to send to England the wreckage of a prototype V2 bomb that had landed accidentally in Sweden. Mallet noted:

Soon after we had started home [from Sigtuna, where the British Council concert took place] Günther said to me that he had been very deeply moved by the beauty of the music and indeed by the whole atmosphere of this Anglo-Swedish school, which had been so admirably arranged by Mr. Bottrall. It had made him reflect on the subject of the bomb and he had decided that it would not be right for him to deprive us of the opportunity of counteracting such a devilish weapon, which might be used to destroy thousands of innocent British civilian lives.... When people have abused the British Council to me, I have always answered that there was one occasion at least upon which the British Council played a very important part in the war. Had it not been for the opportunity they gave me of this drive with the Swedish Foreign Minister and had it not been for the emotion which their concert had aroused in him, we might have spent weeks of wrangling and even possibly never have got the bomb.²⁹¹

Clearly the Mallet-British Council relationship worked well, and after this incident, he was never to have a bad word to say about the organisation.

2.4 Conclusion

The British Council had to deal with extraordinary tensions in its relations with British organisations and individuals, at an extraordinary time. Both inside and outside Government the Council came under immense pressure with regard to how it should operate, what type of propaganda it should undertake and what image of Britain it should present to neutral Europe. As an officially non-political body representing Britain, the Council had to represent Britain as a whole. This involved the balancing of

²⁹⁰ TNA BW 57/4 Mallet, Sir Victor. Letter to Major Alfred A Longden, 10 February, 1943.

²⁹¹ CAC MALT 1 Mallet, Victor. Copy of an unpublished memoir, 1919-46 p.157-8

an array of different interests to ensure it represented both right and left wing political opinions, all four nations of the United Kingdom, a variety of different interpretations of what British culture was, and a variety of expert opinions. This was difficult enough in peacetime and it proved impossible to please everybody all of the time with regards to the image of Britain which should be presented abroad. Yet it believed it was presenting a truthful image of Britain, and not one that could be dismissed as propaganda in a negative sense. On top of this, the Council had to balance the pressures within Britain about what image to present and the image to which the neutral countries would be receptive. Philip Newman may not have been thought of by the Music Committee as a great violinist, but he was popular in Portugal. Benjamin Britten, though a conscientious objector, was arguably Britain's foremost composer at the time, and could not just be ignored. On numerous occasions the Council had to make judgment calls like these in favour of what would work as propaganda abroad in the face of criticism at home.

Once a consideration of the issues regarding the image to be presented had been undertaken, the Council was under other pressures. Aligning its work with that of the Embassies in neutral countries (working much better in Sweden and Portugal than in Spain and Turkey), budget pressures from the Treasury (who maintained that the Council's finances were not under control), and political pressure from the Ministry of Information (in an argument surrounding spheres of influence and what type of propaganda the Council should be conducting, if any at all) were three of the most significant pressures if faced from an administrative point of view. Cultural propaganda was often seen as a long term strategy with little to offer to the war effort itself. Hoare in Spain was often directly guided by the events in the war, such as the British-Soviet alliance in June 1941 and the Allied invasion of North Africa in 1942. Diplomacy with Franco to keep him out of the war and from disrupting Allied military plans for Africa was a major part of his role. He was reluctant to give much time and effort to cultural questions when his attention was needed elsewhere. In Turkey and in Balkan countries, the SOE and SIS certainly saw the Council as a cover for other activities rather than as conducting an important activity in itself. At certain times - particularly from the autumn of 1939 to early 1940, and again in February 1941 - the British Council's very existence was in doubt largely due to questions about the value of cultural propaganda during wartime. These doubts, of course, focused on the need for an immediate 'return on investment' which missed the point about how cultural propaganda worked on a long-term, but pervasive basis.

The strength of personality in these relationships was a major factor in whether the British Council succeeded or failed both in balancing the numerous pressures it was under, and in conducting successful cultural propaganda. The animosity between Starkie and Hoare, and between Grant and certain Embassy officials in Ankara had implications for how much time both Starkie and Grant had to promote and defend their activities amongst the British colony as opposed to spending their time concentrating on conducting cultural propaganda. West and Bottrall clearly had far better relationships with Campbell and Mallet respectively, and knowing that they had their support would have undoubtedly improved their efficiency and effectiveness in promoting Britain's image in Portugal and Sweden. Personality and personal networks also played key roles in persuading famous personalities to join Advisory Committees and to travel to neutral countries. Longden's constant engagement with artists and art critics played a major part in keeping them interested in the Council's work. He, and many others, found it difficult to keep in control of such a diverse and opinionated group of people.

There would always be people who did not support the Council and regarded its work as a waste of vital resources in a time of emergency. Lord Beaverbrook and his newspapers were the foremost critics of the Council's work and remained so throughout the war and beyond. However, it is actually remarkable that considering all of the pressures that it was under from other British organisations and individuals that it made so few mistakes and alienated so few of its critics entirely. In a sense, however, it did not matter a great deal what state the relations between the Council and other British organisations were in, as long as any difficulties did not stop the Council from operating effectively abroad. That, after all, was its mission – to promote British life and thought abroad. Its success or failure did not depend on how effective it was in managing its relations within Britain and with the Embassies. Though that undoubtedly influenced its operations, its success or failure can only be based on the effectiveness of its methods of cultural propaganda, which is the subject of the next chapter.

3. Methods of cultural propaganda on the front line

3.1 The 'one size fits all' approach versus the bespoke approach to propaganda

In an ideal world any organisation involved in propaganda (cultural or otherwise) would want to work with a 'one size fits all' approach. That is to say that they would ideally like to use common methods of disseminating messages across all of the differing audiences that it wished to influence. This approach, of course, has a lot of attractions particularly resulting in administrative savings both in the design and in the deployment of the propaganda itself, particularly in wartime when resources are stretched and the time available to make an effect is limited. This approach also has many advantages in establishing an overarching framework of complementary themes helping to convey the intended message. However, this approach does not take into account that the world is far from ideal - or more precisely, audiences for the propaganda are rarely similar in outlook, history and values, and are unlikely to understand the same message in the same way. This issue was particularly acute for the British Council working, as it did, across a wide geographical area. As was mentioned in chapter one, each neutral country where the Council operated already had an existing view of Britain, the other combatant countries, and the war generally. Whilst Sweden was a democracy, it feared the Soviet Union far more than Nazi Germany as a threat to its liberty and German influence was profound - yet areas of the country such as Gothenburg (which was known as 'little London'¹) were far more pro-British owing to historic trading links. Portugal had an alliance with England dating back to medieval times and had a common sea-faring history. Spain had just emerged from a Civil War where the victorious General Franco had relied on German and Italian support to win and despised the British presence in Gibraltar. Turkey had been a German ally in the First World War but had since had a revolution and had an admiration for British progress which they were keen to emulate in many ways - and they feared the Soviet Union because of Russia's ancient ambition to control the Dardanelles and Bosphorus, and the Italians who were present in the Dodecanese Islands. Also within each country there was a kaleidoscope of differing viewpoints defined by religion, politics, class and separatism to name a few issues. Clearly a commonality of approach in employing methods of propaganda, let alone the

¹ CAC MALT 1 Mallet, Victor. Unpublished Memoirs p.72

messages conveyed by those methods would not be appropriate across all of the four European countries in which the Council operated.

Yet, as we have seen from the previous chapter, the operational environments within which the British Council had to function also had a profound effect on the methods that the Council used to disseminate its cultural propaganda. Issues of practicality in transferring people and materials overseas for cultural propaganda purposes in wartime, the money necessarily involved (particularly with challenging and fluctuating exchange rates) and logistical issues of co-ordination were all factors constraining how the Council could adapt its work to the bespoke needs of the variety of audiences it was trying to reach. Relations between the Council Representatives and Ambassadors, differing personalities and relations between the Council in London and other British organisations also had an effect on the methods being employed in each country. The methods of propaganda were, therefore, intrinsically linked to the operational environment and could not always be best suited to the needs of the audience.

The Council had to find a balance between the needs of the varying audiences, the issues between British organisations which affected its work, issues of practicality in wartime and the ideal 'one size fits all' approach to devise methods of propaganda that would have the desired effect of promoting British life and thought abroad. There are a surprising number of similarities between how it operated in each of the European neutrals with a plethora of common themes running through the Council's work wherever it took place. This was partly due to the similarity of the audience that it was aiming for across all of those countries - i.e. the elites - but as will be shown in this chapter, this certainly did not mean that the Council was insensitive to local conditions or simply threw money at producing a certain form of propaganda just because it had worked successfully elsewhere. The Council was acutely aware of the existing sociological conditions of each country and the differences which needed to be taken into consideration to make its cultural propaganda effective. This chapter also looks at the messages being conveyed through the methods of propaganda because, as we shall see, in cultural propaganda the message conveyed is often determined by the method of propaganda being employed.

3.2 Institutions

British Institutes were established in three of the four countries on which this thesis focuses. Turkey, as was mentioned in the previous chapter, was the odd one out because the Embassy believed that 'it would most probably be either closed down or taken over by the Turks.'² However, even in Turkey there were British Council offices established in Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir (then Smyrna), Mersin and Samsun.³ Michael Grant, the British Council's representative in Turkey, also established six lending libraries which, taken together, in essence (as offices and libraries were the mainstay of an institute in any of the other three countries) created institutes in all but name.⁴ However, Grant concentrated on working with the existing official institutes (the Party-run Halkevleri) instead of attempting to turn the Council offices-cum-libraries into teaching institutes as had been the case in Spain and Portugal. Elsewhere, establishing institutes was still not a straightforward exercise even if the Embassy had given its consent in principle.

In many ways the establishment of a British Institute in a hostile environment, such as Madrid in 1940, was a great propaganda achievement in itself – it had achieved its first aim of being there, 'flying the flag', for Britain. The difficulties in getting permission to open the institute there, and the views of the Spanish Government in detail, will be examined in the following chapter. The impression that it gave though was immense. Not only was the Spanish Government sympathetic to Germany and Italy, but Starkie's arrival and organisation of the housewarming event coincided with the Dunkirk evacuation and the Battle of Britain – defeat for Britain seemed perhaps just weeks away, but yet, here was a British organisation spending time in an intimidating land promoting cultural values which were seemingly under threat. Nevertheless, it was only one of a number of institutes already established in Madrid by other countries and the British Institute's voice was still to be heard above the noise of competing opinions and interests in the whispering gallery that was Madrid. An Italian institute had been established in late February 1940, which by contrast to the opening of the British Institute, received a huge amount of publicity in the Spanish newspapers.⁵ Despite this, the German Ambassador's attempts to persuade the

² TNA BW 61/4 Dundas, C A F. Report entitled Mr. C.A.F. Dundas's Report on his tour of Turkey, August, 1940', August 1940.

³ Grant, *My first eighty years*, p.81

⁴ Coombs, Douglas, *Spreading the Word: the Library Work of the British Council*, (Mansell Publishing Limited, London and New York, 1988) p.14

⁵ TNA BW 56/2 Reavey, George. Letter to British Council, 1 March, 1940

Spanish Government to ban all British propaganda and seize all methods of distribution during 1941 and 1942 can perhaps be seen as a back-handed compliment to the success of British propaganda in a wider sense, of which the British Institute's efforts were a major factor.⁶ Given the circumstances of the war situation at the time, the opening of the institute in Madrid, although ostensibly a non-political cultural institute, has also to be seen as a political statement. Although Lord Lloyd and Sir John Reith had agreed a separation of responsibilities along the lines of cultural and political propaganda between their respective organisations, it is clear that it was not possible to separate political and cultural propaganda entirely as the two concepts cannot be divorced.

In neighbouring Portugal, the institute in Lisbon had opened in November 1938 (prior to the war) with both the Portuguese Minister of Education, Dr António Faria Carneiro Pacheco, and Lord Lloyd present - and so the problem of actually establishing institutes during war conditions was avoided here.⁷ Clearly, having a Portuguese Government Minister in attendance at the opening sent a clear signal that the Portuguese Government was likely to be supportive of the institute's activities, and they confirmed this through a formal letter outlining their support for the institute.⁸ An *Abertura solene* (solemn opening ceremony) was held on the 23 November in the *Academia das Ciências* (Academy of Sciences) for a wide public audience and a *Copo de agua* (literally 'glass of water', but meaning a drinks reception) the following day in the institute itself for a smaller number of guests.⁹ At the *Abertura solene*, Pacheco clearly stated his support:

I can confidently prophesy for the "British Institute in Portugal" the fullest success in its noble task of converting the historic and vital association of interests into a dynamic ideal of co-operation in the present and future: - These are the earnest wishes of our Government.¹⁰

Unlike in Madrid, the opening of the institute in Lisbon was widely publicised in the Portuguese press. Many articles stressed the old alliance between Britain and

⁶ See Schneider, Ingrid Schulze, 'La propaganda alemana en España 1942-1944', *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma*, (Serie V, H.a Contemporánea, t. 7, 1994) p.373

⁷ TNA BW 52/1 West, S George. Letter to Charles Bridge, 21 October 1938.

⁸ TNA BW 52/1 'Translation: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate General of Political and Economic Affairs Proc. 38 No. 45', 4 November, 1938

⁹ TNA BW 52/1 West, S George. Letter to Charles Bridge, 21 October 1938.

¹⁰ TNA BW 52/1 'Translation of speech of Minister of Education at Inauguration of B. Institute', undated, but speech given on 23 November 1938

Portugal.¹¹ 'Portugal and England' wrote the *Diário de Manhã*, are 'countries which are friends and old allies – know each other well and there is nothing more useful than study for obtaining good and perfect knowledge' [OPAJ].¹²

In Portugal, however, once the war had broken out in September 1939, it was not quite as easy as it had been to get support from the Portuguese Government. In Coimbra, although the *Casa d'Inglaterra* (English Room) had existed prior to the war within the University, the newly-established institute in Coimbra was accommodated by the Faculty of Letters which meant, as Portugal was adhering strictly to its neutrality, 'its immediate neighbours [were] the German, Italian and French Institutes.'¹³ It was clearly an advantage, therefore, to be ahead of the game and avoid such unhelpful situations. The Council was always aware that it was not operating in a vacuum and was clearly in competition with the other combatant countries. It is important to stress that at least in Portugal, unlike in Spain, the authorities were not allowing the German and Italian institutes to open and operate in a disproportionately bombastic way compared to the British Institutes. Nevertheless the British Institutes did not seem to have any particular advantage either.

In Sweden, as in Spain, the institute had opened after the outbreak of war – and it took until December 1941 before its doors were finally open.¹⁴ Largely this was due to the practical difficulties in getting enough resources to Sweden in order to make the opening of an institute worthwhile. Peter Tennant, the British press attaché in Stockholm, had been in a caretaker role for the British Council, and it was not until late 1941 that Ronald Bottrall made it to the Swedish capital and opened the institute. As in Portugal, the Education Minister, Gösta Bagge, was in attendance at the opening along with the British Minister Victor Mallet. Bagge's presence at the opening, however, was

¹¹ For example 'A fundação do Instituto Britânico em Portugal vem preencher uma falta que há muito se fazia sentir nas relações culturais entre os dois países aliados', *República* (22 November 1938). BCPHA: Reference c3800160; and 'O Instituto Britânico em Portugal: A Inglaterra deseja tornar ainda mais sólida a antiga aliança luso-britânica declarou-nos hoje lord Lloyd of Dolobran', *Diário de Manhã*, (24 November 1938). BCPHA: Reference c3800350

¹² 'A visita de "Lord" Lloyd', *Diário de Manhã*, (23 November 1938). BCPHA: Reference c3800230.

¹³ KCA STE 2/2/2 Travel Diary entitled 'Visit to Spain and Portugal 1942-3'. Diary entry for 14 December 1942. This quote, and all subsequent quotes, from the papers of John Steegman has been extracted and used here by kind permission of the Provost and Scholars of King's College, Cambridge.

¹⁴ 'Brittiskt kulturinstitut öppnat i Stockholm'. Unclear which Swedish newspaper the cutting is from, but dated 18 December 1941. Newspaper cutting in RAS P3206 'Bottrall, Francis James Ronald'

not as well-received as Pacheco's presence had been prior to the war. The Swedish press reported Nazi Germany's condemnation of Bagge's action:

At today's press conference in Wilhelmstrasse¹⁵ there was an item on Education Minister Bagge's presence at the British Council in Stockholm. This procedure has been described as a tragic-comic charade by the [German] Government who know that the British Council, at least according to German opinion, is merely a layer of the Secret Service. [OSwAJ].¹⁶

A spokesman for the German Government called it a "political somersault" for the Cabinet Minister [statsrådet] Bagge to appear at the opening. The British Council is nothing but an English espionage centre, he further explained... [OSwAJ].¹⁷

The Swedish secret police did not actually take the view that the British Institute in Sweden was a centre for espionage very seriously – they considered that view to be a German rumour.¹⁸ However, the fact that the view was given such prominence in the Swedish press shows that the opening of the institute was certainly not an overwhelming victory in propaganda terms. Again, as in Spain, it was a political statement to open the institute and the German backlash clearly showed that they, at least, saw the Council as a force to be reckoned with. The Council was plainly going to have to fight its corner.

The British Institute in Sweden was also less like the institutes in Spain and Portugal that were the centre of the British Council's activities. Instead the Council operated in a similar way as in Turkey by way of sending lecturers out to the University of Uppsala (Sweden's foremost University), Sigtuna, Malmö, Göthenburg and even Kiruna in the Arctic north of Sweden.¹⁹ Bottrall also collaborated with Swedish organisations such as the *Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund* (ABF – Workers'

¹⁵ 'Wilhelmstrasse' was used as a shorthand for the German Government, similar to the way 'Whitehall' is used as shorthand for the British Government.

¹⁶ 'Berlin vädrar Secret Service bakom teaparty'. Unclear which Swedish newspaper the cutting is from, but dated 17 December 1941. Newspaper cutting in RAS P3206 'Bottrall, Francis James Ronald'.

¹⁷ 'Tyskt angrepp på statsrådet Bagge', *Aftonbladet*, (18 December 1941). Newspaper cutting in RAS P3206 'Bottrall, Francis James Ronald'.

¹⁸ RAS P3206 Danielsson, Otto. Letter to Captain G. von Döbeln, 12 February, 1942

¹⁹ TNA BW 57/1 King, Arthur. Remarks on extending British Council work in Sweden, February 1943; and TNA BW 57/1 Read, Albert, 'Report from Norrland: Autumn 1943'

Educational Association) rather than teaching 'in-house'.²⁰ The Stockholm institute itself was therefore much more of a library and an exhibition space than the teaching locations which were more predominant certainly in Madrid and to an extent in Lisbon. All the institutes provided a number of practical functions – libraries, schools, exhibition spaces and places to hold social events. Douglas Coombs, in his assessment in the Council's library work, *Spreading the Word*, noted that libraries 'were a normal feature of these Institutes, and their supply was just one aspect of the massive wartime expansion of the Council 'printed word' activity; but before the war ended, a policy had emerged which greatly enhanced the priority given to library work, as well as significantly altering its pattern.'²¹ This new policy was to start to establish libraries outside of institute buildings in an attempt to increase the attendance figures, leaving the institutes more as office-only functions.

Just the fact that institutes existed at all often in difficult, if not hostile, conditions was a propaganda success and, as mentioned previously, a political statement. The institutes had a convening power, a focus for those people who were sympathetic to Britain to congregate (particularly long-term sympathisers), but also those who came over to a more pro-British viewpoint later in the war (largely because they began to see who would win the war). It was noted by John Steegman that the Marqués de Lozoya, the Spanish Minister of Fine Arts, for example, in November 1942 '[u]ntil very recently [was] rather in the hands of the Germans – and never went to the British Institute – but he accepted to-night's invitation [to a dinner party held by Walter Starkie] willingly and promises to come to the Institute on Sunday: perhaps events change opinions?'²² Once neutral people were ready to be pro-British, the institutes provided an ideal focus for them to show their new-found sympathy. This is also perhaps an example of how a member of the 'hostile elite' group, as shown in the model of influence in chapter one, was reached through pro-British and indifferent elite groups, but the change in the war situation obviously was a key factor in the change in Lozoya's opinions. However, whilst it was not always within the Council's control who was attracted to the institute in Spain, Starkie was the master at tapping into a broad Spanish culture and was able to appeal to a wide audience. His *tertulias* (in Starkie's words 'a customary reunion of people for the purpose of discussion on subjects of common interest'²³) were a key tool

²⁰ TNA BW 57/1 'The British Council – Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund, Stockholm, Sweden: for the session January-April 1944'.

²¹ Coombs, *Spreading*, p. 11

²² KCA STE 2/2/2 Travel Diary entitled 'Visit to Spain and Portugal 1942-3'. Diary entry for 13 November 1942

²³ Starkie, *Spanish Raggle-Taggle*, p.287

in Starkie's adaption of the institute for Spanish needs. Taken straight out of the pages of his pre-war book *Spanish Raggle-Taggle* (where he devoted a whole chapter to them), there was, Starkie believed, nothing 'more characteristically Spanish than the *tertulias*'.²⁴ They were not held for any particular occasion, but allowed anyone who wished to visit the institute the opportunity to come and talk about anything they wished to anyone. The only rules were that discretion was abandoned and gossip was encouraged.²⁵ One Council employee noted that individual one-to-one contact was the cornerstone of a representative's work, and Starkie was very adept at creating the right atmosphere for this one-to-one contact to work successfully.²⁶ Other events such as cocktail parties and dinners were also mainstays of the Council's work in Portugal and Turkey, which, though not so adapted to local conditions as the *tertulia*, provided a similar opportunity for those who were pro-British to show their sympathy. The events, in particular, gave those attending an opportunity to meet the visitors from Britain who were there on lecture tours and for other similar events. This enabled them to receive uncensored word-of-mouth propaganda about wartime Britain which would not have been available through any other source. To reference one example from a cocktail party held in the British Club in Oporto, about half of the people attending were Portuguese and half British.²⁷ As these events were usually by invitation only, those invited were usually either member of the British Institute or were 'carefully selected persons, not members, ... [who were] asked according to the nature of the occasion.'²⁸ This gives a clear confirmation that the Council's propaganda was carefully aimed at specific people, people with influence in certain areas of Government, professions or in a cultural field. These were undoubtedly pro-British people at first, but people with the ability to influence less sympathetic people in local life to persuade them to a more positive view of Great Britain.

Institutes were often used as a space not just for purely social events, as was the case with the *tertulias* and cocktail parties, but also for musical performances and plays. John Skelton's play *Magnificence* was performed at the institute in Lisbon and produced by Ley before he moved onto Madrid. *Magnificence*, a play dating from the Tudor

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.287

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.289

²⁶ Hurtley, *José Janés*, p.70

²⁷ KCA STE 2/2/2 Travel Diary entitled 'Visit to Spain and Portugal 1942-3'. Diary entry for 3 February, 1943; It was similar in Istanbul - see KCA STE 2/2/4 'Travel Diary for Turkey and Palestine - 1943-1944'. Diary entry for 29 February, 1944

²⁸ TNA BW 52/12 'Report by Professor B. Ifor Evans on the British Institute, Madrid, January, 1942', 28 January, 1942

period (and the only one of Skelton's to survive) about the evils of ambition and how wealth can suddenly disappear (perhaps trying to draw some kind of analogy to the rise and hoped-for fall of Germany), was played by a mixture of Portuguese and British actors including Ley himself.²⁹ Play-reading circles and poetry societies also needed somewhere to indulge in their cultural interests, and the institutes provided a perfect location for this. William Shakespeare, of course, was a mainstay of play-reading, but other Anglophone authors such as Oscar Wilde, R B Sheridan, Daphne du Maurier and George Bernard Shaw were performed in the institutes as well.³⁰ Music performances also gave the institutes a convening power and a focus for discussion – and these will be examined in more detail a little later in the chapter.

3.3 Teaching

The welcoming atmosphere created by the institutes through the variety of functions which they undertook, were a key attraction and therefore a key feature in their propaganda role. The warmth of the institute is exemplified by the example of the British Institute School in Madrid. Unlike in Turkey where teachers were provided to English (and indeed other) schools in Istanbul and elsewhere, in Spain the teaching of English in a school environment actually took place within the Madrid institute itself, largely because of security reasons.³¹ The school was established predominately for Spanish pupils, though British, American and a few other nationalities were also allowed to join – there were 80 pupils in the school itself in January 1942, and 550 older students learning English. The school was established as soon as the institute opened in 1940 but at first 'very few people knew about it' because of the political situation and censorship in Spain at the time, 'so they started quietly and little by little more people became aware.'³² Just as the institute was opened without the blaze of publicity and then gradually increased in influence, so did the school housed within it. As with much of the Council's work, the school's success was built on an incremental basis – one small success would be built on top of another small success until cumulatively a large success was achieved.

²⁹ TNA BW 52/3 Programme entitled: 'Instituto Britânico em Portugal: Poetry Society: 17th December 1939 'Magnificence' by John Skelton'.

³⁰ TNA BW 56/9 Starkie, Walter. Letter to Mrs M Fernald, 29 July, 1941; Starkie, Walter. Letter to W Bridge-Adams, 21 November, 1941; Traversi, D A. Letter to Mrs M Fernald, 27 January, 1942.

³¹ TNA BW 52/12 'Report by Professor B. Ifor Evans on the British Institute, Madrid, January, 1942', 28 January, 1942.

³² Balson, Manuel. Email to Edward Corse, 20 June 2008. In answer to my question 'Do you know whether it was the policy of the school to solely maintain existing sympathy within Spain, or did the institute try to reach out to the less sympathetic Spaniards as well?'

Starkie established the school because he saw it as the most effective way to win sympathy for the British cause. He believed it was 'imperative to show the Spaniards that England has always been right in the forefront in such work [youth problems, formation of character, child welfare].' Establishing a school, he stated, would 'draw to our side not only the parents - Spanish and British - but also the educational authorities generally.'³³ '[M]any Spanish friends informed me', Starkie wrote, that 'it was one of the best means of attracting the "simpatía" of Spanish parents.'³⁴ Starkie was of the view that schools, and certainly good schools, in Spain were scarce and therefore the set-up of the British School, run on approved lines, would be a propaganda coup.³⁵ Again, Starkie showed that he had an acute understanding of the existing sociological situation in Spain. The Council in London organised a collection of materials for the school such as scrap books, coloured paper, finger painting sets, counting and reading aids etc, all of which helped in giving the impression in Spain that the institute school was well organised and well equipped, though some of the equipment was difficult to send out due to export restrictions during the war, and had to be sourced from Gibraltar and Lisbon.³⁶ A bus service was also introduced as '[co]mmunications are so difficult here [in Spain], that most parents seem to expect this' and, of course, complying with this demand increased the school's prestige.³⁷ The German institute had five buses in operation in 1940 and starting to compete against this was clearly a priority.³⁸ Making these special efforts to ensure the schools did not just exist but were ground-breaking, new and genuinely attractive to Spanish parents was what really counted when competing with the German schools. By the end of October 1940, there were 30 children of ages 4-10 in the school 'without any advertising', and George Reavey, who was helping Starkie establish the institute, believed that '[i]f we did advertise we should be swamped, but for the moment we are not prepared to deal with large numbers.'³⁹ If true, and there is no reason really to doubt this, then the establishment of the school was clearly an adept move by Starkie who understood his audience to an impressive degree. By January 1945, the numbers

³³ TNA BW 56/8 Starkie, Walter. Letter to A J S White, 27 August, 1940

³⁴ TNA BW 56/8 Starkie, Walter. Report on the British Institute in Madrid, 3 December 1940.

³⁵ TNA BW 56/8 Starkie, Walter. Telegram to Lord Lloyd, 28 August, 1940.

³⁶ TNA BW 56/8 Wiggin, Carmen. Memorandum to Pamela Henn-Collins, 6 September, 1940; Wiggin, Carmen. Letter to George Reavey, 19 September, 1940; Starkie, Walter. Letter to Carmen Wiggin, 31 October, 1940.

³⁷ TNA BW 56/9 Reavey, George. Letter to Carmen Wiggin, 17 September, 1940.

³⁸ TNA BW 56/8 Unclear author, but presumably Walter Starkie. Telegram to Lord Lloyd, 17 September, 1940.

³⁹ TNA BW 56/8 Reavey, George. Letter to Carmen Wiggin, 28 October, 1940.

had reached 182 pupils, 143 (nearly 80%) of them Spanish (see Appendix D for full breakdown of nationalities).⁴⁰

The teachers, Mrs Nancy Fernandez-Victorio and Mrs Ruiz de Alda, both English but married to Spaniards, and Miss K P Jackson ran their classes on 'modern lines' – according to Froebel and Montessori methods (play-based and child-centred learning techniques devised by educational specialists in Germany and Italy in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries), which was unusual for Spain at that time.⁴¹ The enlightened nature of the institute's teaching method was recalled by one former pupil, Manuel Balson:

...the atmosphere was the best of it – I can tell as I attended the British [Institute] School in the morning and in the afternoon I went to a [S]panish private school, while at the British we were learning by playing, singing [and] doing gym[,] and in the [S]panish one everything was done by memory and punishments. This way of thinking was generally the same for the other pupils.⁴²

There is a striking link to Ellul's example of post-war American cultural propaganda in France where the advantages of new American technology were so obvious to the French that they readily consumed this aspect of the propaganda.⁴³ Many Spaniards here could just as clearly see the advantages of the methods of teaching that the British Council was employing that they were keen to benefit from the opportunity.

The pupils at the school were taught a range of subjects from geography and history (largely British history but also topics such as Ancient Egypt) to mathematics and religion where pupils could choose between Catholicism and Anglicanism.⁴⁴ The pupils adored Starkie because of his storytelling abilities. He addressed them in assemblies and told them about his adventures with gypsies and wandering minstrels

⁴⁰ TNA BW 56/8 Barker, J W. Letter to Carmen Wiggin, 17 January, 1945

⁴¹ TNA BW 56/8 Starkie, Walter. Report on the British Institute in Madrid, 3 December 1940.

⁴² Balson, Manuel. Email to Edward Corse, 27 May 2008. In answer to my question 'Would you be able to describe the school (both in terms of physical appearance and atmosphere)?'

⁴³ Ellul, *Propaganda*, p.70

⁴⁴ Balson, Manuel. Email to Edward Corse, 27 May 2008. In answer to my question 'What subjects were you taught? Did you get involved with other activities at the institute, other than specifically at the school?'; and Balson, Manuel. Email to Edward Corse, 20 June 2008. In answer to my question 'Which areas of history were you taught?'

- such as those that he had recorded in *Spanish Raggle-Taggle*.⁴⁵ Balson was given his first communion at the British Institute by Catholic priests and the ceremony was carried out in the Spanish tradition of dressing up in sailor and admiral outfits - which is another example of Starkie's ability to tap into Spanish culture (see Figure 4).⁴⁶ In addition to teaching, the school provided a service of monitoring the physical development of the children. Starkie employed a doctor called Dr. Martinez de Alonso, a graduate of the University of Liverpool, who 'keeps a record of each child, weighs them, points out defects in bodily development and every week gives lessons in hygiene, breathing etc.'⁴⁷ Starkie understood that child welfare and health were key issues in Spain following the deprivation and under-nourishment caused by the Spanish Civil War, and providing a service was yet another way that the school earned a good reputation in Madrid.⁴⁸

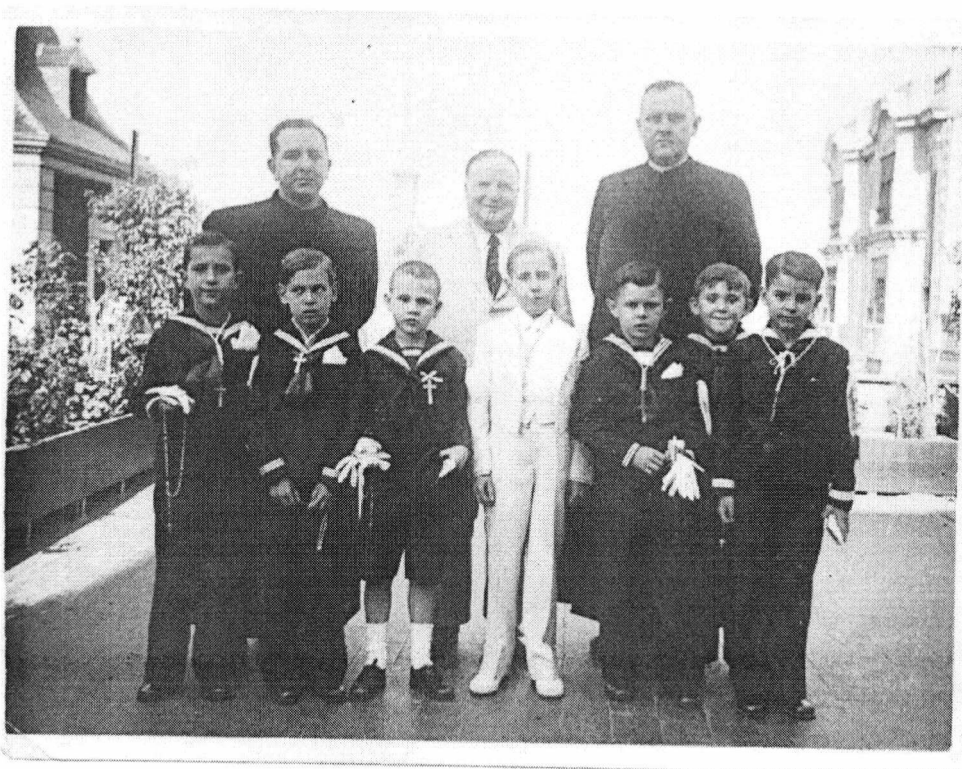


Figure 4: Professor Walter Starkie (centre, back) with Manuel Balson (centre, front) in Admiral's uniform, with two Catholic priests and other pupils in sailor uniforms. On the roof terrace at the British Institute, Madrid, c.1943 on the occasion of Balson's first communion.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Balson, Manuel. Email to Edward Corse, 27 May 2008. In answer to my question 'What was your impression of Walter Starkie and his family during the Second World War?'

⁴⁶ Balson, Manuel. Email to Edward Corse, 27 May 2008; Balson, Manuel. Email to Edward Corse, 20 June 2008.

⁴⁷ TNA BW 56/8 Starkie, Walter. Report on the British Institute in Madrid, 3 December 1940.

⁴⁸ TNA BW 56/8 Starkie, Walter. Report on the British Institute in Madrid, 3 December 1940.

⁴⁹ With thanks to Manuel Balson for allowing me to use his photograph in this thesis.

Although British schools within British institutes were not the norm elsewhere, the teaching of the English language and providing a British education, either through the funding of schools or the provision of teachers, were important parts of the Council's work. A J S White, the Secretary-General, wrote in his account of the period that

[a]s in peacetime the Council's main emphasis was still on English teaching, whether direct in British institutes or indirectly in the subsidisation of English lecturers in universities and schools, in the provision of libraries and in the many other ways which the Council found of stimulating and strengthening the teaching of English in these countries. It had not taken the Council long to become convinced that, as foreseen by its founders, a knowledge of the English language was a major assistance in securing a proper understanding of Britain.⁵⁰

In Portugal, the Council subsidised, though did not control, the St Julian's School in Carcavelos and Queen Elizabeth's School in Lisbon. As in the British Institute School in Madrid, the Council part-funded the schools on the basis that they were conducted on Froebel methods.⁵¹ According to the British Council's Librarian in Lisbon, Carlos Estorinhno, 'the English language had previously been somewhat overlooked for a variety of reasons, including aggressive attempts by German and Italian agents to win over students and a less ideologically driven attitude on the part of the British.'⁵² However, as White suggested above this now changed with the financial support of the two schools in Portugal from 1943. As with much cultural activity, the direct financial benefits of teaching English rarely accrued directly to the institution organising the teaching. The benefits were usually non-financial particularly in the short term (by creating an atmosphere of sympathy), and when financial benefits did occur they would be on a broader level rather than to institutions specifically. Financial support for schools therefore enabled the schools to operate as part of a broader fabric of cultural activity generating benefits for the British cause as a whole through extending British influence especially through the English language.

Prior to 1940, St Julian's was largely for children of the British and American communities in Portugal, but grew during the war to accommodate Portuguese and

⁵⁰ White, *The British Council*, p.37

⁵¹ TNA BW 52/10 West, S George. Letter to David Shillan, 23 June 1944.

⁵² Roberts, *Um Toque Decisivo*, p.57-8

other nationalities.⁵³ Like the British Institute School in Madrid, Queen Elizabeth's attracted a majority of local pupils (i.e. Portuguese in this case) but St Julian's never managed to obtain a majority at anytime during the war, though a rise from near zero Portuguese pupils in 1940 to 32% in October 1944 was nevertheless a good achievement (see Appendix E for a full breakdown of nationalities for both schools).⁵⁴ The Headmaster of St Julian's, Geoffrey L Thorp, applied for a subsidy from public funds (i.e. from the British Council) in October 1943 and stated that he believed that there was 'a very strong case for a subsidy out of public moneys [sic]' as 'the School is a valuable engine of propaganda'.⁵⁵ The British Council agreed, though George West was perturbed about the 'somewhat casual, haphazard mode of expansion' at the school, which he sought to control.⁵⁶ Similarly, Queen Elizabeth's School was set up privately by Miss D E Lester in 1935 after she had apparently been impressed by the German school in Madeira and wanted to 'beat them at their own game.' Lester's aim was for the Portuguese children to be given a high enough quality of education 'to pass their Portuguese examination while at the same time taught in the atmosphere of an English background.'⁵⁷ British Council financial assistance had actually begun prior to the war in 1938. At St Julian's, the school was divided into two sections - for those who wanted to take the Cambridge School Certificate and those who wanted to take the Portuguese Liceu Examination. The school had large playing fields, gymnastics facilities and, being on the Portuguese coast, had access to a beach.⁵⁸

Generally, it was believed by the Council that the two schools in Portugal were doing an 'admirable' job in Sir Malcolm Robertson's words, and had 'always been regarded as a very important British activity'. However, the numbers of Portuguese pupils generally declined during the war at Queen Elizabeth's School and there were questions about the appropriateness of the teaching at St Julian's.⁵⁹ An intercepted letter from a K Heron in Exeter to a R F Heron in Lisbon (both appear to be or have

⁵³ TNA BW 52/10 Graham, Mr. Minute entitled 'Information about St. Julian's School for reply to Department of Education, Oxford University' to David Shillan, 17 November, 1944.

⁵⁴ TNA BW 52/10 Thorp, G L. Note entitled 'St. Julian's School', 5 October 1944.

⁵⁵ TNA BW 52/10 Thorp, G L. Memorandum entitled 'Memorandum: Prepared by Mr. G. L. Thorp, Headmaster of St. Julian's School, Carcavelos, and adopted by the Board of Governors on October, 22nd, 1943'

⁵⁶ TNA BW 52/10 West, S George. Letter to David Shillan 13 January 1944

⁵⁷ TNA BW 52/10 Barkworth, R C. Minute to Ronald Bottrall and Miss Hutton, 21 February, 1945.

⁵⁸ TNA BW 52/10 Graham, Mr., Minute entitled 'Information about St. Julian's School for reply to Department of Education, Oxford University' to David Shillan, 17 November, 1944.

⁵⁹ TNA BW 52/10 Barkworth, R C. Minute to Ronald Bottrall and Miss Hutton, 21 February, 1945; and Barkworth, R C. Minute to Ronald Bottrall and Miss Hutton, 22 February, 1945.

been teachers at the school) shortly before the British Council started financial assistance, strongly suggests that the school was in need of reform:

Folk like Miss W [presumably Miss Warren] and such are letting down England badly. The school is so important from a propaganda point of view but I can imagine nothing more Un-English. The beastly unfairness and injustice. [Geoffrey L] Thorpe [the Headmaster] doesn't know what goes on. He's too much in the clouds. So I must write later. Can't you tell him that as you are not sure about staying I shan't return to S[t]. Julian's.... Really, apart from S[t]. Julian's which I consider desperately important from the point of view of representing England in Portugal, I think I can do more here. You could see the "boys side" was rotten at the school. As long as Miss W and her type are there it's no good. Punish, punish and punish to save her face and hide her incapacities as a teacher. She's not the only one, but the worst.⁶⁰

Whilst no action appears to have been taken specifically upon interception of this letter and it may well be more assertion than fact (though it was the following year considered to replace Miss Warren, if that is who 'Miss W' refers to⁶¹), there was certainly concern about the quality of the teaching. The level of anxiety is exemplified by the fact that Ronald Campbell, the British Ambassador, raised his concern (on George West's behalf) to the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden about the 'insufficient number of qualified teachers at present at the disposal of Saint Julian's School,' and asked him to reinforce the fact that teaching on behalf of the Council was a valuable wartime activity.⁶² Nevertheless, despite their difficulties it is clear that there was a general policy within the Council to keep schools such as these going as it would be an own-goal in propaganda terms to close them. The reputation of British run or funded schools was far more important than the actual quality of the teaching as reputations reach a far larger audience through indirect influence. It was important to keep the sympathy generated by the schools within the wider community than to carry out reforms (albeit much needed reforms) which could reveal to that wider community the inadequacies of those institutions.

⁶⁰ TNA BW 52/10 Heron, K. Letter to R.F. Heron, 14 July 1943. Intercepted by postal and telegraph censorship.

⁶¹ TNA BW 52/10 West, S George. Letter to David Shillan, 13 January 1944.

⁶² TNA BW 52/10 Campbell, Ronald. Letter to Anthony Eden, 22 February, 1945.



Figure 5: *'Uma aula de ingles'* (translated as 'An English lesson') at the British Institute in Lisbon, 1940

English lessons also took place within the institute itself in Lisbon, though not for school-age children, but as adult education. Figure 5 shows one of the English classes at the Lisbon institute in 1940 and it is clear from the picture that the classes attracted a diverse range of Portuguese students - both male and female, young and middle-aged - and all keen to take advantage of the opportunity presented to them by the Council.⁶³ Again there is a

link to Ellul and post-war American propaganda in France - propaganda is readily accepted if the advantages are clear and fit in with the sociological context. The Portuguese could see that learning English could give them particular career and commercial advantages after the war had finished, and this became more and more the case the more obvious it was that the Allies would be victorious in the war.

In Turkey as mentioned before, there were no institutes and so English lessons could not take place on Council premises as was case in this picture from Portugal or Spain. However, as in Portugal where St Julian's and the Queen Elizabeth Schools were supported, the Council gave financial support to the English High School for Boys and the English High School for Girls, the 1943-1944 financial year deficit being estimated at £2,325 and £5,700 respectively.⁶⁴ Both schools had opened in Istanbul during the nineteenth century but required the financial assistance of the Council because 'the trade depression which preceded the outbreak of the present war nearly spelt its doom.'⁶⁵ In a policy called 'Turcising', in Michael Grant's words, Turks were offered an English education in English schools, rather than disproportionately supporting Maltese and British children at the schools.⁶⁶ Still, by July 1944 only 41% at the Boys'

⁶³ BCPHA: Reference c4002011. Also pictured in Roberts, *Um Toque Decisivo*, between pages p.64 and 65

⁶⁴ TNA BW 61/6 Everett, M H S. Memorandum to Martin Blake, Mr Rose and Mr Orton, 17 January, 1945

⁶⁵ TNA BW 61/7 Thompson, D E. Report entitled 'Ingiliz Kiz Tali Mektebi - English High School for Girls, Istanbul - Beyoğlu', 15 April 1944

⁶⁶ TNA BW 61/7 Everett, M H S. Memorandum entitled 'Mr Covington's letter of March 22nd: English High School for Girls' to Martin Blake, Professor Ifor Evans and the Finance Division, 12 April 1944

School and 47% at the Girls' School were Muslim Turks which was still a minority, though admittedly was a lot higher than prior to the Council's involvement.⁶⁷ As in Portugal, the Council sponsored specific scholars in the Boys' School and monitored their progress which, the Council was glad to note had 'improved considerably' from prior to the Council's involvement.⁶⁸ Though both schools were deemed to be 'doing good work', the High School for Girls was not seen as a good investment financially as '[i]t was a very expensive school from the Council's point of view', however the propaganda value of the school was so great that 'it was considered that it would be unwise from the prestige angle that it should be closed,' just as with St Julian's School in Carcevelos.⁶⁹ As regards sponsoring specific scholars it was decided that it was too difficult at the Girls' School because the 'subsidy to the School is already so large.'⁷⁰ It can be seen here that the Council was actually very cautious about overextending its commitments and cannot be accused of throwing money at the problem for the sake of propaganda, but actually wanted to see a return on its investment in tangible terms. M H S Everett, at the Council's offices in London, wrote to W H Covington in Ankara:

Although we agreed some time ago to the principle of Council scholarships at the Schools, we are obliged when faced with the extra allocation involved to consider carefully to what extent this policy should be followed, and particularly, whether the Schools are being run with sufficient economy for an increase in our allocations to be inevitable if these scholarships or more of them are offered. Nor are we entirely satisfied that Grant's "Turcising" plans for the Schools cannot be prosecuted by encouraging the attendance at the Schools of children of the right Turks who can pay the fees, thereby keeping the number of Council scholarships to a minimum.... [The School is] incurring unnecessary expenditure, owing to the large number of pupils accepted at reduced fees, many of whom were not children of "pure" Turks.⁷¹

⁶⁷ TNA BW 61/7 McNab, Major, 'English High Schools, Istanbul (Extra from Major McNab's report, July 1944)', July 1944

⁶⁸ TNA BW 61/6 Sandrey, Dennis. 'Report on the Council Scholars in the High School', 11 January, 1945

⁶⁹ TNA BW 61/7 Extract from the Draft Minutes of the 99th Meeting of the Finance and Agenda Committee held on 8th February 1944 at 10.30am. Comments by Martin Blake on agenda item 'Turkey: High School for Girls, Istanbul.'

⁷⁰ TNA BW 61/7 Everett, M H S. Memorandum entitled 'Mr Covington's letter of March 22nd: English High School for Girls' to Martin Blake, Professor Ifor Evans and the Finance Division, 12 April 1944

⁷¹ TNA BW 61/7 Everett, M H S. Letter to W H Covington, 24 April, 1944

Despite this policy the Girls' School had a broad range of activities which the Council funded, such as the nursery section (known by the German name 'kindergarten', as it was too in the British Institute in Madrid), which was a key part of the educational system and incorporated the teaching of English at an early age. Books by A A Milne and Beatrix Potter, beacon readers (for sentence construction), Puffin books on nature subjects, Chad Valley wooden number toys and plasticine were the key ingredients of the kindergarten's learning environment.⁷² As in Spain the introduction of these new, ground-breaking teaching techniques would undoubtedly have increased the reputation of the school in Istanbul society. To some extent, the fear that the Council had of lack of 'sufficient economy' was unfair in this respect, as the greater benefit of reputation building and maintenance was occurring which, in the longer term, would contribute to enhanced opportunities for extensions of British influence, particularly British commercial influence.

Much English teaching also took place through the Halkevleri, Lycées and Universities – eight British professors resided at the University of Istanbul and six at the University of Ankara – the most famous of which was Professor Steven Runciman, an expert on Byzantium. Army officers and Turkish Government Ministers were also provided with lessons, complemented by two weekly periodicals *The English Supplement* and *Do you speak English?* published by the Council.⁷³ When the Engineering High School in Istanbul was seeking to establish a Ship Design and Marine Construction School, it was noted by J G Crowther, Head of the Council's Science Department, that it was 'of great diplomatic importance at present that the new school should be directed and staffed, if possible, by distinguished British marine engineers and naval architects.'⁷⁴ The Council had a reputation to maintain amongst Government and establishment elites that it could and would supply high quality teachers when requested. Already by November 1941 there were 41 Council teachers in Turkey teaching a variety of subjects to nearly 3,000 Turks, 95% of them Muslim. There were ten teachers in Ankara (for example at the Ankara Halkevi, Ismet İnönü Institute and Türk Maarif Cemiyeti Lycée), six in Smyrna (such as at the Dumlupinar Okulu Halkevi, Gazi Ortaokul Halkevi and Bornova Kahlev), fourteen in Istanbul (for example at the Eminönü Halkevi, Galatasaray Lycée and Robert College) and eleven

⁷² TNA BW 61/7 Note entitled 'Kindergarten Equipment for the English High School for Girls, Istanbul' undated but around May 1944

⁷³ White, *The British Council*, p.37-38

⁷⁴ TNA BW 61/8 Larke, W J. Letter to Sir George Preece, 18 January 1943

elsewhere (for example in Karabuk, Adana and Samsun).⁷⁵ As was shown in the previous chapter, James Morgan from the British Embassy was confident that Grant 'would never succeed in getting British teachers of English into the Halkevis.'⁷⁶ Clearly from the figures above, in Grant's words, '[t]his immediately proved one hundred per cent wrong' as there was range of British teachers across a wide selection of institutions across Turkey.⁷⁷ It was undoubtedly an objective to get British teachers into as many different institutions as possible as Michael Grant stated unambiguously

One of the aims of this expansion has been the maximum diffusion of our teachers. That is to say, we have at this stage preferred the difficult task of forcing a way into organisations hitherto untouched to the much easier one of adding a second or third teacher in institutions where a first is already established. [Grant's underlining].⁷⁸

Grant detected a large amount of 'suspicious temperaments' by Turks resulting in a "'brick-wall" mentality' (which Morgan thought insurmountable), but once this was broken down by the arrival of one teacher, 'the acceptance of a second one, even in adverse political circumstances' was made much easier. The support of the Turkish Minister of Education, Hasan Ali Yücel, and the ruling Party was invaluable in achieving the first step - it was an 'exceedingly delicate task that can only be achieved by the intervention of connivance of the highest powers in the land.'⁷⁹ It was Yücel that had 'asked that it [the School of Ship Design and Marine Construction] should be directed and staffed by British professors' in early 1943 and the Council was clearly keen to oblige not primarily because they wanted Turkey to be able to build good ships with British support specifically, but because of the need to maintain and extend British influence generally.⁸⁰ President İnönü also put pressure on the Council to find candidates for the School of Ship Design and Maritime Construction after six months of delay in finding suitable people, though no suitable candidates were ever found despite exhaustive searches.⁸¹

⁷⁵ TNA BW 61/2 Grant, Michael. Report entitled 'Mr. Michael Grant's Report on Turkey for the Quarter Beginning September 1st and Ending December 31st, 1941'; TNA BW 61/2 Grant, Michael. Letter to M H S Everett, 26 November, 1941 attaching a summary of teaching operations.

⁷⁶ Grant, *My first eighty years*, p.65

⁷⁷ *Ibid*

⁷⁸ TNA BW 61/2 Grant, Michael. Report entitled 'Mr. Michael Grant's Report on Turkey for the Quarter Beginning September 1st and Ending December 31st, 1941'. Grant's underlining.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*.

⁸⁰ TNA BW 61/8 Larke, W J. Letter to Sir George Preece, 18 January 1943.

⁸¹ TNA BW 61/8 Grant, Michael. Telegram to British Council, 16 July 1943

Grant made no apology for proceeding to 'pull strings' with his friend Yücel where necessary to get certain teachers in certain posts where he could. For example, he stated

As a result of certain intrigues, it has been possible to secure the appointment of Mr C. E. Bazell as Docent of Philology in the Department [the Faculty of Letters at Istanbul University]; I am hoping to get him promoted shortly.⁸²

From a twenty-first century viewpoint this looks particularly unfair but in Grant's view this was necessary to achieve the spreading of British culture in Turkey during the war. It is also true that if the British had not tried to influence the Turks in this way, there was always the danger that the Germans would instead and could be seen as a standard practice in Turkey at the time anyway. Not that the teaching of English was unpopular - Grant remarked that according to one 'impartial observer', 'the only time at which the Halkevi is crowded is when English classes are being held.'⁸³ Using this knowledge Grant, at one point, threatened to withdraw the teaching of English at one of the Istanbul Halkevleri until conditions had improved to the satisfaction of the Council. His audacity had the desired effect and shows how much power the Council was beginning to wield in the country.⁸⁴ Outside of institutions, the Council also provided lessons to the staff of the *Ulus* newspaper and to the Anadolu Press Agency.⁸⁵ R F Lucas, Grant's deputy, personally taught Yücel English for ten hours per week, and other teachers taught President İnönü's son and daughter, as well as other Government Ministers.⁸⁶ The power that the Council wielded was considerable, though had the Turkish Government ever chosen to take a less sympathetic route during the war it could easily have restricted the Council's activities if necessary - the Council was only as powerful as the Government allowed it to be. Though this was the case, it is undoubtedly true that the Council was aiming its influence at a specific type of Turk - those elites with the power to influence way beyond where the Council could reach on its own with limited resources. No one, it could be argued, held more influence in Turkey than President İnönü. Concentrating on courting his favour would not only open doors into teaching establishments and

⁸² TNA BW 61/2 Grant, Michael. Report entitled 'Mr. Michael Grant's Report on Turkey for the Quarter Beginning September 1st and Ending December 31st, 1941'.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ TNA BW 61/2 'Teaching Statistics: Private Lessons' - annex to Grant, Michael. Report entitled 'British Council in Turkey - Quarterly Teaching Report April-June 1942,' 10 July, 1942.

areas of Turkish life not usually open to foreign influence, but also create that all important secondary influence of the President persuading elites less sympathetic to the British cause to become more sympathetic and then also allow that influence to trickle down to the wider masses.

Nevertheless, this power to increase the audience for English teaching (and for other subjects taught by British teachers) within defined limitations did not necessarily mean, however, that the influence of British culture was increasing at the rate which the Council expected. In Turkey, the average 'falling-off' rate in attendance was actually quite high and considerably higher than that for other countries. Grant, in a moment of frustration, rather unflatteringly blamed this on the

considerable proportion of pure Turks [who] lack the necessary intelligence, attainment and environment for learning more than the barest minimum of a language so fantastically different from their own as English is.... In spite of the tremendous thirst for knowledge which all Turks possess, 30 per cent of "educated" Turks are physically, and mentally, incapable of completing Eckersley "Essential English 1," and 100 per cent will have fallen off before the book is half completed unless the teacher "chivvies" tirelessly, and infinite charm, personality, and, as far as the women pupils are concerned, good looks.⁸⁷

Clearly Grant's outburst had not considered the possibility that Council's teaching methods might not be as suitable for Turkish students as they might be for students who had a background in Latin-based or Germanic languages. Yet, this shows just how difficult it was to teach English before the English language became predominant in the second half of the twentieth century. Around the same time, however, I E Jago, who taught English for the Council at a number of Ankara institutions and in Samsun, wrote a report with a more considered view:

In this country [Turkey], we are obliged to teach in Turkish institutions. In the British Institutes of other countries, it is possible to steep the students in an atmosphere which constitutes a powerful aid to language teaching. The only

⁸⁷ TNA BW 61/2 Grant, Michael. Report entitled 'British Council in Turkey - Quarterly Teaching Report April-June 1942,' 10 July, 1942.

possible compensation for this would be to cultivate visual instruction such as films and pictures which deal with British life.⁸⁸

Jago also suggested that a 'dual system' should be introduced whereby classes would have both a native English-speaking teacher and a native Turkish-speaking teacher in the same classroom, which Jago believed had 'great advantages':

The foreign teacher (in this case that is to say the English teacher) has the advantage of being able to speak the language naturally and correctly, but the teacher of the country has the advantage of having learnt the foreign language himself, he is therefore much better able to perceive the students' difficulties.⁸⁹

Another proposal for making English teaching easier not just in Turkey but around the world, was the idea of 'Basic English'. 'Basic English', a method whereby only a few hundred English words needed to be learned, was discovered by the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, after a visit to Harvard University in the United States. Basic English was created by Charles Kay Ogden and presented in his book *Basic English: A General Introduction with Rules and Grammar* and published in 1930.⁹⁰ Churchill believed there should be a 'great drive to get it [Basic English] widely adopted as an "auxiliary international language"'.⁹¹ Churchill announced in Parliament that he would encourage the British Council and the BBC to introduce it, but the English teachers in Turkey 'almost unanimously refused to teach Basic English, preferring to resign rather than to do so.'⁹² A small trial did start, but was soon abandoned, and in his report Jago was less than flattering about it. 'Basic English' is regarded as the inspiration for George Orwell's 'Newspeak' in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* where the number of words reduced in each subsequent publication of the Newspeak dictionary. Orwell certainly was involved in its use during the war through BBC broadcasts to India, and later rejected the idea of a simplified language in his essay 'Politics and the English language' (though did not mention 'Basic English' by name).⁹³

⁸⁸ TNA BW 61/2 Jago, I E. Report entitled 'Notes on Section B of Memorandum on Teaching Methods', received 10 July 1942

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Ogden, Charles Kay, *Basic English: A general introduction with rules and grammar*, (Kegan Paul & Co, London, 1930)

⁹¹ White, *The British Council*, p.47

⁹² 'Govt. accept Basic English: B.B.C. to try it out', *Daily Mirror*, (10 March 1944) p.4-5; Grant, *My first eighty years*, p.68

⁹³ Orwell, George, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, (Originally published 1949, Penguin Classics, 2000) - particularly 'Appendix: the Principles of Newspeak' p.312-326; Illich, Ivan and Barry Sanders, *ABC: The Alphabetization of the Popular Mind*, (San Francisco, North Point Press, 1988) p.109; Orwell, George, 'Politics and the English Language', *Horizon*, (April 1946).

There is no evidence that Jago's ideas of the 'dual system' or visual instruction were introduced into English teaching in Turkey, and it was probably difficult to do so in wartime with resources stretched. The only response that can be found is in a letter from M H S Everett which stated '[p]lease convey our thanks to Jago for his very interesting paper ... [it] has been of considerable use at the Council's Committee for the teaching of English overseas.'⁹⁴ A book written by Clifford and Margaret Leech entitled *İngiliz Ders Kitabı* ('English text-book') was meant to combine a number of methods for use in Turkey, and was ordered by the Turkish Ministry of Education to publish as soon as possible, but copyright issues appear to have prevented its publication (at least there is no evidence it was published).⁹⁵ Nevertheless, the statistics of English teaching are impressive even if methods were not changed. During the war the Council expanded English teaching in Turkey to all levels of education with a large number of staff and a budget of £300,000 by the end of the war, teaching English to over 10,000 pupils.⁹⁶ This number is far more than in any of the other three countries focused on here and demonstrates how effective it could be to maintain friendships at the very top of the political elite – with President İnönü and Education Minister Yücel. One can only imagine how great the Council's influence would have been in other countries if the political elite had been as receptive as in Turkey. Figure 6 demonstrates just how close the friendship was between Grant and Yücel was – Grant is shown at Yücel's residence with Yücel's family in a fairly relaxed atmosphere (if perhaps a little stilted in front of the camera). It is unlikely that any of the other Council representatives had managed to become so integrated into the Government elite as Grant had, and even less likely that they had managed to make their working relationship with Government officials work so effectively to achieve the Council's aims.

In Sweden, English language teaching by the British Council was combined with lectures about Britain generally. For example, the Council collaborated with the ABF for a fortnight summer school held in Brunnsvik in 1943 'for the benefit of ABF teachers and group leaders.'⁹⁷ The report, written by the Council's lecturer Frederick A L Charlesworth stated:

⁹⁴ TNA BW 61/2 Everett, M H S. Letter to W H Covington, 18 September, 1942

⁹⁵ TNA BW 61/2 Grant, Michael. Letter to H Orton, 16 February, 1943; TNA BW 61/2 Cover page and contents of Leech, Clifford and Margaret, *İngilizce Ders Kitabı* (28 January, 1943); TNA BW 61/2 Price, E J J. Letter to Michael Grant, 30 March, 1943

⁹⁶ White, *The British Council*, p.37-38

⁹⁷ TNA BW 57/1 Charlesworth, Frederick A L, 'Mr Frederick A L Charlesworth's Report of the First British Council-Arbetarnas Bildningsförbundets Summer School, Brunnsvik, 1943'

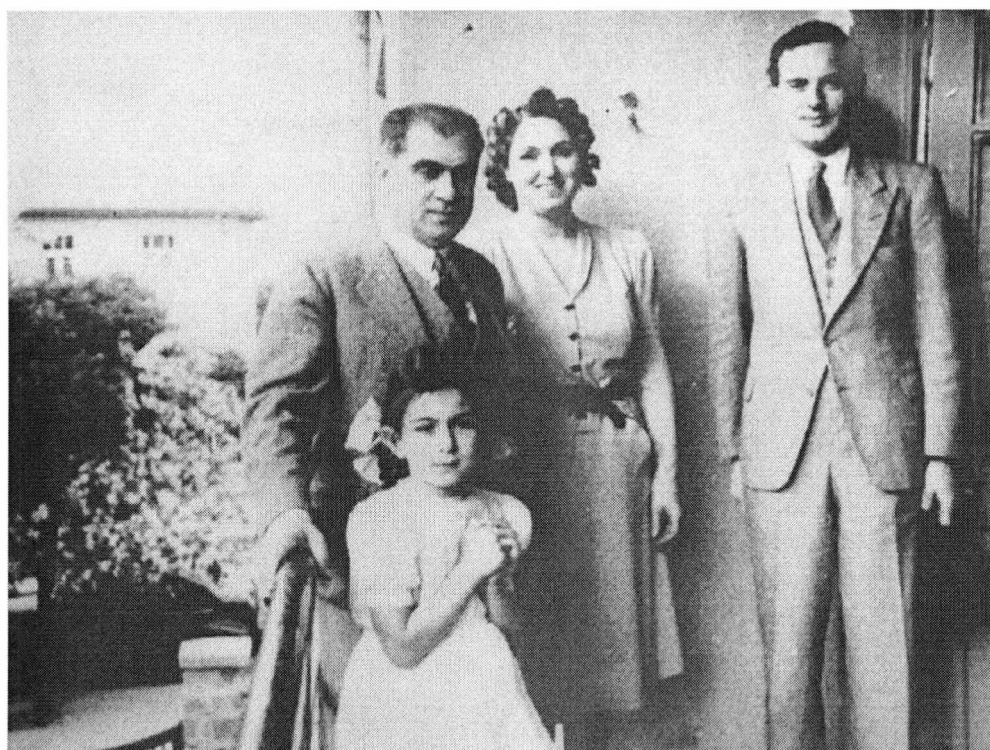


Figure 6: Michael Grant (right) at home with Hasan-Ali Yücel, the Turkish Minister of Education and the Yücel family.⁹⁸

The object of such a Course was to provide tuition in a selection of kindred subjects which would fall within two lines of study, one concentrating on Language and the other on Social, Political, and Trade Union History as well as Literature relating thereto.⁹⁹

The first week of the course spent two hours (before breakfast) on phonetics, intonation, syntactical problems such as prepositional phraseology, and two hours in the afternoon on conversation exercises. During the middle of the day and in the evening there were lectures on British society and politics (- lectures will be considered in more detail later in the chapter). The second week was similar, though pre-breakfast classes were on oral translation and pronunciation.¹⁰⁰

Overall it was considered that the Swedish participants on the course were keen to get a higher standard of efficiency in their use of the English language and a greater

⁹⁸ Picture from Michael Grant's personal photograph album of his time in Turkey (1940-45) The photograph album is in the possession of Michael's son, Antony Grant, and I am very grateful to Antony for allowing me to view and use this photograph in my thesis. Also see Grant, *My first eighty years*, p.68-9, 73-4

⁹⁹ TNA BW 57/1 Charlesworth, Frederick A L, 'Mr Frederick A L Charlesworth's Report of the First British Council-Arbetarnas Bildningsförbundets Summer School, Brunnsvik, 1943'

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

'desire to concentrate more on the linguistic in general, rather than on the lecture series.'¹⁰¹ The lecture series itself covered subjects such as 'Great Democrats', 'The British Social Structure', 'Principles of British Education' and 'The Novelists from 1870 onwards' which were a somewhat eclectic mixture trying to promote British culture (especially emphasising the fact that it was a democratic country, like Sweden), and the English language, whilst trying to tailor the lectures towards the left-wing stance of the ABF.¹⁰² The British Council has often been criticised (particularly by the Beaverbrook press¹⁰³) for perceiving 'culture' to only mean 'high culture', that is to say fine art, classical music and other elitist activities, rather than 'popular culture' - this, however, is a clear example of where the Council worked with a socialist organisation. Left-wing politics and popular culture may not be synonymous but there was clearly a general link that could be made - certainly in the eyes of the British Council - which meant that the Council tended generally not to mix high culture with socialist ideas. Admittedly teachers could be viewed as a group with certain elitist characteristics, or at least leadership characteristics as they are often society role models within a community and have significant influence over others. Nevertheless, working with the ABF was a significant departure from the image often created of the Council only working with more right-wing establishment organisations. Ronald Bottrall, the Council's Representative in Sweden, lectured at Brunnsvik on Arnold Bennett, the British novelist, which he admitted was 'not quite as well suited as the first [lecture on British education], as most of the people are interested in politics, education and social reform rather than literature.'¹⁰⁴ Aside from the Brunnsvik course specifically, Charlesworth also toured the country for the ABF. These were not only important tours in themselves, but had an ongoing effect on the local populations who established Anglo-Swedish societies in the wake of his visits.¹⁰⁵ There was concern, however, that Charlesworth's lectures contained 'large numbers of school children and middle-class people' which, although fine from general point of view of reaching interested Swedish people (and increased the numbers in his audience), was not the point of utilising the ABF as a mechanism for approaching the Swedish working classes specifically. There were other methods and organisations for reaching the

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² TNA BW 57/1 Timetable entitled 'The Brunnsvik A.B.F. Course, from the 1st to the 13th of August 1943'

¹⁰³ See Donaldson, *The British Council*, p.63-67

¹⁰⁴ TNA BW 57/1 Bottrall, Ronald. Letter to Martin Blake, 5 August 1943.

¹⁰⁵ TNA BW 57/1 Charlesworth, Frederick A L, 'The British Council - Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund, Sweden: Mr F.A.L. Charlesworth's Report for the Session January-April 1943'.

middle-classes, such as the *Tjänstemännens Bildningverksamhet* (TBV - roughly translated as 'Jobholders' Educational Activities') which contained clerks and professional people, or *Folkuniversitet* ('People's University') where '[t]he linguistic approach must therefore be and the cultural approach might well be, different [to the ABF].'¹⁰⁶

English language teaching and teaching of other subjects by British Council teachers therefore was a large part of the British Council's work and took place in a number of guises. These guises ranged from housing schools within the British institutes themselves covering a range of ages - kindergarten to teenage years - to sending teachers into existing institutions such as the Halkevleri in Turkey and the St Julian's School and Queen Elizabeth School in Portugal. The Council was pragmatic in driving forward the English language in whatever way was suited to the particular country where it was operating and the circumstances it found itself in. It was not always a straightforward process, however, and whichever method was utilised a number of common problems arose. The first was in actually making the teaching work - keeping students on the courses was a particular concern in Turkey and solutions such as Basic English or use of pictures and films were not entirely successful during the war period. The second problem was the legacy issue of taking on and funding schools such as the English High Schools for Boys and Girls in Istanbul and the St Julian's and Queen Elizabeth schools in Portugal, where the quality of the teaching and the school environment was not necessarily how the Council would have wanted had it had the opportunity of starting the schools from scratch. Closing these schools down in wartime was viewed as an own goal in propaganda terms and therefore there remained the problem of keeping the schools open and trying to reform them without giving the impression that the quality of teaching was substandard. The real impact of English teaching would take a significant amount of time to materialise and it would certainly be unfair to see the Council's wartime English teaching in isolation - it was the start of a long road which has contributed in a large part, alongside other major institutions such as Hollywood, the United States Information Agency and the BBC, to English becoming the lingua franca of the world in the latter half of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

¹⁰⁶ TNA BW 57/1 King, Arthur H. Remarks on extending British Council work in Sweden. Enclosed with letter from Ronald Bottrall to Martin Blake, 2 March 1943

3.4 Reaching out to a wider audience

Beyond the activities of the British Institute itself and beyond the confines of English teaching, the British Council sought to work through existing local bodies and local media in order to reach a wider audience than it could reach directly. The key partnerships that the Council forged with organisations such as the ABF in Sweden and the Halkevleri in Turkey still had a very direct role of supplying English teachers through a pre-existing network. Whilst this was a very important component of the Council's work, it also sought to work in a more indirect way with other pro-British organisations. Predominant amongst these organisations were the Anglophile societies. Anglophile societies straddled the sociological divides between Britain and the host country and they could understand what would work well in both situations. They were obviously part of the pro-British elite, but could also understand the point of view of indifferent elites and hostile elite groups, just as in the model of influence shown in chapter one.

The establishment of Anglo-Swedish societies was a very important part of British Council policy in Sweden and globally there were several hundred Anglophile societies which had a connection to the British Council.¹⁰⁷ The Council's support often existed in the form of supplying Directors and occasionally other British staff in order to get those Societies onto a more solid basis.¹⁰⁸ However, more usually it existed through supplying materials (films, books etc) and services (lectures and music etc) which were unobtainable elsewhere to keep a 'steady supply flowing of British thought in all its manifestations.'¹⁰⁹ The aim here was not to tie the Anglophile societies to the British Council through the Council directing their operations, but more to encourage local communities to develop the societies in their own way with the Council supplying the material they needed to make the societies work effectively. Ronald Bottrall regularly distributed British newspapers (both daily and Sunday), and the literary publications *Horizon* and *Scrutiny* to Anglophile Societies as well as libraries and publishers throughout Sweden.¹¹⁰ Though Latin America had many more Anglophile societies than existed in Europe they were still important in Europe and particularly in Sweden.¹¹¹ Indeed, the only way that the Council operated in

¹⁰⁷ Unwin, *The Truth*, p.419

¹⁰⁸ White, *The British Council*, p.39

¹⁰⁹ HKRC TGA 9712 Note entitled 'The British Council' attached to letter from Fine Arts Department to P W Wall with a request to 'include it in this issue of your bulletin [the *Fine Art Trade Guild Bulletin*]', 9 November, 1943

¹¹⁰ KCA JDH 26/9 Bottrall, Ronald. Letter to John Davy Hayward, 26 December 1942

¹¹¹ White, *The British Council*, p.38-39

Switzerland to any great extent during the war was through already existing Anglophile societies. Materials were used that had been sent there prior to the Nazi invasion of France and the entry of Italy into the war.¹¹² It was the Council's policy, recalled Stanley Unwin 'to encourage and support such societies wherever they are founded by local initiative, but not to attempt to create them where no such initiative exists.'¹¹³ As one would expect if the Council was only supporting societies that were formed by local initiative, the success of the societies, once formed, was fairly certain. It was the establishment in the first place that was always the tricky part. In many ways this was similar to the way Michael Grant found it easier to get a second lecturer into a Halkevi, once the more difficult task of getting the first one in had been accomplished. Nevertheless, allowing local initiative and a decentralised approach was not without its problems as it meant that the Council had to effectively surrender control over many of the activities conducted by Anglophile societies and this had a serious risk of damaging reputations which the Council was fighting hard to maintain. Of course, this was just a risk and many societies were run in a way that was perfectly acceptable to the Council. However, in a report dating from just after the Second World War, the Foreign Office, whilst giving the Council the sanction it needed to begin expanding in the post-war period, stressed that it only wished the Council to set up offices which were not large enough to accommodate Anglophile societies: 'the Council had in some European countries given too prominent a place to foreign-British societies, thus entangling itself in local rivalries and jealousies.'¹¹⁴ It should be noted here that this is a good example of the tension between the 'one size fits all' approach and the bespoke approach to propaganda that was mentioned at the beginning of the chapter.

The Anglo-Portuguese Society and the Ministry of Information collaborated with the British Council to produce *Anglo-Portuguese News* (APN). It was mentioned in the previous chapter that the publication was not without its critics within the British colony and was not seen as a good example of what the British were capable of producing.¹¹⁵ For example, John Steegman stated

¹¹² White, *The British Council*, p.39; TNA BW 82/9 'The British Council: Report for Fourth Quarter, 1940', January 1941 p.17

¹¹³ Unwin, *The Truth*, p.419.

¹¹⁴ Coombs, *Spreading*, p.21.

¹¹⁵ Roberts, *Um Toque Decisivo*, p.64; Also see TNA BW 56/10 Steegman, John. 'Visit to Spain and Portugal: Final Report', 3 March, 1943; TNA BW 56/10 Steegman, John. Minute to Major Alfred A Longden entitled 'Exhibition of Engraved Portraits, and Lectures on English Portrait-Painting: Lisbon', 10 February, 1943

It is a sad fact that almost all the English residents criticise it [the APN] adversely. The chief ground of criticism is that its lay-out is so unattractive and its contents so dull that it is almost useless as an organ of propaganda; it is difficult to see to what kind of reader it is addressed, for it is not a review, nor is it a news-sheet (which, despite its title, it should not be) nor is it a popular weekly. It is apparently addressed to readers of not very high intelligence, but fails to attract even them. It certainly fails to attract critical readers in either language.¹¹⁶

As with a number of the less effective methods of propaganda that were utilised by the British Council, it was decided to keep the publication going because it was deemed that the negative publicity that would result from its closure would be greater than any negativity resulting from its continued existence. Only after the end of the war did the Council review its continuing support for the paper.¹¹⁷ As Sir Malcolm Robertson stated in a note published in APN itself, the APN was 'the only remaining English language paper now published on the continent of Europe' and that he hoped 'that its directors will never forget the times when they had the honour of being the sole representatives, in a journalistic world, of British life and thought in a continent at war.'¹¹⁸ The view was clearly that the influence of APN's critics were a minor problem which could actually be solved through changes in editorial style - the Council simply could not any avoid news of APN's closure being picked up by the Portuguese press and then repeated by German publications.

The publication, it has to be said, contained some strange articles and it is difficult to conceive of who would be interested in reading them. For example, although may be not typical of all of the articles in the APN, the cutting in Figure 7 does not appear to be the best example of British propaganda in Portugal. Nowhere does it mention Britain and it is focused purely on a very discrete aspect of Portuguese life - the Portuguese 'bootblacks' - i.e. shoeshine men. Shoeshine men were undoubtedly prevalent in Portugal and Spain but the relevance to British influence in Portugal is certainly not striking. Perhaps its only discernable message is that art comes in many forms and audiences should not dismiss it just because it may come in a form they are not expecting. Nevertheless, the APN served as a useful way of advertising

¹¹⁶ TNA BW 56/10 Steegman, John. 'Visit to Spain and Portugal: Final Report', 3 March, 1943

¹¹⁷ Roberts, *Um Toque Decisivo*, p.64

¹¹⁸ Robertson, Sir Malcolm 'Kind Wishes from The Rt. Hon. Sir Malcolm Robertson, G.C.M.G., K.B.E., M.P., Chairman of the British Council', *Anglo-Portuguese News*, (17 June, 1941) see BCPHA: Reference c4302700

events that were taking place in the institute itself, particularly when touring lecturers arrived, that could be picked up by the more mainstream Portuguese press in a similar way to the way press notices are picked up by newspapers. As it was largely published in English (though not entirely), it necessarily relied on Portuguese readers having a knowledge of English and also that they were already interested in activities at the British Institute and in the British community generally.

To try to reach beyond the already converted, the Council looked to get news of British events and reviews of British books published in the local press directly, rather than using intermediary publications like APN. The local newspapers provided a good route to publicising the British Council's activities in each of the countries, with the Portuguese newspapers in particular closely following the arrivals of lecturers and the opening of new exhibitions. Articles in the local press could tantalise the curious, encouraging them to find out more about a particular event, search out books that were received or perhaps even giving them the confidence to enter the British Institute building. The model of influence in chapter one can be applied quite readily in this context. In many ways this is no different to how any publisher (in peacetime or wartime) would seek to publicise a book by a new author or on a subject which is not at first glance attractive to a reader. The Council simply utilised well practiced publicity techniques, just in more difficult circumstances. New audiences could be reached by this method. There were generally three types of article that the British Council tried to get published in the local press: firstly, short articles giving a brief notice that an event was taking place; secondly, a report on that event itself; and thirdly, but more rarely, an in-depth article perhaps with an interview with the lecturer or musician who had just arrived in Britain. Below are a few illustrative examples of how the Portuguese press, encouraged by the Council, reported the visits of a number of lecturers and musicians to Portugal in January and February 1943. Firstly there were short articles announcing the arrival of Dr Robert McCance, an expert on nutrition at Cambridge University, such as the one in Figure 8 from *Diário de Lisboa*. McCance, who was touring both Spain and Portugal, was from Northern Ireland which showed that the Council was keen to send representatives from all parts of the United Kingdom.

SHINE, SIR?

IF there is a community of workmen that deserves our attention and respect, it is surely that humble, uniformed, trudging — for what instrument could be more burdensome to lug about than that I-don't-know-what-you-call-it that they put your feet on while they clean them up — silent community known as the *engraixadores*. They are almost a monastic community. They are survivals from the days of the craftsmen, when a foot was a foot and had to be clothed with dignity, and had not sunk to the modern low estate of being but a pandar between brain and gadgets worked by pedals.

The bootblacks of Portugal are, I think, unique in that they are conscious of a tradition — who knows but that their predecessors may not have blacked the boots of D. Deniz or of the lieutenants of Wellington's army? The Portuguese bootblacks are different from their fellows in that they *invite* you to come and have your shoes toned up. And the invitation is more insistent in that it lacks the blatancy of advertisement. It is difficult to refuse the invitation of an artist — especially if, in this case, your shoe has a guilty conscience and a dirty look! The Portuguese bootblack lingers reproachfully and takes a refusal as a personal affront. He has time: he is an artist. He has all the signs of his trade: a silence that is reflective on the various shapes of feet that come before him; a bentness of head that has come from his habit of work, and a great patience that is extended to the most impatient shoe.

It is a mistake and an insult to workmen everywhere to rush into their sanctum and expect to jostle or hustle your man. It is folly to expect your *engraixador* to shine you up in a short



time. He is an artist and his studio is an altar where you must tread gently. He must have the time that his craft demands.

Do not refuse anything he has to give in the shape of creams and lotions. I have done so — but only once — for the look of frustration that appeared on the face of the bootblack will live with me until I am fit only for slippers.

It would be interesting to take a look at his box. Most interesting of all his tools is the fine snaky bit of rag that comes in at the end. For this final operation two hands are needed. The rag is stretched tight and pulled lovingly through the hands before the master applies it to the shoe, for it is in this *finale* that the hand of the master is detected. Only the master can bring it down with the right snap over the toe. Only the master can whip it round your heel with just enough speed and just the right pressure to bring up the sheen on the shoe. The amateur fumbles — he lacks knowledge of the shoe and is not fully master of his rag.

There are many masters of shoeshine in Portugal. Some are itinerant; others have their studios. But all are artists. Let us use them as such.

Denis Brass.

Figure 7: Article by Denis Brass in *Anglo-Portuguese News*, 13 September, 1941¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Brass, Denis, 'Shine, Sir?', *Anglo-Portuguese News*, (13 September, 1941) see BCPHA: Reference c4105080.

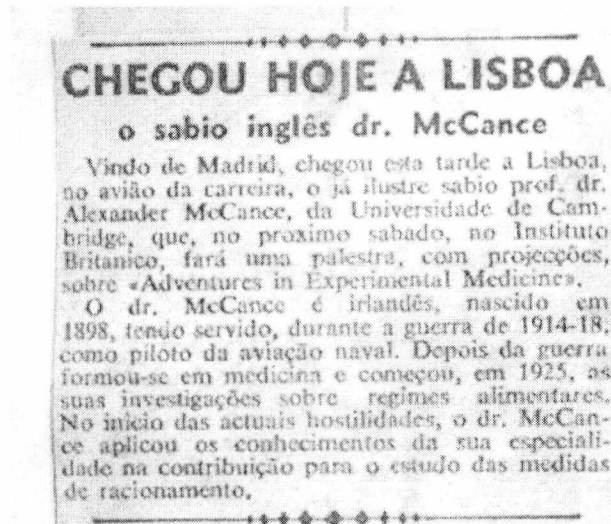


Figure 8: *Diário de Lisboa*, 16 February 1943 – translated title: ‘Arrived today in Lisbon’¹²⁰

This very short press notice was followed by more detailed articles once the event had actually taken place, such as the one in Figure 9 from *O Comércio do Porto* accompanied by pictures showing McCance lecturing at the Hospital of Santo António.

¹²⁰ ‘Chegou hoje a Lisboa o sábio inglês dr. McCance’, *Diário de Lisboa*, (16 February, 1943) see BCPHA: Reference c4306480



Figure 9: *O Comércio do Porto*, 26 February 1943 – translated title: ‘Dr McCance spoke yesterday at the Hospital of Santo António on the physiology of children and its relation to preventative medicine’¹²¹

¹²¹ ‘O prof. Dr. McCance falou, ontem, no Hospital de Santo António sobre a «Fisiologia da Infância e a sua relação com a medicina preventiva’, *O Comércio do Porto*, (26 February, 1943) see BCPHA: Reference c4307220

For a third type of article, an interview, a good example comes from Figure 10 where Sir Malcolm Sargent, who arrived in Portugal just prior to McCance, was interviewed by a journalist from the newspaper *Diário Popular*.

O DR. MALCOLM SARGENT

chefe de orquestra inglês a quem se deve o desenvolvimento das massas corais nos últimos anos, está em Lisboa onde vem dirigir a Orquestra da Emissora em três concertos em São Carlos

Todo o mundo musical conhece já o nome de Malcolm Sargent. Chefe de orquestra, dos mais categorizados, é, ao mesmo tempo, inimitável trabalhador em todas as principais especialidades musicais. Organista de virtu — aos 16 anos era eleito sócio da «Sociedade dos Organistas Ingêleses» — pianista de mérito — antigo discípulo de Moselwiche — o dr. Malcolm Sargent, formado em Música, tem-se dedicado à especialidade — e não difícil esta — de dirigir por toda a Inglaterra, grandes massas corais. O facto de este artista vir ao nosso país contratado pelo Circulo de Cultura Musical para dar a conhecer ao nosso público alguns dos melhores compositores ingleses impunha-nos o prazer de o ouvir. E ao ouvi-lo reconhecemos, com grande satisfação, que o dr. Sargent é o que se chama um Mestre — na excelente accepção do termo.

A conversa começou, naturalmente.

— Quais são os autores ingleses que nos vai fazer ouvir?

— Williams, Hoist, Ireland, Debuss e Walton. Este último é para mim um dos melhores elementos com que conta a história da música contemporânea. A sua «Cena de Baltazar» é, sem dúvida, a melhor obra coral escrita nos últimos vinte e cinco anos.

— Também vai dirigir Brahms?

— Sim. A Música, seja qual for a sua origem, quando é boa, pertence a todos. E eu toco-a. De resto, não existe nenhuma razão para que eu, sendo inglês, não interprete Brahms ou Wagner. A música é internacional. Mais, estou convencido de que será a Música.

(Continua na 4.ª pág.)

Ouvindo o Dr. Sargent



O dr. Sargent entrevistado pelo prof. Jaime Silva (Filho) para o *Diário Popular*

(Continuação da 1.ª página)

... é um dos elementos primordiais para o bom entendimento dos povos depois da guerra; já porque é uma língua que todos entendem, como também, pela influência que ela produz sobre os espíritos. A música não excita ódios. É antes, um bálsamo. E música...

— Já conhece a nossa compatriota Suggia?

— Tive o prazer de, como pianista, ter colaborado com ela em alguns concertos, e alegrá-me por ter, de novo, a oportunidade de a acompanhar. Desta vez com orquestra e em obras espantosas como os concertos de Haydn e Eggar.

— Uma pergunta indispensável: A guerra não tem criado dificuldades à vida musical na Inglaterra?

— Pelo contrario! A guerra serviu para aproximar, para unir mais as vocações do meu país. Um exemplo eloquente: os estoa. Eu tenho meia dúzia de grupos, cada um de classes sociais diferentes, que reúnem no dia do concerto pa-

ra fazer o ensaio geral. E afirmo, que quem tem todos tão boa vontade que, apesar do seu trabalho nas fábricas, não deixam nunca de se preparar de forma a tornar possível uma boa execução e só com um ensaio geral. Para o próximo mês de Fevereiro, tenho já contratos para 25 concertos, e, nos últimos meses, cheguei a dar 12 concertos por semana.

— Já conhece a Orquestra Sinfónica Nacional?

— Ainda não ensaiei, mas creio que com o número de ensaios que vamos fazer, conseguiremos boas audições.

A entrevista estava terminada. Resta-nos acrescentar que o Circulo de Cultura Musical escolheu bem os artistas para festejar o seu duplo jubileu de programas. O 100.º concerto do Circulo, que se realiza a 25 do corrente, reúnem o dr. Sargent, Suggia e o programa que vão executar era — não o disse é famoso maestro inglês, mas afirmamo-lo nós — digno do «Queen's Hall».

E. F.

Figure 10: *Diário Popular*, 11 January, 1943 – translated title: ‘Dr Malcolm Sargent, the English orchestra conductor, who has developed the mass chorus in recent years, is in Lisbon where he is conducting the Orquestra da Emissora in three concerts in San Carlos... Listening to Dr

Sargent’¹²²

¹²² ‘O dr. Malcolm Sargent chefe de orquestra inglês a quem se deve o desenvolvimento das massas corais nos últimos anos, está em Lisboa onde vem dirigir a Orquestra da Emissora

Portugal was not the only example of where the British Council attempted to work with the local press but it was certainly most active and most successful in Portugal.¹²³ As can be shown from the articles above, they were not just directed at one or two friendly newspapers, but across the majority of Portuguese newspapers to try to reach as many people as possible. Appendix C shows that there were twelve Portuguese newspapers that regularly (defined as over 100 articles each, during the war) carried articles of British Council events and related Anglo-Portuguese cultural relations.

More specialist publications were also utilised by the British Council. According to Bottrall, the publication *Bonniers Litterära Magasin* (or BLM – translated as ‘Bonnier’s Literary Magazine’), which contained reviews about British books, was ‘on public sale throughout Sweden and reaches a public that the Legation does not always touch’. Bottrall, who was on good terms with the editor, Georg Svensson, was particularly interested in BLM because, he said, it ‘also is sold in Finland, Denmark and Norway, where official British lists – cannot punctuate.’¹²⁴ Bottrall even asked his friend John Hayward to reference his own poem ‘Farewell and Waterman’ (which he considered his best poem) in a letter to BLM which he stated ‘might help my position in this country’ through reaching beyond the converted audience to which the Council usually preached.¹²⁵ It has not been possible to obtain a copy of BLM dating from the time that Bottrall was representative in Sweden but one dating from the summer of 1940 (when Svensson was editor) can be analysed to give a good idea of the types of articles BLM contained. Firstly, at the end of the publication, there was a section called ‘*Nya utländska böcker – ett redaktionellt urval*’ (‘New foreign books – the editor’s choice’). It is interesting for a number of reasons – firstly the order of the books listed are under country headings, which may be sorted alphabetically, but puts ‘*England och Amerika*’ (England and America) first, followed by ‘*Frankrike*’ (France), then ‘*Italien*’ (Italy) – one has to search over the page for the ‘*Tyskspråkig litteratur*’ (German-language literature). Not only that, but the numbers of books listed under each title is striking – 24 English books (13 from Britain, 11 from the United States), 12 French books, 10 Italian and only 7 German. The only advantage the German language books had, and this was not

em três concertos em São Carlos’, *Diário Popular*, (11 January, 1943) see BCPHA: Reference c4305470

¹²³ ‘Kultursändebud och känd skald lämnar Sverige’ and ‘Bibliotek på 3.000 band Kom med Englandsflyget’, *Dagens nyheter*, (1 September 1944). Newspaper cutting in RAS P3206 ‘Bottrall, Francis James Ronald’.

¹²⁴ KCA JDH 26/9. Bottrall, Ronald. Letter to John Davy Hayward, 26 December 1942

¹²⁵ *Ibid*

within the control of the BLM, was that three out of the seven books were actually published in Stockholm for a Swedish audience (albeit in German), whereas all of the 24 English language books were published in London, New York or Boston.¹²⁶ The main part of this issue of the publication also concentrates heavily on Swedish and English language literature, with German literature hardly receiving a mention.¹²⁷ To reference a brief example of one article's view of the work of Dylan Thomas, the Welsh surrealist writer, an article entitled '*Romaner från England*' ('Novels from England'¹²⁸) called it a '*uttryck för en kärnfrisk begåvning*' ('an expression of a core of fresh talent').¹²⁹ This praise is not only important because Thomas was British, but it showed that a Swedish audience appreciated his style and genre of writing – fantasy and surrealist literature – which were the complete opposite of a Nazi vision of artistic qualities which were largely based on neo-classical concepts. Evidently Bottrall was working with opinion already in existence in Sweden and pushing on an open door with this sympathetic magazine with a sympathetic editor.

The Council therefore tried to make much use of existing pro-British sympathy in a variety of forms (such as local newspapers and other publications, and through the establishment of Anglophile societies) to reach audiences that it could not reach directly. By relying on organisations and media which it did not control, it necessarily decentralised the organisation of cultural propaganda and the messages which were disseminated. Occasionally this led to problems such as the squabbling between different Anglophile societies and the supporting of publications such as APN which were not entirely aligned to the British Council's ideals. Nevertheless, by and large the use of pro-British organisations was successful in reaching beyond the usual audience of the British Institutes and would draw them towards a sphere of propaganda influence which became increasingly Council-controlled. It was an incremental process as with much of the Council's work in building on previous successes.

¹²⁶ 'Nya utländska böcker', *Bonniers Litterära Magasin*, (årg IX, Nr. 6, June-August 1940) p.502-504

¹²⁷ For example Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory*, Rayner Heppenstall's *The Blaze of Noon*, Jean Rhys's *Good Morning, Midnight* and Dylan Thomas's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog* were reviewed in Artur Lundkvist's article '*Romaner Från England*', *Bonniers Litterära Magasin*, (årg IX, Nr. 6, June-August 1940) p. 455-460

¹²⁸ As was noted in chapter two for the German language, 'English' and 'British' or 'England' and 'Britain' were interchangeable in the Swedish language as well at this time. The fact that Thomas was Welsh was lost in translation.

¹²⁹ Lundkvist, Artur, '*Romaner Från England*', *Bonniers Litterära Magasin*, (årg IX, Nr. 6, June-August 1940) p. 460

3.5 Exhibitions and word-of-mouth propaganda

The use of secondary media to try to reach a wider audience was not just confined to an overt campaign of press articles and the work of Anglophile societies. Secondary methods of penetration to a wider audience could and did include local individuals who attended British Institute events such as lectures, film presentations and *tertulias*. As was suggested in chapter one, these events were not only cultural propaganda events in themselves, but also a convenient, perhaps covert, way of influencing people by what was said in the 'margins' through propaganda by word-of-mouth. The Council sent out many lecturers on tour from a variety of backgrounds – film stars, singers and other musicians, artists and art critics, poets, scientists and footballers. These tours served a number of roles, firstly to show that Britain was still willing to send cultural representatives abroad during wartime, secondly to conduct a genuine knowledge and cultural exchange (particularly in the case of scientific studies), and thirdly, to provide a channel of word-of-mouth propaganda about the British war effort in the sidelines at social events and with general conversations. As Sir Victor Mallet noted in his unpublished memoirs

[i]t was most refreshing to get news of how civilisation still existed in wartime England and of new developments in the arts and sciences. The Swedes, who by now were suffering from a kind of isolation complex, took full advantage of these visitors and we were able to make all kinds of interesting contacts in the Swedish cultural world.¹³⁰

Uncensored information could be passed by word-of-mouth. As I have shown in a previous article, this was the basis of propaganda in Eire during the Second World War - it was particularly effective when heavy censorship restrictions and a less than sympathetic audience was being targeted.¹³¹ However, it was not a new type of propaganda. Bolshevik Agitators had been very active before, during and after the Russian Revolution in 1917. Word-of-mouth techniques were also used in a number of ways in the Second World War by Joseph Goebbels's 'rumour-mongers' and the British 'sib' (whispering) campaign to disseminate rumours in neutral countries.¹³² But it is a propaganda technique that is often overlooked because of its intangible nature. Elites,

¹³⁰ CAC MALT 1 Unpublished Memoirs p.143

¹³¹ Corse, 'British Propaganda' – see particularly the conclusion – pgs. 175-176

¹³² See notes on Bolshevik agitators in Inkeles, Alex, 'The Bolshevik Agitator' in Katz et al, *Public Opinion*, p.404-413; For notes on Goebbels's 'rumour-mongers' see Doob, Leonard 'Goebbels' Principles of Propaganda' in Katz, *Public Opinion*, p.516-7; For 'sibs' see Richards, 'Whispers of War'

in particular, in all of the neutral European capitals were keen to learn uncensored news about the status of the war as they could not trust the neutral newspapers and other media to give them an objective account, as Mallet alludes to in the quotation above. Council lecturers relied on a secondary wave of rumour-spreading or word-of-mouth propaganda to take place starting with the relatively few people they had spoken to (people with pro-British sympathies) and being transmitted to less sympathetic and even hostile people. All this would happen, of course, without there ever being a direct tangible chain of evidence leading people to discover where the rumour or word-of-mouth propaganda actually began. Steegman noted after his visit to Madrid that

A visitor sent here by the Council has two functions. One, to lecture; the other, to make personal contacts (as long as these are made under the guidance of the Council's Representative). The Institute in Madrid has become, through Starkie's personality, a remarkable centre of intellectual and social life, quite apart from its functions as a teaching organisation and from its charitable work. To lecture, or perform one's purely professional function, is not quite enough by itself. On the other hand, to pay a visit that has no apparent professional reasons, however distinguished the visitor may be at home, carries with it the danger of being falsely interpreted here. Madrid is not a city where simple, innocent motives are likely to be understood.¹³³

What Steegman seems to be suggesting here is that Madrid society was expecting word-of-mouth propaganda to be disseminated by the British Council lecturers and to some extent it had to fulfil the needs of its audience by making contacts outside its official reason for existing – i.e. that of organising and housing cultural events.

Mallet recalled how the various visitors to Sweden went about their cultural activities in their own different ways. It was mentioned earlier that Sir Malcolm Sargent visited Portugal in January 1943, but he also travelled to Sweden a few months earlier to conduct a number of Swedish orchestras in Stockholm and Gothenburg and also to give lectures to hundreds of Swedish students which ended 'on a highly emotional and patriotic note which called forth storms of applause.'¹³⁴ As the Swedish were actively demonstrating their neutrality, they also invited the German conductor

¹³³ TNA BW 56/10 Steegman, John. Letter written whilst in Portugal to Martin Blake, 12 December 1942

¹³⁴ CAC MALT 1 Unpublished Memoirs p.143

Wilhelm Furtwängler. Though Furtwängler was not a Nazi, it actually helped the British cause that the Swedes had invited both a Briton and a German, as Furtwängler's 'applause was less than Malcolm had got' at least according to Mallet.¹³⁵ Sargent returned to Sweden the following year and performed in Gothenburg.¹³⁶ In Portugal, Sargent conducted Edward Elgar's Cello Concerto and Gustav Holst's 'The Planets'. Steegman, who watched one of the rehearsals, noted that 'there's no doubt he [Sargent] has brought the orchestra to a level of discipline no Portuguese conductor has achieved.'¹³⁷ At the two concerts that Sargent conducted, Steegman noted that 'Sargent got a tremendous reception' from the 2,000 person audience and was on 'superb form'.¹³⁸ The cello was played by the famous Portuguese cellist, Guilhermina Suggia, who had lived in London since the end of the First World War.¹³⁹ Clearly skilled and famous musicians, such as Sargent and Suggia could pull a large and appreciative audience of admirers and were great ambassadors for British music and therefore British culture. Sargent himself was reported in the Portuguese press as saying that music was a 'language for understanding between peoples' [OPA],¹⁴⁰ and it certainly seemed to have that effect. Here again not only were the concerts important but the whole associated experience of press interviews and publicity which surrounded the concerts broadened and heightened the British influence in Portugal.

It was mentioned in the previous chapter the conflict between the advice of the Music Advisory Committee and the British Institute in Lisbon over the role of Philip Newman in Portugal. Newman had arrived in Portugal after escaping Belgium at the time of the German invasion and had been promoting British music culture in Portugal by playing the violin. Regardless of the technical musical prowess of Newman, he was certainly able to pull a large audience, much in the same way as Sargent, but over a longer period of time. Sargent certainly had no qualms about associating himself with Newman whilst in Portugal, even if the Music Advisory Committee did not want to.¹⁴¹ Unlike Sargent's short visit, however, Newman did not keep exclusively to British music in his concerts, and was not afraid to perform works by German and Italian

¹³⁵ *Ibid*

¹³⁶ TNA BW 82/9 British Council's Quarterly Report for October-December 1943 p.4

¹³⁷ KCA STE 2/2/2 Travel Diary entitled 'Visit to Spain and Portugal 1942-3'. Diary entry for 27 January, 1943

¹³⁸ *Ibid*. Diary entries for 27 and 28 January, 1943

¹³⁹ Mercier, Anita, *Guilhermina Suggia: Cellist*, (Ashgate Publishing Ltd, Aldershot, 2008) p.ix and 111

¹⁴⁰ 'Está em Lisboa o maestro inglês Malcolm Sargent', *Diário de Lisboa*, (11 January 1943) see BCPHA: Reference c4305520

¹⁴¹ KCA STE 2/2/2 Travel Diary entitled 'Visit to Spain and Portugal 1942-3'. Diary entry for 20 January, 1943

composers such as Ludwig van Beethoven and Antonio Vivaldi at a time when German victory seemed all but settled.¹⁴² It may appear a somewhat strange juxtaposition at this time but it can be better understood if two factors are considered. Firstly, the German Ambassador was trying to persuade the Portuguese authorities to deport Newman to Britain (twice in 1942 he was asked to leave)¹⁴³ - by playing German music, Newman successfully scuppered the German Ambassador's main argument that he was using British music as a tool of political propaganda. Secondly, the propaganda that Newman produced by playing the violin was about British musicians (i.e. him) and how talented they were, not necessarily about British music. Portuguese audiences were not necessarily ready for British music, and certainly would not have stomached concerts made up of only British music all of the time. Far better to have British musicians, such as Newman, playing German music with a diverse and interested Portuguese audience, than British musicians playing British music with a narrow-minded or uninterested Portuguese audience (or no audience at all).

Only over a longer period of time could British music be played without being interspersed with music from other nations, as the Portuguese audiences were not used to hearing it. Even today it would be odd for a concert to contain the music of only one nation unless it was commemorating a particular event and then would be necessarily publicised as such. This was not an unusual approach in the Second World War. In Spain, Starkie organised a concert in the autumn of 1940 with the Czechoslovakian pianist Rudolf Firkušný where he played Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Antonín Dvořák, Frédéric Chopin, Claude Debussy and Bedřich Smetana. By no means predominately Germanic, it contained two composers from Firkušný's homeland, but certainly no British (or Spanish) music.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, Starkie was able to draw in some of Spain's foremost composers to the concert, Joaquín Turina and Conrado del Campo, as well as conductors and pianists, which he may not have been able to do if the concert had contained music by British composers unknown in Spain. Starkie certainly took a risk in promoting Czech music and was advised to be very careful by the Spanish authorities. He managed to pull it off by avoiding mention of the Czech

¹⁴² RNCM PN/91 Concert Programme entitled 'Teatro Nacional de S. Carlos 30 de Junho de 1941 Concêrto Sinfónico a favor da Casa dos Intelectuais sob a direcção do maestro Frederico de Freitas com a colaboração do violinista Philippe Newman e a Orquestra Sinfónica da Emissora Nacional', 30 June 1941

¹⁴³ RNCM PN/154 'Philip Newman in Portugal' undated, author unknown.

¹⁴⁴ TNA BW 56/2 Concert Programme entitled 'The British Institute: Recital by Ruda Firkušný, the celebrated Czechoslovakian Pianist', 13 October 1940

music in a speech prior to the concert stressing the importance of Spanish music and the links between Britain and Spain through musicians such as Fernandez Arbós, Manuel de Falla and Ralph Vaughan Williams.¹⁴⁵ Quite how these composers were connected is not made clear in Starkie's report of the concert, but he was able to guide the audience's thinking and achieve the difficult task of promoting British music without the aid of British musicians or British music being played. In Samuel Llano's analysis of the British Council's promotion of British music in Spain, he also concluded the Council often resorted to the use of foreign performers so as to draw larger audiences, but also to keep down the expense of sending out British musicians to Spain.¹⁴⁶ Llano noted that the international nature of the music was a way of attracting the Spanish to a British lifestyle, and not necessarily British music.¹⁴⁷ By 1943, British music was being performed in Spain by the Orquesta Nacional including Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* with music supplied by the Council, but British music in Spain did not really get going until much later in the war.¹⁴⁸

In contrast to Sargent's visits to Sweden, T S Eliot's visit in the spring of 1942 was not as extrovert - Eliot, noted Sir Victor Mallet, 'pursued his quiet way with the Swedish Pen Club and other intellectual bodies' - but was no less popular with the Swedes. Mallet remarked in his memoirs that '[t]he Swedes were hungry for intellectual contact with the West and showed a remarkable appreciation of Tom Eliot and his poetry.'¹⁴⁹ Eliot's visit showed that cultural propaganda did not have to be widely publicised to be effective (though, as we shall see Eliot received some attention in the Swedish press), and perhaps shows that that an understated propaganda offensive was more able to attract curious Swedish minds when they did not have to show where their sympathies lay so openly. Sir Lawrence Bragg also spent a lot of time talking privately with Swedish scientists. Peter Tennant, the British press attaché, recalled in his autobiography that Bragg was 'kept under wraps' whilst in Sweden and 'stayed quietly at the Legation for a month', but that is not the impression that is given by his report that he wrote for the Council.¹⁵⁰ His report describes the lectures that he gave to the Universities of Uppsala and Stockholm and the Teknolog Förening (Technology Association) on X-ray optics and Proteins as well as what he called

¹⁴⁵ TNA BW 56/2 Starkie, Professor Walter. Report entitled 'The British Institute, Madrid: Report of a Pianoforte recital given by the celebrated pianist Rudolph Firkusny at the British Institute on the 13th October [1940].' Undated but written soon after the concert.

¹⁴⁶ Llano, 'Starkie y el British Council' p.190

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p.192

¹⁴⁸ TNA BW 82/9 British Council's Quarterly Report for April-June 1943 p.18

¹⁴⁹ CAC MALT 1 Unpublished Memoirs p.143

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p.267

'popular lectures' with titles such as 'Seeing ever-smaller worlds' about his work with electron microscopes.¹⁵¹ Perhaps in contrast to Sargent's flamboyant visit, Bragg's was rather quiet, but he certainly attempted to reach a variety of audiences, both scientific academics and wider, more populist, audiences. Bragg noted in his diary of his visit that he was taken aback that one of his lectures 'must be very popular' because '[i]t is to be followed by a dance, which sets the tone [Bragg's underlining].'¹⁵² For a respected Cambridge professor and winner of a Nobel Prize this was conceivably rather shocking, but Bragg rose to the occasion and '[m]ade it still more popular and put in a few jokes' - and the Swedish audience laughed in the right places which he was delighted about - he added 'I decided I was making myself understood.'¹⁵³ The text of his lecture was translated into Swedish as '*Inblick i allt mindre världar*' and was handed out which was a great help if at anytime the Swedish audience were not clear on what he was saying. After the lecture Swedish translations appeared in the Swedish press.¹⁵⁴ The dancing, unfortunately, was cancelled because it was deemed inappropriate at a time when many in Sweden were preoccupied with the sinking of the Swedish submarine, the *Ulven*, which was presumed to be the work of the German Navy.¹⁵⁵

Dr Robert McCance, a Cambridge scientist, had been sent to Portugal and Spain a few months earlier than Bragg had been sent to Sweden - in February 1943. In chapter two it was noted that McCance was not the most willing of ambassadors of British culture and it took some persuading to convince him to go.¹⁵⁶ McCance was the first visitor to the British Institute in Madrid to be invited to lecture outside of the British Institute building itself, firstly by Professor Jiménez Díaz, Franco's personal doctor, who invited him to lecture at the Faculty of Medicine and the Institute for Puericultura, and then later by Dr. Carlos Blanco Soler, who invited him to lecture at the Academia Medico-Quirúrgica Española.¹⁵⁷ McCance spoke in Spanish at most of his lectures, and

¹⁵¹ RI W L BRAGG 70A/83. Bragg, Sir Lawrence, 'Preliminary Report on tour in Sweden.'

¹⁵² RI W L BRAGG 70B Bragg, Sir Lawrence. Diary of visit to Sweden April-May 1943. Diary entry for 17 April 1943. Bragg's underlining.

¹⁵³ RI W L BRAGG 70B Bragg, Sir Lawrence. Diary of visit to Sweden April-May 1943. Diary entry for 19 April 1943

¹⁵⁴ 'Inblick i allt mindre världar. Föredrag i Hälsingborg av nobelpristagaren sir Lawrence Bragg' *Oresund's Posten* (7 May, 1943) copy available in RI W L BRAGG 70A/263; RI W L BRAGG 70B Bragg, Sir Lawrence. Diary of visit to Sweden April-May 1943. Diary entry for 19 April 1943.

¹⁵⁵ RI W L BRAGG 70B Bragg, Sir Lawrence. Diary of visit to Sweden April-May 1943. Diary entry for 19 April 1943

¹⁵⁶ TNA FD 1/6665 McCance, Robert A. Letter to Sir Edward Mellanby, 12 November, 1942

¹⁵⁷ TNA FD 1/6665 McCance, Robert A. 'Report of Dr. R. A. McCance on his visit to the Iberian Peninsula', undated but covering the period February-March 1943. Received by the Medical Research Council from the British Council on 17 June 1943. p.2

he stated he was 'certain that the trouble I had taken to learn enough Spanish to be able to lecture in that language was well repaid, for by doing so I commanded much larger audiences, and I think my efforts were appreciated.'¹⁵⁸ McCance also tried to lecture in Spanish in Portugal as he did not speak Portuguese - although the Portuguese audiences understood him they 'suggested that I should lecture in French' because of 'their pride' and 'tendency to have no associations with Spain.'¹⁵⁹ Taking account of political and cultural sensitivities such as these could make all the difference for a successful lecture tour. McCance noted that during one lecture in the University of Coimbra 'the audience was less interested and attentive than in any of the other places where I spoke, and a number of students went out when I was showing slides.'¹⁶⁰ Although McCance does not suggest a reason for this, it could well be that speaking Spanish in Portugal's foremost University did not endear him to his audience.¹⁶¹ In the Portuguese newspapers, however, there is no hint that he was unpopular and certainly no mention that he spoke in Spanish, let alone that it caused people to leave the lecture theatre - they all instead stressed the applause that he received.¹⁶² Nevertheless, in Spain McCance believed he was given a much more 'favourable reception' than in Portugal and gave two other reasons for this other than the fact that he lectured in Spanish. Firstly, the change in the war situation which by early 1943 had resulted in Operation Torch in Algeria and the advance on El Alamein, and an ensuing change in the Spanish mind-set. 'The Spaniards' McCance stated 'have decided in their own (individual) minds that the Allies are likely to win the war and are making provision accordingly.'¹⁶³ It was noted earlier that with the changing war situation there was increased interest in the British Institute in Madrid from those who had been earlier indifferent or even hostile to its presence in the Spanish capital. It was also clearly the case that British Council lecturers were becoming more popular and were being invited to venture outside of the institute building itself. The second reason was that his work in particular 'was well known to Professor Jiménez Díaz and the people of his

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p.3

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p.8

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p.10

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*

¹⁶² 'O sábio Prof. McCance realizou ontem a sua primeira conferência', *Diário de Coimbra*, (20 February 1943) see BCPHA: Reference c4306850; 'Conferências do Professor Inglês sr. dr. Robert McCance', *O Primeiro de Janeiro*, (21 February, 1943) see BCPHA: Reference c4306810; 'Prof. Alexander McCance', *O Comércio do Porto*, (21 February 1943) see BCPHA: Reference c4306870

¹⁶³ TNA FD 1/6665 McCance, Robert A. 'Report of Dr. R. A. McCance on his visit to the Iberian Peninsula', undated but covering the period February-March 1943. Received by the Medical Research Council from the British Council on 17 June 1943. p.2

Institute.¹⁶⁴ Choosing a good subject which the audiences were interested in from a practical point of view was evidently a wise move. McCance was particularly impressed with Díaz who 'demonstrated a number of most interesting medical cases, including some six of lathyrism which had been specially collected for my [McCance's] benefit.'¹⁶⁵

In Turkey there were relatively few visitors because of the length of time it took to get there from Britain during the war. However, the ones that did arrive tended to meet all of the key people in Turkey and stay for an extended period of time. The picture in Figure 11, from Michael Grant's personal photograph album from his time in Turkey shows John Steegman, who lectured in Turkey on art during late 1943 and early 1944, meeting Halide Edip.¹⁶⁶ Edip was an associate of the late founder of modern Turkey, Kemal Ataturk, and still remained an influential figure - 'more or less the leading woman in Turkey', noted Steegman in his diary.¹⁶⁷ Edip attended a number of British Council events including one of Steegman's lectures and spoke at length to Steegman about her time in



Figure 11: John Steegman meeting Halide Edip, early 1944

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p.3

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁶⁶ Photograph from Michael Grant's personal photograph album.

I only have one grainy picture from a Portuguese newspaper which I know is definitely John Steegman ('O Dr John Steegman prelecionou ontem, no Museu Nacional Soares dos Reis, sobre a pintura do retrato em Inglaterra do século XVI a meados do século XVIII' *O Primeiro de Janeiro* (10 February 1943) see BCPHA: Reference c4306290). It is difficult to be totally sure that it is him from the angle of this photograph, but I am sure, from John Steegman's travel diary that he met Halide Edip at this time (KCA STE 2/2/4 John Steegman's travel diary entry for 11 January 1944).

¹⁶⁷ KCA STE 2/2/4 John Steegman's travel diary entry for 11 January 1944

London, English literature and her views on the reform of the Turkish language that had been ongoing since the revolution.¹⁶⁸

As well as giving lectures, Steegman also organised an exhibition on English Graphic Art in Istanbul. He noted that it was very similar to ones that he had helped organise in Spain, Portugal and Iceland, and shows that where possible the British Council did seek to conduct a 'one size fits all' propaganda role in this respect. Nevertheless it was not necessarily the art on display that was so important, but that the exhibition itself created a talking point and was an excuse for socialising and networking across political boundaries. For example, Steegman noted the number of 'gate-crashers' and 'political doubtfuls' that attended the exhibition.¹⁶⁹ From correspondence in the British Council papers, Steegman had evidently known Starkie prior to the war which made the organisation of his lectures on art whilst he was in Spain easier than with some other visitors.¹⁷⁰ His relationship with Grant, however, was not so smooth and there are a number of references to friction between the two men whilst Steegman was in Turkey.¹⁷¹

The art that was displayed by the Council was an eclectic mix of modern artists which did not appear to have much of a general theme, apart from the fact that it was the work of British artists. However, some discerning reviewers in Sweden detected a twofold approach including the Impressionists and Abstract artists.¹⁷² A British graphic art exhibition in Spain in 1941 and Portugal in 1942 showed a variety of artists, materials and techniques being utilised such as etchings, wood engravings and lithographs (see Appendix F for a list of the art works displayed in Portugal).¹⁷³ The three examples shown here in Figures 12, 13 and 14 from the exhibition are not obviously propagandistic especially in a political sense, but instead show images of Britain and a British way of life in a number of different guises - industrial, in the home, and out in the British countryside. What was important, however, with all of the art exhibitions was that the art was not blatant propaganda with war subjects as their

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid* - entry for 9 February 1944

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid* - entries for 27, 28 and 29 February 1944

¹⁷⁰ TNA BW 56/10 Bridge-Adams, W. Memorandum to Martin Blake, A J S White, Major A A Longden etc, 5 May 1942

¹⁷¹ KCA STE 2/2/4 John Steegman's travel diary entries for 31 December 1943, 3 January 1944, 4 January 1944 and 9 February 1944

¹⁷² TNA BW 57/4 Review of Swedish newspapers entitled 'Exhibition of English Water Colours in Sweden, 1943' undated, author unclear but written by either the British Council or British Legation.

¹⁷³ TNA BW 52/12 List of works being exhibited entitled 'British Council: Exhibition of British Graphic Art, Lisbon, 1942'.

theme, but were far more subtle and incremental in approach, producing a cumulative impression of the British way of life and achievements and to maintain and inculcate sympathy for the British cause in the war.

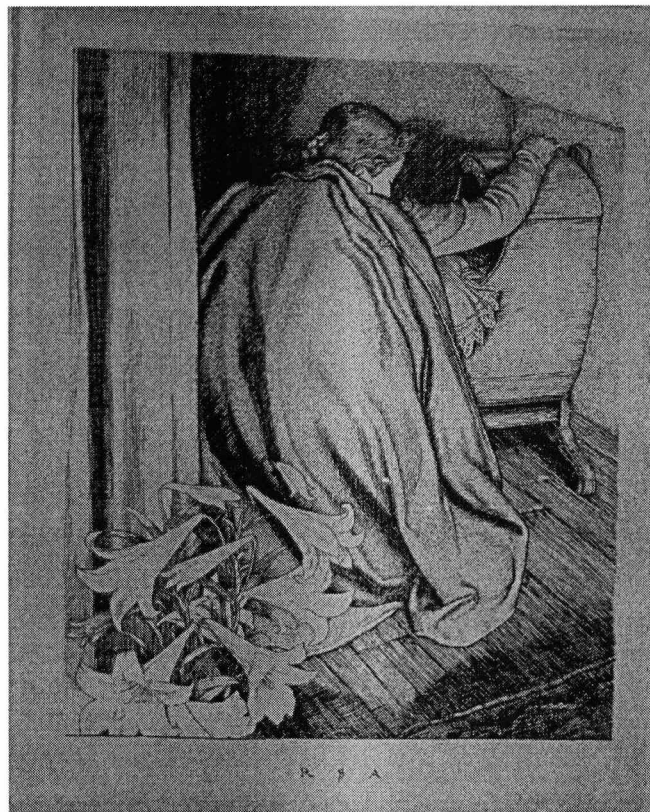


Figure 12: Robert Sargent Austin, 'Young Mother',
Line engraving

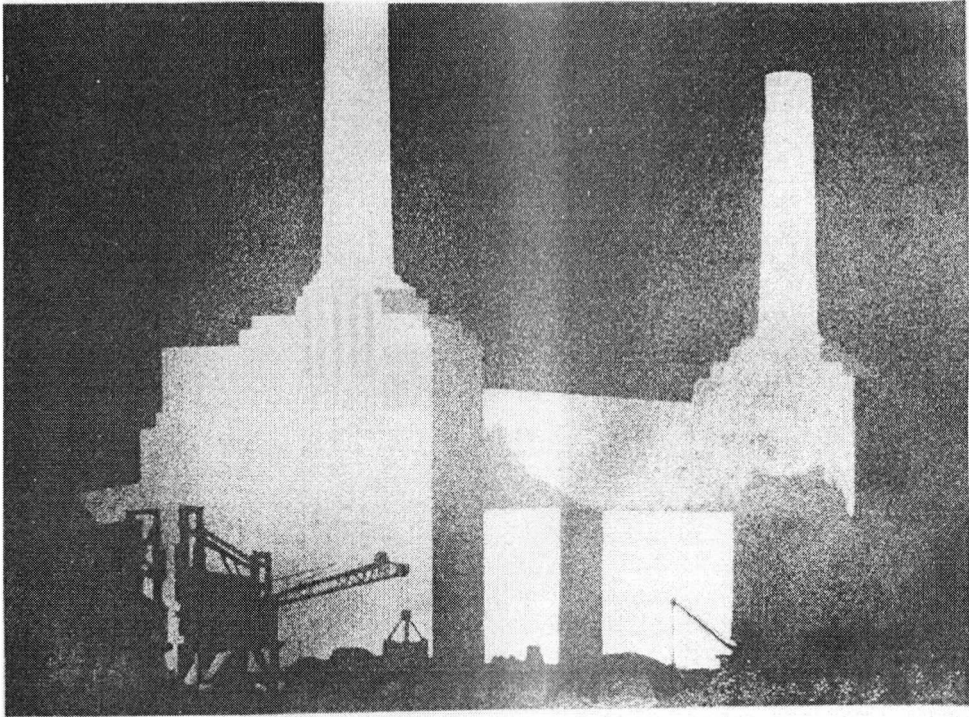


Figure 13: Charles Potter, 'Temple of Power', Aquatint

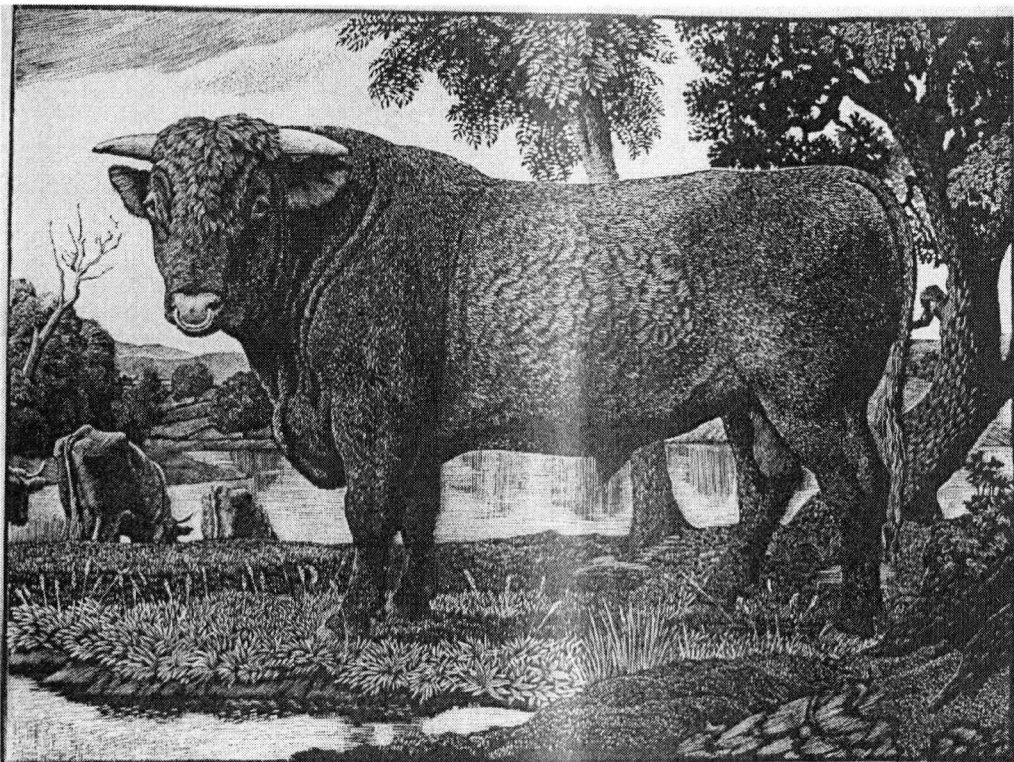


Figure 14: Charles Frederick Tunnicliffe, 'The Shorthorn Bull', Wood engraving¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ For all three pictures see HKRC TGA 9712/2/1 British graphic art, Madrid 1941. I am grateful to the staff at the Hyman Kreitman Research Centre at the Tate Gallery for opening up this file (which had been closed since its arrival at the Tate Gallery) and for permission to use these copies in this thesis.

John Steegman's art exhibitions in Spain and Portugal in the autumn of 1942 and early 1943 were less eclectic. They were specifically prints and portrait engravings in the period from Queen Elizabeth to Queen Victoria, so although there was a theme in terms of type of materials used, there was still a large sweep of history covered by the content of its art itself.¹⁷⁵ Steegman, in his plan of his exhibition, stated that

[t]he exhibits in each main section would be predominantly portraits, but would include a few contemporary engravings of historic events or of topographical interest. The portraits would be selected from certain categories: Sovereigns and the Court; statesmen; soldiers and sailors; churchmen and lawyers; scientists; founders of the Empire; writers, artists, musicians and actors. In general, only portraits of the very famous will be included.¹⁷⁶

Clearly, therefore, whilst Steegman was conscious of the fact that it was an art exhibition that he was organising and therefore the actual focus on the artists' techniques and talents should not be lost, it was primarily designed to show the people of Madrid a positive view of high British society – those who were either aristocrats or people who had achieved recognition for a particular reason. Robert Burns, Josiah Wedgwood, the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel were all represented as were George IV and William IV.¹⁷⁷ This was not an exhibition to show the more ordinary side of Britain. Steegman accompanied his exhibition with three lectures on 19, 21 and 22 November 1942 in Madrid on 'The Engraved Portrait', 'The Earlier Portrait Painters', and 'The Golden Age of Portrait Painting' respectively.¹⁷⁸ He believed these were well-received and was pleased with the number of Spanish students that attended his lectures. After each lecture there was either a cocktail party or sherry party which enabled the word-of-mouth propaganda mentioned earlier to flow in a less formalised setting.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ TNA BW 56/10 Steegman, John, 'Madrid Exhibition of Historical Prints', undated but around August 1942.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ TNA BW 56/10 'Engraved portraits passed to Mr. Read for dispatch, 5th October, 1942 – Roll 3'

¹⁷⁸ TNA BW 56/10 Advertisement for John Steegman's lectures by the British Institute in Madrid, November 1942

¹⁷⁹ KCA STE 2/2/2 John Steegman's travel diary entries for 19, 21 and 22 November 1942



Figure 15: The English watercolour exhibition in Sweden, 1943, organised by the British Council.¹⁸⁰

At an English watercolour exhibition in Sweden in 1943, Bottrall regarded the total number of visitors, 12,610, across all of the exhibition locations (in Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö etc) as 'quite satisfactory', but that there was a 'disappointing attendance at Stockholm, as compared with Gothenburg and Malmö, [which] was in part due to the fact that [Erik] Wettergren [the Director of the National Museum in Stockholm] made no attempt to advertise the Exhibition and little effort to publicize it.'¹⁸¹ Nevertheless, he stated, '[t]here is no doubt that the Exhibition did a great deal to awaken interest here in contemporary British Art.'¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Picture available in a packet in TNA BW 57/4

¹⁸¹ TNA BW 57/4 Bottrall, Ronald. Letter to Major A A Longden, 26 May, 1943

¹⁸² *Ibid*

Dates	Location	Population	Visitors	Catalogues Sold	Visitors per Population (%)
19 Jan - 6 Feb 1943	Gothenburg	283,550	3,452	402	1.217
9 - 28 Feb 1943	Stockholm	605,575	2,150	336	0.355
4 - 19 Mar 1943	Uppsala	38,926	599	139	1.539
23 - 30 Mar 1943	Linköping	41,100	482	19	1.173
4 - 11 Apr 1943	Lund	28,345	500	257	1.764
13 - 26 Apr 1943	Malmö	157,527	5,427	95	3.445
Total		1,154,973	12,610	1,248	1.092

Table 2: Attendance figures for the English Watercolour Exhibition in Sweden, 1943, organised by the British Council¹⁸³

The cost of 1523.96 Swedish Krona (about £91) for the whole exhibition was also deemed 'very reasonable indeed.'¹⁸⁴ 'In view of the very small expenses incurred at this end,' noted Bottrall, 'I think we can agree that it was a really great success.'¹⁸⁵ However, in a review of Swedish newspaper coverage of the exhibition, there was a variety of views as to whether the 'modesty of our show' was too evident and that there should have been more of an attempt to provide blatant political propaganda, as that was what the Swedish audiences were expecting.¹⁸⁶ There was clearly some disquiet in London when news was received of the attendance figures – the Chairman of the Fine Arts Committee, Sir Eric Maclagen stated

I must say I am rather disappointed with the attendance figures. Malmo is all right; but if the average figures at the other five Exhibitions only amounted to under 1500 in each place I think it is extremely difficult to justify all the trouble and expense of sending out such a collection, let alone the risk involved.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ TNA BW 57/4 Table entitled 'Exhibition of British Water Colours in Sweden 1943' attached to Bottrall, Ronald. Letter to Major A A Longden, 26 May, 1943

¹⁸⁴ TNA BW 57/4 Bottrall, Ronald. Letter to Major A A Longden, 31 May, 1943

¹⁸⁵ TNA BW 57/4 Bottrall, Ronald. Letter to Major A A Longden, 18 June, 1943

¹⁸⁶ TNA BW 57/4 Review of Swedish newspapers entitled 'Exhibition of English Water Colours in Sweden, 1943' undated, author unclear but written by either the British Council or British Legation.

¹⁸⁷ TNA BW 57/4 Maclagen, Sir Eric. Letter to Major A A Longden, 18 June, 1943

It did not help that Wettergren who had helped to organise the exhibition wrote an unfavourable review in a Swedish newspaper of the British art – Major Alfred Longden, the Director of Fine Art at the British Council, sent a strongly worded letter to him via Bottrall. '[W]e are exceedingly busy' wrote Longden, 'and do not need to send work where it is not really wanted.'¹⁸⁸ However, it was probably an overreaction to the situation, as Bottrall pointed out to Longden, that if a Swedish watercolour exhibition had been held in England, would 88,270 people (a comparable number for the difference in population between Britain and Sweden), have attended it? Bottrall thought not, but forwarded on Longden's letter nevertheless.¹⁸⁹ Whether the attendance figures are impressive or not in terms of population must not, however, disguise the fact that it must have struck the population who read about the exhibition as rather audacious to send over fifty pieces of art to Sweden during the war, even if the art was not to their taste or they did not feel confident in attending the exhibitions themselves for fear of being seen as too pro-British. In Sweden in particular, the secret police were constantly monitoring who visited the British Legation and the British Council's exhibitions.¹⁹⁰ A secret police agent attended the opening of the English watercolour exhibition at the Stockholm National Museum to monitor who was there.¹⁹¹ It was very difficult, therefore, for the Council to predict the suitability of each art exhibition and the willingness of the local citizens to be active consumers of the Council's efforts. It very much depended on local conditions, local historical preferences and memory in order for the exhibitions to be a success. A particularly good example of this is the postage stamp exhibition that was first tried in Stockholm, which the Director of Fine Art at the British Council, Major Alfred A Longden, described as 'such a failure', but he reported to Ronald Bottrall, the Council's representative in Stockholm, that it was 'a startling success in Madrid, and practically all have been sold'. 'I think you' Longden went on 'got the collection too soon after your arrival and did not have a very fitting place in which to exhibit it.'¹⁹² Bottrall in reply (and perhaps slightly perturbed by Longden's remark) started, however, '[t]he failure here was nothing to do with way in which it was exhibited or the place of

¹⁸⁸ TNA BW 57/4 Longden, Major A A. Letter to Erik Wettergren, 21 June 1943

¹⁸⁹ TNA BW 57/4 Bottrall, Ronald. Letter to Major A A Longden, 12 July, 1943

¹⁹⁰ For example, Sweden - RAS P3206 Hildeby, G, B Cleve, C H Nydahl, G Jonsson, 'P.M. angående brittiske undersåten Kimmins', 25 February, 1943

¹⁹¹ RAS P3206 Name of author difficult to read, but possibly 'Tula Welanson'. Note of monitoring that took place on 9 February 1943 at the National Museum in Stockholm, 9 February 1943.

¹⁹² TNA BW 57/4 Longden, Major Alfred A. Letter to Ronald Bottrall, 18 March 1943.

exhibition. Obviously the Swedes are not interested in specialised collections.¹⁹³ Another report noted that 'Madrid is a great centre for stamp collecting, and nearly all the stamps were sold on the opening day.'¹⁹⁴ It seems clear then that success of exhibitions rested very much on the existing local sociological conditions and preferences and it was not always easy to 'sell' an exhibition to people where they were not already familiar with its contents.

Selling an exhibition to people was often made easier when the Council knew it had the official backing of the Government or other influential elites in the country where they were operating. Usually the Council simply organised exhibitions independently and then invited Government officials and elites along at the opening of the exhibition. Rarely, however, did the Head of State turn up at the opening ceremony to demonstrate his support as happened with the Exhibition of Photographs of British Universities which was held in the Ankara Halkevi in Turkey. Not only did Hasan-Ali Yücel arrive as might be more expected given the closeness of his friendship with Grant, but so did President İnönü - see Figures 16 and 17. This is unlikely to have happened in any of the other three European countries analysed in this thesis, as the closeness of the British Council to the Government elite was not nearly as striking - Grant, himself, believed this was evidence that 'the Council played a part in Turkey's eventual line-up with the Allies.'¹⁹⁵ The President was able to openly show where his sympathies lay and would give others within the Turkish elites the confidence not only to attend the Exhibition of Photographs, but also support the Allied cause.

There are, of course, other examples of where the Council knew an exhibition or event had been a success in one country and thought it could be successful elsewhere, but the wartime practicalities of getting that exhibition or event established elsewhere were too difficult to overcome. The sending of a football team to Turkey, as mentioned in chapter two, had been possible because the close proximity of British troops in Egypt meant that fit young men were available to play the game and hopefully win.¹⁹⁶ Although Michael Grant described the arrival of the football team as 'my most alarming experience in Turkey,' largely because he had to step in to manage the football team personally and had also been instructed by the Council to get a percentage of the gate money royalties from the Turkish authorities (finding out later

¹⁹³ TNA BW 57/4 Bottrall, Ronald. Letter to Major Alfred A Longden, 2 April 1943.

¹⁹⁴ TNA BW 82/9 'The British Council, Report for the Fourth Quarter, 1942', January 1943 p.3

¹⁹⁵ Grant, *My first eighty years*, p.72

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p.79

that the crowds had been let in for free), exhibiting the game of football itself was much more of a success with the British team playing in Ankara, Istanbul and Adana in November and December 1941.¹⁹⁷ When Victor Mallet requested a similar team should be sent to Sweden later that year, the request had to be refused because of the impossibility first of all of getting eleven men to Sweden to play football, and also because all the fit young men were in the armed forces and were not in close enough proximity to be spared to play.¹⁹⁸ Grant's experience perhaps may also have clouded the view of the Council when thinking about the possibility of sending a second team to Sweden.

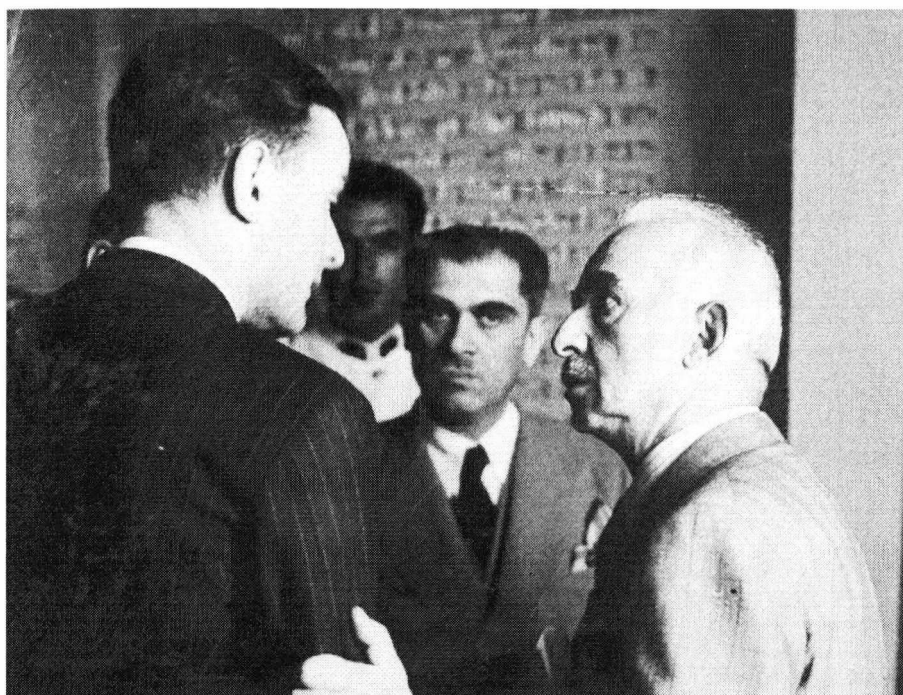


Figure 16: Michael Grant (left), Hasan-Ali Yücel (centre) and President İnönü (right) at the Exhibition of Photographs of British Universities at the Ankara Halkevi¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p.78-9

¹⁹⁸ CAC BRCO 1/1 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Sir Victor Mallet, 21 September, 1942; and CAC BRCO 1/1 Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Sir Victor Mallet, 2 November, 1942.

¹⁹⁹ Photograph from Michael Grant's personal photograph album. Also in Grant, *My first eighty years*, between p.122 and 123.



Figure 17: Hasan-Ali Yücel (centre) at the opening of the Exhibition of Photographs of British Universities²⁰⁰

By sending lecturers to its overseas institutes and by organising exhibitions and concerts, the British Council was able to keep a level of interest in the British way of life and culture that would not have been possible if the institutes had only been libraries or teaching establishments as these would have been perhaps rather static and uninteresting. The events were important in their own right in demonstrating to local populations the breadth and depth of British contributions to culture, particularly from a scientific understanding and artistic point of view. Success here depended on choosing the right person to talk on the right topic. Perhaps more importantly, however, the events provided excuses for people to meet and talk. Having the benefit of new arrivals from Britain by way of lecturers catalysed a flow of information that was not possible, or at least not to the same extent, by any other method. As with much of the British Council's work its effect was felt on a cumulative basis and was naturally incremental - one lecture on its own would have little effect, but over time the success of each lecture would build on the success of previous lectures until a more pervasive effect had been achieved.

²⁰⁰ Photograph from Michael Grant's personal photograph album.

3.6 Language issues

The language barrier was a common theme in all of the British Council's work, partly as it took time for English publications to be translated into the local languages, but also because if works were translated then it could be argued that there was no need for the local people to learn English to understand British culture. They would then miss out on the wider range of publications in English that the British Council was not able to translate because it did not have the time and resources required. Ifor Evans, in his inspection report on the British Institute in Madrid noted that 'if we can interest young Spaniards in this way [by teaching them English], they will become more ready to conduct their own special studies through the medium of English books; they will be able to read our bulletins and newspapers, and generally develop a more friendly attitude towards us.'²⁰¹ In other words a knowledge of the English language would make them reachable through a wider range of cultural propaganda. The Council did translate some English language works into the local language, however, and worked with (and informally encouraged some) commercial publishers such as José Janés in Spain to publish translated British works. Jacqueline Hurlley, in one of her books studying the publishing practices of José Janés (*José Janés: editor de literatura inglesa*) noted that the publisher had adopted 'a Machiavellian strategy in certain circumstances' to ensure its survival under the Franco regime [OSpA].²⁰² Hurlley stated that Walter Starkie was much more enthusiastic about working with Spanish publishers such as Ortega and Janés than British Council staff in London which was often the cause of some tension. The reason, primarily, was one of lack of money for supporting the publication of books rather than an ideological problem.²⁰³ Nevertheless, William Shakespeare, G K Chesterton, Charles Dickens, Oscar Wilde, P G Wodehouse and Winston Churchill all had their works translated and published by the Council or with the Council's backing and Starkie maintained an informal relationship with Janés from 1942 onwards to encourage the publication of English literature in translation.²⁰⁴ However, Janés never appears to have received financial support for publishing English literature in Spain, but support was nevertheless there at a non-financial and informal level.²⁰⁵ Wilde's *La importància d'ésser fidel* was perhaps the most inspired title translation into Spanish, whilst Dickens's *Documentos póstumos*

²⁰¹ TNA BW 52/12 'Report by Professor B Ifor Evans on the British Institute, Madrid, January 1942', 28 January 1942

²⁰² Hurlley, *José Janés*, p.31

²⁰³ *Ibid*, p. 107-9

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p. 179-180

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p. 221-3

del club Pickwick was perhaps less inspired.²⁰⁶ Churchill was presented with a specially bound Spanish translation of his book *Thoughts and Adventures* as *Pensamientos y aventuras* which was arranged through Starkie – Churchill expressed his gratitude to José Janés through the Council stating ‘The good work done by publishers in other countries during the war in translating the work of contemporary English writers is worthy of great praise, and it is gratifying to know that English books in Spain have such a good friend in Señor Janes [sic].’²⁰⁷ A good friend indeed in light of the lack of financial support that Janés received.

The Council produced a series of booklets in a *British Life and Thought* collection covering a range of themes. These were originally only in English language versions but were eventually translated into a variety of languages (a list of English and Spanish titles are in Appendix G). To give a few examples of the titles for the four countries explored in this thesis, publications included *El Hombre Inglés* (Spanish – ‘The Englishman’) by Stanley Baldwin,²⁰⁸ *La Mujer Inglesa* (Spanish – ‘The Englishwoman’) by Cicely Hamilton,²⁰⁹ *O Sistema Governativo da Grã-Bretanha* (Portuguese – ‘The British System of Government’) by W A Robson,²¹⁰ and *Det brittiska samväldet* (Swedish – ‘The British Commonwealth’) by A Berriedale Keith.²¹¹ These booklets were fairly straightforward and often relatively dry accounts of British life. For example in *The British Commonwealth* Berriedale Keith begins in a very matter of fact way, setting out the different statuses of the territories of the Commonwealth and then a table covering four pages outlining the names, geographical area and population (with the date that the population figure represented):

In the following lists are included all territories which are British possessions, or are under the protection of, or have been allotted in mandate to, the British Crown, or are held in condominium by the Crown with a foreign State. British possessions include all parts of His Majesty’s dominions outside the United Kingdom; they make up therefore with the United Kingdom all the territories

²⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p. 242, 260

²⁰⁷ CAC BRCO 2/1 Churchill, Winston. Letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 29 September 1943.

This is a copy of the letter, which has a note at the top that states the original letter was given to Professor Starkie.

²⁰⁸ Baldwin, *El Hombre Inglés*,

²⁰⁹ Hamilton, Cicely, *La Mujer Inglesa*, (Longmans Green & Co Ltd, London, 1940)

²¹⁰ Robson, W A, *O Sistema Governativo da Grã-Bretanha*, (Conselho Britânico das Relações Culturais [The British Council], Lisboa, undated but early 1940s)

²¹¹ Keith, A Berriedale, *Det brittiska samväldet*, (Calson Press Boktr., Stockholm, 1942)

over which the King has complete sovereignty, as contrasted with a protectorate, a mandate, or a condominium or share in control.²¹²

The booklet continued in a similar vein for fifty-six pages in the English version (and was translated largely word-for-word into other language versions), though it was interspersed with a collection of photographs from around the Commonwealth which helped to lighten the dryness of the text. To be fair, occasionally there was an element of emotion, particularly when Keith talked about the American war of independence, but these occasions were short-lived.²¹³ Perhaps the Council was deliberately trying to make its booklets dry and non-propagandistic. It did not want to attract adverse criticism that it was trying to glorify the Commonwealth, but was simply trying to educate the readers as to the scale and structure and allow them to imagine the achievements of the Commonwealth in their own way, similar to the way that the Empire had always spoken for itself. It is interesting that the title of the booklet was 'The British Commonwealth' rather than 'The British Empire'. 'Commonwealth' was still a very new phrase in this context and more commonly linked to the post-war period (being formerly inaugurated in 1949) but had been slowly growing in usage since the 1920s. Churchill had mentioned the word in his famous speech of 18 June 1940: 'Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, 'This was their finest hour.'"²¹⁴ Even then, however, he still mentioned 'Empire' and Churchill's use of the word 'Commonwealth' appears to mean something subtly different to its post-war definition. The British Council was conscious of the need to be forward-thinking, modern and not sounding imperialistic, and Keith met this issue head-on, noting the newness of the phrase:

Of late years the term "British Commonwealth of Nations" has come into both official and private use as a synonym for "British Empire". The choice of name is not arbitrary; it is felt to be more appropriate to describe a grouping of peoples, which now rests essentially on a voluntary basis, than the older name with its suggestion of the rule of Britain over subject races. Even in its earliest

²¹² Keith, A Berriedale, *The British Commonwealth*, (Longmans Green & Co Ltd, London, 1940) p. 11

²¹³ Keith, *British Commonwealth*, p.16

²¹⁴ Churchill, Winston, 'This was their finest hour', 18 June, 1940 reproduced in MacArthur, Brian (ed), *The Penguin Book of Twentieth-Century Speeches*, (Penguin Books, London, 1999) p. 191

days the Empire had closer affinities to the Empire of Athens in the fifth century B.C. than to that of Rome.²¹⁵

Whether this statement is true is not as important for this thesis as the impression the Council was trying to give. It wanted to present the 'Commonwealth' as a warm, friendly and likeable group of nations who chose to be together, with which it wanted the foreign people to have fondness and sympathy. Nevertheless it still had to ensure that the Commonwealth was presented as a force to be reckoned with, so that people did not conclude that Britain was a weaker nation than it had previously been (when it had headed an Empire as opposed to a Commonwealth), and therefore was not able to defeat Germany in the war. A similar change can be noted in the terminology of other British organisations such as the BBC and the Ministry of Information and can be seen partly as a reaction to the growing strength particularly of the Dominions – such as Australia and Canada – and that Britain was no longer the supremely dominant force in the 'Empire' but was becoming more the first among equals.

Other booklets in the series, at least those not written by lawyers (and others certainly were – for example W A Robson's *The British System of Government*), were far more interesting in their style of writing. For example, Dudley Stamp's *The Face of Britain* started as follows – and its full first paragraph is worth quoting:

It would be difficult to find an area of comparable size anywhere in the world which exhibits quite such marked contrasts as may be found within the very limited area of the British Isles. A journey of twenty-five miles in Britain will often afford as much variety of scenery as one can find in two hundred and fifty miles in many of the newer lands, and within her hundred thousand square miles may be found an epitome, sometimes beautifully modelled by Nature in miniature, of most of the scenery of Europe. Too often the visitor, with but a few days to spare, sees only Lowland Britain – it may be Liverpool and London with perhaps a side trip to Edinburgh – and so fails to appreciate the contrasts between the wild, almost inaccessible fjords or sea lochs of the north-west Highlands of Scotland, the Dutch-like scenery of the drained fens of the Holland division of Lincolnshire, the rolling downland of Salisbury Plain, the secluded, heather-covered glades of the New Forest, the rugged crags of North Wales, the smiling orchardland of Kent, the rimy, narrow, congested

²¹⁵ Keith, *British Commonwealth*, p.16

valleys of South Wales, and the desolate almost uninhabited moorland of Sutherland. These scenic contrasts are often within easy reach of the great centres, so that a Londoner born and bred can still thrill at the discovery of new bypaths within twenty-five miles of the city, whilst the Glasgow slumdweller has the finest combination of sea and highland scenery within the same radius.²¹⁶

With perhaps the exception of the word 'slumdweller', the whole opening paragraph exudes a passion that was likely to grip any reader and make them want to visit the wondrous land which Stamp described. Though visiting Britain was most probably out of the question for most foreign people during the conditions of war, Stamp's articulate descriptions certainly mark a strong contrast to Keith's monograph. Stamp proceeded to describe every corner of Great Britain (he excluded Northern Ireland) with the same fervent infatuation which was sure to enthral. The pictures, of which there are only eight, show a contrast in the scenery of Britain which helped to illuminate Stamp's points even further. Keith's use of the word 'Commonwealth' when the word 'Empire' was still in common use was perhaps unlikely to have won over people in the way that Stamp's writing style might have done.

The series of booklets did not shy away from difficult but obvious questions about Britain and its role in the world. Sometimes a conversational style of writing was used to present these questions, not dissimilar to the way in which organisations today use 'frequently asked questions' (or FAQs) on press releases to address tricky issues. For example in Michael Lewis's *British Ships and British Seamen* he asks:

"Now why", it may be asked, "does Great Britain play this troublesome and expensive rôle [of patrolling the world's seas]? We are not, surely, going to be asked to believe that she is altogether altruistic in this important matter, and that it is just for the love of her fellow men that she thus polices the seas?"²¹⁷

Self-posed questions such as the one above, if chosen carefully and answered well, have the potential to make the reader believe that any concerns that they may have had are being allayed. More often, however, self-posed questions, like FAQs, tend to only address issues which the author thinks the reader wants answers to or thinks they need answers to, but does not actually address the real issues the reader is concerned about. This can lead to a certain amount of despondency on the part of the

²¹⁶ Stamp, L Dudley, *The Face of Britain*, (Longmans Green & Co Ltd, 1940) p.11

²¹⁷ Lewis, Michael, *British Ships and British Seamen*, (Longmans Green & Co Ltd, 1940) p.35

reader. It is difficult to assess the importance of the conversational style of writing in Lewis's booklet specifically as there are no records of readers' views on the way the booklets were written. Nevertheless Lewis's style of writing was attractive and the questions that he posed were generally well-chosen which would lead to the conclusion that people reading the booklets would have some sympathy with the points he was trying to make.

The problem with Lewis's booklet and indeed all of the booklets in the *British Life and Thought* series as well as other English books was that readers had to physically pick up the book in the first place before reading it. Of course, the content of books and the ways in which they were written were important, but getting over the first hurdle of actually persuading people in neutral countries to pick up the book was far more difficult. Just as Michael Grant had shown it was far easier getting the second and third teacher into the Halkevleri, than the first, and that it was far easier for the Council to support pre-existing Anglophile Societies than establish them from scratch, it was also far easier to write a convincing argument in a book than persuading someone to pick the book up and get past the front cover. Essentially therefore, these books were designed to maintain existing sympathy and tap into unconvinced yet curious thoughts of the neutral mind-set, and not to try to win over the non-sympathetic and hostile elites. To try to nurture the unconvinced, yet curious, a number of techniques were employed. When books arrived (and many were sent – the 3,000 flown to Sweden are testament to the large numbers involved),²¹⁸ the Council established exhibitions where anyone could come and view the books – and the 'public poured in' according to Stanley Unwin.²¹⁹ The libraries within the British institutes were, of course, an opportunity for those with curiosity to view the books at their leisure without having to attend an exhibition, but they still had to enter the premises of a British organisation which was always going to be an issue for some, especially as the police in many of the neutral countries monitored who entered the institutes.²²⁰ However, given the critical shortage of paper during the war (by 1941 the paper shortage was 'reckoned to be the biggest obstacle to the 'functional work' of the Council'²²¹) and the efforts needed in physically getting the books to these countries, these efforts would have surely have

²¹⁸ 'Kultursändebud och känd skald lämnar Sverige' and 'Bibliotek på 3.000 band Kom med Englandsflyget', *Dagens nyheter*, (1 September 1944). Newspaper cutting in RAS P3206 'Bottrall, Francis James Ronald'.

²¹⁹ Unwin, *The Truth*, p.421

²²⁰ For example, Sweden - RAS P3206 Hildeby, G, B Cleve, C H Nydahl, G Jonsson, 'P.M. angående brittiske undersåten Kimmins', 25 February, 1943

²²¹ Coombs, *Spreading*, p.13

been impressive to the local populations. The fact that the Council had flown 3,000 books to Sweden was reported in the Swedish press²²² – it did not even require people to view the books to make the political statement that the British commitment to cultural exchange was strong enough to keep it going even in what appeared to be the throes of defeat. Similarly, on a small group of islands such as Malta, word would have quickly spread that during the intense air raids of 1940 and 1941, the Council was stocking its library from books arriving by submarine.²²³ The Council ran a Book Export Scheme from 1940 to 1947 which greatly increased the availability of British books abroad as the Council offered a ‘sale or return’ policy for overseas booksellers which publishers in Britain were either unable or unwilling to offer. What this basically meant was that booksellers were offered books to sell to their customers without having to fear having excess stock which they had already purchased and could not sell – they could return them to the British Council without any financial liability being incurred if they could not sell the books. Whilst it did run successfully and was sound economically, some staff found the complexities of fluctuating currency exchanges and customs problems difficult to work around, particularly when they had plenty of other duties to attend to. How widespread this view was is unclear, but it was certainly effective enough to increase sales of British books abroad.²²⁴

3.7 Conclusion

It can be seen from this chapter that the Council used a variety of techniques and methods of cultural propaganda to reach audiences in neutral Europe. The methods ranged from sending out lecturers, teaching English, subsidising schools and arranging art exhibitions and music concerts, to the provision of both English-language and translated books. In a number of cases it was possible to conduct a ‘one size fits all’ approach through *Britain To-day* and to send lecturers to more than one country – particularly Spain and Portugal as they were geographical neighbours. A surprising amount of time, however, was given to tailoring the cultural propaganda to local audiences. Surprising in the sense that in the context of the time it was incredible that so much effort was put into organising a specific art exhibition of Sweden, for example, when Britain was preparing for the invasion of Italy in 1943 or organising a piano recital in the autumn of 1940 when Britain’s survival was under threat and London was

²²² ‘Kultursändebud och känd skald lämnar Sverige’ and ‘Bibliotek på 3.000 band Kom med Englandsflyget’, *Dagens nyheter*, (1 September 1944). Newspaper cutting in RAS P3206
‘Bottrall, Francis James Ronald’

²²³ Coombs, *Spreading*, p.13-14

²²⁴ *Ibid*, p.12

under the heaviest bombardment in its history. Tailoring propaganda to the needs of the audience, however, was very important. It was often the element that made the Council's message heard above the whispering galleries of the neutral capitals of Europe and above the more highly resourced campaigns of Germany and Italy, at least early on in the war. Starkie's *tertulias* are a prime example of how the Council tapped into the local culture and produced impressive results. Understanding the sociological context and utilising word-of-mouth propaganda made it appear that the British Council's work was not propaganda - it did not stand out as being something alien imposed on an indifferent audience.

Establishing institutes and offices in neutral Europe at this time was a major political statement and could not be divorced from the reality that there was a war going on. Britain could not escape the impression that its establishment of overseas institutions was a knee-jerk reaction to the war situation. Throughout the period of the war, the Council was necessarily playing catch-up with other countries who had had institutions established for some years. The institutions provided a convenient meeting place for neutral peoples to show their British sympathies (often new-found) once they were ready to do so. Equally the art exhibitions, music concerts, though interesting and important from a cultural point of view, perhaps played a larger role in providing a focus for people to attend an event that would allow them to show their sympathy. Yet it would be cynical to take this so far as to say that the content of art exhibitions, lectures etc. were not important as long as they contained a British element. Clearly McCance's visit to Spain forged new and important links with Spanish scientists who were grateful for the access to British science and information. Great musicians such as Sir Malcolm Sargent and poets such as T S Eliot would clearly also have drawn audiences because of their artistic abilities rather than simply because they were British.²²⁵ Nevertheless the fact that Britain sent 3,000 books to Sweden along with 50 original watercolour paintings (as well as similar numbers elsewhere) and were keen to send lecturers hundreds of miles in dangerous conditions were political statements that Britain was a country that wanted to engage on a serious scale with the neutral peoples of Europe. The Council's work was naturally incremental. Despite the original political statements that were made by way of setting up the institutes and flying in thousands of books, the Council's work was long-term and would take years to accomplish. Each lecturer that arrived in Spain, Portugal or Sweden built on the work

²²⁵ T S Eliot was born a citizen of the United States of America but took British citizenship in November 1927.

of the previous lecturer that had visited. To look at one particular lecturer's achievements in isolation would miss the wider cumulative effect of achievements created by the continual stream of lecturers. It was constantly laying the ground for more propaganda in the future - particularly political propaganda that would help drive people to more direct action than was possible initially.

4. The view from the other side

4.1 Issues in assessing the view from the other side

Determining how the British Council and its work were viewed in neutral Europe during the Second World War is fraught with difficulty. It would be very easy to take references to the Council's work from documents in the archives of foreign governments, from articles in foreign newspapers and from personal accounts of people who interacted with the Council on a regular basis, and build up an exaggerated image of success. Focusing solely on how the Council was perceived without considering the work of the German and Italian institutes would create the illusion that the British Council worked in a vacuum when interacting with foreign peoples - an impression that would clearly be unhelpful to determining the level of success that the Council attained. Yet, trying to pin down what foreign peoples actually thought about the Council in comparison to the Council's counterparts from enemy countries is not straightforward - censorship issues render newspapers difficult to assess; political considerations and the effect of the course of the war itself make archive material equally complex terrain. Genuine thoughts and Machiavellian antics are certainly intertwined, and it has already been noted that the capital cities of all of European countries that remained neutral during the war were riddled with propaganda and were hotbeds of rumour in extreme proportions. Although it is difficult to assess the view from the 'other side', it would be clearly unacceptable to conduct no assessment at all. After all, making a success of cultural propaganda was what the British Council was all about. It can be readily recognised that difficulties of this kind must be accepted as widespread and therefore each piece of evidence must therefore be carefully evaluated to take account of its context.

The view from the 'other side' clearly does not amount to a single perception of the British Council's work. But as stated in previous chapters, each of the four neutral European countries where the British Council operated had a range of differing opinions about the war situation and about geopolitics more generally, even within the 'official' elites. The difference in the view of city-dwellers compared to the view from the countryside is just as notable as variances owing to broad geographical differences. The Council's influence was naturally directed through institution buildings, Universities and other places of learning such as the Halkevleri in Turkey, where lecturers and teachers could draw significant numbers of people to make their work and tours worthwhile. This meant, to a large degree, that the Council's influence was

directed at the people of the main cities where these institution buildings were located – Madrid and Barcelona in Spain (and later on in the war Bilbao, Valencia and Seville); Lisbon, Oporto and Coimbra in Portugal; Ankara and Istanbul in Turkey; and Stockholm, Malmö, Lünd, Göthenburg and Uppsala in Sweden. Though the Council did attempt to reach out beyond the main cities through connecting particularly with Anglophile Societies and sending lecturers on tours (Ronald Bottrall, for example, frequently travelled within Sweden to try to reach out to smaller communities) these attempts were still more of an ‘add-on’ to the core business of trying to influence people in the cities.¹ Naturally, therefore, the people in the cities were more likely to have had an opinion about the Council’s work than those people in small towns and villages who were not its target audience.

The type of person that the British Council aimed to influence in the cities, of course, affected how it was seen by different people within those cities. It was shown in chapter one that the aim of the British Council was to focus more on the elites rather than on the masses. Through the model of influence to which the British Council’s work was aligned, it was the pro-British elites who were the first line of contact for the Council, which it then hoped would indirectly influence indifferent and hostile elites and eventually the masses. Except in a few cases it is very difficult to actually delineate the Council’s influence upon the masses as opposed to other influences directed at them. The Council also had misgivings about working directly towards influencing the masses for fear of being seen as a political rather than a cultural organisation. For example, Frederick Charlesworth’s work with the *Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund* (ABF – Workers’ Educational Movement), examined in chapter three was carefully scrutinised by Council officials in London who stated that the ‘the proposed lecture on “The Labour Party’s Foreign Policy” might well be postponed till a more suitable period.... [w]e think it to be outside the Council’s fixed rules regarding political propaganda.’² Instead, the Council generally hoped to influence the masses indirectly. The elites, in this chapter, will be split into two main blocks – the views of the ‘official’ elites (i.e. Government Ministers and officials) – and the ‘non-official elites’, covering the artists, musicians and scientists. It is logical to assume that the elites, therefore, had more of an opinion about the Council than the masses, simply because, as with the city-rural divide mentioned above, the elites had actually heard of the Council’s work and could

¹ Grant, Antony. Telephone conversation with Edward Corse, 2 July 2008; Bottrall, Anthony. Email to Edward Corse, 29 September 2008.

² TNA BW 57/1 Orton, H. Memorandum to Ronald Braden, 16 February 1943; TNA BW 57/1 Braden, Ronald. Letter to Ronald Bottrall, 17 February, 1943.

see its day-to-day operations. Focusing initially on the elites who were already pro-British would also help to reinforce pre-existing views within all of the elites, that the Council was there to give succour to those who were pro-British. The pro-British elites were, of course, quite happy that the British Council was there to support them. Those in Spain against the Franco regime or the Axis such as the Basque writer Pio Baroja were clearly in this category. As will be shown, by attending the institute every Sunday Baroja overtly showed that he viewed the Council as a haven for anti-regime or anti-Axis Spanish elites. Baroja was 'Anglophile from the beginning, in contrast with the fascist, Germanophile atmosphere prevailing in Spain' [OSpAJ].³ Charles David Ley, a lecturer at the British Institute in Madrid (and previously in Lisbon), noted that Baroja's presence was a 'decisive victory' [OSpAJ] because Baroja rarely visited other such cultural centres.⁴ The institute was described by Tom Burns, the British press attaché based at the British Embassy in Madrid, as

an embassy to the survivors of Spain's intellectual eclipse. Any evening one could count on finding there a great novelist such as Pio Baroja, a rising star like José Camilo Cela (since then a Nobel prizewinner), that prince of essayists, Azorin [the pseudonym of José Martínez Ruiz], composers like [Joaquín] Rodrigo.⁵

Simply by attending the institute, these artists and writers showed that they appreciated the institute for being a kind of safe-house that they needed in time of war or because they distrusted the Franco regime. Where the Council fulfilled a particular need such as this it was bound to be popular. It was no surprise that the Council was able to be viewed highly in the eyes of these people – indeed, it would be more surprising if it had failed to do so given the conditions in Madrid at the time. It was largely slotting into the view that was ready-made for it by providence of circumstance. If the Council was to be viewed as anything other than an organisation existing to reinforce the status quo, then at least one of two events had to occur. The Council could expand its influence beyond its 'natural' audience of pro-British elites

³ Baroja, Pío Caro. Interview with Iñaki Estaban in Estaban, Iñaki, 'Pío Baroja molestaba a los políticos por su sinceridad', *El Correo Digital* (4 February, 2006) at http://www.elcorreodigital.com/vizcaya/pg060204/prensa/noticias/Cultura_VIZ/200602/04/VIZ-CUL-000.html Answer in response to the question: 'What were those years like?'. Original Spanish for question: '¿Cómo fueron esos años?'

⁴ Ley, Charles David, *La Costanilla de los diablos (Memorias literarias 1943-1952)*, (José Estaban, Editor, Madrid, 1981) p.10

⁵ Burns, Tom, *The Use of Memory: Publishing and Further Pursuits*, (Sheed & Ward, London, 1993), p.102

(particularly beyond those in the cities which had a tradition of being pro-British) – this was within the Council's control but perhaps would also involve some abandonment of principles depending on how this was carried out. The second event would be through its 'natural' audience expanding beyond the initial grouping that were originally attracted to the Council's work – in other words, by those indifferent and hostile groups in the model of influence becoming smaller in number and the pro-British group expanding to contain a complex mixture of overt ideologues, covert ideologues and 'barometer elites'. The term 'barometer elite' covers those elites who reflected the changing times either because of pragmatism or because of genuine changes in sympathy.

The enlarging of the pro-British elite group could happen in three general ways: firstly by those indifferent and hostile groups becoming aware through their contacts with pre-existing pro-British elites that the Council was worth visiting (i.e. the aim of the Council through the model of influence); secondly, by other external influences such as the state of the war generally affecting the overall environment in the neutral country and either allowing their opinion of the Council and Britain to be more favourable or by allowing their latent favourable opinion to be more publicly acceptable; or lastly, by being alienated by the Axis institutes (or Axis-influence generally) and looking for a new social and cultural and pseudo-political outlet which the British Institute represented. Realistically it was likely to be a mixture of all three of these ways in which the indifferent and hostile elites could change their opinion of the Council.

4.2 Official views of the British Council

In order to gain an understanding of the 'official' view of the Council within the four long-term neutral European countries where the Council operated, there are notable roles, and individuals who held them, that are of course essential to examine in detail. Clearly the Head of State played some kind of role in the Council's operation in each country. This role was more important and active in some countries than others – the Turkish President Ismet İnönü, for example, attended some Council events and his family had English lessons provided by the Council, whereas in Sweden there is no evidence that King Gustav V, who was notably pro-German, was ever particularly interested in the Council's work.⁶ Nevertheless without their blessing, at least in a tacit sense, the Council's operation would have stalled at the first hurdle.

⁶ Grant, *My first eighty years*, p.72

General Franco had given his personal permission to Lord Lloyd in 1939 for the establishment of a British Institute in Madrid (Franco 'would unreservedly welcome the establishment of British Council activities in Spain in as full measure as we cared to develop them' noted Lloyd after a meeting between Franco and Lloyd on 23 October 1939), but dealing with the Spanish Government bureaucracy was a different matter.⁷ In the absence of Lord Lloyd's meeting with General Franco in October 1939, for example, it seems unlikely that an institute would have opened in 1940 in Madrid. Lloyd travelled to Madrid on behalf of the British Government in order to stress the importance to Franco, of Spain to Britain. Indeed, the Council's arguments for opening an institute during 1940 very much hinged on the Lloyd-Franco meeting, even though, in reality, discussion of the Council was a relatively minor aspect of the meeting itself, concentrating on other aspects of Anglo-Spanish relations and the outbreak of war the previous month.⁸ Lloyd's report of his meeting with Franco on this point, is worth quoting in some detail:

I [Lloyd] described the world-wide activities of the British Council in some detail, and told him [General Franco] how anxious the Council was to obtain permission for the prosecution of the same activities in Spain now the [Civil] war was over. He seemed already well acquainted with the nature of that work, about which he had clearly made enquiries, and asked me questions about certain aspects of the Council's work in other countries. He said that he respected and admired the British cultural standards more than those of any other country, and would unreservedly welcome the establishment of British Council activities in Spain in as full a measure as we cared to develop them. He begged to be excused from going into further detail on British Council affairs as he particularly wished to use the occasion to talk to me on other matters. He had already given instructions to the Minister of Foreign Affairs [Colonel Beigbeder], under whom Spain's Cultural Department existed, that all facilities were to be given to the inception of our work. He would be glad if I would, therefore, discuss all our plans with Señor Beigbedir [sic].⁹

It is worth quoting in some detail because it perhaps shows Lloyd's skill for embellishing his report with more enthusiasm by Franco than was perhaps the case, or

⁷ TNA BW 82/13 Lloyd, Lord, Report of visit to Spain, diary entry 23 October 1939

⁸ MAEC AG Leg R 5261/8. Lloyd, Lord. Letter to the Duque de Alba, 14 February 1940; Alba, Duque de. Letter to Colonel Beigbeder entitled 'Asunto: Remite copia carta del Presidente del "British Council" sobre apertura Instituto Británico en Madrid', 15 February 1940.

⁹ TNA BW 82/13 Lord Lloyd's report of his meeting with General Franco on 23 October 1939 p7

that Franco was apt at flattering his guest and passing responsibility for action onto his staff. Nevertheless, Franco's endorsement, though briefly made, was critical in levering the Spanish Government into accepting a British Institute in Madrid. The Head of State of any of the four countries may not have been a great supporter of the British Council, or indeed Britain, at this time, but would be wise enough to recognise that in order for their neutrality to be credible they had to operate an official policy of fairness between the belligerents. If Germany or Italy had been granted the right to open institutes, then the same had to be the case for Britain, even if it was grudgingly. Actually getting the machinery of neutral Government to carry out this official policy of fairness was a different matter, however. As will be shown, even with Franco's endorsement of a British Institute in Madrid, the route to actually opening the institute was scattered with hurdles.

Foreign Ministers and Education Ministers, as well as the Ministries for which they were responsible, also had key roles to play in formulating the 'official' view of the Council. Unlike the Heads of State who had to take more the role of a statesman - by understanding what was in the interest of the country as a whole - individuals at Cabinet level were able to take a more political view of the Council. They often had the practical power to approve which directors or lecturers could come to that country, but more importantly, were a leading voice in the official opinion of the Council in the Government and in the country more widely. Juan Beigbeder, the Spanish Foreign Minister for the first year of the war, may have been described as 'rather a tiresome windbag' by Lloyd when they met just prior to Lloyd's meeting with Franco, but at least he had a certain understanding and growing friendship for Britain.¹⁰ Beigbeder was one of the few Spanish Ministers in early 1940 who was not overtly pro-Nazi and was seen as a potential ally of the British colony in general and particularly by Sir Samuel Hoare when he arrived in June of that year, and was an important figure in the British Council's success in getting Walter Starkie to Madrid.¹¹

Tom Burns believed the Spanish Government could not have refused the request to send Starkie to Spain as the British Council's representative,

[f]or how could official Spain ever say that Starkie was *persona non grata*? He knew more about the country, its literature and folklore than most Spaniards,

¹⁰ TNA BW 82/13 Lord Lloyd's report of his meeting with Juan Beigbeder on 23 October 1939 p6

¹¹ Bowen, Wayne H., *Spain during World War II*, (University of Missouri Press, Columbia, Missouri, 2006) p.33-4

its politics had never concerned him and he could hardly be suspected of being a British agent.¹²

As the analysis in chapter two showed, Starkie's politics were not as straightforward as Burns suggests. Nor was it correct to say that Starkie was never regarded as a British spy. But it is true that he knew a lot more about Spanish culture than many in Spain itself and on this standing could be regarded as an inspired choice for a Representative. An inspired choice perhaps, but it was not so straightforward from a bureaucratic point of view and it was fortunate that Beigbeder was Foreign Minister at the time to ensure his appointment was approved.

When the British Embassy asked for permission to bring Starkie to Madrid as Director of the proposed institute, on 9 May 1940, Beigbeder ordered his staff to complete an internal check of their archives to ensure there were no records to suggest that Starkie would be a poor candidate from a Spanish point of view. This was completed just ten days after Starkie's name was proposed. Enrique Valera, of the Spanish Foreign Ministry, noted that 'as Mr Starkie is Catholic and is arguably qualified in principle, we can consider him to be a *persona grata* to the Spanish state' [OSpA].¹³ However, Valera went on to note cautiously that

even though in this department we cannot find any unfavourable precedent on the behaviour and attitude of Mr Starkie during the National Movement... [I] deem it advisable that before responding to the British Embassy, we should hear the views of our Ambassador in London [OSpA].¹⁴

Beigbeder therefore sent a telegram on 24 May 1940 to Alba in London, to see 'if, in his view, he would raise any objections against the candidate [Starkie]' [OSpA].¹⁵ The inference from Beigbeder and Valera was that in their view Starkie was acceptable but that neither of them, however, wanted to be responsible for allowing him into Spain without the approval of Alba. The Spanish Consulate in Dublin also provided information to Beigbeder (particularly on reports in the *Irish Independent* on Starkie's appointment), given that Starkie was from that city, but it seems Alba's opinion was

¹² Burns, *Use of Memory*, p. 102; also see Burns, *Papa Spy*, p.252

¹³ MAEC AG Leg 5261/8 Valera, Enrique. Letter to Colonel Juan Beigbeder, 19 May 1940.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ MAEC AG Leg R 5261/8. Beigbeder, Colonel Juan. Telegram to Duque de Alba, 24 May 1940.

the one that counted in Madrid.¹⁶ A strong underlining fear that both Beigbeder and Valera had at that time for their positions (and perhaps ultimately their lives) can clearly be detected given the military situation in May 1940 in the Low Countries and neighbouring France.

The Duque de Alba was descended, illegitimately, from James II of England (VII of Scotland) and still retained the British title of the Duke of Berwick. He played a crucial role as Spanish Ambassador in London in smoothing relations between Britain and Spain on a number of occasions during the war and, indeed, in getting Walter Starkie to Madrid.¹⁷ In recently released files at the National Archives it appears that MI5 were concerned about how much influence Alba had amongst the British political elite and the information he was seemingly able to obtain. However, they also saw the opportunity of feeding 'misinformation through Alba's high-up political and social contacts' back to the Franco Government as he was so highly respected in both London and Madrid.¹⁸ It is not clear whether, in the end, MI5 used him in this way, but it is the principle that they considered it would be possible that is important here. Prior to the end of the Spanish Civil War, Alba had already located himself in London as 'El Agente de España' for the 'Estado Español' - in effect the Ambassador in London for the Nationalist side of the Civil War.¹⁹ And he was already making contact with the British Council at this stage particularly through his friendship with Lord Lloyd. In June 1938, one of Alba's staff wrote to the Nationalist Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Spain to seek permission to accept Lord Lloyd's offer to renew cultural ties with Nationalist Spain.²⁰ It is clear that Lloyd and Alba were keen to improve cultural relations between London and the Franco regime even before the British Government had officially recognised Franco as the legitimate ruler of Spain - and this keenness to improve relations continued until Lloyd's death in February 1941. Alba was eager to help establish a British Institute in Madrid and was instrumental in persuading Franco's Government to support the British Council's cause. Following the delay after

¹⁶ MAEC AG Leg R 5261/8. Ontiveros, J G. Letter to Colonel Juan Beigbeder, 14 May 1940 reporting on article entitled 'Offer of Post in Spain for Dr. Starkie', *Irish Independent*, (Dublin, 14 May 1940)

¹⁷ See for example, Llano, 'Starkie y el British Council' p.215

¹⁸ TNA KV 4/429 Brooman-White, R. Note for B.I.G. 8 December 1942; Bevan, J H (Offices of the War Cabinet). Letter to 'General', 10 December 1942. This file was released on 1 September 2008.

¹⁹ MAEC AG Leg R 5261/8. Alba, Duque de. Letter entitled 'Asunto: Servicios dependientes de la Junta de Relaciones Culturales en Londres' to Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores, 6 May 1938.

²⁰ MAEC AG Leg R 5261/8 El Subsecretario, Señor Agente de España en Londres. Telegram entitled 'Asunto: Relaciones Culturales Inglaterra', 13 June 1938, referencing an earlier telegram of 25 May 1938.

the Franco-Lloyd meeting in October 1939 in getting the institute open, Alba had written to Beigbeder in February 1940 to state:

[T]he way this [the Spanish] Government has refused to grant permission for the opening of the British Institute, I have tried to reflect the impression this has made during my conversation with Lord Lloyd, who told me that this refusal would be regarded here [in London] as a very unfriendly gesture on our part. No one understands the reason why England [sic] is not authorised, but Germany and France are permitted, especially considering their past attitude to the glorious National Uprising, which was no more favourable to that observed by Great Britain [OSpA].²¹

With this knowledge of previous correspondence, asking Alba for a view on Walter Starkie was clearly something that Beigbeder was pretty confident he knew the answer to already, but it was no doubt very important to have in writing, such were the conditions in Madrid at that time. Beigbeder was fully aware that his job was in a precarious position and the Interior Minister Ramon Serrano Suñer, Franco's brother-in-law, was seeking a more pro-Nazi Spanish foreign policy with himself vying for the role of Foreign Minister. Beigbeder did not want to give his rival, or Franco, cause for relinquishing him of his duties and taking Spain into the war against Britain and France. Fortunately for Beigbeder, Alba replied promptly on 27 May to his 24 May telegram:

I consider it a very wise appointment of Professor Starkie, who is Catholic and has been a great defender of our cause in the press from the first moment. Very knowledgeable of the Spanish language and an excellent author on Spain and academic correspondent of the language [OSpA].²²

As with Alba's influence in persuading the Spanish Government to open the institute, Alba's role was again critical to Beigbeder's acceptance of Starkie as the British Council's candidate in Madrid. Following Alba's telegram, on 5 June 1940 the

²¹ MAEC AG Leg R 5261/8 Alba, Duque de. Letter to Colonel Beigbeder entitled 'Asunto: Remite copia carta del Presidente del "British Council" sobre apertura Instituto Británico en Madrid', 15 February 1940.

²² MAEC AG Leg R 5261/8 Alba, Duque de. Telegram to the Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, 27 May 1940.

British Embassy received a letter, at last, informing them that Starkie would be an acceptable representative.²³

Even after this success, on 14 June 1940, the Spanish Interior Ministry tried to thwart Starkie's journey to the Spanish capital, and 'published a decree forbidding all forms of propaganda by belligerents,' which shows the innate tensions between Beigbeder and Serrano Suñer.²⁴ All authorities were ordered to close 'premises in which, under name of reading-rooms, libraries and the like, propaganda is done for belligerent countries by oral or written means, by supplying books, notes, pamphlets, broadsheets, documents etc.'²⁵ This description of activities appears to reflect exactly what the Council intended to do in Spain, as indeed it intended to do in all of its institutes. The Council and the Foreign Office were in two minds about what to do. Starkie already had his bags packed for his journey to Spain and his Directorship of the institute had been approved by the Spanish Foreign Ministry – but there was a real chance that the British Institute would never be established for the duration of the war because of this decree. On the other hand, Lloyd believed that unless the German and Italian institutes were closed down, the Council should push ahead with their plans and make representations to the Spanish Government to this effect if it objected.²⁶ The Foreign Office in London was in concurrence with his views, though Starkie was asked to postpone his departure until things were a little clearer.²⁷

Lloyd contacted Alba on 27 June for his help and the Spanish Ambassador agreed to do his 'very utmost in a private way' to resolve the situation.²⁸ Lloyd seemed unaware of the work Alba had already done to secure Starkie's appointment in Madrid, and Alba appears to have not felt it necessary to tell him. Nevertheless, Starkie was eventually allowed to go to Madrid in July 1940 and agreed in his first letter to London that, although he did not believe that Serrano Suñer's decree itself was directed at the establishment of a British Institute (which seems doubtful),

I think it would be a mistake to open an Institute at the present moment with the full blare of publicity, for incidents would then occur of an unpleasant

²³ MAEC AG Leg R 5261/8. Unsigned note B03 [from Spanish Foreign Ministry] to British Embassy, Madrid, 5 June 1940

²⁴ TNA BW 56/2 Reavey, George. Letter to Dennis Campkin, 14 June 1940

²⁵ TNA BW 56/2 White, A J S. Memorandum to Lord Lloyd, 25 June 1940 quoting telegram from Samuel Hoare.

²⁶ *Ibid* with note from Lloyd to Sir Alexander Cadogan attached to the end.

²⁷ TNA BW 56/2 Cadogan, Sir Alexander. Telegram to Sir Samuel Hoare, 27 June, 1940.

²⁸ TNA BW 56/2 Alba, Duque de. Letter to Lord Lloyd, 27 June, 1940

character which might injure our cause at this delicate moment. But most of my Spanish friends agree that it would be a good thing to open in a small, unofficial way, and give classes during the Summer to those left in Madrid who are willing to learn English, and to organise social gatherings of those friendly to us, etc. In the Autumn, when the situation has clarified, it would be possible to engage upon more ambitious schemes and open the Institute formally.²⁹

The Council had to agree to strict conditions with the Spanish Foreign Ministry before the institute could open including that all staff in the institute had to be Catholic (a full list of the conditions is given in Appendix H).³⁰

As was the case with Alba, the Portuguese Ambassador in London, Armindo Monteiro, was well respected in London and his home capital. He was also formally a member of the British Institute in Lisbon, which demonstrates the importance that the Council had in the Anglo-Portuguese relationship generally. Sir Malcolm Robertson was listed as a frequent associate of Monteiro on that same MI5 file mentioned above.³¹ Monteiro was also in frequent contact with Salazar and reported his meetings with Robertson to Salazar directly as he did regarding meetings with a whole range of individuals from the British elite. By influencing Monteiro's opinion in London, the Council would have an indirect lever to influence the 'official view' of the Council back in Portugal as this was highly dependent on Monteiro's thinking. This was just as the view from Spain was highly dependent on Alba's opinion. As has been described in previous chapters, the British Council opened its institute in Lisbon prior to the outbreak of war and the Portuguese Government had given it an enthusiastic response, and the Portuguese Minister of National Education, Carneiro Pacheco, had attended its opening. The Portuguese historian, António José Telo noted that at that time, 'the initiative [in Portugal] was welcomed and it found a large audience [OPA]'.³² The atmosphere, however, had changed significantly since its opening in 1938 and during the war itself, the Portuguese Government relied heavily on the reports from Monteiro in London for how they should respond to the Council in Lisbon. It is true that Salazar had accepted an honorary degree conferred upon him by Oxford University at

²⁹ TNA BW 56/2 Starkie, Walter. Letter to Lord Lloyd, 23 July, 1940

³⁰ TNA BW 56/2 'Translation of Note Verbale No. 27 addressed to His Majesty's Embassy by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dated: 16th February, 1940'

³¹ Roberts, *Um Toque Decisivo*, p.52; TNA KV 4/429 'Contacts of the Portuguese Ambassador Dr. Armindo Monteiro' undated but attached to Brooman-White, R. 'D.B. through B.1.A. Major Robertson [no relation to Sir Malcolm]', 10 November 1942

³² Telo, António José, *Propaganda e Guerra Secreta em Portugal (1939-1945)*, (Lisbon, Perspectivas & Realidades, 1990) p.50

Coimbra in the early years of the war, but generally he had been careful not to show his hand too readily when the outcome of the war remained uncertain. His speech at Coimbra at the Oxford degree ceremony focused on the role of academics generally and morality in society, rather than any aspect of Anglo-Portuguese relations.³³ A short reference to the 'cultural bonds uniting Western civilisation' was seen by the Ambassador Ronald Campbell as enough of anti-German statement to rile German opinion, but it was hardly an overtly pro-British stance.³⁴ Salazar had also held a dinner-party for the Oxford delegation where apparently the conversation was free and frank, but the official report also noted how unusual it was for Salazar to do this and it was certainly not an everyday occurrence.³⁵

It was noted previously that the Foreign Office was concerned about the Portuguese authorities withdrawing support for the British Institute in Lisbon because of protests from the German Minister in 1940. It is clear, therefore, that the congenial backing of the Portuguese authorities that had existed before the outbreak of war was no longer guaranteed, at least publicly.³⁶ In a letter to the Minister of Education in Portugal marking the first anniversary of the institute's opening in November 1939, George West, the Council's Representative, wrote

We enter on our second year of activity in the hope that the good offices of Your Excellency will be extended, as hitherto, towards the maintenance and promotion of Anglo-Portuguese intellectual relations, which as we profoundly believe, is one of the greatest services which our two nations can render to each other.³⁷

The tone of the paragraph above does not give an overwhelming feeling of expectation that the Portuguese Education Minister would oblige. Apparently the Minister did not see it as important enough for replying to West personally but asked one of his colleagues to quote a memorandum on his thoughts. Nevertheless, it was positive, if short:

³³ TNA BW 52/8 'Dr. Salazar's Speech', document undated, but delivered on 19 April 1941 at the University of Coimbra.

³⁴ TNA BW 52/8 Campbell, Ronald. Letter to Anthony Eden, 26 April 1941

³⁵ TNA BW 52/8 Report entitled 'University of Oxford Delegation to Portugal,' 28 April 1941, p.3

³⁶ TNA BW 52/3 Harlech, Lord. Letter to Charles Bridge, 10 March, 1940.

³⁷ TNA BW 52/3 West, S George. Translated letter to H.E. The Minister of Education, Ministerio de Educação Nacional, Lisboa, 23 November 1939

The Director of the British Institute is to be informed of the fullest appreciation with which we regard its cultural activity, in the interests of science and for the greater reciprocal understanding to the two great and Friendly Nations. Co-operation will be continued in the same spirit.³⁸

Certainly no suggestion that the Portuguese Government was unsupportive of the Council's efforts, but the length and tone was hardly a repetition of the warmth that Pacheco had conveyed the year before. However, West noted that he had received numerous letters and telegrams congratulating the Council on its first anniversary from various organisations and individuals within Portugal, even if the Government could no longer be as openly pro-British as it had been prior to the war.³⁹ Nevertheless Pacheco did not break off relations and still attended lectures given by the Council during the war.⁴⁰

In the papers of Philip Newman, the violinist mentioned in the previous chapter, there is an anonymous account of Newman's time in Portugal that claims that concerts organised by the British Council were to 'counter to the best of his [Newman's] ability the lavish propaganda concerts organized by the German official circles in Lisbon with military and government support.'⁴¹ This claim that the German concerts were supported by the Portuguese Government, but the British concerts were not, does not appear to be entirely supported by other evidence however. The Portuguese Government was attempting to be neutral by supporting both the British and German cultural events, or not supporting either of them. No doubt that it may have felt like the Portuguese were favouring one side rather than the other when they supported an enemy's event, but it may have been more of a perception than a reality. For example, one of Philip Newman's concerts was forbidden by the Portuguese police just two hours before the performance was due to begin, and it was instead performed on radio.⁴² When this type of control was used it is not difficult to understand how such a perception of one-sided victimisation was formed. Most of his concerts were in fact authorised and performed in person.

³⁸ TNA BW 52/3 Pacheco, Carneiro. Memorandum dated 23 November 1939. Quoted by Riler de Motta, A A. Translated letter to George West, 4 December 1939

³⁹ TNA BW 52/3 West, S George. Letter to Charles Bridge, 6 December, 1939

⁴⁰ TNA BW 52/3 'Report on the Visit to Portugal of the Rt. Hon. Lord Harlech P.C. G.C.M.G. 22nd February-5th March, 1940 - Programme in Lisbon' - clearly mentions the Minister of Education 'chairing' the lecture given by Lord Harlech.

⁴¹ RNCM PN/154 'Philip Newman in Portugal' (undated and anonymous, though clearly written soon after the Second World War) p.3

⁴² *Ibid.*

Though Monteiro and Robertson were frequent associates, Monteiro-Robertson meetings were not always amicable. Ironically, however, this may have indirectly helped the British Council in Portugal, rather than hindered it. One meeting in October 1942 resulted in a heated discussion on the '*Mocidade Portuguesa*' (literally 'Portuguese Youth' founded in 1936 and modelled on the Hitler Youth) to which the British Council had supplied a boxing instructor, George Gogay. Gogay had been in the service of the *Mocidade* for a number of years and had been very successful in integrating into the organisation, but suddenly Gogay was dismissed by the *Mocidade* at around the same time as this Monteiro-Robertson meeting. Gogay's dismissal was viewed by the Council in London as being for political reasons, as Gogay's conduct had been exemplary, which probably explains Robertson's frustration at the meeting.⁴³ Monteiro reported his meeting with Robertson to Salazar, noting that Robertson was

visibly agitated [and replied that he] could not conceive how the official organisation "Mocidade" could be an ally of England, as it was at the moment accepting invitations to visit Berlin, after making a pilgrimage to Vichy Morocco [OPA].⁴⁴

The heated conversation went on to cover Anglo-Portuguese relations more generally, with Robertson making an 'attack of rage' [OPA] on how Portugal needed to decide whether it was a British ally (from the long-standing Anglo-Portuguese alliance) or a neutral country.⁴⁵ Although Monteiro noted that he thought Robertson's attitude to be unacceptable and that he had reported the incident to Brendan Bracken, the Minister of Information, (as he regarded Robertson, incorrectly, to be 'in some ways his subordinate' [OPA] - words which would have riled Robertson even more), it seems clear that by reporting the incident to Salazar that he expected it to have some effect in Lisbon.⁴⁶ Monteiro regarded Robertson's attitude to be the just the tip of the iceberg in British frustration on the Portuguese position in the war generally and was not just an issue relating to the British Council. He noted that the *Mocidade* was 'on the verge of entering a Black List' [OPA] in the Foreign Office and if Portugal were to keep Britain as a friendly country, it needed to work harder to maintain its sympathy.⁴⁷

⁴³ TNA BW 52/13 Gogay, George. Letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 6 November 1942

⁴⁴ Montiero, Armindo. Letter to Oliveira Salazar, 26 October 1942 reproduced in Rosas et al, *Armindo Monteiro*, Document 60, p.346

⁴⁵ *Ibid*

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p.347

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p.348

Overtly supporting the British Council's activities, particularly early on in the war, was a potentially dangerous activity for a Foreign Minister or an Education Minister, even if they also supported equivalent activities by the German or Italian Governments. When the British Council opened its institute in Stockholm in December 1941, as was noted in previous chapters, the German Government made it clear that it was not happy with the Swedish Government's position nor the fact that Gösta Bagge, the Swedish Education Minister, had attended the opening ceremony.⁴⁸ Reports in the Swedish press reflected the German Government's view, though this varied from one newspaper to the next. For example the column space given to the German reaction was actually significantly smaller (103 words) in *Dagens Nyheter* than the space given to the report about the opening of the institute (395 words).⁴⁹ The *Aftonbladet* appears far more sympathetic to the German point of view with the headline 'German attack on Cabinet Minister Bagge. Endgame for the opening of the British Council office: political somersault [OSWAJ].'⁵⁰ It caused enough of stir in the Nazi capital that Christian Günther, the Swedish Foreign Minister, clearly believed that it was something worth responding to in order to assert the Swedish right, as a neutral power, to associate with whoever they wished. Günther sent a telegram of protest to the Swedish Ambassador in Berlin, Avrid Richert, to hand to the German Government. It stated:

1. The Swedish Education Minister [Gösta Bagge] will, as a self-evident measure of civility, attend various foreign cultural events in Stockholm. His presence at the German Book Exhibition and at the inauguration of the German School is well known.
2. The message from Berlin had stated that the British Council would be a centre of espionage. Until the contrary is proved or is done, the Swedish Government has no good reason to suspect that foreign cultural institutions are being used for illegal activities in neutral Sweden.

⁴⁸ 'Tysk Misstänksamhet mot British Council', *Dagens Nyheter*, (Stockholm, 19 December 1941) p.11

⁴⁹ *Ibid* (103 words) and 'Engelsk kulturcentral har öppnats i Stockholm', *Dagens Nyheter*, (Stockholm, 18 December 1941) p.19 (395 words)

⁵⁰ 'Tyskt angrepp på statsrådet Bagge', *Aftonbladet*, (18 December 1941). Newspaper cutting in RAS P3206 'Bottrall, Francis James Ronald'; Also see 'Brittiskt kulturinstitut öppnat i Stockholm'. Unclear which Swedish newspaper the cutting is from, but dated 18 December 1941. Newspaper cutting in RAS P3206 'Bottrall, Francis James Ronald'; and 'Berlin vädrar Secret Service bakom teaparty'. Unclear which Swedish newspaper the cutting is from, but dated 17 December 1941. Newspaper cutting in RAS P3206 'Bottrall, Francis James Ronald'.

3. Sweden's relations with the British Council are older than our relationship with the *Akademischer Austauschdienst* and will address questions about student and lecture activities. The Swedish Government has received official assurances regarding the British Council - that the agency's activities here will be conducted along these lines. [OSwAJ].⁵¹

There does not appear to have been any further response from the German Government on this issue and probably decided that in the grand scheme of the war it was better to allow the Swedes to choose a pro-British Council policy than to risk the ending of the that country's benevolent neutrality in terms of supplying raw materials essential for the German war effort.

Günther and Bagge had similar views to each other on foreign policy and both have been described as Machiavellian or 'players' [in Swedish '*spelaren*'] when it came to preserving Swedish neutrality against interference from the belligerent countries.⁵² Günther is described by Henrik Arnstad in his book *Spelaren Christian Günther* as moving seamlessly between conservative views, then liberal views; becoming anti-Semitic at times (not uncommon amongst Swedes at the time), then moving in Jewish circles.⁵³ Günther was someone who did not seem to have particularly set views on any subject, but had a sole aim of keeping his country out of the war and not to become overly influenced by any viewpoint. He did admit to Mallet at one point that 'we Swedes have a certain feeling of shame when we look at our neighbours and brethren living under German oppression' [OSwAJ], but this one statement, argues Arnstad, is in stark contrast to other comments made by him on the war situation.⁵⁴ Günther's flexible ability was noted by Sir Victor Mallet, the British Minister in Stockholm, who stated that he had 'admirable qualities, not least his ability to turn a blind eye on occasion.'⁵⁵ Peter Tennant had a less flattering view of Günther, remarking that he was usually defeatist and did not have the qualities he regarded as necessary for a Foreign Minister, leaving much of the delicate work of diplomacy to his officials.⁵⁶ What this meant, though, for the British Council was that as long as Günther and his ally Bagge

⁵¹ Grafström, Sven, *Anteckningar 1938-1944* (Utgivna genom Stig Ekman), (Kungl. Samfundet för utgivande av handskrifter rörande Skandinaviens historia, Stockholm, 1989) p.375 - entry for 18 December 1941. My thanks to Henrik Arnstad for directing me to this source.

⁵² Arnstad, Henrik, *Spelaren Christian Günther: Sverige under andra världskriget*, (Wahlström & Widstrand, Stockholm, 2006) p.89

⁵³ *Ibid*, p.86, 89

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p.407-408

⁵⁵ CAC MALT 1 Mallet, Victor. Copy of an unpublished memoir, 1919-46, p.66

⁵⁶ Tennant, *Touchlines*, p.31 and Arnstad, *Spelaren*, p.299

were in charge of foreign policy Ronald Bottrall would, by and large, be left alone to receive the same favourable treatment that the Germans were receiving. Günther and Bagge continued to attend British Council events throughout the war and it was noted in chapter two that the Council's summer school in Sigtuna in 1944, which Günther attended, persuaded him to hand over the wreckage of a prototype V2 bomb that had landed in Sweden to the British.⁵⁷ At least in the Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* the British Council seems to have received very fair treatment with regard to coverage of its events and particularly visiting lecturers, and could not have done so without the tacit support of Günther and Bagge. There were numerous articles, as we shall see later, on visits to Sweden by T S Eliot, William Holford and Sir Lawrence Bragg to name a few, as well as some prominent front-page pictures of Eliot and the English watercolour exhibition in early 1943.⁵⁸

Hasan Ali Yücel, the Turkish Education Minister, was, by contrast to Ministers in similar positions in other countries, far more pro-British and pro-British Council, and overtly so. It was shown in chapter three that Michael Grant, the British Council Representative in Turkey, and Yücel were good friends throughout the war and this access to the high political elite was essential for the Council's success. Grant noted that Yücel was 'the only member of the neutral Turkish Cabinet who was a hundred per cent in favour of ourselves and our allies (except Russia), and believed that we would win the war.'⁵⁹ It was not just Grant's impression either – it was clear to visitors, such as John Steegman who in December 1943 noted that '[c]learly he [Yücel] is extremely well-disposed to the Council, which is as well since he is the supreme head of all education in Turkey.'⁶⁰ Evidently Yücel's position was not then typical of the Turkish Cabinet, but he also commanded enough respect for his position to remain in post throughout this period which must have meant that being pro-British was not a career destroying move. Many officials within the Turkish Civil Service – Grant mentioned one particularly notorious official called Feridun Cemal Erkin at the Foreign Ministry – 'plugged away at the theme that the British Council was illegal' but their work does not appear to have much success.⁶¹ It certainly helped Yücel to be able to show to

⁵⁷ CAC MALT 1 Mallet, Victor. Copy of an unpublished memoir, 1919-46 p.157-8

⁵⁸ 'Engelsk poet föreläser här', *Dagens Nyheter*, (Stockholm, 21 April 1942) p.1; 'Fyra miljoner hus skall byggas i England', *Dagens Nyheter*, (Stockholm, 10 October 1942) p.12; "'Den måste jag se närmare på'", *Dagens Nyheter*, (Stockholm, 10 February 1943) p.1; 'Yngste Nobelpristagaren krigsutbildar naturvetare', *Dagens Nyheter*, (Stockholm, 18 April 1943) p.5

⁵⁹ Grant, *My first eighty years*, p.68

⁶⁰ KCA STE 2/2/4 Steegman, John. 'Travel Diary for Turkey and Palestine 1943-1944'. Diary entry for 29 December 1943

⁶¹ Grant, *My first eighty years*, p.71

others in the Turkish elite that he was able to get worthwhile support from the British Council for Turkish activities in education and culture and it was not simply a matter of Turkey allowing the Council in to do whatever they liked. Drawing English and technical teachers into the Halkevleri was clearly something that Yücel could show as a benefit to the Turkish economy and development generally. The fact that not only had Yücel been successful in getting long-term teachers and short-term lecturers all the way from Britain (which was not an easy journey during the war), he also had the added benefit of a visit from Robertson in 1943. Robertson did not visit any of the other countries in Europe where the Council operated, except for a brief stopover in Lisbon on his way to the Middle East and Turkey, and shows the importance of this area of the world to Robertson personally. Yücel noted to Robertson after his visit that

For a man who loves his country, it has given a great happiness to see that such an eminent and esteemed man as you should love it too. I shall treasure the photograph [sic], which you have been so kind to give, as a present from a friend, and shall keep it in my own house which you honoured by your visit. [Original in English]⁶²

Grant, in a covering letter for this note to Robertson, remarked that Robertson's visit had 'created an excellent impression' in Turkey and was widely reported in the newspapers - clearly events that boosted Yücel's position as Minister of Education.⁶³ The opening of the London Halkevi in February 1942 which Anthony Eden and Robertson attended together with '400 distinguished guests,' [original Turkish: '400 seçkin davetlinin'] also created a great impression in Ankara particularly in the newspaper *Halkın Sesi* as it was the only Halkevi outside of Turkey.⁶⁴ Robertson returned to lecture there after his visit to Turkey in July 1943, which was also well received in both London and Ankara with copies in Turkish being distributed to President İnönü and 'other friends among the head of [the Turkish] Government.'⁶⁵ The reception that the British Council received in the Turkish newspapers has not been examined in detail due to the lack of access to Turkish newspapers from the wartime period. However, as was discussed in chapter two, Grant reported that 'our friendly

⁶² CAC BRCO 2/6 Yücel, Hasan-Ali. Letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 11 April 1943

⁶³ CAC BRCO 2/6 Grant, Michael. Letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 15 April 1943, attaching *ibid.*

⁶⁴ 'HALKEVLERİNİN KURULUŞU VE ÇALIŞMALARI' at

<http://w3.balikesir.edu.tr/~mozasari/Halkevleri.htm> - particularly footnotes 21 and 22 which cite 'Londra Halkevi', *Halkın Sesi*, nr. 4467, 22 Kânunuevvel/Aralık (December) 1941 and 'Londra Halkevi açıldı', *Halkın Sesi*, nr. 4516, 21 Şubat (February) 1942, respectively.

⁶⁵ CAC BRCO 2/1 Deedes, Sir Wyndham. Letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 7 July 1943; CAC BRCO 2/2 Grant, Michael. Letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 23 September 1943

reception from the Turkish Press' caused friction between him and Embassy staff as it 'conflict[ed] strangely with the recurrent crises in commercial and other relations.'⁶⁶ It can safely be assumed therefore that the impression that the Council gave was a generally positive one, even if that impression was not a general one for Britain as a whole. The success of Grant and his Council colleagues in Turkey was obvious and their work provided reciprocal benefits for those in the Turkish Government, like Hasan-Ali Yücel, who associated with Council.

Unlike Turkey where the benefit of associating with the British Council to Yücel was clear, it was not such a straightforward story in Spain. The British Institute had been established without Starkie or the Council asking the Franco Government whether the decree of 14 June 1940 applied to the Council. Though inviting over seventy people to a housewarming party in late August perhaps was not everyone's idea of what the phrase 'to open in a small, unofficial way' actually meant, it was, however, small enough and discreet enough for the Spanish Foreign Minister not to object.⁶⁷ This was confirmed a few weeks later by Beigbeder, who invited Starkie for an interview with him. Starkie reported that Beigbeder 'said that he would put no restrictions on my work and would not press too strictly the conditions laid down at the beginning.'⁶⁸ However, though Beigbeder was fortunate to secure Alba's blessing for Starkie's appointment and had successfully allowed the British Institute to open, ultimately Beigbeder had failed to secure his own position more generally and had shown his hand too readily in associating with Hoare to be able to stay in post. The appointment of Starkie was one of many contributory factors leading to his downfall on 16 October 1940. Sir Samuel Hoare noted in his memoirs that Beigbeder was

a doomed man. The completeness of his conversion [to the Allied side] and the panache that he waved over it had delivered him into the German hands. Serrano Suñer's opportunity had come. Franco, who habitually suppressed all independent ministers except his brother-in-law, could not permit his Minister for Foreign Affairs [Beigbeder] to proclaim his confidence in a corrupt and decadent England.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ CAC BRCO 1/2 Grant, Michael. Letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 30 August, 1943

⁶⁷ TNA BW 56/6 Starkie, Walter. Letter to A J S White, 27 August 1940.

⁶⁸ TNA BW 56/2 Starkie, Walter. Telegram to Lord Lloyd. Undated, though clearly late September 1940 from dates of handwritten notes on the telegram.

⁶⁹ Hoare, *Ambassador*, p.71

Beigbeder's rival and successor as Foreign Minister could not have been more different in his policy towards Britain generally and the British Council specifically. Serrano Suñer was pro-Nazi and anti-British, and held a great deal of influence over the Spanish press, which made communicating information about events happening at the institute very difficult. Hoare again noted

I was now faced with a grim prospect. Hitherto, the Foreign Minister with whom I had been dealing had been a convinced friend of the Allies. Now his place had been taken by the man who was not only his irreconcilable enemy, but was at the same time the moving spirit of the Falange and the leader of the Axis party in Spain. To make matters worse, the well-known intimacy between Beigbeder and myself made it very unlikely that I should be able to exercise any influence over his vindictive and hostile successor.⁷⁰

Serrano Suñer's opinion of Beigbeder (written in his memoirs published in 1977) was that he was 'capable of a thousand follies' [OSpAJ] and though originally pro-German at the beginning of the war he became pro-British within a year having being 'seduced' by Hoare [OSpAJ].⁷¹ For as long as Serrano Suñer was Foreign Minister, the omens did not bode well for the success of the Council. Even Serrano Suñer, though, understood that although he could isolate and restrict the activities of the Council, he could not close down the institute without causing a diplomatic crisis with Britain, which Franco was not prepared to do in 1940.

Serrano Suñer's views on the British Council specifically are not recorded either in his memoirs or in the archives of the Spanish Foreign Ministry, but his views generally about Britain were clear enough for his staff to know that they would need to restrict the activities of the Council to the bare minimum, which is exactly what happened publicly. If Serrano Suñer's control over the Spanish press had been extensive prior to becoming Foreign Minister, it was now near-absolute thereby thwarting the small amount of publicity that the Council may have had, had Beigbeder remained in office. Behind the scenes, though, it was a different story. Either Serrano Suñer's influence was not as great as he would have liked amongst the Spanish elites, or he turned a blind eye to the activities of the British Institute, but he was seemingly unable or unwilling to stop the Spanish elites from attending its events. For example, under Serrano Suñer's tenure as Foreign Minister the British Institute even attracted

⁷⁰ Hoare, *Ambassador*, p.75

⁷¹ Serrano Suñer, Ramón, *Entre el silencio y la propaganda la Historia como fue Memorias*, (Editorial Planeta, Barcelona, 1977) p.266

members of the Falange (the movement of which Hoare described Serrano Suñer as being the 'moving spirit') as students and attendees of its events.⁷² Starkie also reported that the first major lecture series conducted in the Instituto Britanico by a touring lecturer - that of Sir James Purves-Stewart in January 1941 - was attended by Government officials and the scientific elite of Madrid in clear defiance of Serrano Suñer's public wishes. Starkie wrote

His [Sir James Purves-Stewart's] visit has been a great boon to the Institute for it has brought into our orbit all the principal men of science and doctors in Madrid. I made a special point of entertaining them and getting them into personal touch with Sir James. Everyone was delighted and I was told by members of the Government that Great Britain was very wise in sending abroad men of great prestige and technical ability. It was significant that Sir James in his lectures did not play down to his audience but kept them at the highest level of his profession, in this way he won over the sympathies of the Spanish doctors. The lecturers we need from England in Spain are those who will talk as masters of their subject; in this way there is no fear of political propaganda creeping in.⁷³

Commenting specifically on the pro-German propaganda in the Spanish newspapers, Starkie noted

[T]hose of us who know Spain through and through after many years of experience did not feel dismayed at the sight of this anti-Britain façade, for we were conscious that behind it there is always throughout the whole country an innate sympathy for England - a sympathy which no amount of foreign propaganda can destroy.⁷⁴

It appears that the bombastic and overt political propaganda in Spanish newspapers was so out of touch with what the Spanish elite actually wanted to read, according to Starkie at least, it had little effect. Although Serrano Suñer's policy of anti-British propaganda pervaded the operation of his Foreign Ministry machine through what resembled a 'go slow' principle wherever possible, he never developed a policy of destroying the British Council's work. He allowed the Council to do what it wanted

⁷² TNA BW 56/3 Starkie, Walter. Letter to Lord Lloyd, 15 January 1941

⁷³ TNA BW 56/3 Starkie, Walter. Letter to Lord Lloyd, 15 January 1941

⁷⁴ TNA BW 56/2 Starkie, Walter. 'The British Institute in Madrid' - article for "The Times" undated, but late 1940.

by and large as he knew significant sections of the Spanish elites wanted the Instituto Británico to exist and succeed, but instead he decided not to react quickly to its needs. Examples of this range from the relatively small-scale but essential help that the Foreign Ministry gave to the Council in arranging for material sent from London (designated as being for diplomatic purposes) that got caught up in customs disputes, to the approval being given for lecturers to be able to attend the institute.⁷⁵ In one approval for lecturers Hugh Ruttledge and Laurence Binyon to travel to Madrid, the Spanish Foreign Ministry wrote:

[The Ministry] has the honour to signify that at the moment and in principle we have no objection to the holding of conference on mountaineering and British poetry respectively by Mr Hugh Ruttledge and Mr Laurence Binyon, with the understanding, of course, that appropriate time be requested by the British Institute in the capital for the relevant regulatory approvals to be obtained for each of these conferences [OSpA].⁷⁶

That is what Serrano Suñer's policy seemed to be aiming at – making things difficult where possible, but nothing more proactive because Serrano Suñer did not have the control over the elites that he needed in order to stop the activities. Starkie commented to Robertson in September 1941 that he felt that it was solely down to himself being a *persona grata* of the Spanish state that Serrano Suñer had not felt able to do anything more active against the Council. Starkie wrote:

I do not think that it is fully realised in London how heavy has been my task in starting our work here and how ruthless and indefatigable our adversaries have been against us. Zuloaga, the painter, who is a personal friend of Sr. Serrano Suñer, told me that greater difficulties would have been put in my way as Director of this Institute had I not been *persona grata* here owing to my writings and my connection with Spain over many years. For this reason I made as full use as possible of my personal connections with the cultural and musical and artistic life of the Spanish capital.... I have made the acquaintance

⁷⁵ MAEC AG Leg R 1012/244. Starkie, Walter. Letter to Ramon Serrano Suñer, 17 April 1942; MAEC AG Leg R 1012/260. British Embassy in Madrid. Note 441 (70B/6/42) to Spanish Foreign Ministry, 15 May 1942; MAEC AG Leg R 1012/260 Spanish Foreign Ministry, Nota Verbal to British Embassy in Madrid, 30 May 1942; MAEC AG Leg R 1317/13 British Embassy in Madrid. Note 818 to Spanish Foreign Ministry, 15 October 1941; MAEC AG Leg R 1317/13 Spanish Foreign Ministry. Minuta Num 649 to British Embassy in Madrid, 30 October 1941.

⁷⁶ MAEC AG Leg R 1317/13 Spanish Foreign Ministry. Minuta Num 649 to British Embassy in Madrid, 30 October 1941.

of the Jesuit Padre Otaño, the Director of the Conservatoire here, and a great personal friend and confidant of General Franco and Sr. Serrano Suñer... Padre Otaño has promised to do his best to secure me an interview with Sr. Suñer and to support our claim for expansion.⁷⁷

There does not appear to be any record of a Starkie-Serrano Suñer meeting but it seems clear that Serrano Suñer's opinion of Starkie personally was good enough or not bad enough for his close friends to believe that a meeting would be possible. His dislike of Britain was more a mixture of his political beliefs against the British way of life and domination of the world rather than being a vendetta against specific individuals.

In Stockholm, Swedish Government officials also seem to have been far more interested in the individual of the British Council's representative, Ronald Bottrall, than the British Council's work in the country generally. The secret police followed Bottrall regularly and examined his motives for various meetings. The secret police reports on him are rather revealing about the official view of Bottrall. 'From newspaper photographs Bottrall appears to be Jewish' [OSwAJ] wrote Otto Danielson, who had been following Bottrall's movements, which speaks volumes of the ingrained anti-Semitism of the time in Sweden.⁷⁸ Another description by an agent known as 'Cassel', wrote, and drew, a very unflattering portrait of how Bottrall appeared to the Swedes:

Around 190 cm tall, slim, poor posture, with a long stride, short neck and round head, the nose is long and thin and seems segmented, (see illustration [reproduced right]), eyes protruding with thin eyelids and slightly melancholic, large mouth when talking. Bare crown. He behaves carelessly at the table, sitting crooked, talking with food in his mouth, is loud etc., (observed at lunch) [OSwAJ].⁷⁹



Sketched tall portrait.

Figure 18

Throughout Bottrall's file held at the Riksarkivet in Stockholm, there is little interest shown actually in the cultural side of the British Council's work. Bottrall was followed largely for political and security reasons. A number of the intercepted

⁷⁷ TNA BW 56/3 Starkie, Walter. Letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 17 September 1941

⁷⁸ RAS P3206 Danielsson, Otto. Letter to Captain G. von Döbeln, 12 February, 1942

⁷⁹ RAS P3206 Cassel, 'P.M. ang. Francis James Ronald Bottrall', 21 September 1942.

telephone conversations reported in the file soon after Bottrall's arrival in Sweden were picked up because the word 'political' was mentioned.⁸⁰ This approach perhaps had the disadvantage of a lack of official interest in the cultural work of the Council, but had a greater advantage in the fact that as long as Bottrall and the other Council staff kept to cultural events and made only cultural contacts, they would be by and large left alone to make progress in any way they saw fit with the Swedish elites (outside of Government) and beyond. Take, for example, the report of the agent who attended the opening of the British Council's watercolour exhibition in February 1943:

Among the first to appear was Mr and Mrs [Victor] Mallet. Later there was Mr [Ronald] Bottrall and a lady, who was probably his wife, and Mr Urquhart and Mr [Roger] Hinks. Through an acquaintance, I had heard that Mr. Hinks was 'Director Roger', as she called him, who knew the art well and had an art dealer trade or similar in London. Eventually there gathered a whole lot of people, both Swedish and English, but I did not know any of them and did not get to know any further names successfully. In all probability, it can be determined that the Head of the British Council in London, who was expected to be in Stockholm, was not present. He would have been there for the arrival of the Crown Prince and Crown Princess, and he would have been presented to them. However, it was mainly Minister Mallet himself, who showed them around [the exhibition] [OSwA].⁸¹

The agent was clearly not particularly interested in the exhibition from an artistic point of view, but more interested in who might be attending. Some members of the official Swedish elite were interested in the visitors who arrived from Britain from a cultural point of view, however. Sven Grafström, a Head of Division in the Swedish Foreign Ministry, was particularly interested in the arrival of Harold Nicolson, whom he met on a number of occasions during his visit to Sweden in October 1943. Nicolson, he remarked

is as fascinating a human in society and as a lecturer, as he is in his books, which I read a lot. When he talks about the tradition of English life - which he does with intense expertise and restrained pathos - one seems to understand

⁸⁰ RAS P3206 'Avskrift ur P. 262', 7 January 1942; 'Avskrift' 20 February 1942.

⁸¹ RAS P3206 Welauesou, Tula [? difficult to read name]. Report on the opening of the British Council's watercolour exhibition, 9 February 1943.

better the properties which make the British such skilled imperialists.
[OSwA]]⁸²

And Grafström was not the only person who was delighted that Nicolson had made the journey to Stockholm. There were numerous reports in the Swedish press about his arrival and his lectures. They considered him to be the most 'distinguished' of the guests that the British Council had sent over the North Sea, and were pleasantly surprised that Nicolson was open and frank about the state of Britain after years of war, the role of food rationing, and how the reconstruction of Europe would take many years.⁸³ Nicolson was taken aback by the reception that he received in Sweden. He noted in a letter to his sons, Benedict and Nigel that:

At first I could not understand the fuss that was made of me. I thought they must imagine that I was far more important than I really am. But I think that it was merely that they hate the Germans and like welcoming Englishmen. Moreover, they were flattered that an elderly M[ember of] P[arliament] should trouble to undertake so hazardous a journey on their behalf.⁸⁴

Nicolson's supposition was a common one amongst British visitors to Sweden – the Swedes of both official and non-official opinion, it seems, were so surprised that Britain bothered sending lecturers to a country that was neutral and difficult to get to in wartime, that they were very keen to show their appreciation. This sentiment matches well with the theories mentioned in chapter one regarding the 'Handicap Principle' by Amotz and Avishag Zahavi as well as Robin Wight's 'Peacock's Tail and the Reputation Reflex'. Going beyond what is expected or necessary for survival – being able to show that resources can be 'wasted' through the sending of lecturers to neutral countries instead of on military equipment and the armed forces – can pay dividends in terms of increasing and reinforcing the reputation and status. Only the successful can be seen to 'waste' resources in this way.⁸⁵

⁸² Grafström, *Anteckningar*, p.516 Diary entry for 24 October 1943

⁸³ 'Ransonering i England en tid efter kriget slut', *Dagens Nyheter*, (Stockholm, 20 October 1943) p.1; 'Reorganisation av Europa skall föregå fredsslutet: Harold Nicolson har inte mött krigströtthet hos det engelska folket', *Dagens Nyheter*, (Stockholm, 20 October 1943) p.4; 'Den lilla ön utanför Holland födde fem stora nationer. Harold Nicolson om revolutionen i brittiska imperietanken' *Dagens Nyheter*, (Stockholm, 22 October 1943) p.7

⁸⁴ Nicolson, Harold. Letter to his sons Benedict Nicolson and Nigel Nicolson, 7 November 1943 reproduced in Nicolson, Nigel (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries & Letters 1939-1945*, (Collins: Fontana Books, 1970) p.328

⁸⁵ Zahavi and Zahavi, *The Handicap Principle*; and Wight, *The Peacock's Tail*, particularly p.20.

The alignment between official and non-official opinion in Spain was not so apparent. For despite the anti-British propaganda supported through the Serrano Suñer-sanctioned press in Spain, there was a rapid increase in student numbers and popularity of the institute in early 1942 to the extent that invitations had to be restricted due to lack of space in the building.⁸⁶ The lectures of Purves-Stewart were also only the start of a successful number of events taking place within the institute including talks by Arnold Lunn, an Olympic athlete, and a series of concerts by the soprano Astra Desmond during late 1941 followed by Thomas Bodkin and Professor Cairns in 1942.⁸⁷ Having said that, however, the activities of the British Council in Spain were still restricted to taking place inside the institute building itself. To an extent, therefore, perhaps Serrano Suñer considered that it was better to allow this outlet of pro-Britishness to flourish in Madrid and freely allow the elites to attend if they wanted to, and not to force it underground. By keeping it alive, but only in the institute building, he could control its movements and influence beyond the institute. This certainly appears to be plausible explanation of his policy. But the tide was turning against Serrano Suñer - Starkie reported in May 1942 that the Spanish newspapers were keen to start reporting the events of the institute in detail and reporters started to attend the events. They were prevented from reporting the events by Serrano Suñer, but it was only a matter of time before the pressure on Serrano Suñer would begin to have an effect.⁸⁸ On 3 September 1942, Franco sacked Serrano Suñer due to an attempted assassination in Valladolid which he suspected was Serrano Suñer-inspired, and replaced him with Conde de Jordana, who had been Foreign Minister previously, just prior to the war, and had been driven out of office due to his opposition to the Axis. Franco's appointment of Jordana was a clear signal that he had decided to be far less anti-British from then on. Jordana ensured that Spain remained firmly neutral in the autumn of 1942 whilst the British armed forces amassed in Gibraltar for the invasion of French North Africa - Operation Torch - on 8 November. 'What' Hoare remarked, 'would have happened in these weeks if Serrano Suñer had still been in office?'⁸⁹

⁸⁶ TNA BW 56/4 Starkie, Walter. Letter to A J S White, 19 January 1942

⁸⁷ MAEC AG Leg R 1317/13 The British Embassy. Note No. 787 to Spanish Foreign Ministry, 13 October 1941; 'The British Institute...' invitation to a concert with Astra Desmond, November 1941; Starkie, Professor Walter [British Council Representative in Madrid]. Letter to 'Marquis' unclear who this is but referred to in the letter as a relative of 'Juan Valera' so could possibly be Enrique Valera at the Spanish Foreign Ministry, 13 November 1941. TNA BW 82/9 'The British Council: Report for the Second Quarter, 1942', July 1942 p.3

⁸⁸ TNA BW 56/4 Starkie, Professor Walter. Letter to Martin Blake, 12 May 1942.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p.176

The events in Spain in the late summer and early autumn of 1942 with Serrano Suñer's dismissal, also affected Portugal and the British Council's involvement there. Monteiro noted an 'unexpected change' [OPAJ] in the attitude within the British Council in the relative importance between Portugal and Spain.⁹⁰ Monteiro reported to Salazar that he had been told that the Council's position had changed because

Spain is a country that, having started from an enemy position, day-by-day moves towards us, their interest in England *is rising*. Portugal, however, despite the treaties of alliance, tends to move away from us [OPAJ] - italics as original in Rosas et al, *Armando Monteiro*].⁹¹

Due to 'interventions of higher stations' [OPAJ] within the British Government, the Council was now to send lecturers who were originally bound for Portugal, onto Spain, in order to try to capitalise on the new situation resulting from the change of Foreign Minister in Madrid.⁹² By reporting this to Salazar, Monteiro clearly regarded it as an important development and could have implications beyond the role of the British Council. Portugal was still sulking from the arrival of Australian troops in neutral Portuguese East Timor in late 1941 and early 1942 to try to pre-empt a Japanese invasion of the island. Although there was a pragmatic reason for the troops' arrival to try to prevent the island of Timor becoming a base for an invasion of Australia by Japan, the Portuguese took it as an insult to their sovereignty. Gogay, the British Council's boxing instructor at the *Mocidade Portuguesa* certainly noted that the Timor effect had had significant bearing on his dismissal, in a letter to Robertson.⁹³ Now that Portugal's foremost rival, Spain, was being seen as more important than Portugal by the British Council, there was yet another reason for Portuguese pride to feel bruised. Earlier on in the war, when the Oxford University delegation visited Portugal to confer the honorary degree on Salazar, they were careful not to venture over the border, though it was considered and Spanish visas were requested from the Spanish consulate in London.⁹⁴ Professor William Entwistle, one of the delegation, noted that there was a concern that 'it would weaken the impression in Portugal if the Oxford mission were to go on to Spain. It would seem as if we could not find enough to interest us in the

⁹⁰ Monteiro, Armando. Letter to Oliveira Salazar, 26 September 1942 reproduced in Rosas et al, *Armando Monteiro*, Document 54, p.306

⁹¹ *Ibid.* It is unclear who the British official is, but they have a connection to the British Council (there is a reference to a 'Sir Ronald' but it is unclear whether this is the person quoted).

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ TNA BW 52/13 Gogay, George. Letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 6 November 1942

⁹⁴ TNA BW 52/8 Read, T. Letter to Spanish Consulate-General, 8 April 1941.

country we had come to visit.⁹⁵ Not anymore. The Council saw the opportunity of cashing in on a more benevolent Spain and it seemed prepared to accept the consequences of how this might be viewed in Portugal. A culmination of Spanish-Portuguese rivalry, which the British Council played a part through Monteiro's feedback to Salazar about the *Mocidade* and Portugal's position generally towards the Council's work, was perhaps one reason for the Portuguese agreement to allow Britain and the United States to use air bases in the Azores in August 1943.⁹⁶ Although Spanish approval for the British to use bases in the Canary Islands was a remote possibility, it may be that Salazar was keen to show Britain that its relationship with Portugal was more beneficial than anything that could be gleaned from Franco's regime.

For the British Council in Spain, nothing actually changed overnight, but with time the restrictions placed on the British Institute by Serrano Suñer were lifted and the Council was, at last, able to reach out more publicly to a wider Spanish audience. The Marqués de Lozoya, the Spanish Minister for Fine Arts, as was noted in chapter three, was described by John Steegman as 'rather in the hands of the Germans' but attended an art exhibition at the Instituto Britanico on 13 November 1942 for the first time – five days after the Allied invasion of North Africa.⁹⁷ But he was clearly not someone who had changed his opinion of Britain so much so quickly as to no longer attend the German institute's events. In the Spanish newspaper *ABC* it was reported that he had helped organise a concert at the German institute – the *Instituto Aleman de Cultura* – and he attended it 'along with prominent personalities of Spanish cultural life' [OSpAJ].⁹⁸ *ABC*'s report was dated 13 February 1943, exactly three months after Steegman's note. Steegman's observation of the fact that Lozoya had 'accepted tonight's invitation [in November 1942] willingly and promises to come to the Institute on Sunday; perhaps events change opinions?' was either naïve, premature or perhaps more accurately a reflection of the start of a long road that Lozoya was on to start to infiltrate himself into pro-British circles.⁹⁹ Ironically, in the case of Baroja, when formerly pro-German Spaniards, like Lozoya, started visiting the institute, he actually started visiting less often, stating '[i]t has all changed with the circumstances and I will end up not coming here' [OSpAJ].¹⁰⁰ The British Council had to strike a balance, of

⁹⁵ TNA BW 52/8 Entwistle, William. Letter to A J S White, 22 February 1941

⁹⁶ Roberts, *Um Toque Decisivo*, p. 55-56

⁹⁷ KCA STE 2/2/2 Travel Diary entitled 'Visit to Spain and Portugal 1942-3'. Diary entry for 13 November 1942

⁹⁸ 'Instituto Aleman de Cultura – Concierto de canto', *ABC* (Madrid, 13 February 1943) p.10

⁹⁹ KCA STE 2/2/2 John Steegman's Travel Diary entitled 'Visit to Spain and Portugal 1942-3'. Diary entry for 13 November 1942

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p.11

course, between maintaining its core audience and reaching out beyond to indifferent and hostile elites and manage the inevitable conflicts which would result by doing so. The changing of sympathies in Sweden was noted by Anthony Bottrall, Ronald's son, who stated that

I recall my mother saying how uncomfortable she felt about previously pro-German Swedes becoming ever more ingratiating [towards the British Council] as the war went on.¹⁰¹

In Spain this difficulty was even more acute because not only was there a World War in progress with people sympathetic to either side, but the recent Civil War had torn the country apart. As Steegman noted:

The Civil War ended 3½ years ago, and there has been no political amnesty. Since about half Spain was on the "other" side, I suppose it follows (the Spaniards having an almost Irish memory for grievances) that all those people regard themselves as opposed to the regime.¹⁰²

Still in February 1944 famous English language books such as *Gone with the Wind* (despite Leslie Howard's role in the film of the book, and his subsequent visit to Spain), *Rebecca* and *Wuthering Heights* continued to be banned in Spain, which shows just how far the British Council had to come to overturn the ingrained anti-British views in many areas of the Spanish Government. It was noted on the list, however, that 'in England, this may cause a very bad effect' [OSpA] which was a recognition that views of Britain could no longer be ignored.¹⁰³

Until 1943, the British Institute in Madrid was the only British Institute in Spain largely for fear of being seen to be promoting Catalan (in Barcelona) and Basque (in Bilbao) separatism. In addition to this whilst Sir Samuel Hoare, the British Ambassador in Madrid, had given his consent to a Barcelona institute in 1941, he changed his mind with the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June of that year, fearing an extension of the Council's work would be inappropriate, now that Britain and the Soviets were allies, as the Communist influence on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War was still a fresh memory.¹⁰⁴ Later in the war when Germany was on the back foot militarily,

¹⁰¹ Bottrall, Anthony. Email to Edward Corse, 29 September 2008.

¹⁰² KCA STE 2/2/2 Travel Diary entitled 'Visit to Spain and Portugal 1942-3'. Diary entry for 1 December, 1942 p.41

¹⁰³ MAEC AG Leg R 5261/9 'Libros Prohibidos en España', 17 February 1944

¹⁰⁴ TNA BW 56/6 Starkie, Walter. Letter to Martin Blake, 5 July, 1941.

institutes started to be opened in Barcelona and Bilbao as well as Seville, but even then those institutes were deliberately publicised as branches of the institute in Madrid, rather than as autonomous institutes. Conde de Jordana had informally given Starkie his backing on this basis.¹⁰⁵ Starkie was very aware of the difficulties and in his official report of the situation wrote:

Barcelona today presents many difficulties to our mission in Spain, owing to the separatist elements which are so general there. If one had only to think of Barcelona, or indeed Catalonia, it would be very easy to push right ahead and play up to the Catalan intellectuals, many of whom are brilliant writers and charming personalities, especially as those Catalan separatists are 100% pro-British. If we did this it would be not only to destroy our work, but the Institute in Barcelona would have a very short life indeed. In Barcelona we must be careful not to play too public a game. We have to go slowly because of the present Government in Spain. Any of us who play up to the separatist elements in this country whether the the [sic] Catalan, the Basque or the Galician type, injures the British mission at present, for the Spanish authorities are doing all in their power to preserve a unified Spain.... It is for this reason that I intend to keep a close watch on the work of [Christopher] Howard [the Director of the British Institute in Barcelona] and his staff in Barcelona. There is no reason why we should not be on good terms with all the Catalans without mixing up in their internal politics.¹⁰⁶

The official letter from the Embassy to Jordana again stressed the subsidiary nature of the Barcelona institute to Madrid, though the reply appeared to suggest that the Spanish Government was not as concerned about the independence of the Barcelona institute as Hoare or Starkie had feared.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, during the spring and summer of 1943, records in the *Archivo General de la Administracion* show that the Spanish Government was looking to substantially improve cultural relations with Britain and was undertaking an assessment of the feasibility of an Instituto Britanico-style Spanish institute in London. This would exist, it was hoped, alongside the

¹⁰⁵ TNA BW 56/6 Starkie, Walter. Letter to A J S White, 29 March 1943 referencing a meeting with Conde de Jordana in November 1942.

¹⁰⁶ TNA BW 56/6 Starkie, Walter. 'Professor Starkie's Official Report on the arrangements made for starting the new Institute in Barcelona', 25 August 1943.

¹⁰⁷ TNW BW 56/6 British Embassy, Madrid [i.e. Samuel Hoare] to Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs [i.e. Conde de Jordana], 6 July 1943; and TNA BW 56/6 Translation of Letter from Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs [i.e. Conde de Jordana] to British Embassy in Madrid [i.e. Samuel Hoare], 20 August 1943

funding scholarships, encouraging Anglo-Hispanic Societies and working through the Spanish Department at the University of London. The British Council's work was being seen as a model for reciprocating its work in London, and it seems clear that Jordana was keen to learn as much as possible from the activities of the Council in Spain.¹⁰⁸

To conclude this section regarding the official 'other side' view of the British Council's work in neutral European countries, it seems clear that the war going on outside had a significant effect on that view in a number of different ways. In Spain the changing of the Foreign Minister along with changes in the war situation over time benefited the Council's work by allowing it more freedom to publicise its work. Later in the chapter it will be shown how the non-official Spanish elite took advantage of this situation, by being increasingly bold in their interaction with the Council. In Sweden, Christian Günther by and large allowed the Council to do as it wished as long as the Swedish Government was not asked to give more concessions to the Council than those being given to the Germans. In Turkey, the support of Hasan-Ali Yücel was crucial to Michael Grant in the British Council's success, but it was also crucial to Yücel that he could show real benefits to allowing the Council to be so influential. In Portugal there was a fear that the Council would start to concentrate on Spain in preference to Portugal and began to try to show the worthiness to the Council of its work in Portugal to the Portuguese. Overall, however, the most significant conclusion appears to be that the official elite tended to see the Council as an opportunity or a threat to their own influence in their home country, and, particularly for Portugal, their country's position in the wider world. As a general rule, when the war was going badly for Britain, they saw it as a threat; when the war was going well for Britain, they saw it as an opportunity. A more detailed examination shows that it was not always quite that straightforward – Starkie, for example, was seen as a *persona grata* in Spain that even Serrano Suñer did not go as far as he perhaps wished in restricting the Council's work. But as a general rule it worked.

There are two interesting references showing the views of Salazar and Franco at the end or soon after the end of the war, which show their renewed personal interest in the Council's work, now that the Council did not pose a threat, but only an

¹⁰⁸ AGA 54/6839 Pastor, A R (University of London). Letter to Viscount Mambblas (Spanish Embassy in London) 1 March 1943 attaching report entitled 'Informe relativo a las posibilidades de expansion de las relaciones culturales entre España y la Gran Bretaña'. Also see note entitled 'Relaciones Culturales Entre España y Gran Bretaña,' 22 July 1943

opportunity for their own countries. Firstly, after a visit to Portugal in May 1945, W H Montagu-Pollock and George Hall, from the Foreign Office, reported a conversation that they had had with Salazar, which stated:

Dr. Salazar expressed his satisfaction with the Council's work in Portugal, drawing attention to its importance for the furtherance of Anglo-Portuguese relations, and added that he shortly hoped to make English the first foreign language in the Portuguese education system.¹⁰⁹

Secondly, Franco sent Starkie a message on 8 January 1946 telling him that he wished to see him the following day, and Starkie readily complied, and reported his interview to the new British Ambassador to Spain, Sir Victor Mallet, who had moved from his post in Sweden.

He started off by informing me that he had followed very closely the work of the British Institute in Madrid and the branches in other parts of Spain, ever since the beginning. I was able to prove that he was exceedingly well informed about all that we have tried to do in Spain ever since 1940.... [H]e welcomed the possibility of strengthening the cultural bond between nations: "we need to know one another", he said, not just to speak one another's languages but to know how we live, what our general masses think, what each of us has to offer the other in the way of science, technical equipment, literature, art, ideas." He then questioned me upon the methods I had adopted in the early difficult days of 1940. I told him about the methods we had adopted and how we had tried to make the Institutes real centres so that the Spaniards who came to us would find themselves in an English atmosphere.... He gave me the impression of being extremely friendly to Great Britain and he was certainly most complimentary about the work that we had achieved.¹¹⁰

Both reports could be viewed with a cynical eye and the conclusion drawn that this was a sign of two quasi-fascist dictators trying to integrate themselves into a post-fascist world, and trying their level best to flatter Britain and the work of the British Council in particular. Although there is a strong element of truth in this, both reports also show that the Council's work was known in some detail at the highest level in both Spain and Portugal and seen as an important element in relationships with

¹⁰⁹ Eastment, 'The policies', 1982 p.103 citing TNA BW 2/111 Foreign Office Report on a visit to Council Institute abroad, 1945.

¹¹⁰ TNA BW 56/7 Starkie, Walter. Letter to Sir Victor Mallet, 11 January 1946

Britain. Franco even recognised that the conditions in Spain for the British Council during 1940 had not been easy. Although no apology is apparent, he showed an admiration for the dogged determination that Starkie had shown in the early years. The Council, it is clear, had achieved recognition from the official elites that cultural relations were important, and the way that the Council had carried out its cultural propaganda had a large amount of respect from those official elites. And those official elites now hoped to benefit further from associating themselves with the work of the Council.

4.3 Non-official views of the British Council

The second part of this chapter will focus on the views on the 'non-official' elites - i.e. the elites outside of the Government. Amongst the non-official elites, the actual cultural work of the Council was usually more important than the potential political and security implications that were a higher priority in official circles. Non-official elites saw the Council naturally as a source of information to a world that neutral people were otherwise temporarily severed. This was particularly the case for Sweden which prior to the war had been fairly well integrated with the British and American worlds of scientific research. For example, Sir Lawrence Bragg, in his diary about his trip to Sweden in April and May 1943, recorded that

[t]he scientists said how much they were cut off from England and begged me to get for them the Proceedings of the Royal Society and Science Abstracts. They get Nature at the Hogskola, but nothing else.¹¹¹

As with Nicolson's visit, mentioned earlier, reports in Swedish newspapers of other British Council lecturers such as Bragg, William Holford - a leading British architect - and T S Eliot, also gave an impression that the Swedish elites were genuinely interested in the cultural aspects of the British Council's work because they had been isolated for so long from British cultural events. In the *Dagens Nyheter's* report of Bragg's arrival it noted that there had been 'poor contact during the war' between Britain and Sweden, and that Bragg was there to improve it.¹¹² Bragg noted later in his diary that

¹¹¹ RI W L BRAGG 70B Diary of Sir Lawrence Bragg covering his trip to Sweden for the British Council p19 (for Friday 7 May 1943)

¹¹² 'Yngste Nobelpristagaren krigsutbildar naturvetare', *Dagens Nyheter*, (Stockholm, 18 April 1943) p5

[b]eing the first physicist to be sent out by the Council I was warmly welcomed by all the Swedish physicists and chemists, and made very valuable contacts. I have brought back with me numerous commissions to execute on their behalf. They are very keen to get closer contacts with our people; in fact it is impossible to exaggerate their eagerness to work with us. I got the impression that now that our fortunes are brightening, many Swedish scientists who did not like to express their sympathy with us openly are feeling bolder.¹¹³

Clearly the view of Swedish scientists was in flux during the war. The pro-British scientists were keen to re-establish the links that they had prior to the war but there were indifferent (or perhaps more accurately described as 'pro-British but not wishing to show it whilst the Germans were in the ascendancy militarily') scientists who were keen to develop links with Britain through the British Council either because of a latent pro-Britishness or because they could see where the war was heading. At a macro level, therefore, the way the British Council was viewed and the way in which people in foreign countries responded to its work could not be divorced from the course of war. In this way they were no different to the official elites. However, it would be a mistake to see how the Council was viewed at a day-to-day level as being linked directly to the war - there was a genuine need for the scientific communities in particular to interact with a wider world and the British Council provided that method of interaction. It was just that that wider world which they wanted to interact with was no longer German, but British.

Even before Bragg had arrived in Sweden, he received numerous invitations from Swedish scientists to lecture at their institutions. One such invitation came from Professor Percy Quensel of the *Mineralogiska Institutionen* in the *Stockholms Högskola*, who wrote to Bragg stating:

We got to hear through the British Council that you might be expected [sic] to come over about the middle of April. On mentioning this at a faculty meeting, the Faculty resolved to formally invite you to lecture at the university. I need not say how pleased we will be to see you here again [Original in English].¹¹⁴

¹¹³ RI W L BRAGG 70A/63 Bragg, Sir Lawrence. Letter to Martin Blake 14 May 1943 (Bragg arrived back in Britain on the 13 May)

¹¹⁴ RI W L BRAGG 70A/21 Quensel, Professor Percy. Letter to Sir Lawrence Bragg, 19 March 1943.

Bragg and Quensel had met prior to the war in 1922 when Bragg had collected his Nobel Prize, but had not kept in touch. Quensel was now keen to make up for lost time and even offered Bragg the use of his flat during his stay, such was the eagerness for creating a warm welcome. 'Quensel and [Dr Arne] Westgren [of the Swedish Academy of Science] could not have been more hospitable or anxious to show their complete sympathy with the Allies,' noted Bragg in his diary.¹¹⁵ Similar invitations to lecture and to visit laboratories came from J A Hedvall of the *Chalmers Tekniska Högskola* in Gothenburg and Hans Pettersson of the *Ozeanografiska Institutet* in Gothenburg.¹¹⁶ Bragg gave a number of lectures and attended dinner parties and other events during his stay in Sweden, as can be seen in the photograph in Figure 19. Following Bragg's return to Britain, he kept up a correspondence with Quensel and Hedvall in particular and sent them copies of books and reprints of articles to maintain an Anglo-Swedish scientific dialogue during the latter part of the war.¹¹⁷

It was a similar story in Turkey. Turkish artists were keen to engage with the British Council because they saw the benefit of reaching a wider audience and a wider respect than could be achieved in one country, particularly a country that was effectively severed from the rest of the world at that time of war. In his diary, John Steegman noted the response he received at a reception in Turkey

[A]ttended a reunion given for me at the Eminonu Halkevi over in Stamboul by the Turkish Artists' and Sculptors' Union. An extremely successful party, friendly, informal and talkative. There was nothing of the uncomfortable political arrierepensee atmosphere that I rather feel at the Beaux-Arts tea-parties, and that was present even at the big cocktail-party on the 15th [February 1944]. They were simple artists, wistfully pining for information about what artists were doing in England. I'm afraid that what I was able to tell them about the War Artists and [the] C[ouncil for the] E[ncouragement of the] M[usic and the] A[rts] and the Carnegie Trust made them sick with envy: there is almost no

¹¹⁵ RI W L BRAGG 70B Diary of Sir Lawrence Bragg covering his trip to Sweden for the British Council p3 (for Saturday 17 April 1943)

¹¹⁶ RI W L BRAGG 70A/58 Hedvall, Professor J A. Letter to Sir Lawrence Bragg, 30 April 1943; and 70A/50 Pettersson, Hans. Letter to Sir Lawrence Bragg, 16 April 1943.

¹¹⁷ RI W L BRAGG 70A/177 Bragg, Sir Lawrence. Letter to Professor Percy Quensel, 14 September 1943; 70A/185 Hedvall, Professor J A. Letter to Bragg, 23 September 1943; 70A/192 Quensel, Professor Percy. Letter to Sir Lawrence Bragg, 4 October 1943; 70A/227 Hedvall, Professor J A. Letter to Sir Lawrence Bragg, 28 January 1944.



An excellent supper at Gothenburg

Figure 19: Sir Lawrence Bragg meeting prominent Swedish scientists in Gothenburg. Bragg is speaking to Professor J A Hedvall of the *Chalmers Tekniska Högskola* in Gothenburg¹¹⁸

patronage or practical encouragement of any kind for artists in Turkey, neither State, nor private, nor industrial nor municipal.¹¹⁹

The Nicolson effect (that of neutral country being surprised and flattered that the Council made the effort of sending lecturers to their country), which was evident in Sweden, was also plain to see in Turkey as it took even longer for British lecturers to arrive there. Robertson's own visit must have made a great impression on the Turkish people, as did the visits of others who made the effort like Steegman. Steegman noted his reception in Turkey in his travel diary, and the numbers of people who turned up to hear him talk. At first he seemed to suggest that his lectures were increasingly well received and well attended - for example on 16 February 1944, he wrote:

¹¹⁸ RI W L BRAGG 70B Picture in between p.20 and 21 of Bragg, Sir Lawrence. *Diary of visit to Sweden April-May 1943*. I am grateful to the Royal Institution for providing me with this copy and permission to use in this thesis.

¹¹⁹ KCA STE 2/2/4 Steegman, John. 'Travel Diary for Turkey and Palestine 1943-1944'. Diary entry for 26 February 1944

Gave my second lecture at the Faculty [of Letters], at 5 p.m. About 140 people, roughly twice the number at the first lecture. The room was quite full.¹²⁰

But over the time of his stay, the novelty and the effect of his visit appears to have worn off a bit, even though the weather may have been a factor in lower attendance figures:

My third lecture at the Faculty. The attendance was not as good as last week. Halideh [sic Halide Edip] charitably explained this on the ground of the atrocious weather: snow and sleet and N[orth] E[ast] wind.¹²¹

The word 'charitably' seems to suggest that Steegman was not convinced that the weather had anything to do with the lower attendance figures, and one of his last reports suggests a reason why:

Gave my fourth lecture at the Faculty. In conversation with Halideh [sic Halide Edip] afterwards, I found that her view is that the anti-British element in the Faculty is active and is not being discouraged by the Dean.¹²²

Clearly the British Council's success in getting lecturers placed all over Turkey, in the Halkevleri particularly but also in other institutions, though impressive was not all-pervasive. There were evidently elements within the Turkish intellectual elite who were either becoming tired of the British Council's efforts, or who had never been convinced that the Council's efforts were a benefit to them. Despite this negative effect, it also shows that the Turkish intellectual elite were keen to show their independence of the political, official elite, and the fact that the Council had done relatively well more generally in placing British lecturers. It perhaps demonstrates that the intellectual elite by and large agreed with what Yücel and his colleagues were doing to bring in outside lecturers from Britain, and saw the benefit to them of doing so and were keen to interact with a British cultural world that the Council represented.

In Spain, as the political situation was more delicate, the position of the non-official elites in their relationship with the British Council tended to appear far more dependent on the signals coming from the Government than in other countries but as has been shown this appearance was not always the reality. Nevertheless, soon after

¹²⁰ *Ibid* - entry for 16 February 1944

¹²¹ *Ibid* - entry for 23 February 1944

¹²² *Ibid* - entry for 1 March 1944

the sacking of Serrano Suñer and the Marqués de Lozoya's move to attend British Council events, Dr Robert McCance became the first British Council visitor to be invited to lecture outside of the British Institute itself – and the invitation came from leading scientists. As was explained in chapter three, McCance was actually invited to lecture by two different Spanish scientists – firstly by Franco's doctor, Jimenez Diaz, to talk at the Faculty of Medicine and then by Diaz's rival Dr. Carlos Blanco Soler, to speak at the *Academia Medico-Quirúrgica Española*.¹²³ These two invitations certainly give the impression that, now that the war looked as though it was turning in the Allies' favour and that the influence of Serrano Suñer had retreated, rivals within the Spanish elite were starting to fight out amongst themselves who could best curry favour with the British Institute. There is clearly a parallel here between the rivalry between Spain and Portugal where both parties were keen to show that they were the best friend of Britain, for their own interest. McCance, in his report of his visit to Spain, noted the differences between Diaz and Soler – Diaz, he wrote, ran an institute which 'struck me as being quite outside politics, and I felt they [the institute workers] were working on an international basis and deserved all our respect.'¹²⁴ Soler, on the other hand, was 'an important political counter... everything he did was for effect and for the glorification of Blanco Soler.'¹²⁵ Clearly politics was a significant force in Spain even outside of Government. In the Spanish newspapers, though McCance's visit was reported (which was rare for a British Council event at this time), Diaz's name was not mentioned at all but instead his rival Carlos Blanco Soler took all the credit. Though this may have been against what the British Council was aiming to do in the sense that it shied away from being seen as an institution designed for political propaganda purposes, it could benefit from the increased publicity from those within the elites, who wished to use the Council as an object from which to obtain political prestige. The fact that McCance also spoke in Spanish and on a topic that had a real significance in Spain since the Civil War – that of nutrition and health – (there had been outbreaks of typhus in Madrid in 1941 and 1942 resulting in many deaths) made McCance's visit something even more valuable to Diaz and Soler to associate themselves for purposes of increasing their own influence and status.¹²⁶ It should be noted that McCance's visit was still shown as a minor article in *ABC* compared to the events of the *Instituto Aleman de Cultura* (the German Cultural Institute) and the *Instituto de Cultura Italiana* (the

¹²³ TNA FD 1/6665 McCance, Dr. Robert Alexander, 'Report of Dr. R.A. McCance on his visit to the Iberian Peninsula', undated, but given to the British Council on 16 June 1943. p2

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, p3

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, p3-4

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, p.3, 5

Institute of Italian Culture) described on the same page.¹²⁷ Figure 20 shows the juxtaposition of the ABC's report of the British Council event and the events of the German and Italian institutes: the *Instituto Británico* was not mentioned by name at all and the differing sizes of the headlines are poignant. And it was not just ABC - a similar situation existed for other Spanish newspapers such as *Arriba* and *Ya*.¹²⁸

LA MEDICINA Y LOS MEDICOS

Academia Médico-Quirúrgica Española

Esta Academia celebrará sesión científica el próximo lunes, día 15 del corriente, a las siete de la tarde, en su domicilio social del Colegio de Médicos (calle de Esperteros, 11), con arreglo al siguiente orden del día:

Primero. Doctor Alvaro-García Sanfiz: "El método de Monaldi en el tratamiento de las cavernas tuberculosas del pulmón".

Segundo. Doctores Peña (A. y L.): "Antrax de riñón".

Tercero. Doctores Aliz R. Gavilanes y Valdés: "La presencia en el plasma de sustancias activas contra la tuberculosis."

Conferencia del profesor Alexander McCance

El jueves celebró sesión extraordinaria la Academia Médico-Quirúrgica Española, bajo la presidencia del doctor Carlos Blanco Soler, disertando el eminente profesor Robert Alexander McCance, de Cambridge, sobre el tema "Progresos y problemas en el metabolismo mineral", fijando especial atención sobre el metabolismo del calcio, del hierro, del cobre, del cobalto y del fluor, tanto en el hombre como en los animales.

La conferencia tuvo lugar en el Colegio de Médicos, viéndose lleno su amplio salón, tanto de académicos como público.

INSTITUTO ALEMAN DE CULTURA

Concierto de canto

En la serie de conciertos organizada por el Instituto Alemán de Cultura, fué celebrado ayer tarde en el salón-biblioteca de este Centro un acto musical a cargo de los alumnos de los profesores Eudico Chao y Carlota Dahmen-Chao, con asistencia del marqués de Lozoya, director general de Bellas Artes, y señora, junto con destacadas personalidades de la vida cultural española.

Maestros y discípulos fueron saludados por el secretario general del Instituto, Dr. Bennett, con breves palabras de bienvenida y presentación.

Figuraban en la primera parte del programa obras y canciones de Weber, Grieg, Mozart, R. Strauss, Schumann y Brahms, y en la segunda, de los autores españoles de los siglos XV a XVIII, Salinas, Llórens, Pablo Esteve y B. de la Serna, entre otros.

Fueron intérpretes las señoritas Bida del Campo Rosq de Valenzuela Elisa Puyal, Ovidio Guzmán y los señores Enrique de la Vara, Marcos Cubis y José María Leguina, acompañados al piano por Alfredo Romero.

La depurada actuación de los jóvenes artistas fué premiada con prolongados aplausos por la numerosísima y distinguida concurrencia que llenaba por completo el salón-biblioteca del Instituto.

INSTITUTO DE CULTURA ITALIANA

«Impresiones y recuerdos de un viaje de estudio en Italia»

Sobre este tema habló ayer en el Instituto de Cultura Italiana el profesor ayudante de la Universidad Central D. José Naharro Mora.

Explica las ayudas que el estudiante extranjero encuentra en los organismos italianos para facilitarle su adaptación y destaca la labor que en este sentido realizan el Instituto para las relaciones culturales con el exterior y los grupos universitarios fascistas.

Habla del nuevo tipo de estudiante italiano, educado en la disciplina del fascismo, y dice que se abraza en el tiempo con la antigua juventud militar de los tiempos clásicos.

Se extiende después en consideraciones acerca de la vida escolar en las Casas del Estudiante y en los aspectos artísticos de Roma y su influencia sobre el estudiante extranjero.

Termina haciendo elogios del intercambio de estudiantes entre España e Italia, por el valor formativo que tiene para las juventudes de los dos países antes y hace resaltar la obra meritoria en este sentido del Instituto de Cultura Italiana en Madrid, augurando la creación de una institución nuestra similar en Italia, cuya necesidad y conveniencia parece haberse sentido ya en los medios oficiales.

El conferenciante fué presentado por el director del Instituto, doctor De Zuñi, el cual exaltó el valor de los estudiantes españoles, compañeros predilectos de los italianos.

El Sr. Naharro Mora fué muy aplaudido y felicitado.

Figure 20: ABC (Madrid, 13 February 1943) p10 - reports on the work of the three institutes.

McCance's visit is overshadowed by the *Instituto Aleman de Cultura* and the *Instituto Cultura de Italiana*. Neither the British Council nor the *Instituto Británico* are mentioned.

¹²⁷ 'Conferencia del profesor Alexander McCance', ABC, (Madrid, 13 February 1943) p.10

¹²⁸ 'Sesión de la Academia Médico-Quirúrgica Española', Arriba, (Madrid, 13 February 1943) p.2; 'Académica Médico Quirúrgica', Ya, (Madrid, 13 February 1943) p.2

The British Council clearly still had a long way to go before it would be recognised by Spanish newspapers as being at the same level or higher than the German and Italian institutes. But it was a start. The newspapers, of course, were still heavily censored and controlled by the Government, and McCance's visit had a much greater effect on the scientists of Spain than was evident from *ABC*, *Arriba* and *Ya*. McCance noted that people like himself

can pass right across the barriers of politics and make intimate contacts with their fellow experts.... Any good man who has got something original to say (and can say it preferably in Spanish) would make his own contacts out there and would, I have no doubt, be a successful medical emissary.¹²⁹

Nevertheless, he noted,

There are critical men in Madrid, and it would be far better not to send anyone than to send a man who was not on top of his subject. I can picture such a person being ruthlessly exposed round the tea table at the Instituto de Investigaciones Médicas. Such visitors could only do harm.¹³⁰

To consider the Spanish newspapers to be reporting the real effect of visits like McCance's would be a mistake. Of course, they had a large amount of influence in publicising visits and making them well-known, but in terms of communicating to and between elite audiences, there were plenty of discreet, unrecorded and word-of-mouth methods of communication which were far more important. Newspaper reports should therefore be seen more as a lagging indicator of elite opinion, rather than having a significant effect on elite opinion.

Previously in the war, the Spanish newspapers were full of reports about activities taking place in the *Instituto de Cultura Italiana* and also the *Instituto Aleman de Cultura*, from short notifications about the inauguration of the new academic year, to reports on book exhibitions, and to more detailed reports on Professor Francesco Severi's lectures on Galileo Galilei in April 1942.¹³¹ After McCance's visit there was a

¹²⁹ TNA FD 1/6665 McCance, Dr. Robert Alexander, 'Report of Dr. R.A. McCance on his visit to the Iberian Peninsula', undated, but given to the British Council on 16 June 1943. p.15

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, p.15-16

¹³¹ 'Exposicion del Libro Aleman en Madrid', *Ya*, (19 November, 1940) p.3; 'Inauguración de curso del Instituto de Cultura Italiana', *Arriba*, (15 January 1941) p.3; 'El Instituto Alemán de Cultura inaugural reuniones de estudiantes españoles y alemanes', *Arriba*, (12 September 1941) p.3; 'Inauguración del año académico en el Instituto de Cultura Italiana', *Ya*, (21 November, 1941) p.4; 'Instituto de Cultura Italiana', *Ya*, (6 April, 1942) p.2; 'Música en el Instituto Alemán de Cultura', *Ya*, (7 April 1942) p.2

subtle difference with more obvious reports of British Council activities which included coverage of Leslie Howard's visit to Madrid, as well as his tragic death, a positive review of British Catholic, G K Chesterton's *Life of Dickens* in Spanish. The review noted its 'originality and quality', 'his understanding of Dickens is perfect', and 'needless to say that the book is important and worth reading [OSpA]'.¹³² Quotes such as these would have been just a dream earlier in the war, and were a godsend now. Late on in the war, in 1945, the visits of Frank Wallace and the Douglas Woodruff, the editor of the Catholic *The Tablet*, caused great interest in the Spanish press - Woodruff's speech was reported as being 'greatly applauded by the audience [OSpA]'.¹³³ Being an editor of a Catholic newspaper clearly gave Woodruff a ready audience in Spain, and he was keen to stress that there was a growing interest in Catholicism in Britain and that the Pope's messages had 'created an overall conducive environment' in Britain [OSpA].¹³⁴ Changes in how newspapers reported the events of the British Council from a wider perspective will be examined in more detail later in the chapter, but it seems clear that reports tended to follow the course of the war, and follow the opinion of the elites, rather than having a particular effect in themselves.

In Sweden, the newspaper coverage of the arrival of lecturers was more obvious than coverage afforded in Spain. Coverage of T S Eliot's visit in local newspapers is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, the British Council did not really begin work in Sweden until the arrival of Bottrall in December 1941, and T S Eliot's visit was just a few months after the institute's inauguration. As we have seen, the institute's opening was received in the Swedish press in less than welcoming terms. When Eliot arrived, however, in April 1942 he was an immediate hit in the press with his picture appearing on the front page of the *Dagens Nyheter* on 21 April with the title 'English poet to lecture here' [OSwA].¹³⁵ Over the following weeks the *Dagens Nyheter* followed his progress with interviews and adverts highlighting the publication of Eliot's poems in translation. He was described as 'probably the greatest English critic since

¹³² 'Leslie Howard, en Madrid', *Ya*, (15 May 1943) p.4; 'Perecen Leslie Howard y doce pasajeros más en ataque aéreo', *Ya*, (3 June 1943) p.1; 'El avión en que viajaba Leslie Howard, derribado en el golfo de Gascuña', *Arriba*, (3 June 1943) p.1; Ruiz, Nicolás González, 'G.K. Chesterton: "Vida de Dickens"', *Ya*, (7 October 1943) p.4

¹³³ 'Conferencia de mister Frank Wallace', *Ya*, (19 January 1945) p.2; 'En el Instituto Británico', *Ya*, (8 March 1945) p.2; 'Instituto Británico: Conferencia de mister Woodruff, sobre el cardinal Newmann', *ABC*, (Madrid, 4 March 1945) p.36

¹³⁴ 'Declaraciones del director del semanario inglés "The Tablet"', *La Vanguardia Española*, (20 March 1945) p.2; Also see 'Estancia de Mr. Douglas Woodruff en Barcelona', *La Vanguardia Española*, (9 March 1945) p.10

¹³⁵ 'Engelsk poet föreläser här', *Dagens Nyheter*, (Stockholm, 21 April 1942) p.1

Coleridge' [OSwA]].¹³⁶ In the press conference that Eliot gave, he was quite frank about how the war had effected book publishing in Britain stating that 'the editors are quite difficult, the paper is scarce, and there are few workers [in publishing]' [OSwA]].¹³⁷ This openness to talk about the conditions in wartime Britain seemed to go down well with the Swedish people, and contrasts dramatically with the approach taken in Spain, where talk of the war was avoided at the institute. Eliot was perhaps unconsciously satisfying the need of the Swedish people to hear news, real news, which they had not been able to receive for so long.

Nevertheless, the fact that Eliot's visit and other visits were publicised in Swedish newspapers lends weight to the view, if the Spanish model of newspapers being a lagging indicator of elite opinion is applicable to Sweden, that the Swedish elites were already significantly pro-British and overtly so by the time of Eliot's visit. It certainly seems that by the time of Bragg's visit in April 1943, from the reception that he received from Swedish scientists and his post-visit correspondence with them, that there was a general lack of fear of associating with the Council lecturers, and the Swedes were flattered that such eminent cultural figures were being sent over the North Sea to visit them. This, now, was being reflected quite clearly in the Swedish press, and there is an increasing and significant lack of articles about German cultural events during this period.

In Portugal, the newspapers had always been far more pro-British Council than in any of the other three neutral countries where the Council operated in Europe. As mentioned in chapter two, and will be analysed in more detail later in this chapter, over 3,000 articles in the Portuguese press were printed during the war period on the British Council and related Anglo-Portuguese cultural relations. Nearly 70 articles were published in February and March 1940 reporting Lord Harlech's visit with remarks such as 'when he finished his beautiful session, he was much applauded' and that he was a 'recognised authority on the monuments in England having written a guide on important monuments, in 3 volumes, and rightly considered one of the best works in the genre' [OPA]].¹³⁸ No such positive comments were published in Spanish or Swedish newspapers this early in the war. Nearly 80 articles were published on the

¹³⁶ 'Engelsk förläggare får poem från fronter runt jordklotet', *Dagens Nyheter*, (Stockholm, 21 April 1942) p.11; 'T. S. ELIOT Till skaldens Sverigebesök: DIKTER' - Advertisement by Bonniers - *Dagens Nyheter*, (25 April 1942) p.8

¹³⁷ 'Engelsk förläggare får poem från fronter runt jordklotet', *Dagens Nyheter*, (Stockholm, 21 April 1942) p.11

¹³⁸ 'Diario de Coimbra - Lord Harlech', *O Comercio do Porto* (1 March 1940) (BCPHA: c4000800) and 'Lord Harlech', *Dario de Coimbra*, (11 February 1940) (BCPHA: c4002630)

Oxford University Delegation conferring their degree on Dr Salazar in April 1941 and nearly 30 on McCance's visit – significantly higher in number than articles published in Spain on McCance's visit. It is clear that the response in Portuguese newspapers was far greater than elsewhere and probably reflects a greater freedom of thought about the war generally amongst the elites than was possible elsewhere – Portugal was the only one of the four countries which did not border an Axis country or a country occupied by the Axis. The risks of showing sympathy towards Britain and showing the British Council in a positive light were significantly less. How this changed over the war period, particularly as Spain – Portugal's great rival – became more sympathetic to Britain, will be considered a little later in this chapter.

It was not just the newspapers and scientists that had to follow the lead of the official elite in Spain. *La Real Academia de la Historia* (the Royal Academy of History) had expressed its wish in May 1942 to appoint Walter Starkie as one of their *Académicos Correspondientes* along with Don Enrique Leite Pereira de Paiva (the Conde de Campo Bello) from Portugal.¹³⁹ Although there does not appear to be a reply to their letter on record, they recognised that the appointment could be inconvenient at that time, and, given that the letter was sent to Serrano Suñer, it would be no surprise if the request was refused immediately, or just ignored. In December 1943, a second request was made, but again it was rebuffed, this time by Conde de Jordana.¹⁴⁰ Jordana's statement on the matter was conveyed to the *Real Academia*:

As for Mr Walter Fitzwilliam Starkie and Mr Francisco Pietro, given that the first is the Cultural Attaché from the British Embassy and the second Ambassador of France, and, moreover in view of present circumstances, it seems appropriate to postpone the processing of their appointments given their official positions, or at least until their current circumstances cease. [OSpA]¹⁴¹

It was not until after the war, in July 1945, that the request was at last granted, along with a whole host of requests for Starkie to talk at various Universities – such as at Oviedo and Salamanca – which had been awaiting approval for some time.¹⁴² It

¹³⁹ MAEC AG Leg R 3575/69 Castaneda, V. Letter to Ramon Serrano Suñer, 11 May 1942

¹⁴⁰ MAEC AG Leg R 3541/80 Maura, Duque de. Letter to Conde de Jordana, 18 December 1943

¹⁴¹ MAEC AG Leg R 3541/80 Valera, Marqués. 'Nota para la Secretaria particular del Excmo. Sr. Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores', 27 December 1943

¹⁴² MAEC AG Leg R 3541/80 Castaneda, V. Letter to Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores. 19 June 1945; Castaneda V. Letter to Subsecretario del Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, 4 July 1945; MAEC AG Leg R 2473/44 El Subsecretario de Asuntos Exteriores. Telegram Postal to Al Subsecretario de Educación Nacional, 6 June 1945; El Subsecretario del Ministerio de

seems clear that academic and non-official elites were keen some time before the end of the war (as early in many cases as mid-1942) to engage seriously with the British Council and did so quietly. But where official approval was needed, this was nearly always postponed because of the political risks involved in the approval. Even for Jordana, who was far more sympathetic to Britain than Serrano Suñer, postponement was often his preferred tool in his dealings with the Council. Only the ideologue pro-British non-official elites, those who had no choice but to associate with the Council to receive protection against the current regime, were openly prepared to take the risk of association when the war situation seemed still unfavourable to Britain.

The effect of the war outside was always going to colour the thinking of the neutral peoples, and the Council's successes and failures cannot be seen outside this overall context. However, in Spain to a significant extent the Council tried to avoid mention of the war itself and only referred to difficulties in how the Council operated logistically – such as of getting lecturers and materials out to the neutral countries safely. They wanted, and tried to all possible extent, to concentrate on cultural propaganda only. Perhaps this could be easier said than done, but in many ways not mentioning the war was probably a significant factor in ensuring the institute was not accused of being a political institution. In the British Institute School, at least, this approach had some success, as the children were educated in a war-free environment. Manuel Balson, a pupil at the school recalled that

[T]here was no feeling of a war outside. Spain was not in the war and at the school there was never mention of the fact. I don't think it was relevant to the way the school was operated. I have to say that even when the [U]nion [J]ack I was carrying on my bicycle was torn out by somebody in the street, my teacher did not pay any attention and it was only my father when I got home that mentioned the fact that most probably it had been done by [F]alangists or pro-[G]erman individuals.¹⁴³

This non-partisan atmosphere in the school was attractive to many Spanish parents, but the school also fulfilled the need of providing sought-after methods (the Froebel and Montessori methods mentioned in previous chapters) and a standard of

Educación Nacional. Letter entitled 'Asunto: S/invitación al Profesor Starkie', to El Subsecretario del Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, 10 April 1945.

¹⁴³ Balson, Manuel. Email to Edward Corse, 27 May 2008. In answer to my question: 'Did it feel like there was a World War occurring whilst you were at the school? Was it relevant to the way the school operated?'

education that was difficult to find elsewhere in Spain. The school was clearly going to be over-subscribed, even if it was not publicised. Balson, noted that students were

children from the pro-Anglo aristocracy in Madrid, from well known established merchant (Bourguignon, the florists; Brooking, the jewellers; Lecock, the Belgian Company with big forest properties in the Madrid Sierra etc. Also of high middle class [S]panish families, who like my father realized the importance of the English Language despite the war.¹⁴⁴

In stark contrast to how the British Council was perceived through reports in the Spanish newspapers the numbers of students attending the British Institute School increased from 160 in the first quarter of 1941 to 762 in the third quarter of 1942 – an increase of nearly five-fold, which was still while Serrano Suñer was at the helm of the Foreign Ministry. The membership of the Instituto Britanico also increased from 60 members to 420 in the same period – a seven-fold increase.¹⁴⁵ These may be relatively small numbers in terms of the overall population of Madrid or Spain, or even the elites themselves, but it is important not to forget the amount of influence that these 420 members of the institute had amongst their peers. Following the model of influence from chapter one it was important to start small and allow the power of the Council to spread through influential circles. By the end of the war the Council would have 1,213 members in Spain, 2,153 students in Madrid, 1,374 students in Barcelona and 763 students in Bilbao – numbers which could only have been dreamt of at the start of the war.¹⁴⁶

It was always going to be difficult, however, to gear a teaching course to the needs of all those in the class as the numbers increased and the expectations of those being taught (and their families) widened. Charles David Ley, who joined the Instituto Britanico in Madrid in 1943 recalled how one particular course had not been well-received in 1945

Most of the attendees did not agree with my methods of teaching, and claimed they were very slow given that after two or three classes, had not come to have

¹⁴⁴ Balson, Manuel. Email to Edward Corse, 27 May 2008. In answer to my question: 'Do you know why you were sent to the British Institute School? What were the main attractions for you, your family, and other people in Madrid?'

¹⁴⁵ TNA BW 82/9 'The British Council – Report for the First Quarter, 1941', April 1941 p.6; TNA BW 82/9 'The British Council – Report for the Third Quarter, 1942', October 1942 p.2

¹⁴⁶ TNA BW 82/9 'The British Council – Report for the First Quarter, 1945', April 1945 p.4; TNA BW 82/9 'The British Council – Report for the Second Quarter, 1945', July 1945 p.4

a thorough knowledge of the [English] language. "I am not interested in the essence of the English language", noted Victor Ruiz Iriarte [one of the attendees], "I just want to learn some fairly easy-to-read Shakespeare in the original." [OSpA]¹⁴⁷

Perhaps as this was 1945 and the war was drawing to a close, the attendees of courses at the Instituto Británico were no longer satisfied that the institute was providing them with the haven that they needed during the war. They wanted more, though as was shown in chapter three, the teaching in Turkey was often difficult throughout the war period. As we have seen, with Salazar and Franco in particular now openly interested in the work of the Council and seemingly ready to support its development, attendees no longer needed the protection status that the Council had provided. Instead they wanted to be provided with courses which prepared them for the post-war world, whatever that post-war world might bring.

To conclude this section of the chapter, it seems clear that the non-official elites were keenly aware of the general war situation and this affected their relationship with the Council, and in this way were no different from the official elites. In the 'indifferent' camp, the non-official elites tended to follow the lead of the official elites to make sure that they were not taking too many risks if and when associating with the Council. To an extent they can be seen as 'barometer' individuals and groups, reflecting the current state of thought in the neutral elites. However, to see them only following the official elites and to see the newspapers as a reflection of elite opinion would be a mistake. The British Council in Spain particularly attracted a lot of the intellectual and academic elite at the same time as Serrano Suñer, the arch-enemy of all things British, was at the height of his power. It seems they simply ignored him and Serrano Suñer was unable or unwilling to stop them associating with the Council. In other countries such as Sweden, the signals from the official elite were less clear - Günther in particular, kept a firm non-committal policy throughout his tenure at the Foreign Ministry - and so found their own way to interact with the Council. In all of the four countries, but Sweden and Turkey in particular, who seemed flattered by the Council spending the time and effort to send eminent British cultural figures to their countries and this had a tremendous effect. To use the Zahavi and Wight analogy, by sending artists and scientists abroad in time of war Britain was showing that it able to 'waste' resources when that money could be seemingly better spent elsewhere. It was

¹⁴⁷ Ley, *La Costanilla*, p.64

signalling its reputation as a great power that could afford to 'waste' resources in this way, whilst fighting the most resource-intensive war that had ever been fought.¹⁴⁸

4.4 Newspaper reports of British Council activities

Examining how the British Council was portrayed in foreign newspapers gives interesting insights into both the official view as well as the wider elite view of the Council. Most of the newspapers, though designed for the elites and literate masses (depending on the newspaper) were either controlled by those foreign Governments directly, or were subject to censorship restrictions to help maintain neutrality or instead a certain sympathy to one belligerent or another in the war. They therefore say more about the Government view of the Council than the view of the masses, and as has been argued, tended to lag behind their views in terms of time. Previously in this chapter there has been an examination of particular articles focusing on specific lecturers and events held by the British Council, but it is important to also examine the overall picture to see how coverage changed over the course of the war. By examining the variations in frequency of articles about the British Council and comparing this to the frequency of articles about other countries' institutions, a number of important observations can be made which are not at all obvious from examining specific articles on a case-by-case basis. Fortunately for the modern-day historian, a number of these newspapers have been digitised and placed online with search functionality for no charge. Notable amongst these are the Spanish newspapers *ABC* (Madrid and Seville editions) and *La Vanguardia Española* (based in Barcelona).¹⁴⁹

For *ABC* (in both the Madrid and Seville editions), there were 76 articles which mentioned either 'Instituto Británico', 'Consejo Británico' (translation of the British Council) or 'Starkie' during the course of the Second World War. In comparison, there were 141 articles which mentioned the equivalent German institution or personnel (either 'Instituto Aleman de Cultura', 'Petersen' (for Wilhelm Petersen, the German cultural attaché to Spain), 'Beinert' (for Berthold Beinert, the Secretary-General of the Instituto Aleman de Cultura) or 'Heinermann' (for Theodore Heinermann, the Director of the Instituto Aleman de Cultura)) and 205 articles which mentioned the equivalent Italian institution or personnel (either 'Instituto de Cultura Italiana' or 'Zuani' (for Ettore De Zuani, the Director of the Instituto de Cultura Italiana)). Clearly overall the

¹⁴⁸ Wight, *Peacock's Tail*, p.31

¹⁴⁹ *ABC* is available at <http://hemeroteca.abc.es/>; *La Vanguardia Española* is available at <http://www.lavanguardia.es/hemeroteca>. The 'Española' was dropped from the title after the Second World War.

Spanish press and, by proxy, the Spanish Government favoured the publicity of the Axis institutions at the expense of the British institution. What is more interesting, however, is the distribution of the articles, which the overall numbers do not show. A more detailed examination of the figures (given in Appendix I) shows that 72% of the articles about the British Council were from October 1943 onwards, 50% of the articles were from October 1944 onwards. In comparison, 77% of the articles about the *Instituto Aleman de Cultura* and 84% of the articles about the *Instituto de Cultura Italiana* were before October 1943. The graph in Figure 21 helps to illustrate the point, using moving averages to take account of seasonal variations (there were always less articles in the summer months - the third quarter - for all institutions) and any possible data errors.

The result is striking. There were three clear waves of popularity, starting first with the Italian institute, peaking in the middle of 1942, then secondly with the German institute, peaking in late 1943, and lastly with the British Institute, which was on an upward trend during 1944 and early 1945. In part this reflects the overall state of the war from which newspaper coverage of the institutes was clearly influenced, as well as the activities of the institutes themselves. The clearest example of this is the 'tipping point' date in the graph - where the popularity of the British Institute overtook the popularity of both the German and Italian institutes - which is in the second quarter of 1944. This is the same period as D-Day, perhaps the most obvious reversal in fortunes in the war militarily in which the British were involved. The increase in popularity of the German institute after the second quarter of 1941 (at the time of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union), and its rapid decline after the third quarter of 1943 (after the reversal of fortunes on the eastern front following the Battle of Stalingrad, as well as the end of the African campaign and the subsequent invasion of Italy by Allied forces) are probably largely influenced by events in the war itself. However, one must not see the war situation as the only reason for the changes in popularity. The preference for Italy as opposed to Germany earlier on in the war stems largely from a Spanish preference for a Catholic and Latin culture to be promulgated in their country, rather than a Germanic culture. Indeed an average of over 20 articles per quarter in early 1942 on the Italian institute compared with less than 10 articles on the German institute was hardly a reflection of the relative military strength of the two Axis powers at that time. To a large extent, therefore, it can be assumed that the British culture being promoted at the British Institute was less welcome than if Britain had been a Catholic country. The British Institute's lack of popularity in *ABC* for much of the war must partly have been due to the relative cultural preferences of the Spaniards

rather than being solely a reflection of the war situation. What is also perhaps surprising is that given Italy's change of sides in the war, the new Italy (on the British side) was a lot less popular late on in the war than the old Italy (on the German side) had been. The military situation clearly does not tell the whole story. It is interesting as well that although Serrano Suñer had been replaced by Conde de Jordana in September 1942, the popularity of the German institution actually peaked sometime after this

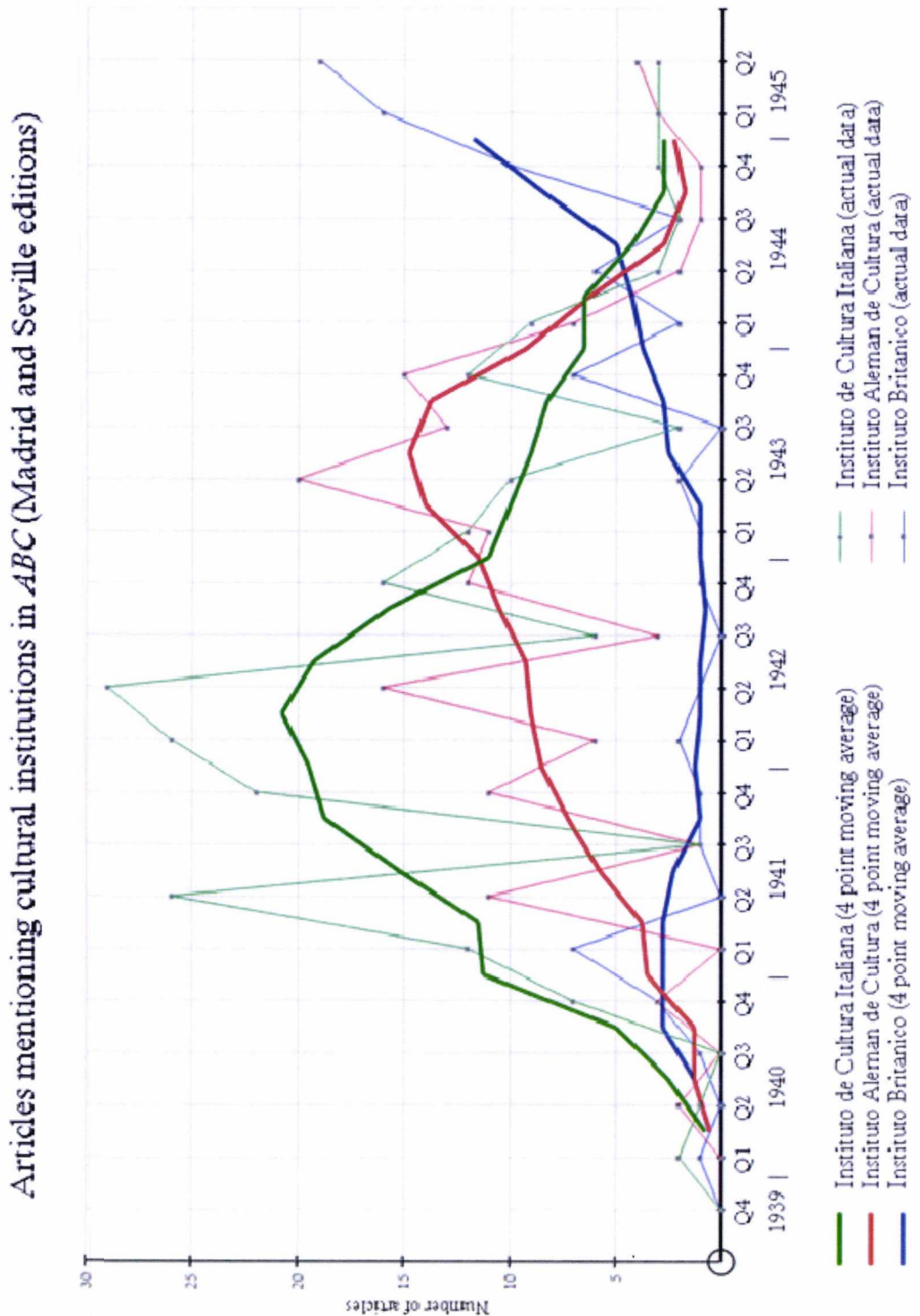


Figure 21

date, which suggests that the change of Foreign Minister did not result in a profound change in overt propaganda on this issue overnight, and that the newspaper lagged behind the official elite opinion by a significant time period.

Just showing the results from *ABC*, does not prove there were three waves of popularity in Spain of these institutions - firstly *ABC* is only one newspaper, and secondly, as already stated, what was printed in *ABC* says a lot more about the preferences of the Spanish Government than it does about the views of the Spanish people. The first point can be partly solved by examining the results from *La Vanguardia española*. Using the same search criteria as above, the *Instituto Británico* was mentioned in 103 articles during the war period, the *Instituto Aleman de Cultura* was mentioned 184 times, and the *Instituto de Cultura Italiana* 99 times. A similar overall distribution, in three waves, can be detected reflecting the overall state of the war, though the popularity of the Italian institute was barely above the popularity of the German institute in the first 'wave' which may reflect a regional preference between the Axis countries by the editorship of the newspaper - see Figure 22. The second (German) and third (British) waves are much clearer, however, and the 'tipping points' where the British Institute firstly became more popular than the Italian institute (late 1943), then the German institute (third quarter of 1944) can be seen to reflect the Allied invasion of Italy and D-Day respectively. What is interesting when comparing *La Vanguardia española* and *ABC* is the particularly strong increase in the popularity of the British Institute in 1943 in the Barcelona-based newspaper, and the rapid increase thereafter, which is not so marked in *ABC*. This is due to the opening of a branch of the *Instituto Británico* in Barcelona in October 1943 and clearly reflects the interest that the regional newspaper (though not Catalan separatist) had in the institute opening on its doorstep. Prior to the opening of this branch in Barcelona, *La Vanguardia española* took less interest than *ABC* in the *Instituto Británico* largely because it was based in Madrid. There is a noticeable policy change that can be detected in the winter of 1942-1943 which allowed a greater freedom in the Spanish press of reporting events happening at the *Instituto Británico* and those associated with it. In February 1943 the first British Council sponsored event - the lecture of Professor Robert McCance - to take place outside of the institute building was a clear indication from the Spanish authorities that their view of the institute's work had changed significantly.¹⁵⁰ And this fact is clearly reflected in the increase in articles in both *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* after this date.

¹⁵⁰ TNA BW 82/9 'The British Council - Report for the First Quarter, 1943', April 1943 p2

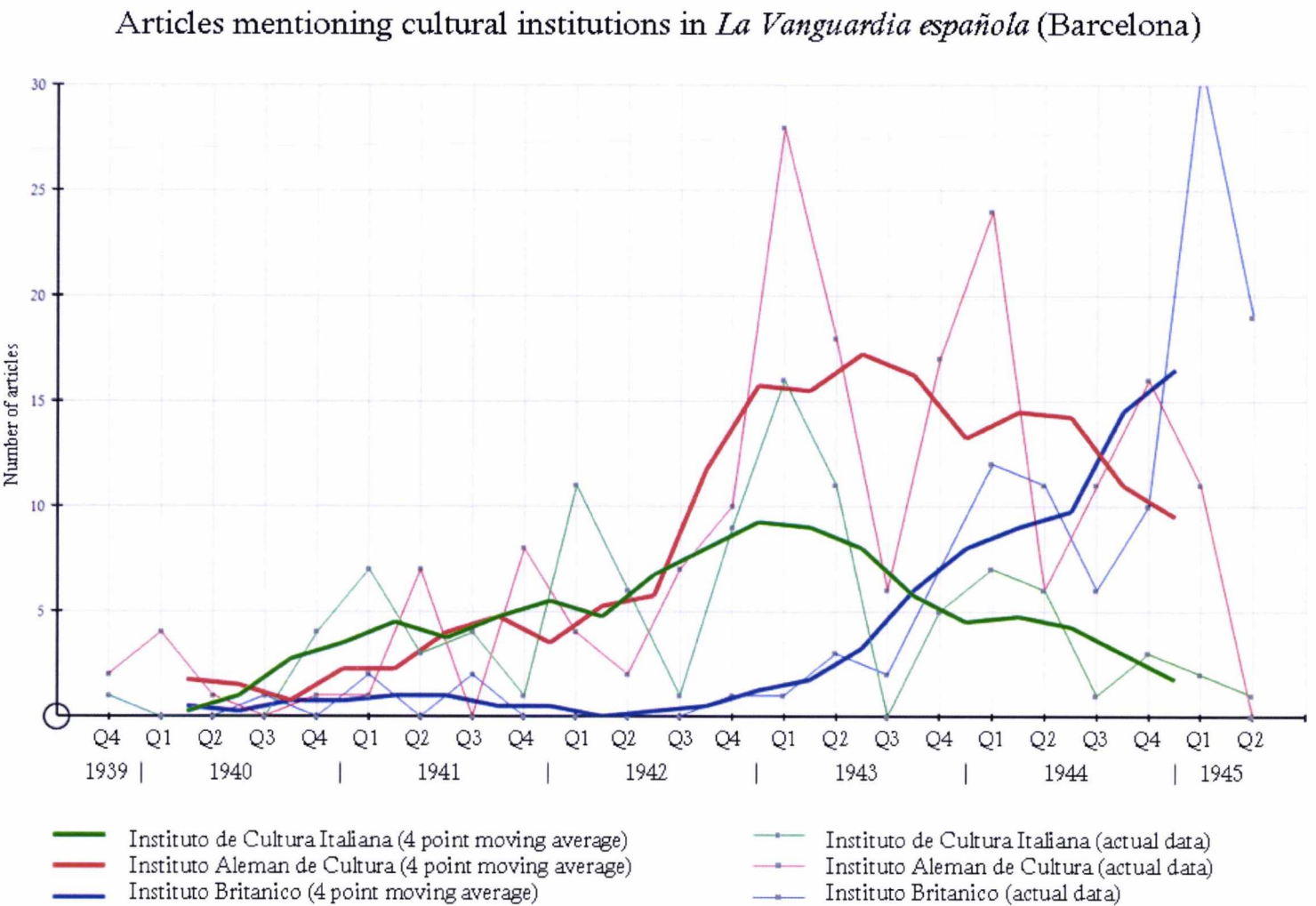


Figure 22

In both *ABC* and *La Vanguardia española* there is also a noticeable lack of articles on any of the institutes early on in the war – in late 1939 and during the whole of 1940 particularly – but more generally there were still a relative lack of articles until 1942 and 1943. Admittedly the *Instituto Aleman de Cultura* did not open until the spring of

1941, but the *Instituto de Cultura Italiana* opened in early 1940 and the *Instituto Britanico* opening in the late summer of 1940. Cultural events, it appears, were not high on the newspapers' list of priorities of topics to cover in the first year or so of the war, but became more important later in the war for both sides. The military battles, of course, had become less decisive and numerous since the years of blitzkrieg warfare in 1939, 1940 and to an extent in 1941, and so the newspapers actually had a chance to focus more on longer term cultural issues which had not been possible earlier.

In contrast to Spain, and on a data set covering a larger number of newspapers (from the British Council's Portugal Historical Archive), it has been evident throughout this thesis that the Portuguese Press was far more interested in the work of the British Council, with up to 33 articles per newspaper per quarter a number of times dedicated to British Council events or Anglo-Portuguese relations, with over 3,000 articles in total. Also in contrast to Spain, is the apparent slow decline in reporting of British Council events during the course of the war from late 1942 onwards, rather than the gradual increase that is evident in Spanish newspapers – see Figure 23. This is certainly not evident from examining the articles on a case-by-case basis and shows the benefit of viewing the newspapers from a broader perspective. There is an increase towards the very end of the war post-D-Day, as there was in Spain, but the decline is quite evident and is perhaps surprising. The contrast is even more apparent when the average number of articles per quarter for Spain and Portugal are compared on the same graph (see Figure 24). Admittedly, the average number of articles in the Portuguese Press never declines below the average number of articles in the Spanish Press, although they get relatively close during 1945.

Perhaps this decline in the Portuguese Press's interest in the British Council is due not because of a changing view of the Council and Britain generally – for example there is no apparent slide in popularity directly after the arrival of Australian troops in Portuguese East Timor in late 1941 and early 1942. Instead perhaps it is as a result of there being less to report, due to a relative decline in British Council events in Portugal during the period late 1942 to mid 1944. As has been shown during this chapter, there was a fear in Portugal that the British Council would start to concentrate on Spain in the post-Serrano Suñer climate, and focus less on Portugal. As the British Council's work in Spain began to take off around the time of Operation Torch, it does appear that there was a subtle decline from this time onwards, in its work in Portugal, which is not obvious from examining the newspapers on an article-by-article basis.

Figure 23

Articles in the Portuguese Press about the work of the British Council and related Anglo-Portuguese cultural relations

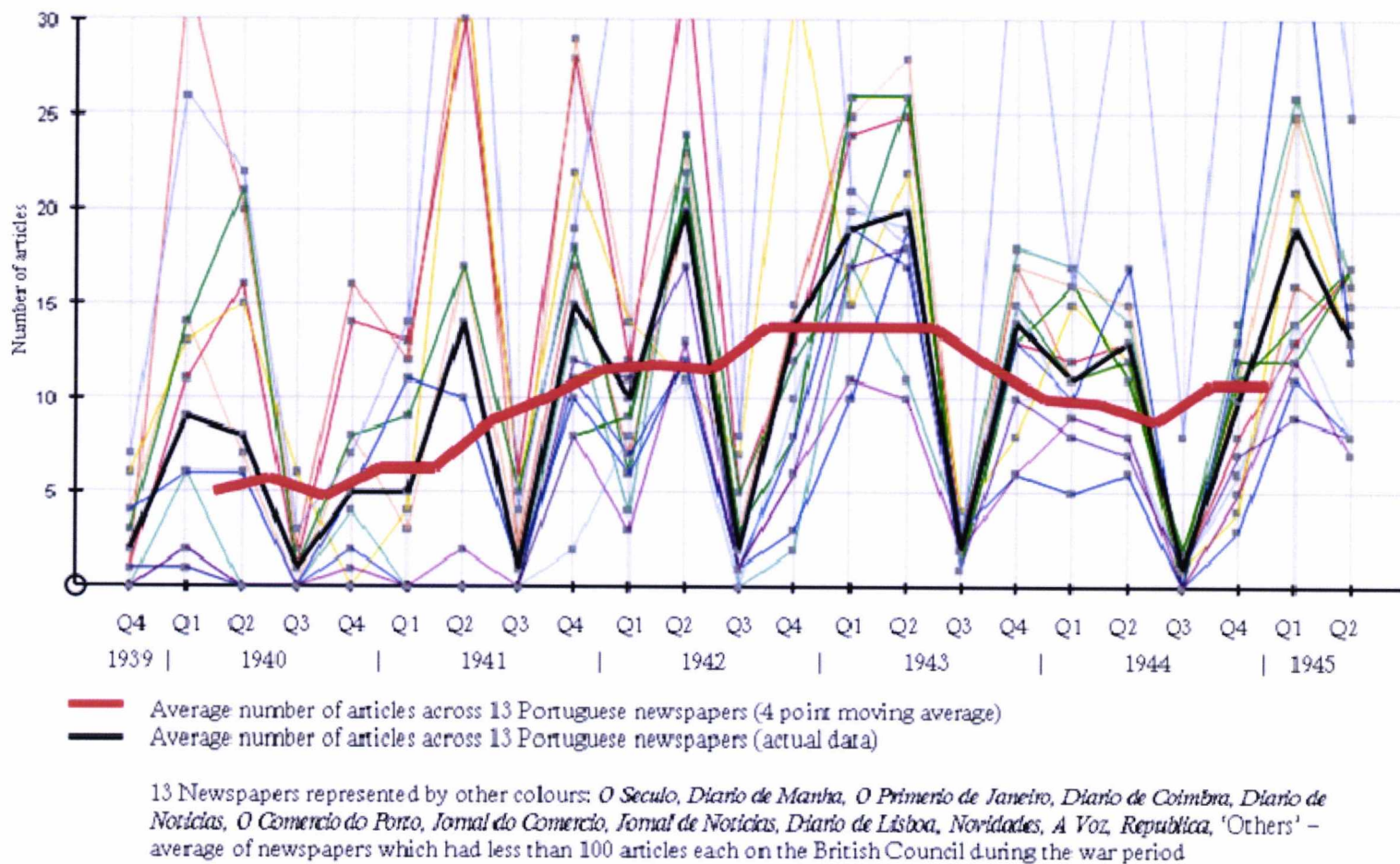
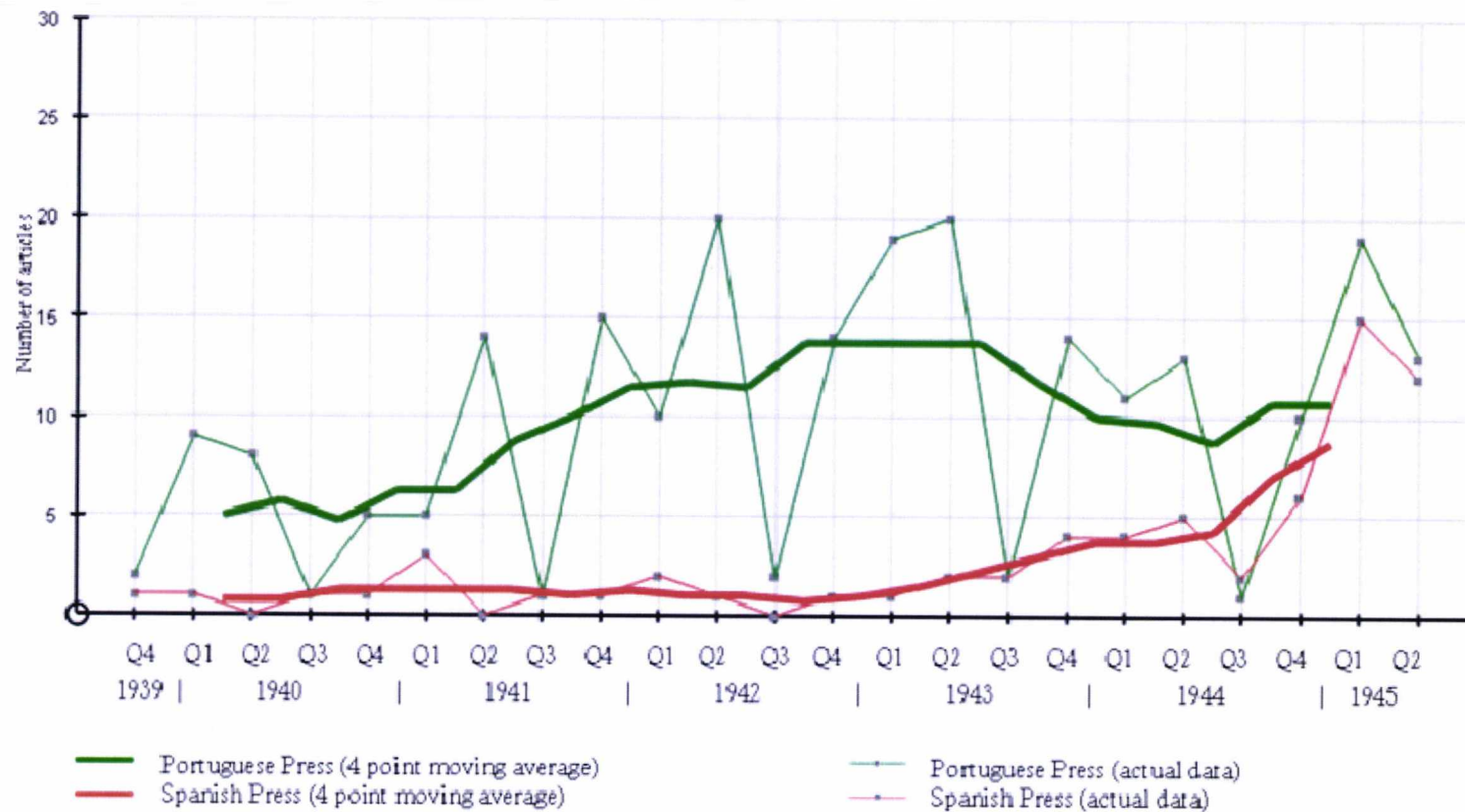


Figure 24

Articles in the Portuguese and Spanish Press about the work of the British Council



Portuguese Press data average of 13 Portuguese Newspapers from BCPHA

Spanish Press data average of ABC (Madrid), ABC (Sevilla), La Vanguardia (Barcelona)

4.5 Conclusion

As a conclusion to this chapter there are a number of points that are important to note when considering the view of the British Council from the 'other side'. Five points in particular should be highlighted. Firstly, the view of the British Council's work could not be divorced from its context. Primarily, of course, this meant the wider picture of the Second World War - the course of the war affected its ability to get its message across and the amount of publicity it was able to achieve in the neutral press, the confidence of its audience to associate with it when the consequences of doing so were unclear. The context, however, should also cover the pre-existing views of Britain and the other belligerents in all four countries ranging from the Anglo-Portuguese alliance, Spanish upset over the British enclave of Gibraltar, and Swedish and Turkish fears of the Soviet Union.

The second point to highlight is that official and non-official views were highly dependent on individuals and personalities. Beigbeder, Serrano Suñer, and Jordana, and their differing views changed the course of British Council success in Spain and Yücel's support was highly significant in Turkey, to name just a few of the important personalities. Official and non-official views were often analogous as the non-official elites waited with baited breath for signals from the official elites about what was acceptable. But it was not always the case. Serrano Suñer was simply ignored by many of the non-official elite in Spain, showing his apparent underlying weakness to control them. Official elites tended to be more interested in political consequences of the British Council's work and the security implications; whereas the non-official elites tended to be more interested in the cultural subject itself, and their own influence within that cultural sphere than the political dimension.

The third point to make is that newspapers in the neutral countries (owing to censorship restrictions, political interference and, like the non-official elites, waiting to find out what was acceptable to print) tended to be symptomatic of the views of the official elite, rather than formative of their views. The newspapers also tended to lag some time behind the changes in opinion within the elite themselves. However, in Spain at least it is clear that there was a rapid increase in articles about the British Council in the final stages of the war.

Fourthly, the expansion of the British Council's audience, reflecting changes in the war and in the official elite opinion, was more apparent than an expansion in the

British Council's appeal. The model of influence from chapter one showed that the British Council interacted with pro-British elites only, and this seems to be reflected in reality. It relied on those pro-British elites talking to indifferent and hostile elites and allowing them to join the ranks of the pro-British when they were ready. To a large extent they only did so when they had assessed that the opportunities presented by associating with the British Council were clearer than the risks and threats of doing so. The barometer elites who reflected the general atmosphere appear more numerous than the ideologues, and joined the ranks of being pro-British when they could see it was in their interest to do so.

Lastly, cultural propaganda was viewed as a handicap on the British use of resources whilst fighting a major war - but a handicap that Britain could bear. By apparently 'wasting' resources in this way, the British Council purported that it was an important and resource-rich country in the ascendancy that did not have to use all of the resources at its disposal in order to win the war militarily. Lord Beaverbrook's view, that the British Council was an unnecessary liability as it spent money on 'useless' enterprises instead of on the armed forces, was ill-judged. On the contrary, this 'liability' was, in fact, an important and significant British asset.

5. Conclusion: towards a model of cultural propaganda

5.1 The British Council's vital role

The British Council's wartime activities are one of the forgotten stories of the Second World War. Being less obvious and direct than military battles and more subtle and incremental than political propaganda, it has become hidden away as if it were merely a footnote to history. Even at the time, its cultural propaganda was seen as an intangible and ineffectual waste of resources when Britain needed all the resources it could lay its hands on. Yet, as has been outlined in the preceding chapters, its role was vital in many ways and the Beaverbrook inspired attacks of the war period were ill-judged and ignorant of the huge benefits that it provided to Britain and the war effort. It provided support to pro-British elites in difficult territory, made genuine connections between cultural communities and provided a conduit for word-of-mouth propaganda to neutral people who were unable to receive uncensored news in any other effective way. It also crucially showed Britain to be a successful country by going beyond what was seemingly essential for Britain's survival through supporting cultural initiatives and thereby tapping into the Reputation Reflex of the neutral people. In this way it provided a magnetic attraction to the influential and opinion-forming elites and allowed its influence to percolate through the various strands of elite (pro-British, indifferent and hostile groups) and maintain and incrementally expand a backdrop of sympathy amongst those groups which was crucial for winning the war.

This chapter will attempt to draw together an array of different themes present in the earlier chapters to outline conclusions on a number of aspects of the Council's work. The first section will conclude and summarise the main ways in which the British Council operated as an organisation and how this affected its cultural propaganda work. Secondly, there will be a conclusion on what the success of the Council was dependent upon, how that success can be measured, and a judgment on how successful it was in achieving its aims. Thirdly, there will be an outline of a model of cultural propaganda to provide a considered definition based on the British Council experience and its applicability elsewhere. Lastly, there will be final conclusion on how this thesis, and particularly this model of cultural propaganda, contributes to the existing literature on the British Council and propaganda more generally.

5.2 How the British Council operated and how this affected its cultural propagand work

It has been shown throughout this thesis that the British Council did not operate in a vacuum. Whether it was other British Government organisations, British Embassies, the context of the Second World War or indeed its audience in the neutral countries, however much the British Council wanted to have independence of action it would always be constrained by a various number of other organisations and circumstances outside of its control. In Britain, a number of clear constraints arose which restricted the freedom the Council. Some, like funding constraints, were nothing extraordinary for any organisation and perhaps ironically funding was the least of its problems - its budget rose from £353,233 in the 1939/40 financial year to £2,237,060 in 1944/45, which, even allowing for inflation, was a large rise particularly given that the Council's field of operation naturally shrank as the Wehrmacht made many of countries the Council had opened offices in, out of bounds.¹ With only four countries to concentrate on in Europe (though admittedly a growing number in Latin America and the Middle East), it had enough funding to make sure that the cultural propaganda created in those four countries was of a high quality. However, the amount of high quality work it could carry out was physically constrained given the logistical difficulties of the war situation.

Far more important from an internal Government point of view were the constraints resulting from the political haggling between the Foreign Office, the British Council and the Ministry of Information. There was a fierce conflict between Lord Lloyd, the Chairman of the British Council, and Sir John Reith, the Minister of Information, over the delineation of responsibilities which resulted in the political-cultural split between the MOI and the British Council.² But arguments about who should control the British Council's work and how much freedom it should have continued in one form or another throughout the wartime period. The death of Lord Lloyd in February 1941 put the British Council's role under the spotlight once again with various arguments between Alfred Duff Cooper, the new Minister of Information and Anthony Eden, the Foreign Secretary, on its purpose and whether it still had a contribution to make as part of the British wartime propaganda armoury.³ On that occasion, the Foreign Office was successful not only in maintaining the Council in

¹ White, *The British Council*, Appendix C, p.123

² *Ibid*, p.32

³ TNA FO 370/634. Eden, Anthony. Minute to Winston Churchill, 20 May 1941; TNA PREM 4/20/3 Duff Cooper, Alfred. Letter to Winston Churchill. 7 February, 1941.

existence, but also maintaining its control over the organisation instead of its line of reporting transferring to the MOI. Under its new Chairman, Sir Malcolm Robertson, the Council continued to grow in success, but still there were conflicts in which it became embroiled - often due to interference, perceived or real, from the Foreign Office itself. At one point, in July 1943, Robertson threatened to resign due to interdepartmental conflicts and constraints - 'No Chairman that I know of' he stated 'would retain his position in such circumstances.'⁴ Clearly his frustration had been building up for some time. His furious outbursts in front of the Portuguese Ambassador, Armindo Monteiro, the previous November regarding the seemingly anti-British nature of the *Mocidade Portuguesa*, could perhaps show that Robertson was easily frustrated. It was more likely, however, that a variety of different constraints on his ability to lead the British Council was making his role seemingly impossible.⁵ However, there is an interesting passage in the notes of his Secretary-General, A J S White, which also shows that, though Robertson cared deeply about the Council, not only was his freedom of action constrained by others, but also by Robertson himself through doing too much elsewhere.

He tried hard, perhaps too hard, to infect his Parliamentary colleagues with his enthusiasm: but he could not, or did not, spare enough time from the House of Commons to carry out the day-to-day direction of the Council's work and his constant failures to keep important appointments in Hanover Street [the British Council's headquarters] led to difficulty.⁶

Clearly Robertson had a vision for the British Council but was personally constrained by a variety of factors within Government and beyond which were largely outside of his control. This led to constant irritation both for him and for certain other elements of the British Council. Robertson, and the Council generally, had to deal with a barrage of criticism and lobbying from a variety of individuals and non-Governmental organisations ranging from the likes of external voices such as Lord Beaverbrook to those with a more integral cultural role such as Astra Desmond and

⁴ CAC BRCO 2/5. Robertson, Sir Malcolm. Letter to Lord Riverdale. 14 July, 1943.

⁵ Monteiro, Armindo. Letter to Oliveira Salazar, 26 October 1942 reproduced in Rosas et al, *Armindo Monteiro*, Document 60, p.346

⁶ White, *The British Council*, p.49

Kenneth Clark.⁷ All these relationships made for a large array of checks on its freedom of movement just within a British political context.

On the front line the Council also had a variety of constraints it had to deal with – many of which were contradictory and resulted in a complex array of methods of propaganda that the Council employed. Logistical issues meant that the Council was constrained in what it could physically do particularly in terms of transporting people and cultural freight over to neutral countries because of security concerns for flights and resource limitations (the lack of paper being a major problem, for example⁸). Communication constraints more generally resulted in a lack of direct central control from London, and a pragmatic decentralised approach to the way the Council operated. With decentralisation of control from an organisational point of view on the one hand coupled with a varied situation and audiences on the ground in each of the four neutral countries (analysed in this thesis), the Council's work varied significantly and would have been conceivably unrecognisable from one country to the next by the end of the war. The British Council did not open its own institutes in Turkey for teaching purposes because of the amount of time that it took to get to Turkey (via South Africa for much of the war) and local preference of Hasan Ali Yücel for placing British Council lecturers within Turkish institutions (the Halkevleri primarily, but also Universities and schools), as well as a real fear that opening a British Institute would be unwelcome.⁹ By contrast, the British Council in Spain, until relatively late in the war, did not conduct any activities outside of the British Institute building, and therefore not only conducted teaching activities there (through the establishment of the kindergarten and the British Institute School), but also its art exhibitions, music concerts and lectures. In Sweden, the Council aimed to reach out to as many Swedes as possible across the country but were severely restricted by the difficulties in getting people and bulky materials there because of limited flights and limited load capacity of those few flights.¹⁰ Therefore the Council worked primarily through Anglophile Societies and thereby encouraged pre-existing pro-British sympathies. This inevitably carried a level of risk for the Council due to being unable to control those Societies, but it seems to have worked well enough at least during the time of war. When the

⁷ CAC BRCO 1/4 Desmond, Astra. Letter to Sir Malcolm Robertson, 2 April, 1945; HKRC TGA 8812/1/1/17 Longden, Major Alfred A. Letter to Sir Kenneth Clark, undated but between two related letters dated 6 and 20 December 1943 in the file.

⁸ Coombs, *Spreading*, p.13

⁹ TNA BW 61/4 Dundas, C A F. Report entitled Mr. C.A.F. Dundas's Report on his tour of Turkey, August, 1940', August 1940.

¹⁰ CAC MALT 1 Mallet, Victor. Copy of an unpublished memoir, 1919-46 p.75

relatively few lecturers such as T S Eliot, Sir Lawrence Bragg and Sir Harold Nicolson did touch down on Swedish soil, the Council ensured that they received as much publicity as possible and met as many influential people as possible emphasising implicitly that these lecturers had risked their lives in travelling there which created a great impression. In Portugal, the Council had relatively few restrictions and could be more easily served from London through the regular flight services to Lisbon (though clearly still not safe, given the tragic death of Leslie Howard). There was also a more congenial atmosphere created by the Portuguese Press and Government, partly created, of course, by the fact that Nazi troops were not sitting at the borders of the country.

On the other hand, and because of a need to be economical with resources (despite the growing budget), the Council also tried to find ways in pooling its activities together. This ranged from a number of publications like *Britain To-day* and the *British Life and Thought* series of booklets being centrally authored and distributed for a number of different countries, to the same lecturers and art exhibitions being moved from one country to the next – particularly geographical neighbours Spain and Portugal, but it also extended elsewhere.¹¹ There was, to an extent, an attempt to create a corporate identity through these publications and events, though by doing so there was always a risk that the corporate identity would not be suitable across the range of different audiences that the Council was aiming at. Some exhibitions, such as a postage stamp exhibition organised firstly in Stockholm and then in Madrid, were failures in some places (in this instance, Stockholm) and large successes in others (Madrid) – yet it was essentially the same exhibition presented in the same way. Though direct feedback is less apparent, the Council was often criticised for creating publications that were the same ‘for a businessman in Toronto and a businessman in Damascus’ (in the words of a post-war review of the Council by M R K Burge), and clearly the focus for the Council had always to be a bespoke approach wherever possible for each of its audiences.¹² Yet, it was important for the Council to try to show it was one organisation presenting a single image of Britain to a range of foreign peoples. Already, during the war, the Portuguese were beginning to fear that a more sympathetic Spain from late 1942 onwards would make the British Council concentrate its efforts on Madrid rather

¹¹ Roberts, *Um Toque Decisivo*, p.59-60

¹² Burge, ‘The British Council’ p.311

than Lisbon, and this fear could be exacerbated if the approach taken across the board was not sufficiently homogenous.¹³

The British Council focused on targeting the elites rather than the masses, and the towns and cities instead of rural areas, by deliberate intention, though it was also partly because of existing constraints of resource limits of needing to focus on a relatively small audience. This point has been emphasised throughout this thesis and it clearly affected the way the British Council was organised, the way it operated and its cultural propaganda. The Council concentrated on cultural propaganda that was going to interest the elites and provide events that they would want to attend. The aim, as shown in chapter one was not to directly influence those who were indifferent or hostile to Britain, but to influence those who were already pro-British but had a certain influence amongst the elites, so that the message of the British Council could spread through a secondary influence. Focusing on a small group of people meant also that a very effective form of influencing, but one which is often overlooked, could be utilised – that of word-of-mouth propaganda. The message of the Council could spread in a similar way to a rumour and have a relatively high level of fidelity even after being passed through a number of people. Clearly it is very difficult to measure this in any meaningful way. Anecdotal evidence from sources suggests that the British Council, particularly in areas like Spain where it was starved of publicity, was still able to attract many pupils to its school and members to its institute and the only conceivable way that it could have done so was by its reputation being passed on from one impressed elite member to the next.¹⁴ Word-of-mouth propaganda worked well and was a mainstay of the way the British Council extended its influence among the elite who then influenced others.

The constraints outlined above about its relationship with other British organisations and individuals as well as its work on the front line are a particular factor in determining the British Council's success. However, it must be stressed that a constraint does not necessarily equal a barrier to success. The constraints that the British Council had to deal with could just as easily be drivers for efficiency and for focusing on a particular audience or a particular way of operating. This could enable the Council to be successful in its constrained field whilst leaving other areas of propaganda and other audiences to other organisations. Nevertheless there is a certain

¹³ Montiero, Armindo. Letter to Oliveira Salazar, 26 September 1942 reproduced in Rosas et al, *Armindo Monteiro*, Document 54, p.306

¹⁴ TNA BW 56/8 Reavey, George. Letter to Carmen Wiggin, 28 October, 1940.

link between how the Council dealt with its constraints and whether it was successful, which will be explored in the next section as well as examining the range of other factors on which its success depended.

5.3 Factors critical for the success of the British Council

The British Council's success in neutral Europe was dependent on a variety of different variable factors, some of which were within the Council's control and some were not. The first factor critical for its success was an agreement amongst interdependent organisations on its remit – that it should exist at all, and then once that was secure, what it should be doing to achieve its aims. As has been shown in previous chapters and above, this agreement took some time to come to fruition. After the Lloyd-Reith agreement on the political-cultural split and the subsequent Royal Charter enshrining the Council's objectives, it is clear nonetheless that there was a broad agreement within the British Government that some kind of promotion of British culture abroad was worthwhile and the British Council was the best placed organisation to provide it. Despite Lloyd's death and the constant irritations that Robertson felt were eroding his ability to run the organisation, the British Council was strong enough and had enough friends in Government to continue its operation throughout the war period and still thrives in the present day. There may well have been disagreement on the detail of what kind of image of British culture to present abroad, but the important point here is that there was general agreement on the issue that an image of British culture should be presented abroad at all – and this was critical to its success. Achieving a general agreement depended heavily on the personalities involved. Pro-British Council individuals (such as Lloyd, Halifax, Robertson, Eden and the British Council representatives on the ground) had an ability to persuade others of the benefits of the British Council. The British Council sceptics (such as Beaverbrook, Reith, Duff Cooper and even Hoare and the British Embassy staff in Ankara to an extent) were unable, or unwilling, to make effective counterarguments.¹⁵ Fortunately the Council had a mixture of forceful personalities in its favour and a general lack of people with vested interests who were prepared to undermine the Council.

¹⁵ TNA INF 1/443. Lord Halifax. Letter to Sir John Simon, 12 January, 1940; TNA FO 370/634. Eden, Anthony. Minute to Winston Churchill, 20 May 1941; Unwin, *The Truth*, p. 437; White, *The British Council*, p.32; TNA PREM 4/20/3 Duff Cooper, Alfred. Letter to Winston Churchill. 7 February, 1941; TNA FO 954/23A Hoare, Sir Samuel. Telegram entitled 'Personal for Sir Malcolm Robertson from Sir S. Hoare', 12 November, 1941; TNA BW 61/12 Grant, Michael. Letter to Martin Blake, 19 February, 1941.

The second factor on which success of the Council depended was the broad context in which it operated. By this it is not meant the day-to-day operations nor the general internal agreement on its role mentioned above, but more the context of the war itself and the views of the people and the Government in the countries where it operated. As stressed throughout this thesis the British Council was not working in a vacuum and it is clear in extreme cases in Italy, the Low Countries, France, Yugoslavia, Greece, Romania and Bulgaria, when those countries either joined the Axis or were invaded by the Axis the British Council had to be evacuated. Any successes achieved prior to evacuations, such as creation of general pro-British sympathy or more specific English language skills, were either lost or went underground. Where the Council continued to operate, the course of the war was clearly something of acute importance to those countries even though they may not have been directly involved in the war itself. When the war was going badly for Britain (in reality or in perception only), then the British Council would clearly suffer the consequences and struggle to make its voice heard; equally when the war was going well for Britain, then the British Council would reap the benefits. The overall context of the war was then crucial, and the Council could not create huge benefits in a non-conducive context. Yet, it has been shown in chapter four that it was not always as simple as direct correlation between success in the war and success for the British Council. The Council often created a focus for pro-British elites in neutral countries who, regardless of the war situation, were ideologically against the values of the Nazi and Fascist systems, or who could see through the context to the benefits of what the British Council was offering. Under the tenure of the pro-Nazi Serrano Suñer as Spanish Foreign Minister, the British Council's influence actually grew considerably in terms of membership and student numbers, and this was mirrored in other contexts. For example, Hasan-Ali Yücel was always a pro-British Turkish Education Minister regardless of how the war was going for Britain and the spread of British Council lecturers around the Halkevleri was similarly unhindered by the general context. Nevertheless, at the detailed level it is complex, there was always going to be a general link to the war situation which the Council would never be able to get away from – as it became more and more obvious that Germany could not win the Second World War, less and less neutral people felt they should not engage with the Council. But perhaps more important than the war situation for the Council was the general feeling amongst the neutral elites about whether the war situation was important or not to how the Council should be treated. It was this assessment of the importance of the war to the Council's operations on which, in reality, the Council relied. Tacit approval was vital if overt approval was not

forthcoming because of the war situation. However, it is important to note that if the Handicap Principle which was outlined in chapter one is applied here, it actually shows that the Council was able to demonstrate that the war situation was a handicap with which it could cope, instead of the unhelpful war situation hindering the success of the Council. It could operate quite well enough with the constraints that the war presented, and give the impression that the culture that it was portraying was so inherently positive that the constraints of war were not important. This concept, of course, only takes the thesis so far. It seems clear that the elites were not going to be overwhelmed by this principle if they were pro-Nazi or worried about showing any sign of pro-British sympathy, but for many it would have been an important factor that should not be forgotten.

The third factor on which the Council's success depended was the overall approach that it took on the ground. This, of course, had many facets that this thesis has examined in detail but there are some broad themes which can be highlighted. The first point to make is that the Council had to provide something that was actually wanted by the neutral peoples that it was trying to engage with and influence, rather than trying to impose propaganda that was not needed, wanted or necessary. The most obvious example of this approach was explained by Stanley Unwin, the Chairman of the Books and Periodicals Committee, in his memoirs where he remarked that the Council only ever established Anglophile Societies where there was local interest in establishing them.¹⁶ Unwin also applied commercially sound incentives for bookstores in neutral Europe to encourage them to stock English language books or English books in translation through the Book Export Scheme and the sale or return policy.¹⁷ This approach to a large extent, though perhaps less obviously elsewhere, was a major part of the Council's approach. Supplies of British Council teachers to the Halkevleri was clearly something that Michael Grant pushed considerably in Turkey, but he could not have had his great success unless there had been a need – perhaps a latent need, rather than an active one – amongst those Turkish institutions for those teachers.¹⁸ In Spain, the British Council did not even attempt to teach outside of its institute building until it was invited to do so, and in Portugal the Council could not have received such favourable press coverage for its activities had the Government and non-official elites not wanted to read about the Council's activities.

¹⁶ Unwin, *The Truth*, p.419

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.422; Coombs, *Spreading*, p.12

¹⁸ Grant, *My first eighty years*, p.65

The second point on the approach the Council took was that it was an incremental approach. No one particular event made the British Council's work a success, but instead it was the culmination of many events building on the successes of previous events that made the Council such a force. Over time it constructed strong foundations working on long-term sympathy creation, rather than short-term superficial successes. It may have been slower, therefore, to produce results (which was always going to cause a problem at a financial level when trying to defend return on investment) but its effect was more profound. There is another important point to make on the incremental approach which is that incrementalism relies on the maintaining and servicing of the foundations. It should not forget about them when new activities and events came onto the horizon, even if those new activities were building on the success of previous visits. What is meant by that is best provided by an example such as Sir Lawrence Bragg's continued correspondence and connections with the Swedish scientific community long after his visit to Stockholm in April-May 1943. In his archive at the Royal Institution there are letters going back and forth across the North Sea until late 1944, and they were still referencing his visit itself and the direct consequences of it, such as the facilitation of publishing articles by Swedish scientists in British journals.¹⁹ Though subsequent visits to Sweden by other important figures such as Harold Nicolson built on the success of Bragg, it was imperative to ensure that Bragg himself continued to secure his long-term success through maintaining the contacts that he had personally made. Incremental propaganda also affected the themes of the propaganda by making it more timeless, old-fashioned and conservative - which made it ideal for the (largely) conservative elites who were the target of the propaganda. The image of Britain in the *British Life and Thought* series, for example, focuses more on a very comfortable, nostalgic picture of prewar Britain, rather than wartime ammunitions factories and the slums of the inner cities where the workers lived (though, to be fair, they were not entirely ignored either).²⁰

A third point on the approach was that it had to ensure that when opportunities arose through changes in the war situation or changes in sympathy by people in neutral countries it took advantage of those opportunities. Those opportunities could arise from a change in Foreign Minister (such as the change from Serrano Suñer to Jordana in September 1942), the arrival of new elites at a British Council event (such as

¹⁹ RI W L BRAGG 70A/248 Hägg to Bragg, 25 December 1944

²⁰ Stamp, *The Face of Britain*, p.11

the Marqués de Lozoya in November 1942²¹), the interest aroused in Britain amongst Swedish scientists that was detected by Bragg (in May 1943²²) because of the realisation that Germany could not win the war, and also things which did not change, but were relatively rare – such as Hasan-Ali Yücel's pro-British sympathies.²³ These examples clearly link with the earlier point made about the broad context in which the Council operated, but there is a difference here in that it was one thing for the broad context to be conducive to the British Council's success, and quite another for the British Council to cash in on that conduciveness effectively. The two had to work in tandem and as that conduciveness was fragile and uncertain, owing to the nature of the war situation, it had to ensure it took opportunities when they arose. Lozoya's apparent change of heart commented upon by John Steegman was clearly not a profound one (he often visited the Instituto Aleman de Cultura after November 1942²⁴), but the British Council had to, and did, make every effort to seize upon glimmers of pro-Britishness amongst the neutral elites.

A final important point to make on the approach that the Council took is that just as it had to cash in on the opportunities that came along, it also had to ensure that its enemies – both the equivalent German and Italian institutes as well as those amongst the people of the neutral countries where it operated – did not take advantage of any mistakes, gaps or reversals in its own propaganda. This often meant continuing to spend money on institutions and events which were not in themselves particularly effective in terms of cultural propaganda. Not spending money on them, and closing them down, would have been very costly to British reputation – an own-goal in propaganda terms. The non-financial cost of acting to close down schools and newspapers outweighed the financial cost of not closing them down. With finite resources this was always going to be difficult to justify, but there were plenty of examples where it happened. These include maintaining *Anglo-Portuguese News* when it had a declining readership and keeping open two schools in particular – the St Julian's School in Carcevelos, and the English High School for Girls in Istanbul – which were considered to be very costly for what they achieved.²⁵ It could also be argued that,

²¹ KCA STE 2/2/2 John Steegman's Travel Diary entitled 'Visit to Spain and Portugal 1942-3'.
Diary entry for 13 November 1942

²² RI W L BRAGG 70A/63 Bragg, Sir Lawrence. Letter to Martin Blake 14 May 1943 (Bragg arrived back in Britain on the 13 May)

²³ KCA STE 2/2/4 Steegman, John. 'Travel Diary for Turkey and Palestine 1943-1944'. Diary entry for 29 December 1943

²⁴ 'Instituto Aleman de Cultura – Concierto de canto', *ABC* (Madrid, 13 February 1943) p.10

²⁵ TNA BW 52/10 Campbell, Ronald. Letter to Anthony Eden, 22 February, 1945; TNA BW 61/7
Extract from the Draft Minutes of the 99th Meeting of the Finance and Agenda Committee

to an extent, the reason for the British Council's survival at the beginning of the Second World War (in September 1939) and at the time of Lord Lloyd's death (in February 1941) rested on a similar argument. To close down the Council's institutions across neutral Europe or to subsume them into the overtly propagandistic Ministry of Information, would have been costly in propaganda terms. Many considered that the Council was ineffective (misguidedly as argued by this thesis), but it simply was not worth the backlash that would have been received from the Axis, by closing it down.

The fourth and final main factor on which the Council's success depended was its ability to work through others, and the extent to which others were prepared to extol the virtues of the British Council. This clearly has links to the points above but was so critical to the Council's success that it deserves to be a factor in its own right. Chapter one highlighted a model of influence where influencing the pro-British elites could have a chain reaction effect to influence other groups, firstly the indifferent and hostile elites, and then the wider masses. The primary audience of pro-British elites could be seen as being a channel to reach a wider audience rather than solely as a receptacle in themselves.²⁶ This thesis has shown that this model evidently has a lot of merit and enabled the British Council's influence to expand. Perhaps, however, it is a little simplistic to group the elites into pro-British, indifferent and anti-British in opinion as they were more complex than this suggests and does not take into account the confidence of each group in demonstrating their opinion. Some elites were proudly pro-British and keen to show it (overt ideologues), other elites were more cautious until the war outcome was more certain, but were pro-British from the outset (covert ideologues), for example. The model also does not cover the extent to which the groups were made up of ideologues and 'barometer elites' (their barometric behaviour being either due to pragmatism or genuine changes in sympathy), which makes the picture far more complicated, as was shown in chapter four. Nevertheless the important point here is that the British Council, by working with others who had influence elsewhere, was able to reach out beyond its natural audience of overt pro-British elites to these complex groups of individuals to incrementally change sympathy. As stated above, the Halkevleri, Anglophile Societies, the favourable Portuguese Press are perhaps the most obvious of these routes from spreading influence beyond the pro-British enclaves to a wider audience. It was also true for non-newspaper publications, such as *Bonniers*

held on 8th February 1944 at 10.30am. Comments by Martin Blake on agenda item 'Turkey: High School for Girls, Istanbul.'; TNA BW 56/10 Steegman, John. 'Visit to Spain and Portugal: Final Report', 3 March, 1943

²⁶ See Bogart, *Cool Words* p.56

Litterära Magasin in Sweden which Ronald Bottrall noted 'reaches a public that the Legation does not always touch' and was even distributed in occupied Scandinavia which was clearly out of bounds for the usual British Council branded publication.²⁷ This was something the British Council should have and did utilise and influence wherever possible, though this is a more extreme example. The use, and encouragement, of other non-official, but more mainstream, publications like *Nature* and *The Economist* was widespread, and were probably more effective because of their non-official nature. British Council-published books such as the *British Life and Thought* series had, as was demonstrated in chapter three, great examples of literary creativity particularly the Dudley Stamp booklet *The Face of Britain*. However, these booklets could not directly penetrate beyond those who were likely to read the booklets because they were always going to be seen as official. They could be extremely well-written but remain unread because of their branding and title. Getting covert ideologues and barometric elites to read British Council books or step inside the British Council buildings and attend events such as book exhibitions was always going to be difficult particularly when the general course of the war was not going in Britain's favour. The influence of such events and the *British Life and Thought* series as well as other British books displayed at book exhibitions was always going to be limited in a direct sense but they could, however, be significant (if incremental) through word-of-mouth from pro-British elite (who attended the events or read the books) to not-so-pro-British elite. Well-presented facts about Britain (or 'soundbites' as they might be called today) could be quoted in general conversation without reference to the booklets themselves.²⁸ The SOE 'sib' campaign worked on a similar basis, providing easily remembered rumours for spreading – the British Council technique may have been more subtle in approach, but it worked on very similar foundations.²⁹ The potentially unread books could also have an indirect effect of showing 'evidence of ... intellectual achievements' which have 'value even if it deals with an esoteric subject of relatively little interest to the target audience' – words of an observer of the USIA's cultural propaganda work, but just as applicable here.³⁰ Just by showing that it could produce books covering what could be seen as 'intellectual' subjects, even if they remained unread, had an important propaganda value which should not be underestimated. One final barrier that could be overcome through working through others in this way was the ever-present language

²⁷ KCA JDH 26/9. Bottrall, Ronald. Letter to John Davy Hayward, 26 December 1942

²⁸ Unwin, *The Truth*, p.421

²⁹ Richards, 'Whispers of War'

³⁰ Bogart, p.91

barrier which always caused a dilemma for the Council – should it work in English only to spread the influence of the English language and wider access to English language material, or should it translate its work for non-English speakers who it wished to influence directly? By working through others it could do more in English, as the pro-British elites were very likely to speak fluent English (which saved time and effort), and then allow the messages of the Council to spread in the local language amongst the elites, reaching a far more extensive audience.

5.4 The success of the British Council

The previous section has shown that the British Council's success was dependent on a range of different variables some of which were in its control but many which were not and relied instead on the goodwill of pro-British elites and British organisations in order to make its work count in time of war. Having favourable conditions did not mean, of course, that the British Council was automatically successful, merely that a number of conditions had to be satisfied to make that success possible. It is far more difficult to measure the success of the Council for a number of different reasons, such as determining what success would look like in the first place, whether the indicators for measuring success are reliable metrics or whether they are really a measure of other influences (such as the general state of the war) and whether it is possible to determine success in the absence of an unknowable counterfactual situation (i.e. what would have been the outcome had the British Council not acted in the way that it did). However, chapter four explored a number of different ways to determine the view from the other side which attempted to assess the success of the Council in getting an audience reaction. Key amongst these indicators are the views of people in specific roles – the Heads of State, Foreign Ministers and Education Ministers – particularly if the views of the individual changed over time or the specific post changed hands. Clearly this will only give an indication of that individual's views of the British Council as they would have been exposed to a variety of other influences in those positions. But what can be determined is to what extent the British Council became more able to deliver its objectives with official support, or the frequency of visits made by the official elites to the British Council's institutes. The most striking example of this is perhaps the invitation of Jimenez Diaz and Carlos Blanco Soler to Dr Robert McCance to lecture outside of the British Council building in February 1943 – the first time that that had been sanctioned in Spain.³¹ Also in this category could be

³¹ TNA BW 82/9 'The British Council - Report for the First Quarter, 1943', April 1943 p2

placed the attendance of Gösta Bagge at the opening of the British Institute in Stockholm despite the barrage of complaints from the Nazi Government, the attendance of the Marqués de Lozoya at a dinner party at the British Institute in Madrid in November 1942, and the attendance of President Ismet İnönü of Turkey at an exhibition of British Universities.³² The correspondence between Alba and Beigbeder, Monteiro and Salazar and the views of Serrano Suñer and Jordana shown in chapter four are good examples of a general trend of increasing engagement and freedom for the British Council and its work. It will always be difficult, however, to delineate the success of the Council's work itself from the wider, more conducive, context when it comes to official views and attendance at events. The views of Franco and Salazar at the end of the war show that though they talked about the British Council specifically, it would be a brave historian who concluded that their views were not affected by the general postwar climate and their need to keep on the right side of the victorious Allies.³³

What chapter four showed was a better indicator for the Council's success was the level to which the non-official elites followed the official lead - in effect how far was the Council successful in going beyond what was officially acceptable and reach out to the non-official elites. A numerical way of measuring this is through membership numbers and the numbers of students who attended British Council courses, and through the number of newspaper articles reporting British Council events. As was stated in that same chapter, the local newspaper coverage of the British Council's work, and tracking the frequency of articles during the war period, cannot give such a good indicator as the membership and student numbers. This is because the newspapers were largely influenced by the official elite (or censored by them) and therefore were more symptomatic of the official elite view (which as stated above is difficult to delineate from the wider context) rather than having an opinion-forming role. Looking at the membership and student figures for the institutes and how independent those figures are from the newspaper article frequency and the views of the official elites, therefore give a better indicator of the level of success attained by the Council. Membership figures or other indicators of interest shown by the non-official

³² 'Tyskt angrepp på statsrådet Bagge', *Aftonbladet*, (18 December 1941). Newspaper cutting in RAS P3206 'Bottrall, Francis James Ronald'; KCA STE 2/2/2 John Steegman's Travel Diary entitled 'Visit to Spain and Portugal 1942-3'. Diary entry for 13 November 1942; Grant, *My first eighty years*, p.72

³³ TNA BW 56/7 Starkie, Walter. Letter to Sir Victor Mallet, 11 January 1946; Eastment, 'The policies', 1982 p.103 citing TNA BW 2/111 Foreign Office Report on a visit to Council Institute abroad, 1945.

elites can be compared against how conducive the context was and the self-interest of the official elites to support the British Council's work. Differences between the two (particularly if interest amongst the non-official elites was aroused when there is no need or explanation for it from an official perspective) are potentially a good indicator of the Council's work itself in achieving support and interest amongst the wider elite population. There are a number of examples of this. Firstly, when Serrano Suñer issued a decree in June 1940 effectively banning the work of the British Council, he was seemingly unable to stop the institute opening and building up its work with the support of the Madrid population.³⁴ Even when Serrano Suñer became Foreign Minister later that year, he still was unable to thwart the work of the Council, despite being openly pro-Nazi. Membership of the British Institute increased from 60 in the first quarter of 1941 to 420 in the third quarter of 1942 and student figures rose from 160 to 762 over the same period – all while Serrano Suñer was Foreign Minister.³⁵ As a comparison, the number of articles per quarter in *ABC*, over which he had a strong influence, steadily declined in this period from around three articles in the fourth quarter of 1940 (on a four-point moving average) to around one article in the third quarter of 1943, only rising after Serrano Suñer had left office (see Appendix I). Clearly the Council was successful at attracting a large increase in new members and students in spite of Serrano Suñer's efforts to choke the publicity that the Council could receive and an implementation of his 'go slow' policy whenever the Council needed assistance. Even more surprisingly, a significant proportion of the new members were observed as being from the Falange movement, which Serrano Suñer was meant to be the central player.³⁶

In contrast, the situation in Portugal was somewhat different. The membership numbers of the British Institute in Lisbon were recorded as 1,717 in the first quarter of 1942 (a higher number than the Madrid institute ever achieved during the war), rose slightly over the next year then dropped to 1,664 in the third quarter of 1943, then dropped again to 1,024 (a figure less than 60% of the peak figure) in the second quarter of 1944 before rising slightly towards the end of the war.³⁷ The articles in the

³⁴ TNA BW 56/2 Reavey, George. Letter to Dennis Campkin, 14 June 1940

³⁵ TNA BW 82/9 'The British Council: Report for the First Quarter, 1941', (April, 1941) p.6; TNA BW 82/9 'The British Council: Report for the Third Quarter, 1942', (October, 1942) p.2

³⁶ Hoare, *Ambassador*, p.75

³⁷ TNA BW 82/9 'The British Council: Report for the First Quarter, 1942', (April, 1942) p.2; TNA BW 82/9 'The British Council: Report for the First Quarter, 1943', (April, 1943) p.3; TNA BW 82/9 'The British Council: Report for the Third Quarter, 1943', (November, 1943) p.2; TNA BW 82/9 'The British Council: Report for the Second Quarter, 1944', (July, 1944) p.3; TNA BW 82/9 'The British Council: Report for the Third Quarter, 1944', (October, 1944) p.2

Portuguese press about the Council and Anglo-Portuguese cultural relations generally, seems to almost mirror this trend with around twelve articles in the first quarter of 1942 (on a four-point moving average), rising to around fourteen in early 1943, dropping back to around twelve in the latter half of 1943, then dropping again to around nine articles in the second quarter of 1944, before rising again to around eleven before the end of the war (see Appendix C). There is an apparent linkage between the success of the Council (or lack of success) in attracting members to the Lisbon institute, and the numbers of articles about the British Council in the Portuguese Press and it could have a number of explanations. Firstly, there could be a direct causal link between the two in either direction. This could be through the number of articles in the press directly influencing who knew about the Council's work and creating interest - and therefore driving up or down the membership figures for the Council; or by the number of interesting events taking place in the Lisbon institute being reflected by the number of members anyway, and the events being merely recorded in the press; or a mixture of the two.

The second possible explanation could be that both the membership figures and the number of articles in the Portuguese Press reflected the general mood amongst the Portuguese elite with regard to their views about the Anglo-Portuguese relationship, and are only connected indirectly through this generally feeling. This general mood reflected the wider events of the war (including the effects of the East Timor landings and Allied use of bases in the Azores) and the fact, mentioned in chapter four, that Britain appeared to be focusing more on wooing Portugal's great rival Spain than on Portugal itself from late 1942 onwards, with Portuguese interest in Britain only recovering after D-Day. The general mood may well have been affected by war fatigue meaning that as the war dragged on, the Portuguese people saw less urgent need to show their sympathy for Britain as they had done earlier in the war.

The third possible explanation could be that the mirroring was just coincidental, but it does seem too striking for this to be likely. It was most probably a combination of the first two possible explanations - that there was a definitive causal link (from press to membership) because the press in Portugal seemed to have a significant impact for the Council particularly in attracting new members. For example, unlike in Spain, it dared to report British Council events in some detail (being symptomatic of the official line rather than formative of it) and a lower number of articles would have directly created less interest in the Council from those who had not attended its events before.

However, it is also true that it suffered a net decline in membership figures of 693 from early 1942 to early 1944, meaning that at least that number cancelled or did not renew their membership. It seems therefore that it can be concluded there was also a definitive causal link (from membership to press) as the declining numbers of those interested in the Council's work would have given the newspaper journalists less cause to write articles. It seems sensible to assume that these lapsed members were unlikely to have been directly influenced by articles in the Portuguese Press about the Council as they would have known the details already as members. Despite those causal links, the press and the membership figures were also largely reflecting the state of the war. This is because both new and existing members' relationships with the Council did not exist in a vacuum and would have been influenced by the general mood of the country. It is a highly complex and interdependent set of relationships which do not give rise to a simple explanation.

What does this mean for the overall measurement of success of the Council's work? In Spain it seems clear that the membership figures and numbers of students were increasing despite the lack of articles in the Spanish press and the implementation of Serrano Suñer's 'go slow' policy - i.e. the British Council was increasingly successful in reaching out to a wider audience despite those constraints. In Portugal, the picture is more complex. The membership figures did not rise in spite of a lack of articles and official support as they did in Spain, and in fact the two sets of data appear to track each other in a downward direction from 1942 to 1944. If the numbers of articles had risen, whilst the membership decreased it would have been tempting to conclude firstly that the two sets of data in both Spain and Portugal were independent and secondly that the Council was not very successful in Portugal even though it had increasing publicity and failed to convert that publicity into support and success for its work. But that was not the case, and instead it is difficult to conclude whether the decreasing membership of the Lisbon institute was a sign of the Council's poor performance, or merely a reflection of the wider context in which it operated. This wider context included knowledge of the official Portuguese view of the Council's work and war fatigue amongst the Portuguese population.

In Sweden and Turkey it is less easy to measure the success of the Council in the same way as Spain and Portugal because of the lack of data on press articles that can be compared against membership or student numbers. Nevertheless there are some proxy indicators that can be used in both cases. For example the number of students that the British Council taught in Turkey increased from zero in 1940 to over 10,000 in 1945,

teaching in 42 Turkish institutions in early 1942, 123 in late 1943 and 150 in 1945.³⁸ Whilst it has been argued above that using one set of figures, like student numbers, cannot in itself show how successful the Council was, it is also reasonable to argue that such a rapid increase in student numbers and a proliferation in the number of Turkish institutions being utilised are reasonable indicators of success. It must also mean, by deduction, that the activities it was carrying out were wanted by the Turkish authorities and it was doing them in a way which the Turkish authorities approved, otherwise it would not have been allowed to continue expanding. Similarly in Sweden the number of Anglophile Societies increased from 37 in late 1943 to 51 in 1945 which, though in a democratic country, shows that the Council must have been continuing its work in a way which was acceptable and welcomed by the Swedish people and Government.³⁹ The Council came under pressure in Sweden when the English watercolour exhibition attracted what was viewed in London as a small number of visitors – 12,610. Bottrall was keen to point out that in a population of just one seventh of the size of Britain, this was actually quite high, and percentage-wise would have produced an audience of 88,270 if it was held in London. Nevertheless the criticism from London shows that the British Council was keen to concentrate on events which were successful and known in advance to be successful, rather than taking a gamble on success.⁴⁰

To conclude this section, the success of the Council in the four countries where it operated is difficult to determine. What can be said is that in all four countries the work of the Council expanded during the war and in a number of cases this expansion was independent of direct support from the local authorities, though it always needed their tacit approval. Some events like its Stamp exhibition in Stockholm were considered outright failures. Others, like its English watercolour exhibition in Sweden, were events which were regarded as disappointments even if not an outright failures. More generally some events did not make the wider impact that could have been the case in different circumstances (such as touring lecturers to Spain, because of the lack of publicity). The Council learned from these failures and disappointments, recognised its limitations and constraints, and therefore focused on events which were more likely to give it success. The Council understood, therefore, that the Turkish authorities were

³⁸ TNA BW 82/9 'The British Council: Report for the First Quarter, 1942', (April, 1942) p.4; TNA BW 82/9 'The British Council: Report for the Fourth Quarter, 1943,' (January 1944) p.4; TNA BW 82/9 'The British Council: Report for the First Quarter, 1945', (April, 1945) p.5

³⁹ TNA BW 82/9 'The British Council: Report for the Fourth Quarter, 1943,' (January 1944) p.3; TNA BW 82/9 'The British Council: Report for the First Quarter, 1945', (April, 1945) p.4

⁴⁰ TNA BW 57/4 Bottrall, Ronald. Letter to Major A A Longden, 12 July, 1943

keen for them to place lecturers in the Halkevileri and therefore focused resource on this, which they knew would be a success. The same occurred in Sweden where the Council understood that supporting home-grown Anglophile Societies was always going to give them a good return for their money. In Spain, the Council focused on lecturers who were at the forefront of their profession and spoke about subjects of keen interest to the Spanish authorities (nutrition, child health, British Catholicism). In Portugal they focused on touring visitors that they knew would be publicised widely in the largely pro-British press. Success, therefore, was something that the resource constraints actually made more likely as the British Council understood that it had to get as much payback from its expenditure as possible in the time of war in order to ensure its existence remained justified.

5.5 Towards a model of cultural propaganda

In chapter one, this thesis considered theoretically what cultural propaganda actually was, how it differed from political propaganda and how the different propaganda theories of Jacques Ellul and Leonard Doob might be applied to it as well as the more interdisciplinary theories of memetics and the Handicap Principle. Through chapters two, three and four, this thesis has considered the British Council's work of cultural propaganda in practice, firstly by seeing how it operated within a British context, secondly how it operated on the ground and lastly how it was received by the local populations. In other words, those chapters attempted to see how applicable those propaganda theories were to the reality of operation. This chapter has so far summarised how the Council operated and has concluded the factors on which the success of the Council was dependent, how its success can be measured and to what extent it was successful. The coming section is designed to draw all of those elements together into a model that will help to define the concept of cultural propaganda and create a transferable template that can be applied to other eras and situations. This model will be divided into three key elements which will be termed 'pillars' to emphasise the argument that all three pillars are equally important and the edifice of cultural propaganda which they support cannot work without all three being in existence. The three pillars will be termed 'Perception', 'Substance' and 'Organisation'. Each of those pillars, it will be shown, have a number of sub-elements.

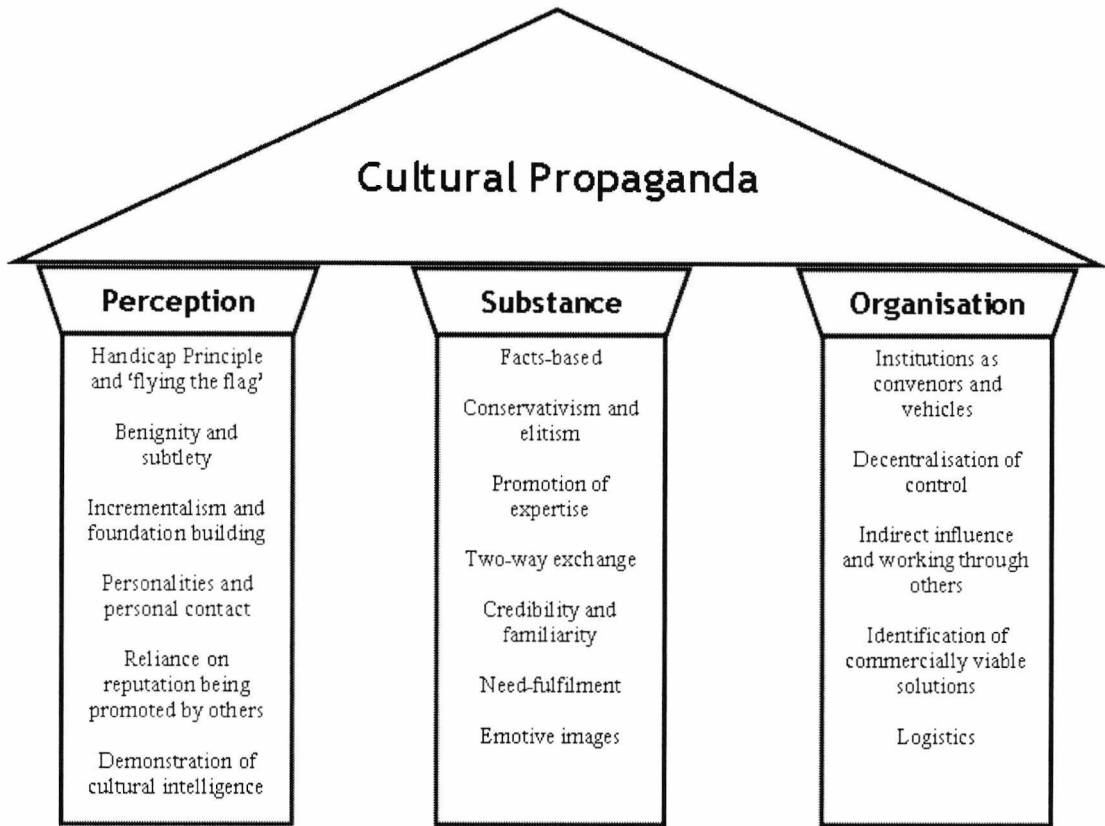


Figure 25: A visual model of cultural propaganda

5.5.1 Perception pillar

'Perception' contains all of the elements relating to how cultural propaganda is presented and in the case of the British Council, how it presented itself and British life and thought to the people of neutral Europe.

The Handicap Principle and 'flying the flag'

It has been emphasised throughout this thesis is the fact that it was remarkable that the British Council actually managed to exist at all in difficult territories. That it did so and kept its presence felt throughout the war (except in those countries that it had to evacuate because of military reasons) was an essential part of the cultural propaganda of the Council. This is before the actual substance of the Council's work is considered. To spend time and resources on art, music and lecture tours at a time when Britain was fighting for its survival may have raised criticism at home from the likes of Lord Beaverbrook, but doing so gave out an audacious signal to those who were the target audience for its work. Not only was it an opportunity to 'fly the flag' as was the case with the Embassies and other British organisations in difficult territories, but also the Zahavi Handicap Principle can clearly be applied here. To show it could afford to

'waste' resources on cultural adventures at this time (however well targeted) shows clearly that the Council had the ability to impress and unlock the Reputation Reflex recently proposed by Robin Wight. Harold Nicolson's remarks that he was surprised at the great reception that he received in Sweden and that he considered the reason for that reception was that he had made the effort to travel there, is an obvious example of this, as stated earlier in the thesis.

What made the British Council's work even more remarkable compared with other types of propaganda used in the Second World War was that it required a significant amount of intensive resource to make it worthwhile. Other types of propaganda such as through a press attaché at an Embassy, the production and distribution of posters, the dropping of leaflets over occupied Europe of course all required resource in some form. The way the British Council operated from an institute involving the organisation of one event after another with numerous staff on its books was particularly resource intensive. Its work was not obviously propagandistic in the sense of having an obvious return on investment that it was aiming for, unlike other forms of propaganda. However, it targeted its resources at specific activities which it knew were more likely to bring it success. The Council was seen by the target audience as strangely and intriguingly benign and seemingly directionless. All that resource-intensive effort for art exhibitions and music concerts was at a time when Britain surely needed all the resources it could lay its hands on to shore up the last line of defence against military attack. But it was not so - Britain did and could spend significant resources on cultural propaganda, and by doing so sent out the signal that it was in a healthy enough state to do so, and definitely not a country on its last throes.

Benignity and subtlety

Creating a perception through the style of operation is something that was emphasised earlier as a key feature in the success of cultural propaganda. The British Council's propaganda work was not focused on the war situation and at times blithely ignored that there was a war on at all. Instead it took a more long-term, positive image of the British way of life and presented it in a way that was attractive to its audience and not in a way that appeared to impose a way of life or a way of thinking onto its audience - merely presented them in a way the audience could take or leave. Admittedly the Council focused on those areas of the British way of life which were more impressive - scientific achievements, impressive art and music - than on the mundane and potentially uninteresting (which, of course, fits under the 'Substance'

pillar below). But nevertheless that more impressive image of Britain was not in itself enough - it is probably fair to say that most propaganda is going to focus on impressive issues when representing a way of life - so the difference in terms of taking a subtle approach instead of a patronising and imposing one was crucial in getting a more profound response from the audience. Benignity and subtlety may not have such an immediate impact, but their impacts are more likely to last longer.

Incrementalism and foundation building

Connected with the benignity point above, cultural propaganda must be a slow, incremental process with one event building on the success of the previous event. No one particular event is important enough on its own, but the cumulative effect of a constant stream of events (as much as is practical) is very important. Indeed, too great a focus given to one particular event could invoke censorship restrictions, or a counter propaganda campaign, whereas an incremental approach, just below the radar of the censor's view, can continue successfully without disruption.

Creating a perception and presence through cultural propaganda also provides a foundation upon which other propaganda can build. Without it political propaganda would often have little effect because the latent need for it created by the advanced guard of cultural propaganda amongst the audience would not exist. This links very well with the ideas of Ellul and Doob mentioned in chapter one in their proposed 'pre' or 'sub' propaganda paving the way for the main propaganda. Whilst it has been argued that cultural propaganda is actually far more than just 'pre' or 'sub' propaganda and should be seen as central to general propaganda efforts, it can also provide the basis for other 'main' forms of propaganda as well.

Personalities and personal contact

'Personalities and personal contact' has a number of different facets. Firstly it is important to ensure that the individuals representing a culture are both accepted by the country they are being sent to and accepted by others in the culture they are representing as being good and true representatives of that culture. As has been shown in this thesis this is not always easy to achieve. Walter Starkie, for example, was not even British formally and this fact played a part in a certain suspicion amongst the British establishment as to whether he was a reliable and accurate representative for British culture. However, the Spanish Government accepted him as a *persona grata* and found it very difficult not to accept his presence in Madrid given that he was an expert

on many aspects of Spanish culture and highly respected in Madrid society. Many have commented that had the Council been represented by anyone else in Madrid, the successes made would have been severely limited and perhaps the Council's very existence in the Spanish capital would have been short-lived. These are counterfactual arguments, the details of which cannot be known, but the overall point remains that the personalities chosen as representatives is a key factor in cultural propaganda.

The second point to make here is the personal contact made by cultural representatives is crucial for the spread of cultural propaganda because as was shown in chapter one, most people are likely to be influenced by the arguments of people they know personally and trust. Word-of-mouth propaganda spreads effectively, is uncensorable and has a certain level of fidelity of message even after a number of transmissions from one person to the next. Historians and other commentators have often overlooked word-of-mouth propaganda because it is intangible, a 'writ in water', and its effects are difficult to assess but it is most definitely effective in getting a message through to those who it is directed at, and then passed on again.

Reliance on reputation being promoted by others

Linked with word-of-mouth propaganda, because of the way reputation spreads, cultural propaganda relies on the secondary and tertiary effects of its influence (as defined in the model of influence shown in chapter one) for its message to be disseminated. Cultural organisations, like the British Council, cannot expect to have the resources to do all of the work it needs to do itself, and even if it did, any message promulgated by itself would not necessarily be effective. As stated above, most people are likely to be influenced by the arguments of people they know personally and trust. The British Council could rely on a lot of the hard work of reputation building being done for it by its friends and this would actually be a lot more appealing to those who it could not reach directly than if it tried to make the efforts itself.

Demonstration of cultural intelligence

The last point to make under the 'Perception' pillar is that a cultural organisation needs to show that the country, or way of life, it is representing has cultural intelligence (i.e. groundbreaking science, pioneering art and music etc.) without its audience actually having to engage with that science, art and music directly. This is where a lot of the critics of the British Council - Beaverbrook particularly - missed the point of how the British Council was successful and was worth investing in. The

cultural events were not necessarily important in themselves for all of the people the British Council was aiming to influence, but they had a further level of importance by demonstrating the cultural intelligence of Britain – and the implication therein that Britain was a ‘civilised’ country that had interests that were worth defending. Many of the people the British Council influenced in this way may have read about the British Council’s latest exhibition or the arrival of an eminent cultural representative in the newspapers, but that was about as far as they would personally get involved with the cultural element of the British Council’s work. All that was needed for them was to know that the Council was operating in this way and that one eminent cultural person after another was visiting their country. The distance from the cultural aspect of the British Council’s work may not have been quite as extreme for others. Elites may have visited exhibitions that the Council was showing, but they did not necessarily have to understand the cultural significance of the exhibition in any detail.

5.5.2 Substance pillar

The ‘Substance’ pillar contains the genuine connections and benefits that are made as part of cultural propaganda, and in the British Council’s case the links between scientific communities, the teaching of the English language and the advancement of British art and music to those elites who appreciated the art and music for its own sake and not as part of a wider propaganda war. It is true that political propaganda can have substance but it has been argued in this thesis that it is not as essential in political propaganda as it is in cultural propaganda simply because of the timescales involved and the mode of operation – that being one of slow, incremental but profound maintenance and extension of influence.

Facts-based

Cultural propaganda has to be based on facts. It is not there as a deception tool or as a way of creating an image of the country that is not based on the truth. It can, as mentioned in the ‘benignity and subtlety’ section under the Perception pillar, focus on the elements of that country and culture which are the most impressive, and thereby provide a joined up story of constant cultural success rather than a mundane story of everyday life, but those cultural successes have to be real. If there was any way in which the work of the British Council could have been shown as being false by its opponents in the German and Italian institutions its whole credibility would have been damaged. Unlike the ‘sib’ campaign of the Special Operations Executive, where the

rumours sent out could not be traced back to an official source (i.e. the SOE), the work of the British Council could very easily be traced back to the British Council. The SOE could afford to be deceptive and mix truth with falsehood, but it was not something the British Council could afford to do.

Conservatism and elitism

Being long-term in nature, cultural propaganda has to be able to stand the test of time and often this means a conservative and old-fashioned substance that is known already to be robust and worth investing time and effort to promote. It also tends to dictate who the audience is likely to be in the short-term – for the British Council these were people who were going to be receptive to conservative and old-fashioned pro-British ‘substance’ (the pro-British elites). Their support can be more easily entrenched before the process of spreading influence to other audiences can commence. Focusing on ideas, works and individuals that have stood the test of time – such as William Shakespeare and his famous plays – is a very safe form of propaganda. To put it rather flippantly, there was no danger for the British Council of Shakespeare turning into a Communist and threatening to undermine the Council’s success in promoting his plays in Falangist Spain. The British Council did mention the war occasionally, but for the main part steered clear of it and presented an image of Britain that was a pre-war and nostalgic one – very comfortable for the audience that it was being presented to. In wartime it was quite safe to do this as well because the likelihood of any Spanish visitor coming to Britain during the war to see what Britain was ‘really’ like was highly unlikely because of the travel and visa restrictions imposed during the war period.

Promotion of expertise

The British Council was advised on many occasions to make sure it sent only experts abroad as touring lecturers. Robert McCance noted that someone could be ‘ruthlessly exposed’ if they were put in front of a panel of local experts on a particular subject, and did not know their subject well enough.⁴¹ Cultural propaganda relies on only the crème-de-la-crème of the cultural world being sent abroad as it is only natural that the true local experts of a particular subject are the ones that will want to meet the touring lecturers and exchange views and knowledge with them. If those local experts are not impressed, then the visit will have failed to achieve its objectives and the

⁴¹ TNA FD 1/6665 McCance, Robert A. ‘Report of Dr. R. A. McCance on his visit to the Iberian Peninsula’, undated but covering the period February-March 1943. Received by the Medical Research Council from the British Council on 17 June 1943 p.15-16

reputation of the organising body will be damaged as that view will filter through to other areas of the elite and wider masses.

For the British Council this fear of failure was acute – it simply could not afford to make mistakes in sending someone who did not know their subject well enough. It was better to send a smaller number of people who were experts than a lot of people who were not at the forefront of their subjects. Its reputation depended on being seen to be the pinnacle of excellence in cultural terms and if damaged by sending someone who was not an expert, its whole reputation for excellence would have been very hard to rebuild.

Two-way exchange

Linked with the promotion of expertise above, is the point that cultural propaganda is often very much about showing a real sense of wanting a cultural exchange. Opinions are far more likely to be accepted by one party if their opinions are considered and accepted by those who are trying to influence them. A clear example of the two-way exchange promoted by the British Council was the visit of Lawrence Bragg to Sweden, where he not only gave a number of lectures about his work on X-rays and related subjects, but he also spoke with Swedish scientists to get their work published in British scientific journals, and recognised by a wider Anglo-American scientific community.⁴² The two way exchange was not always quite so obvious as in the Bragg example and could cover the talks given by Starkie in Spain on comparing the work and lives of Shakespeare and Cervantes or Vaughan Williams and de Falla. It could also include the way in which Turkish artists were given information about how artists were patronised by the state in Britain, and started to think about how that model of patronisation might be applicable in Turkey.

This clearly also links with the benign and subtle approach mentioned under the 'Perception' pillar where the two-way exchange, though genuine, also plays a part in the general approach taken by the cultural propaganda organisation. Two-way exchange requires an invitation to the audience to be recognised as equal cultural partners, and an invitation of this sort is clearly going to be friendly and benign.

⁴² RI W L BRAGG 70A/63 Bragg, Sir Lawrence. Letter to Martin Blake 14 May 1943 (Bragg arrived back in Britain on the 13 May)

Credibility and familiarity

Mentioned earlier was the point about the need to make the British Council's cultural propaganda facts-based. This was very true, but it was not just important to make it facts-based but also to make it credible and familiar. Credibility was a key part of the British Council's work and is important for cultural propaganda generally. True but seemingly unrealistic facts have no place in cultural propaganda. This often means that evidence has to follow the facts and this can be supplied through photographs, books, art and music – the things which make a culture tangible – to avoid any sense that the propaganda is all just assertion. This was one good reason to hold exhibitions where people did not just have to hear British officials talk about cultural successes (though this was extremely important for word-of-mouth transmission) but they could see, hear, touch and perhaps even smell British culture 'as it really was'.

Need-fulfilment

The fulfilment of a need amongst an audience, and perhaps a latent need, is not just something important for cultural propaganda but also for other types of propaganda, including, particularly, advertising. The British Council went out of its way to ensure it did not force something upon its audience. It either allowed its audience to choose what it wanted from the British Council (such as help in establishing Anglophile Societies in Sweden) or analysed its audience to ensure it provided what it wanted. An example of the second point is where Starkie set up the British Institute School in Madrid teaching Froebel and Montessori style education which was unusual, but preferred by many Spanish parents. An interesting example of where the British Council did not get this right was the organisation of a Stamp exhibition in Stockholm which was poorly attended, but when it was re-constituted in Madrid, it was a great success. The needs of the different audiences had to be analysed carefully to ensure that the right exhibitions went to the right places. In some of the activities the British Council had the official backing of the local Government – the work in the Halkevleri, for example, was very much supported by the Minister of Education in Turkey – and its success there was much more certain than if it had gone ahead with setting up its own institutions offering English courses – something that was not needed or wanted in Turkey. To an extent this goes back to the 'one-size-fits-all' and bespoke approach argument outlined in chapter three where there was always going to be a tension between the preferred economy of scale advantages of the one-

size-fits-all approach and the preferred way of working to make the propaganda as appropriate for the audience as possible, through a bespoke approach.

Emotive images

Lastly under the 'Substance' pillar, and something that has been touched upon by the other points above, is the need to make that substance attractive and emotive. For the British Council, the everyday British way of life may be more representative of Britain, but it was not something that was going to be appealing to the audiences it was aiming at. It needed, instead, to focus on the achievements (albeit facts-based, credible and familiar) of Britain and give people a real reason for showing sympathy with the country. However, it was not in itself enough to focus on achievements, but it had to make those positive achievements attractive through a set of propaganda tools - the art exhibitions, music concerts, publications, and touring lecturers - and make those events engaging for the audience. An example of this was Dudley Stamp's description of Britain in the *Face of Britain* booklet produced by the Council described in chapter three.⁴³ He used emotive imagery to engage his readers and draw them into an emotive sympathy with Britain.

5.5.3 Organisation pillar

The 'Organisation' pillar is there in the model of cultural propaganda to emphasise the fact that cultural propaganda is not something which just happens in the way of Jacques Ellul's 'sociological propaganda' - that is naturally self-perpetuating - but needs to be directed and encouraged. Of course, many types of propaganda need an organising body and so organisation in itself is not unique for cultural propaganda. The sub-sections below will demonstrate what type of organisation was necessary - the institutions, the physical logistics of transportation of materials and people etc - to make cultural propaganda different from those other forms of propaganda.

Institutions as convenors and vehicles

In chapter one it was mentioned that the theory of memetics, which proposes that culture can be viewed as replicating units passing from one person to the next, mutating slowly over time, had also suggested the existence of 'meme vehicles'. Vehicles are used by replicators (in this case memes) to get them into a situation, or

⁴³ Stamp, *The Face of Britain*, p.11

preserve them in a situation they would not be able to arrive at on their own. Vehicles are used, therefore, for the preservation and propagation of those replicators.⁴⁴ This thesis then suggested that the need for a 'vehicle' – in other words the Council itself as an organising body and more specifically the institute buildings – is the element that distinguishes cultural propaganda from sociological propaganda. Theoretically, memetics conceivably works in both situations – with or without a vehicle – but the vehicle is needed to perpetuate the units of culture in the British Council case study because those units of culture were being injected into an alien and hostile society and could easily have been crowded out.

The institutions provided a focal point for the British Council activities, and though the Council operated through other organisations and placed British Council lecturers in schools and universities it tended to have a central location as its headquarters in a particular country. This had a benefit of drawing people together into a safe haven, if they felt the local society was alien and hostile to them, or simply as a convenient place where people could talk and exchange ideas and thoughts about a range of issues. This was regardless of whether the society outside the institute building was hostile to them or not. Word-of-mouth propaganda, as stated previously, could easily spread in these situations in the margins of cultural events and it was not the culture of the cultural events that was necessarily important, but more the fact that people were drawn together.

Decentralisation of control

The war situation meant that communication difficulties were rife in the British Council's operation and though the British Council may have wanted to direct all of its work from London, it simply could not do so for practical reasons. Often the Representatives out in Madrid, Lisbon, Stockholm and Ankara were left for days, weeks or even months without any or any meaningful contact with London. Telegrams could be used instead of transporting correspondence to and from Britain, but were costly and use of the telegraph lines were clearly restricted fairly regularly for the more immediate need of the Embassies. Materials and people took even longer to arrive and were even more costly to transport. What this meant was that the British Council relied on its local Representatives to make their own pragmatic decisions depending on the local situation and was forced to operate a decentralised policy.

⁴⁴ Blackmore, *The Meme Machine*, p.65

Even if the war situation had not been so restrictive for British Council operations, the decentralised model worked well for cultural propaganda as the British Council fulfilled the needs of the local population rather than determining it centrally. At the end of the war the way the Council operated in each of the four countries focused on in this thesis was very different. In Turkey, there was a concentration on placing English and other subject teachers in Turkish institutions, primarily the Halkevleri and Universities. In Sweden there was a concentration of working through Anglophile Societies. In Spain there was a concentration on working from the institute buildings themselves and providing a variety of cultural events from those premises. In Portugal there was a concentration of touring lecturers speaking at Portuguese institutions with a great deal of publicity in the Portuguese Press. Taking this decentralised approach was not only necessary, therefore, but also sensible and effective from a propaganda point of view.

Indirect influence and working through others

As has been stated, the institutes needed to work as vehicles for cultural propaganda and centres which drew people together. An element stressed throughout this thesis was the importance of working through other institutions which the organising body does not control directly. This has a number of benefits for the cultural propaganda organisation by being able to reach out beyond its natural audience (such as with the example of *Bonniers Litterära Magasin* being distributed in occupied Norway and Denmark) and having a far greater influence if its virtues are being extolled by an influential local figure, rather than directly. There was actually very little that the British Council could do to reach indifferent and hostile elites directly – it tended to be more of a case of waiting for circumstances to change for those elites to be interested in the British Council's work, or of reaching them indirectly through the pro-British elites in the manner outlined in the model of influence in chapter one. The Anglophile Societies established in Sweden and the placing of British Council lecturers in Turkish institutions was a particular focus for working through others for the Council. By being able to show that it had official backing in Turkey, and had the support of the local community in Sweden, the British Council was able to have far greater influence than if it had only set up its own institutions and worked in a degree of isolation. Circumstances were different, of course, in Madrid where the Council was not allowed to work outside of the institute building for many years, but the Council was still able to influence the pro-British elites who arrived there through Spanish-style receptions

(i.e. the tertulias) who would then proceed to relay the message of the Council outside of the institute building walls.

Identification of commercially viable solutions

To an extent the 'need fulfilment' section under the 'Substance' pillar (which covered the actual propaganda needs of the audience) has to be coupled with an understanding of the economic and commercial needs of the audience in order to work successfully. Of course, a large part of the Council's work was done on a 'free at the point of use' basis and was funded by the grant provided by the Treasury. Examples include the cocktail parties, book exhibitions, the talks of the touring lecturers - but it could not rely on the grant for all of its work. During the postwar period the Council became more and more dependent on the fees it was able to extract from its audience (charges for English language courses particularly), and it was also true of from the war period even if the Treasury grant covered the majority of its activities. Audiences tend to be suspicious of activities that are totally without a financial charge and expect to pay some kind of fee for something that will benefit them, otherwise they fear they will be subjected to propaganda, in a derogatory sense, rather than education. Therefore the Council, and any other cultural propaganda organisation needs to find commercially viable solutions that enable the audience to purchase the cultural propaganda. The Book Export Scheme, devised by Stanley Unwin, is clearly a good example of this where local booksellers were not made liable for excess stock, but other examples include the subsidising of teachers' pay at the Halkevleri and the distribution and showing of British Council films.⁴⁵

Logistics

Logistics is the key component of cultural propaganda as the events and in particular the touring lecturers (the element that often made the British Council's work appear in the local press) would not happen without careful and proactive organisation. This extended to visa applications, organisation of transport, managing diaries, paying fees, organising of venues for exhibitions, liaison with the local press, printing and distribution of invitation cards and seeking and carrying out interviews with Government Ministers to help make events happen. There are many more examples, and all of which are absolutely essential for supporting the work of the cultural propaganda itself. The British Council did not get it all right - a number of

⁴⁵ Unwin, *The Truth*, p.422; Coombs, *Spreading*, p.12

famous personalities did not travel abroad under its auspices – John Gielgud particularly – and space in the diary could not be found for everything the Council wished certain personalities to do. For example, Sir Malcolm Sargent did not travel to Spain, despite the wishes and organisation of Starkie. At a more mundane level, the Council's materials and equipment were often delayed in transit, being held up by transport difficulties and customs restrictions, and did not always arrive intact after the journey. However, the fact that the Council managed to do so much and managed to convince so many famous personalities to travel abroad in its name is testament to the logistical organisation that the Council carried out behind the scenes and should not be underestimated. The logistical skill of the Council employees in organising all of the events in a time of extreme constraints was a crucial foundation necessary for the Council's success. Although cultural propaganda may not always work in such extreme circumstances, the logistical skills of a cultural propaganda organisation are perhaps the most essential part of its work.

5.6 Contribution to existing literature

The first section of this thesis outlined the existing scholarship relating to the work of the British Council in the Second World War. This thesis has offered a great deal to the existing historiography on the British Council and on cultural propaganda. Many books written about the Council itself have either been the 'official version' (such as Frances Donaldson's *The British Council: the first fifty years* covering a large chronological sweep of the Council's work), have focused on periods other than the Second World War (such as Philip Taylor's *The Projection of Britain* which examines the Council's work during the 1930s) or have considered only certain aspects of the Council's work during the war itself (such as the work in Spain and Walter Starkie (Jacqueline Hurtleley and Jean François Berdah) or Portugal and George West (Alison Roberts)).⁴⁶ No book to date has attempted to tell the story of the Council's work across Europe during the Second World War and compare and contrast its work in the four countries in which it operated and analyse its successes and failures during this period. A previous PhD thesis from 1982 at the University of Leeds by Diana Eastment entitled *The policies and position of the British Council from the outbreak of war to 1950* and a study undertaken by D W Ellwood, published in the same year, did not focus on the propaganda aspects of the British Council's work (the work of Starkie in Spain covers

⁴⁶ Donaldson, *The British Council*; Taylor, *The Projection*; Hurtleley, *José Janés*; Berdah, 'La "Propaganda"'; Roberts, *Um Toque Decisivo*

just a few pages), but its changing relationship within the British Government.⁴⁷ This thesis has taken the scholarship on the British Council a long way by attempting to view the Council's work thematically, examining closely the propaganda work of the Council and taking account of the views of the foreign countries where the British Council operated. This has involved drawing material from a range of British and foreign archives – much of which has been looked at for the first time.

However, the most important contribution that this thesis has made I believe is the construction in this chapter of a model of cultural propaganda bringing together all of the elements of the British Council's work. Construction of a model of cultural propaganda has not been attempted before and has been designed to show the equal importance of Perception, Substance and Organisation in the British Council's cultural propaganda work. It is not the purpose or aim of this thesis to examine how well the model fits with other examples of cultural propaganda, but merely to construct it from the British Council case study examined here. However, there are clear links that can be seen with the work of the other institutions operating in neutral Europe alongside the British Council – those of the German and Italian Governments in particular. Reports in the Spanish newspapers of the work of Ettore de Zuani at the Instituto de Cultura Italiana in Madrid demonstrates that the Italians too invited touring lecturers from Italy and organised similar types of exhibitions to the British Council focusing on art and music. Examples include lectures in Madrid of Professor Tamberlini on 'Spanish authors and Italian actors in the 16th century' [OSpA]], and the numerous references to music concerts at the Instituto Aleman de Cultura sponsoring German music.⁴⁸ Similarities can also be spotted with the work of the United States Information Agency (USIA), examined by Leo Bogart, which operated on a very similar basis to the British Council in the postwar period. Its work was conducted through institutions, through other organisations, targeting elites, and demonstrating the cultural intelligence of the American people.⁴⁹ The *Alliance Française* and *Goethe Institut* are other clear examples where this model could be applied in the postwar period.

For the British Council itself, it is still very much in existence today as its appearance in the news recently, as mentioned right at the beginning of the thesis,

⁴⁷ Eastment, 'The policies'; Ellwood, 'Showing the world'

⁴⁸ 'Instituto de Cultura Italiana: Conferencia del professor Tamberlini', *ABC*, (Madrid, 3 February 1943), p7; 'Concierto en el Instituto Alemán de Cultura', *ABC*, (Madrid, 19 November 1942) p12; 'Concierto en el Instituto Alemán de Cultura', *ABC*, (Madrid, 15 April 1943) p14.

⁴⁹ Bogart, *Cool Words*

shows. It remains controversial in many places in the world, particularly in countries where its presence is either not wanted by the local Government (e.g. Iran), or the local Government is suspicious of its true aims (e.g. Russia).⁵⁰ Its purpose and role are often confused by those who have less antagonistic aims as well. As numerous authors have pointed out its name is often confused by non-English-speakers with 'British consul', which has an entirely different purpose, but more importantly in those countries its promotion of British culture is seen as an official extension of the British Government, when in reality it is non-partisan politically.⁵¹ The British Council is often viewed in a similar way to how the BBC is often framed - as the 'mouthpiece' of the British Government - because both receive funds from the British taxpayer or licence-fee payer despite being editorially independent (though the percentage of public sector funding has fallen significantly for the British Council since the war period). And yet, it is often also recognised as the best place to find out about Britain, opportunities to visit and study, and to receive the best English-language courses available. It is, in short, far more important abroad for people wanting to engage with Britain than many in Britain realise. It is often the centre for the British colony abroad and for that reason has often been regarded as one of the 'great bargains on the Treasury's list'. Its promotion of British culture is extraordinarily profound for the relatively small amount of money that is needed from the British taxpayer to maintain it.⁵² These are, of course, issues which were present during the Second World War and during the whole of the postwar period. There is no reason, therefore, why the model of cultural propaganda that has been outlined cannot be applied to its existence today. It is, and remains, an important cultural propaganda institution and has had far greater influence and success in making Britain friends in the world, than its greatest critic, Lord Beaverbrook, could ever appreciate.

⁵⁰ 'Russia to limit British Council', (BBC News Website, 12 December, 2007)

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/7139959.stm>; 'British Council in Iran 'illegal' (BBC News Website, 5 February 2009)

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/7872525.stm

⁵¹ Tennant, *Touchlines*, p.263

⁵² Cull, Nicholas J, 'Propaganda?' (British Council website)

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/history-why-propaganda.htm>

Appendices and Bibliography

Appendix A: British Council Expenditure

Table 1: The British Council's expenditure from the 1934/35 to the 1945/46 Financial Years, including funding sources

Financial Year	Total Expenditure	Net expenditure out of Government grants *	Council's general revenue †	Agency expenditure ‡
1934/35	£881	-	£881	-
1935/36	£13,947	£5,000	£8,947	-
1936/37	£29,531	£15,000	£12,922	£1,609
1937/38	£67,143	£60,000	£6,095	£1,048
1938/39	£178,466	£130,500	£45,965	£2,001
1939/40	£353,233	£330,249	£21,110	£1,874
1940/41	£480,673	£433,099	£16,712	£30,862
1941/42	£688,773	£611,728	£5,944	£71,101
1942/43	£1,011,109	£966,705	£9,146	£35,258
1943/44	£1,646,321	£1,573,958	£60,773	£11,590
1944/45	£2,237,060	£2,108,122	£120,778	£8,160
1945/46	£2,814,625	£2,522,370	£267,646	£24,609

	Pre-war years
	Financial Years with only part of the year with hostilities
	Financial Years during the Second World War

Table 1

Notes from White, A.J.S., *The British Council, the first 25 years: 1934-1959 - a personal account*, (The British Council, London, 1965) Appendix C, p.123

* 'This shows actual expenditure from Government funds, which was usually somewhat less than the total grants allotted to the Council at the start of the year concerned.'

† 'Receipts from teaching, sales of publications, etc., and ordinary donations.'

‡ 'This includes donations for special purposes and expenditure on behalf of and financed by outside agencies.'

Table 2: The British Council's expenditure from the 1934/35 to the 1945/46 Financial Years, including funding sources in 2005 prices, using the Governments inflation index §

Financial Year	Total Expenditure	Net expenditure out of Government grants	Council's general revenue	Agency expenditure	Price Index (January within Financial Year) January 1974 = 100 January 2005 = 757.3
1934/35	£41,961	-	£41,961	-	15.9
1935/36	£660,129	£236,656	£423,473	-	16.0
1936/37	£1,247,218	£684,307	£589,508	£73,403	16.6
1937/38	£3,026,630	£2,704,643	£274,746	£47,241	16.8
1938/39	£7,812,272	£5,712,581	£2,012,098	£87,593	17.3
1939/40	£13,242,740	£12,381,068	£791,416	£70,256	20.2
1940/41	£16,250,610	£14,642,226	£595,000	£1,043,384	22.4
1941/42	£21,733,658	£19,302,567	£187,558	£2,243,533	24.0
1942/43	£30,875,518	£29,519,585	£279,285	£1,076,649	24.8
1943/44	£48,892,506	£46,743,466	£1,804,839	£344,200	25.5
1944/45	£64,661,280	£60,934,381	£3,491,037	£235,861	26.2
1945/46	£78,945,019	£70,747,807	£7,506,974	£690,237	27.0

	Pre-war years
	Financial Years with only part of the year with hostilities
	Financial Years during the Second World War

Table 2

§ The inflation index is located at

<http://www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp2006/rp06-009.pdf>

Appendix B: Key People in the British Council during the Second World War

Chairmen

The Rt Hon Lord Lloyd GCSI, GCIE, DSO	1937-1941
The Rt Hon Lord Riverdale GBE (Acting)	Feb-June 1941
The Rt Hon Sir Malcolm Robertson GCMG, KBE	1941-1945

Vice-Chairmen

The Rt Hon Lord Riverdale GBE	1936-1946
The Rt Hon The Earl of Derby KG, GCB, GCVO	1936-1946
Sir John Chancellor GCMG, GCVO, DSO	1940-1941
The Rt Hon Lord Snell CBE	1941-1944
The Rt Hon Lord Lawson	1944-1945

Secretaries-General

Colonel Charles Bridge CMG, DSO, MC	1934-1940
A J S White CMG, OBE	1940-1947

Members of the Executive Committee

J W Ramsbottom	1935-1952
The Rt Hon Lord Ramsden	1935-1952
Sir John Power Bt, MP	1935-1950
Philip Guedalla	1935-1944
Ernest Makower	1935-1946
Sir Lionel Faudel-Philips Bt	1935-1941
Sir Stanley Unwin	1936-1968
Sir William Rootes GBE	1936-1964
William Graham	1936-1943
W J U Woolcock CMG, CBE	1936-1942
The Rt Hon The Viscount Alexander of Hillsborough	1936-1941
The Rt Hon CR Attlee OM, CH, MP	1936-1940
Lady Chamberlain GBE	1936-1941
Colonel Ivor Fraser	1937-1943
The Rt Hon The Viscount Thurso KT, CMG	1938-1940
The Rt Hon H Graham White	1940-1962
George Lathan	1941-1942
James Walker	1941-1945
Sir Eric Maclagan KCVO, CBE	1942-1951
The Rt Hon A Creech Jones MP	1942-1945
Sir Henry Dale OM, GBE	1943-1949
Lady Megan Lloyd George	1943-1966
The Rt Hon The Earl of Rosebery KT, DSO, MC	1943-1945
Mrs Mary Hamilton CBE	1943-1946

Advisory Committees and Panels and their Chairmen

<i>Drama Committee</i>	
The Rt Hon The Viscount Esher MBE	1939-1951
<i>Fine Arts Committee</i>	
Sir Lionel Faudel Phillips Bt	1935-1941
Sir Eric Maclagan KCVO, CBE	1941-1951
<i>Law Committee</i>	
The Rt Hon The Viscount Finlay KBE	1942-1944
The Rt Hon Lord Porter GBE	1945-1956
<i>Music Committee</i>	
Ernest Makower FSA	1935-1946
<i>Science Committee</i>	
Sir William Bragg OM, KBE, DSc, FRS	1941-1942
Sir Henry Dale OM, GBE, MD, DSc, FRCP, FRS	1942-1949
<i>Medical Panel</i>	
Sir Edward Mellanby GBE, KCB, MD, FRCP, FRS	1942-1955
<i>Books and Periodicals Committee</i>	
Sir Stanley Unwin HonLLD, FRSL	1936-1948
<i>Advisory Committee on English Teaching Overseas</i>	
Professor Gilbert Murray OM	1940-1944
<i>Films Committee</i>	
Philip Guedalla	1939-1944
Sir Stephen Tallents KCMG, CB, CBE	1945
<i>Humanities Committee</i>	
Sir John Clapham CBE	1944-1946
<i>Ibero-American Committee</i>	
Philip Guedalla	1935-1944
<i>Lectures Committee</i>	
The Rt Hon Lord Lloyd GCSI, GCIE, DSO	1937-1941
Sir John Power Bt	1941-1944
<i>Resident Foreigners Committee</i>	
S H Wood CBE, MC	1939-1943
E N Cooper	1943-1944
<i>Students Committee</i>	
The Rt Hon Lord Ramsden OBE	1935-1946

Representatives in Europe

Portugal

Professor Sidney George West

Spain

Professor Walter Starkie

Sweden

Peter Tennant (watching-brief)

Francis James Ronald Bottrall

Michael Roberts

Turkey

Michael Grant

Appendix C: The Portuguese Press and the British Council

Table 1: The Number of Articles in the Portuguese Press about the work of the British Council (including the Instituto Britânico) and related Anglo-Portuguese cultural relations

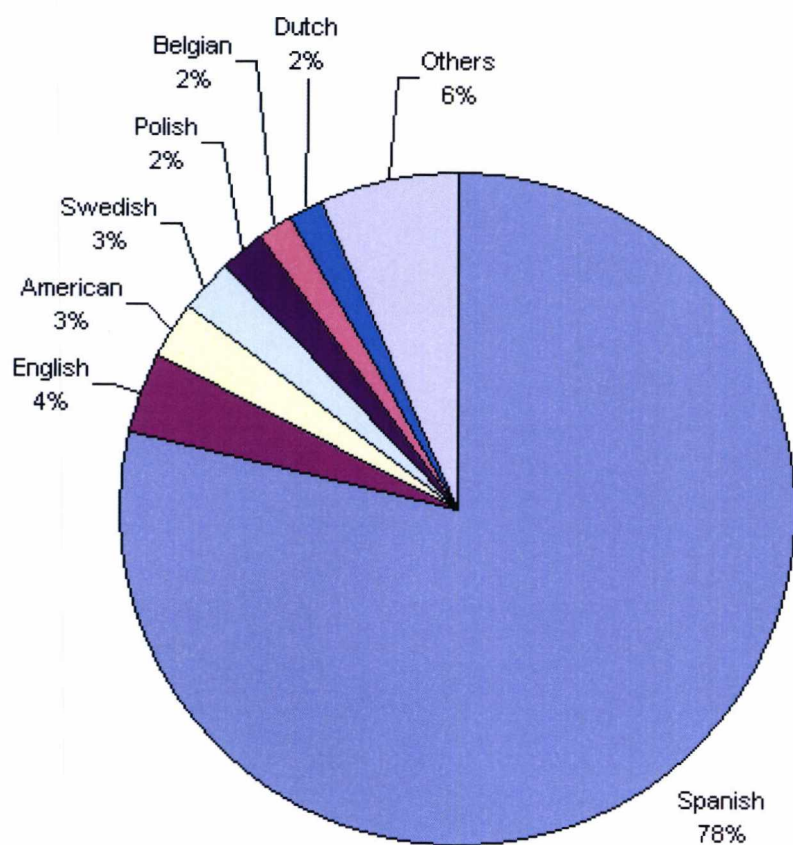
Year	Quarter	Portuguese Newspapers													
		<i>O Século</i>	<i>Diário de Manhã</i>	<i>O Primeiro de Janeiro</i>	<i>Diário de Coimbra</i>	<i>Diário de Notícias</i>	<i>O Comércio do Porto</i>	<i>Jornal do Comércio</i>	<i>Jornal de Notícias</i>	<i>Diário de Lisboa</i>	<i>Novidades</i>	<i>A Voz</i>	<i>República</i>	Others	Total
1939	Q4	1	1	4	6	3	0	1	0	4	1	1	0	7	29
1940	Q1	11	32	14	13	14	6	1	2	6	1	1	2	26	129
	Q2	16	20	7	15	21	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	22	107
	Q3	1	2	0	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	13
	Q4	14	16	8	0	8	4	0	2	5	0	0	1	7	65
1941	Q1	13	12	3	4	9	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	14	66
	Q2	30	33	17	33	17	0	0	0	10	0	0	2	48	190
	Q3	6	2	2	5	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	25
	Q4	28	17	29	22	18	14	8	11	10	2	12	8	19	198
1942	Q1	12	7	14	14	6	4	9	7	6	8	11	3	39	140
	Q2	33	20	23	11	24	22	21	12	12	11	17	13	45	264
	Q3	5	2	3	7	5	0	3	1	1	0	1	1	8	37
	Q4	13	15	15	32	12	2	8	8	3	10	6	6	55	185
1943	Q1	24	26	25	15	17	17	26	19	10	20	17	11	21	248
	Q2	25	26	28	22	26	11	26	17	19	19	18	10	18	265
	Q3	3	1	3	4	1	3	1	2	3	3	1	2	1	28
	Q4	13	17	17	8	15	18	13	13	6	15	10	6	39	190
1944	Q1	12	11	16	15	11	17	16	10	5	9	8	9	16	155
	Q2	13	12	15	12	12	14	11	17	6	8	7	8	36	171
	Q3	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	0	8	15
	Q4	8	5	11	4	12	14	11	13	3	6	7	5	40	139
1945	Q1	13	16	25	21	12	26	14	37	11	14	9	12	49	259
	Q2	17	14	15	13	17	16	17	12	8	8	8	7	25	177
Total		312	307	294	283	266	189	188	183	146	136	135	106	550	3095

Appendix D: Pupils at the British Institute School, Madrid, 17 January, 1945

(Source: The National Archives, BW 56/8)

	Numbers of pupils at the British Institute School, Madrid				Percentage of pupils at the British Institute School, Madrid			
	Junior School	Oxford Class	Infants School	Total	Junior School	Oxford Class	Infants School	Total
Spanish	74	8	61	143	75%	67%	86%	79%
English	5		2	7	5%	-	3%	4%
American	1	1	3	5	1%	8%	4%	3%
Swedish	3		2	5	3%	-	3%	3%
Polish	2	1	1	4	2%	8%	1%	2%
Belgian	2		1	3	2%	-	1%	2%
Dutch	3			3	3%	-	-	2%
French	2			2	2%	-	-	1%
Norwegian	2			2	2%	-	-	1%
Bolivian			1	1	-	-	1%	1%
Chilian	1			1	1%	-	-	1%
Danish	1			1	1%	-	-	1%
Ecuador	1			1	1%	-	-	1%
Gibraltarian		1		1	-	8%	-	1%
Hungarian	1			1	1%	-	-	1%
Spanish/English (dual nationality)		1		1	-	8%	-	1%
Swiss	1			1	1%	-	-	1%
Total	99	12	71	182	100%	100%	100%	100%

Nationalities at the British Institute School, Madrid

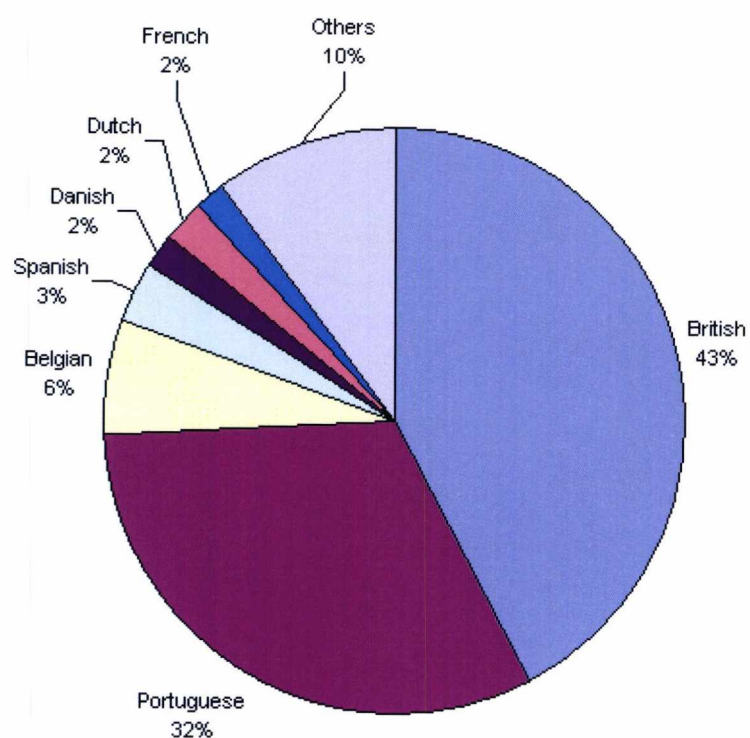


Appendix E: Pupils at St Julian's School, Carcavelos, Portugal, October, 1944; and Queen Elizabeth's School, Lisbon, Portugal, February 1945

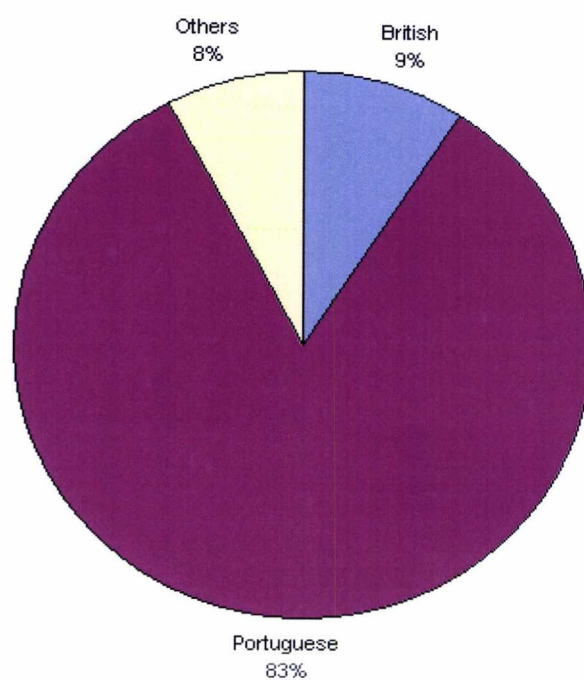
(Source: The National Archives, BW 52/10)

	Numbers of pupils at St Julian's School (October, 1944)		Numbers of pupils at Queen Elizabeth's School (February, 1945)	
	No.	%	No.	%
British	99	42%	21	9%
Portuguese	75	32%	191	83%
Belgian	15	6%	1	0%
Spanish	8	3%	2	1%
Danish	5	2%	2	1%
Dutch	5	2%	0	0%
French	4	2%	3	1%
Brazilian	3	1%	2	1%
Uruguayan	3	1%	0	0%
American	2	1%	1	0%
Chinese	2	1%	0	0%
Greek	2	1%	1	0%
Swedish	2	1%	0	0%
Swiss	2	1%	0	0%
Czech	1	0%	0	0%
Indian	1	0%	0	0%
Irish	1	0%	0	0%
Yugoslavian	1	0%	0	0%
Norwegian	1	0%	0	0%
Palestinian	1	0%	0	0%
Polish	1	0%	2	1%
Turkish	1	0%	0	0%
Romanian	0	0%	1	0%
Egyptian	0	0%	1	0%
Italian	0	0%	2	1%
	235	100%	230	100%

Nationalities at St Julian's School in Carcavelos, Portugal (October, 1944)



Nationalities at Queen Elizabeth's School, Lisbon (February, 1945)



Appendix F: The British Graphic Art Exhibition in Portugal, 1942

(Source: The National Archives, BW 52/12)

No.	Artist	Title of work	Type of art	Copies in total	Copies sold				Money Received (PE = Portuguese Escudos)
					Total	Lisbon	Oporto	Coimbra	
1	Stanley Anderech	Toledo Cathedral	Etching	1	1		1		630 PE
2	"	Hot chestnuts	Line engraving	2	1	1			420 PE
3	"	The old tinker	Line engraving	1					
4	Sybil Anderens	The prodigal son	Linecut in colours	2	1	1			210 PE
5	Robert Sargent Austin	Young mother	Line engraving	3	3		3		1,110 PE
6	Sir Muirhead Bone	Manhattan excavation	Drypoint	1					
7	"	Midnight at Venice	Lithograph	1					
8	Leonard Griffith Brameer	The two ovens	Etching	1					
9	Sir Frank Brangwn	Water carrier, Furnes	Etching	1	1	1			420 PE
10	Arthur Briscow	Alastor	Etching	1					
11	Gerald Leslie Brockhurst	Almina	Etching	1					
12	"	Malvina	Etching	1					
13	Henry J Stuart Brown	Bishop West's Chapel, Ely	Etching	1					
14	John Buckland-Wright	Metamorphosis, Girl into fish	Wood engraving	1					
15	"	Shelter	Wood engraving	1					
16	"	Sunbathers	Wood engraving	1					
17	Sir D Y Cameron	Killundine	Etching and Drypoint	1					
18	"	The chimers of Amiens	Etching and Drypoint	1					
19	Tom Chadwick	The fan dance	Wood engraving	1					
20	Anne Clark	Sea horses	Linecut in	2	1	1			210 PE

Appendices and Bibliography

			colours						
21	Alice [?]	Still life with pears	Woodcut in colours	1					
22	"	Lilacs	Woodcut in colours	1					
23	Leslie Cole	Girl undressing	Lithograph	1					
24	Charles Conder	A dream of Araby	Lithograph	1					
25	John Copley	The wine shop	Lithograph	1					
26	Raymond Cowern	Valley of the Piave, Sottocantello	Etching	1	1		1		315 PE
27	"	Feast of St. Antonio in Anticoli, Corrado	Etching	1	1		1		315 PE
28	Eric Pitch Daghish	The merlin	Wood engraving	1					
29	"	The stonechat	Wood engraving	1					
30	Ann Dallas	Quimper - a retrospect	Lithograph in colours	1					
31	W D Davis	The prawn	Etching	1					
32	Francis Dodd	Spanish ox-driver	Drypoint	1	1			1	315 PE
33	Paul Drury	A French cemetery	Etching and aquatint	1					
34	Wilfred Fairclough	The Spanish mule	Line engraving	1					
35	"	The large cart, Rothenburg	Line engraving	1					
36	John Farleigh	The black girl	Wood engraving	1					
37	Russell Flint	Spanish wheelwrights	Drypoint	1					
38	Mubert Freeth	Tuscania	Etching	1					
39	"	Campbell Dodgson	Etching	1					
40	Ethel Garain	La Venitienne	Lithograph	1					
41	Percy Francis Gethin	The Klingenthor, Rothenburg	Etching	1					
42	Robert Gibbins	Dormudian fish	Wood engraving	1					
43	"	Blue angels	Wood engraving	1					
44	Eric Gill	Illustration to "The Four Gospels" (Golden	Wood engraving	1					

Cultural propaganda

		Cockerell Press) 1							
45	"	Illustration to "The Four Gospels Cockerell Press) 2	Wood engraving	1					
46	"	The Prior of Caldey	Line engraving	2	1	1			315 PE
47	Stephen Gooden	St George and the Dragon	Line engraving	3	2		2		1,050 PE
48	Sylvia Gosse	The angler	Etching	3	3	1	2		480 PE
49	James Grant	The dressing-room	Drypoint	1					
50	Barbara Greg	The edge of the wood	Wood engraving	2	2	1		1	320 PE
51	John Frederick Greenwood	Road to the leadmines	Wood engraving	1					
52	"	Right stair	Wood engraving	1					
53	Ronald Grierson	Fruit and flowers	Linecut in colours	1					
54	"	Fruit and leaves	Linecut in colours	1					
55	Frederick Landscar Griggs	St Botolph's Bridge, No. 2	Etching	1					
56	"	Priory Farm	Etching	1					
57	"	Launds	Etching	1					
58	Anthony Gross	Prairie des Filtres, Toulouse	Etching	1					
59	Sir Francis Seymour Haren	Out of my study window	Etching	1					
60	"	Newcastle in Emlyn	Etching	1	1			1	125 PE
61	"	From the bridge at Cardigan	Etching	1					
62	Oliver Hall	The Value of Poutiniég	Drypoint	1					
63	Martin Hardie	Calvary, Concarneau	Drypoint	1	1			1	315 PE
64	Archibald Standish Hartrick	Three rounds, old style	Lithograph	1					
65	"	Bell-ringers	Lithograph	1					
66	Elzie Marian Henderson	Black jaguar on a tree	Lithograph	1					
67	Anne Henderson	Fishing boats, St. Tropez	Linecut in colours	1	1	1			210 PE
68	Gertrude	Thernapple	Wood	1					

Appendices and Bibliography

	Hermes		engraving						
69	"	Mistletoe	Wood engraving	1					
70	Sir Charles Holroyd	Nonister Crag	Etching	1					
71	"	Borghese trees, Rome	Etching	1					
72	Blair Hughes-Stanton	Three illustrations to "Lamentations of Jeremiah" No. 1	Wood engraving	1					
73	"	Three illustrations to "Lamentations of Jeremiah" No. 2	Wood engraving	1					
74	"	Three illustrations to "Lamentations of Jeremiah" No. 3	Wood engraving	1					
75	Elizabeth Leith	The good earth	Woodcut in colours	1					
76	Henry Martyn Lack	Yonne Valley	Etching	1	1		1		420 PE
77	T E La Bell	Silex Bay	Lithograph in colours	2	1			1	210 PE
78	Calre Leighton	Apple picking	Wood engraving	1	1	1			315 PE
79	Sir Lionel Lindsay	St Andres, Toledo	Etching	1	1			1	315 PE
80	"	Posada del la Sangre	Etching	2	2	1	1		735 PE
81	"	The crossing	Etching	3	3	2		1	1,155 PE
82	"	Shadow of the vine	Etching	5	5		5		2,415 PE
83	Vincent Lines	A Bretan woman	Lithograph	1					
84	Marjorie Lucas	The warning	Etching	1					
85	E S Lunsden	Morning worship	Etching and engraving	1					
86	Iain Macnab	Deya, Majersa	Wood engraving	1					
87	"	Southern landscape	Wood engraving	1					
88	James McBey	Marrakesh	Etching	1					
89	"	The Phoenician	Etching	1					

Cultural propaganda

		coast						
90	Guy Malet	Sark girl	Wood engraving	1				
91	William Westley Manning	Dahabhiyat on the Nile	Aquatint	2				
92	Frederick Marriott	Ravollo, Italy	Etching	1	1		1	315 PE
93	James Hiloy Milner	Bridge at Mostar, Yugoslavia	Woodcut in colours	1				
94	John Charles Moody	Western Highlands	Drypoint	1				
95	William Morgan	The source	Line engraving	1				
96	"	Perseus	Line engraving	2				
97	Harry Morley	The sacristan	Line engraving	1				
98	"	A Perugian balcony	Line engraving	1				
99	John Nash	Convolutulus	Wood engraving	1				
100	Paul Nash	Arches	Wood engraving	1				
101	"	Still life	Wood engraving	1				
102	Job Nixon	San Vigilie, Lago de Garda	Drypoint	2	1	1		420 PE
103	John O'Connor	Appletree in Blossom	Wood engraving	1				
104	"	Spring water	Wood engraving	1				
105	(O C Pissarro) Orovida	Mare and foal	Aquatint	1				
106	"	Galloping zebra	Etching	1				
107	J R Wallace Orr	Ploughing	Etching	1	1		1	315 PE
108	Malcolm Osborne	The fountain, Carcuss-onne	Etching	1				
109	Agnes Miller Parker	Squirrel	Wood engraving	2	2		2	420 PE
110	"	Seagulls	Wood engraving	1	1		1	210 PE
111	Viola Paterson	Lobster	Woodcut in colours	1				
112	Richard Pearsall	Calle de Vicario, Toledo	Etching	1	1		1	210 PE
113	Claughton Pellew	The entombment	Wood engraving	1				
114	John Platt	Two	Woodcut in	1	1		1	525 PE

Appendices and Bibliography

		monkeys	colours						
115	"	Pragus	Woodcut in colours	1					
116	Charles Potter	Temple of power	Aquatint	1					
117	Gwendolen Ravarat	Summer in the mountain	Wood engraving	1	1			1	210 PE
118	"	Playing bowls	Wood engraving	1					
119	"	The mill pool	Wood engraving	1					
120	Eric Ravilious	Heron	Wood engraving	1	1	1			105 PE
121	"	Cuckoo	Wood engraving	1					
122	"	The Hanger	Wood engraving	1					
123	"	Submarine training ship in home waters	Lithograph in colours	1					
124	William Palmer Robins	Canterbury Cathedral	Drypoint	4	4			4	1,680 PE
125	Sir William Rothenstein	Fantin-Latour	Lithograph	1					
126	"	H G Wells	Lithograph	1					
127	Mabel Alington Royds	Prickly pear	Woodcut in colours	1					
128	Henry Rushbury	St Victor, Marseille	Drypoint	1					
129	Charles Shannon	W L Hacon	Lithograph	1					
130	"	The snow, winter	Lithograph	1					
131	"	The pursuit	Lithograph	1					
132	Sir Frank Short	Morning haze in Chichester Harbour	Aquatint	2	1			1	840 PE
133	Joseph Simpson	The Highlander	Etching	1					
134	Douglas Smart	Distant Gerona	Drypoint	2				1	315 PE
135	"	The four chimneys	Etching	1	1			1	315 PE
136	May Aimée Smith	Dancing dolls	Wood engraving	1					
137	E L Spowers	Wet afternoon	Woodcut in colours	1	1			1	210 PE
138	Ian Strang	Alcantara Bridge, Toledo	Etching	1					
139	William	Dance	Etching	1	1	1			315 PE

Cultural propaganda

	Strang	macabre							
140	"	George Bernard Shaw	Drypoint	1					
141	"	Frederick Goulding	Drypoint	1					
142	Charles William Taylor	Sussex	Wood engraving	5	5		5		1,050 PE
143	Eric Wilfred Taylor	The bath	Etching	1					
144	Vere Temple	Knapwort	Lithograph in colours	1					
145	Ernest Heber Thompson	Senegalese Trooper	Drypoint	1					
146	Murray Macpherson Tod	Graignair, Dalbeattie	Etching	1					
147	"	Alcantara Bridge, Toledo	Etching	1	1	1			315 PE
148	Charles Frederick Tunnicliffe	The shorthorn bull	Wood engraving	1					
149	Francis Sydney Unwin	Back of artist's cottage	Lithograph	1					
150	"	The mowers	Etching	1					
151	"	The boulder	Etching	1					
152	"	Porte S Trinità, Florence	Etching	3	3		3		945 PE
153	Nora Unwin	Antelope and young	Wood engraving	3	3		3		480 PE
154	William Washington	Cleft chopping	Line engraving	1					
155	Meryl Watts	The chameleon	Woodcut in colours	1					
156	Clifford Webb	River bank	Wood engraving	1					
157	Geoffrey H Wedgwood	The Borghese Gardens, Rome	Drypoint	1					
158	Ethelbert White	Decoy pond	Wood engraving	1					
159	"	The wooded path	Wood engraving	1	1		1		210 PE
				195	68	16	43	9	21,730 PE

Appendix G: The *British Life and Thought* collection published by the British Council - English and Spanish titles

Author	Title (English)	Title (Spanish)
A Berriedale Keith	<i>The British Commonwealth</i>	<i>La Comunidad Británica de Naciones</i>
W A Robson	<i>The British System of Government</i>	<i>El Sistema Británico de Gobierno</i>
Sir Maurice Amos	<i>British Justice</i>	<i>La Justicia Británica</i>
J E Hales	<i>British Education</i>	<i>La Educación Británica</i>
L Dudley Stamp	<i>The Face of Britain</i>	<i>Los Aspectos de la Gran Bretaña</i>
Bernard Darwin	<i>British Sport and Games</i>	<i>Deportes y Juegos Británicos</i>
Michael Lewis	<i>British Ships and British Seamen</i>	<i>Barcos y Marineros Británicos</i>
F A de V Robertson	<i>British Aviation</i>	<i>La Aviación Británica</i>
Cicely Hamilton	<i>The Englishwoman</i>	<i>La Mujer Inglesa</i>
Earl Baldwin	<i>The Englishman</i>	<i>El Hombre Inglés</i>

Appendix H: Reproduction of conditions imposed on the British Council for establishing a British Institute in Madrid - 1940

(Source: The National Archives, BW 56/2)

Enclosure to Madrid despatch No. 94 of 22nd February, 1940

TRANSLATION of Note Verbale No. 27 addressed to His Majesty's Embassy by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dated: 16th February, 1940.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs present their compliments to His Majesty's Embassy and with reference to previous correspondence on the subject, have the honour to inform them that there is no objection in principle to the proposals submitted by the British Council in regard to British cultural activity in Spain provided that the following conditions are accepted.

1. All the teachers and British personnel must be of the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman religion, and the British Council, before making any appointments, must in every case obtain the previous approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, either through the Spanish Embassy in London or the British Embassy in Madrid.
2. For the time being and on these conditions a President or Director of the proposed British Institute, a Director of the proposed English studies in Madrid and three additional teachers may be appointed.
3. The instruction given in the schools must only be in connection with the English language and literature, including courses in shorthand-typing and English commercial correspondence.
4. The Director of Studies must submit to the Secretary of the Department of Cultural Relations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) a monthly list in triplicate of the names of the pupils in each class.
5. All lectures given under the auspices of the Institute must first receive approval in accordance with the regulation laid down in paragraph 1.
6. The Spanish personnel employed in the schools and Institute must be chosen from ex-combatants who have service in the National Army, ex-prisoners in the hands of the reds, and their relatives. The porters etc. must be appointed by the "Dirección General de Mutilados" in accordance with existing regulations.
7. The salaries of teachers and personnel of all sorts, and expenses in connection with the rent and equipment for the British schools and Institute will be compensated, in whole or in part, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, i.e., the equivalent of the pounds sterling which the British Council should transmit to Spain for meeting the above expenses will be handed over in pesetas, at the official Spanish rate of exchange, to the British Embassy in Madrid, the corresponding amount in pounds being handed to the Spanish Embassy in

London for use in connection with Spanish cultural activities in Great Britain. (Lectureships and Spanish chairs.).

8. Scholarships for studies in Universities or higher schools of University status for the purpose of specialising at the educational establishments desired, will be granted by the Department of Cultural Relations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) to the students proposed. For the year 1940-41 the proposal of the British Council is accepted whereby there will be two scholarships for classics, one for commerce, one for agriculture, and eventually a fifth for industrial engineering.
9. In due course, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will submit to the British Council the names of Spanish professors of English who desire to perfect their knowledge of the language and who would be suitable for the two bursaries offered by the British Council.

Appendix I: Articles mentioning cultural Institutes in ABC (Madrid and Seville editions) and *La Vanguardia española* (Barcelona)

Year	Quarter	ABC (Madrid)			ABC (Sevilla)			ABC (Madrid and Sevilla)			La Vanguardia española (Barcelona)		
		Instituto Británico	Instituto Aleman de Cultura	Instituto de Cultura Italiana	Instituto Británico	Instituto Aleman de Cultura	Instituto de Cultura Italiana	Instituto Británico	Instituto Aleman de Cultura	Instituto de Cultura Italiana	Instituto Británico	Instituto Aleman de Cultura	Instituto de Cultura Italiana
1939	Q4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1
1940	Q1	-	-	2	1	-	-	1	-	2	-	4	-
	Q2	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	1	-
	Q3	1	0	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-
	Q4	2	2	4	1	1	3	3	3	7	-	1	4
1941	Q1	6	-	11	1	-	1	7	-	12	2	1	7
	Q2	-	7	18	-	4	8	-	11	26	-	7	3
	Q3	-	1	-	1	-	1	1	1	1	2	-	4
	Q4	1	8	13	-	3	9	1	11	22	-	8	1
1942	Q1	2	6	16	-	-	10	2	6	26	-	4	11
	Q2	1	16	18	-	-	11	1	16	29	-	2	6
	Q3	-	2	4	-	1	2	-	3	6	-	7	1
	Q4	1	12	10	-	-	6	1	12	16	1	10	9
1943	Q1	1	11	11	-	-	1	1	11	12	1	28	16
	Q2	2	18	9	-	2	1	2	20	10	3	18	11
	Q3	-	13	2	-	-	-	-	13	2	2	6	-
	Q4	5	15	11	2	-	1	7	15	12	7	17	5
1944	Q1	1	5	9	1	2	-	2	7	9	12	24	7
	Q2	5	1	2	1	1	1	6	2	3	11	6	6
	Q3	1	1	2	1	-	-	2	1	2	6	11	1
	Q4	9	1	3	1	-	-	10	1	3	10	16	3
1945	Q1	14	3	3	2	-	-	16	3	3	31	11	2
	Q2	18	4	3	1	-	-	19	4	3	19	-	1
Total for Q4 1939 to Q2 1945		70	128	152	13	14	55	83	142	207	109	184	99
Total for war period 3 September 1939-8 May 1945 (i.e. including 3-30 Sept 1939, but excluding 9 May-30 June 1945)		63	127	150	13	14	55	76	141	205	103	184	99

Note: For Figures 21, 22 and 24, the quarterly figures for articles are used which covers the period 1 October 1939 to 30 June 1945. However, the figures quoted in the text refer to the European war period 3 September 1939 to 8 May 1945. The difference is minimal except that the postwar period to 30 June 1945 contains a number of articles mentioning the Instituto Británico which slightly distorts the graphs in favour of a more enhanced upswing in popularity for the Instituto Británico.

Appendix J: Original language quotations that have been used in translation

All translations by the author.

1. Introduction

Footnote 106 (Spanish): *'Buscar en el mismo ámbito confidentes para la difusión de consignas por el sistema "boca a boca" (Flüsterpropaganda), en las colas en tiendas y paradas de autobuses, en bares, restaurantes, etc.'*

2. Operational environments: the British Council's relations with British organisations and individuals

Footnote 84 (Spanish): *'Algunos doctores apuntaron ayer la posibilidad de que Walter Starquie [sic – Starkie], un hispanista que fue agregado cultural de la Embajada británica y miembro del servicio de espionaje de su país, fuera la persona encargada de contactar con los miembros del Ejército aliado que pasaban por España.'*

Footnote 85 (Spanish): *'Esta frase... constituye una grave ofensa para el honor y el buen nombre de mi padre..., y rechazo de forma categórica y absoluta tal alegación, totalmente infundada y realmente grotesca... una mera y ruin difamación.'*

Footnote 122 (Portuguese): *'Philippe Newman possui excepcionais faculdades de solista: assombroso manejo do arco, técnica perfeita da mão esquerda, sonoridade volumosa e doce, variedade de timbres e de efeitos de ataque surpreendente.'*

Footnote 261 (Portuguese): *'Creio que todos estarão de acordo comigo, quando digo que a melhor maneira de conhecer um país estrangeiro, o seu povo, a sua vida e a sua cultura – é ir até lá e ali viver. Mas quando, por infelicidade, isso não é possível tal como sucede agora, devido às condições impostas pela guerra, a melhor coisa que temos a fazer é estudar a arte desse país e, sobretudo, familiarisarmo-nos com a sua literatura.'*

3. Methods of cultural propaganda on the front line

Footnote 12 (Portuguese): *'Portugal e Inglaterra – países amigos e velhos aliados – devem conhecer-se cada vez melhor e nada mais útil do que o estudo para um bom e perfeito conhecimento.'*

Footnote 16 (Swedish): *'Vid dagens presskonferens i Wilhelmstrasse förekom som enda punkt på dagordningen ecklesiastikminister Bagges tedrickning hos British Council i Stockholm. Denna procedur sages ha kastat ett traikomiskt skimmer över statsrådet som bort veta att British Council åtminstone enligt tysk uppfattning endast är en avläggare till Secret Service.'*

Footnote 17 (Swedish): *'En talesman för den tyska regeringen kallade det för en "politisk kullerbytta" av statsrådet Bagge att närvara vid öppnandet. British Council är ingenting annat än en engelsk spionercentral, förklarade han vidare...'*

Footnote 140 (Portuguese): *'lingua primordial para a compreensão de todos os povos.'*

Footnote 202 (Spanish): *'la adopción de Janés de una estrategia maquiavélica en unas circunstancias determinadas'*

4. The view from the other side

Footnote 3 (Spanish): *'...él fue anglófilo desde el principio, en contra del ambiente germanófilo y fascista de España.'*

Footnote 4 (Spanish): *'un triunfo decisivo'*

Footnote 13 (Spanish): *'que Sr. Starkie es católico e indiscutiblemente reúne méritos que en principio permiten considerarle como persona grata al Estado español.'*

Footnote 14 (Spanish): *'No obstante y aunque en este Departamento no obra ningún antecedente desfavorable sobre la conducta y actitud del Señor Starkie durante el Movimiento Nacional... [yo] suscribe estima conveniente que antes de dar repuesta a la Embajada de la Gran Bretaña se oiga el parecer del Señor Embajador en Londres.'*

Footnote 15 (Spanish): *'si, a su juicio, habría alguna objeción que formular contra dicho candidato.'*

Footnote 21 (Spanish): *'[L]a forma como interpretará este Gobierno nos neguemos a conceder el permiso para la apertura del Instituto Británico, he tratado de reflejar la impresión secada durante mi conversación con Lord Lloyd, quién me ha dicho que aquella negativa se consideraría aquí como gesto muy poco amistoso por nuestra parte, pues no se comprende la razón por la cual no se autoriza a Inglaterra lo permitido ya a Alemania y a Francia, sobre todo si se considera la actitud de la última hacía el Glorioso Alzamiento Nacional, en nada mas favorable a la observada por la Gran Bretaña.'*

Footnote 22 (Spanish): *'Considero muy acertado nombramiento profesor Starkie, católico gran defensor de nuestra causa en la prensa desde el primer momento, españolista de siempre muy conocedor nuestra idioma y autor excelentes obras sobre España, académico corresponsal de la Lengua.'*

Footnote 32 (Portuguese): *'onde a iniciativa é bem acolhida e encontra um público numeroso.'*

Footnote 44 (Portuguese): *'Retorquiu Sir Malcolm, visivelmente agitado, que não concebia como a organização oficial da "Mocidade" de um país aliado da Inglaterra podia, num momento destes, aceitar convites para visitar Berlim, depois de ter feito uma peregrinação ao Marrocos de Vichy.'*

Footnote 45 (Portuguese): *'ataque de fúria'.*

Footnote 46 (Portuguese): *'em certo modo é seu subordinado'.*

Footnote 47 (Portuguese): *'está em vésperas de entrar na Lista Negra'.*

Footnote 50 (Swedish): *'Tyskt angrepp på statsrådet Bagge. Efterspel till öppnandet av British Council-byrån: Politisk kullerbytta.'*

Footnote 51 (Swedish):

'1. Svenske ecklesiastikministern plägar som en själofallen hövlighetsåtgärd närvara vid olika utländska kulturella manifestationer i Stockholm. Sålunda var han som bekant närvarande vid den tyska bokutställningen samt vid invigningen av den tyska skolan.

2. (i Berlinmeddelandet hade bland annat stått, att British Council vore en spionercentral) Intill dess att motsatsen bevisas eller göres sannolikt har svenska regeringen ingen anledning att misstänka på neutral svensk botten verksamma kulturella utländska institutioner för illegal verksamhet.

3. Sveriges förbindelser med The British Council äro äldre än våra förbindelser med Akademischer Austauschdienst och beröra frågor angående studentutbyte och föreläsningsverksamhet. Enligt de officiella försäkringar svenska regeringen erhållit angående B.C. – byråns verksamhet här kommer denna att bedrivas enligt dessa linjer.'

Footnote 54 (Swedish): *'Av svenskar har en viss känsla av skam när vi ser på våra grannländer och brödrafolk som lever under tyskt förtryck.'*

Footnote 71 (Spanish): *'capaz de mil locuras'; and 'exaltado germanófilo en los primeros meses de la guerra mundial, y anglófilo luego seducido por Sir Samuel Hoare'.*

Footnote 76 (Spanish): *'tiene la honra de significarle que, por el momento y en principio, no existe inconveniente en que se celebren las conferencias sobre Alpinismo y Poesía Británica a cargo*

respectivamente de Mr Hugo Rutledge y Mr Laurence Binyon, en la inteligencia, claro es, de que llegado el momento oportuno se solicitaran por el Instituto Británico en esta capital las correspondientes autorizaciones reglamentarias para cada una de las conferencias aludidas.'

Footnote 78 (Swedish): '*Av tillgängliga tidningsfotografier synes Bottrall vida jude'*.

Footnote 79 (Swedish): '*Omkring 190 cm. lång, small, dålig hållning, går med lån steg, tämligen kort hals och runt huvud, näsan är lång och small och verkar inslagen, (se ill.) ögonen utstående med tun ögonlock och något melankoliska, munnen plutig och stor. Kal hjässa. Han uppträder ovådat vid bordet, sitter krokig, talar med mat i munnen, är högljudd etc., (iakttaget vid lunch).'*

Footnote 81 (Swedish): '*Bland de första som infunnit sig var Mr. och Mrs. Mallet. Vidare märktes Mr. Bottrall och en dam, som troligen var hans fru, samt Mr. Urquhart och Mr. Hinks. Genom en bekant fick undertecknad höra, att Mr. Hinks eller Direktör Roger, som hon kallade honom, kände väl till konst och hade en konstandel eller något dylikt i London. Så småningom samlade sig en hel mängd personer, både svensk och engelsmän, men undertecknad kände ocke igen och lyckades icke uppfatta namnet på några flera. Med största sannolikhet kan fastställas, att chefen för British Council i London, som väntades till Stockholm, icke var närvarande. Det skulle i så fall ha märkt vid Kronprinsens och Kronprinsessans ankomst, då han väl i så fall skulle ha blivit presenterad för dem. Det var emellertid huvudsakligen minister Mallet ensam, som visade dem omkring.'*

Footnote 82 (Swedish): '*Nicolson är lika fascinerande som sällskapsmänniska och föreläsare som han är i sina böcker, varav jag läst de flesta. När han talar om traditionen i engelskt liv – han gör det med intensiv sakkunskap och behärskat patos – tycker man sig bättre förstå de egenskaper, som gjort britterna till de skickliga imperiebyggare de äro.'*

Footnote 90 (Portuguese): '*inesperada modificação'*.

Footnote 91 (Portuguese): '*a Espanha é um país que, tendo partido de posições inimigas dia a dia se aproxima de nós; o seu interesse para a Inglaterra está a subir. Portugal, pelo contrário, apesar dos Tratados de aliança, tende a afastar-se de nós*'. [Underlining denotes italics in Rosas et al, *Armindo Monteiro*]

Footnote 92 (Portuguese): '*intervenção de estações mais altas'*.

Footnote 98 (Spanish): '*junto con destacadas personalidades de la vida cultural española'*.

Footnote 100 (Spanish): '*Todos van cambiando con las circunstancias hasta que yo tenga que acabar por no venir aquí'*.

Footnote 103 (Spanish): '*En Inglaterra causa muy mal efecto'*.

Footnote 132 (Spanish): '*originalidad y por su calidad'*, '*Su comprensión de Dickens er perfecta'*, '*Excusado resulta decir que el libro es importante y digno de ser leído'*.

Footnote 133 (Spanish): '*El confenciante fué muy aplaudido por el selecto público'*.

Footnote 134 (Spanish): '*se ha creado un ambiente general favourable'*.

Footnote 135 (Swedish): '*Engelsk poet föreläser här'*.

Footnote 136 (Swedish): '*Han torde vara den störste engelske kritikern sedan Coleridge'*.

Footnote 137 (Swedish): '*Förläggarna har det ganska svårt, papper är det ont om, och man har få arbetare.'*

Footnote 138 (Portuguese): '*ao terminar a sua bela lição, foi muito aplaudido'*; and '*Lord Harlech é também uma autoridade reconhecida acerca dos monumentos nacionais de Inglaterra, tendo escrito um*

importante Guía dos monumentos, em 3 volumes, que é justamente considerada uma das melhores obras no género'.

Footnote 141 (Spanish): *'En cuanto a los Sres. Don Walter Fitzwilliam Starkie y don Francisco Pietro, habida cuenta de que el primero es Agregado Cultural de la Embajada Británica y el segundo Embajador de Francia, y, por otra parte, en atención a las actuales circunstancias, parece oportuno que se aplace la tramitación de sus nombramientos mientras ostenten sus aludidos cargos oficiales o, cuando menos, hasta tanto que las aludidas circunstancias cesen.'*

Footnote 147 (Spanish): *'La mayor parte de los asistentes no estaban de acuerdo con mis métodos de profesor que decían ser muy lentos en vista de que después de dos o tres clases, no habían llegado a tener un conocimiento profundo del idioma. "A mí no me interesa esencialmente la lengua inglesa, observó Victor Ruiz Iriarte, sólo quiero aprender un poco para leer con cierta facilidad a Shakespeare en el original.'"*

5. Conclusion

Footnote 48 (Spanish): *'Autores españoles y actores italianos en el siglo XVI'.*

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