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Music Goes to War

How Britain, Germany and the USA used
Jazz as Propaganda in World War II

Will Studdert

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Abstract

The thesis will demonstrate that the various uses of jazz music as propaganda in World War II were determined by an evolving relationship between Axis and Allied policies and projects. The limited previous scholarship in the area, however, has been restricted to ‘single-country studies’ which present only national perspectives with little reference to the broader international context. Within a comparative framework, the thesis will trace and contextualise the international development of ‘propaganda jazz’, from early isolated broadcasts to consolidation in the form of regular programming and dedicated musical ensembles.

A wide range of English- and German-language sources including Mass Observation, oral history, trade magazines and archive material from Britain, Germany, the USA and Canada will be utilised and cross-referenced to provide an unprecedented perspective on wartime uses of broadcast propaganda. Although a significant number of British and German documents relating to propaganda were destroyed during and after the war, the breadth of the research will allow reconstruction and analysis of various propaganda programmes from a multitude of standpoints. The thesis will also explore contemporary cultural, social and political considerations in Britain, Germany and the USA, thus not only increasing the scope and perspective of the discourse, but also reflecting the diversity of the interrelated factors which influenced wartime popular culture and propaganda.

The thesis will make a number of significant contributions to the historiography of the field. Analyses of previously overlooked Allied and Axis propaganda projects will highlight the diversity of the methodologies regarding the use of music for propaganda purposes. Moreover, the international scope will facilitate an imperative reappraisal of British ‘black’ propaganda radio stations of Sefton Delmer and the Political Warfare Executive (PWE), which were hugely successful and yet have been unjustifiably neglected by prior historiography. The popularity and psychological adroitness of PWE’s broadcasts will be juxtaposed with the demonstrably inferior quality and effectiveness of German ‘black’ programming for Britain and the USA, which exposed considerable limitations to Joseph Goebbels’ abilities. The thesis will also explore Goebbels’ attempts to nurture an ‘indigenous’ New German Entertainment Music, and demonstrate that the Propaganda Minister’s inability to

come to terms with jazz, both for German audiences and as a tool for propaganda broadcasts to the enemy, ceded an extremely important advantage to the Allies.

A radical revision of the character and work of Hans Hinkel, an influential figure in the Nazi cultural apparatus who has nonetheless been the subject of very little scholarly attention, will also be provided. While a central component of the thesis is the assertion that Goebbels was far less pragmatic than has been acknowledged by prior historiography, Hinkel's reputation as an ideologically rigid reactionary will be challenged by cross-referencing oral history sources and documentary evidence. Furthermore, the comparative framework will be used to show conclusively that the problems of appropriate musical programming for the Forces, which fell within Hinkel's remit, were not restricted to Germany but were part of a broader international discourse regarding music's role in the maintenance of morale. It will facilitate a wide-ranging exploration of the uses of music and broadcasting to manipulate Forces and civilian morale for both benevolent and malevolent purposes.

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Glossary

Endsieg – Final Victory

Gauleitung – District Leadership

Geheime Sonderdienststelle – Secret Special Agency

Heimat – Homeland

Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur – Combat League for German Culture

Kurzwellensender – Shortwave Station

Machtergreifung – Seizure of Power

Obersten Reichsbehörden – Top Reich Authorities

Reichspropagandaleitung – Reich Propaganda Leadership

Soldatensender – Armed Forces Radio Station

Sonderfahndungsliste G.B. – Special Wanted List G.B.

Volksempfänger – Peoples' Receiver

Völkisch – Racial, ethnic

List of Abbreviations

ABC – American Broadcasting Company

BA – Bundesarchiv Berlin

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

BBC WAC – BBC Written Archives Collection, Caversham

CBS – Columbia Broadcasting System

COI – Office of the Coordinator of Information

CTASC – Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, York University, Toronto

DNB – *Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro* (German News Agency)

DRA – Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv Frankfurt

DTUO - *Deutsche Tanz- und Unterhaltungsorchester* (German Dance- and Entertainment Orchestra)

FCC – Federal Communications Commission

JZD – Jazzinstitut Darmstadt

KWS – *Kurzwellensender* (Shortwave Station)

MBS – Mutual Broadcasting System

MI5 – Military Intelligence, Section 5

MoI – Ministry of Information

MO – Mass Observation Online

NA – National Archives, Kew

NAACP - National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

NARA – National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland

NFCL - National Federation for Constitutional Liberties

NID – Naval Intelligence Department

NJA – National Jazz Archive, Loughton

NSDAP – Nazionalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist German Workers' Party)

OCD – Office of Civilian Defense

OFF – Office of Facts and Figures

OKW – *Oberkommando Wehrmacht* (Armed Forces High Command)

OWI – Office of War Information

POW – Prisoner of War

PWB – Psychological Warfare Branch

PWD – Psychological Warfare Division

PWE – Political Warfare Executive

RBTO – *Radio Berlin Tanzorchester* (Radio Berlin Dance Orchestra)

RKK – *Reichskulturkammer* (Reich Chamber of Culture)

RMK – *Reichsmusikkammer* (Reich Chamber of Music)

RMVP – *Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda* (Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda)

RRG – *Reichs-Rundfunk-Gesellschaft* (Reich Broadcasting Corporation)

RTK – *Reichstheaterkammer* (Reich Chamber of Theatre)

SD – *Sicherheitsdienst des Reichführers-SS* (Security Service of the Reichsführer-SS)

SHAEF – Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force

SOE – Special Operations Executive

SS – *Schutzstaffel* (Defence Corps)

SSD – Special Services Division

UK-Stellung – Unabkömmlichstellung ('Reserved Occupation')

VOA – Voice of America

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In the course of nearly four years, I am sure that I have accumulated so many personal and scholarly debts that it is impossible to acknowledge these all individually or adequately here. I will, however, do my best. I am particularly grateful to my supervisors at the University of Kent, Professor David Welch and Professor Ulf Schmidt for sharing their expertise with me through the duration of my doctorate. Their friendly support and patience throughout the research and writing process have been much appreciated. Both I and the thesis have benefited greatly from their insights, advice and criticisms, and the convivial nature of their supervision has made it a particularly enjoyable and inspirational learning curve.

Professor Michael H. Kater has been supportive of this project and provided a number of helpful suggestions. His kind permission to access the wealth of material which he gathered whilst researching his seminal work on jazz in Nazi Germany during the late 1980s, and which is now housed at the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections at York University, Toronto, has been invaluable. With very few surviving witnesses and protagonists to speak to, Professor Kater's extensive interviews and correspondence with surviving musicians and aficionados from the Third Reich jazz scene have proven to be 'the next best thing'. Not only have they allowed me to integrate unpublished oral history into the thesis, but in some cases, for example with my re-evaluation of the character of Hans Hinkel in Chapter Three, they have shed important new light on events and individuals and enabled me to draw new conclusions which contradict or elaborate upon previous scholarship in the area.

I have also been very fortunate to meet one of the key British protagonists of the thesis. My partner Olya and I visited Charles and Penny Chilton at their house in West Hampstead in June 2012, and the interview was memorable not only for the extraordinary opportunity to discuss at length the content of the thesis with the BBC's leading wartime jazz producer and DJ, but also for the warmth and humour of our hosts. Although Mr Chilton passed away in January 2013 before we were able to visit them again, our subsequent friendship with Penny, Katy, Kath and other members of the family has become a regular and valued feature of our visits to London.

I have unfortunately been unable to meet the wartime jazz aficionado Peter W. G. Powell in person before the submission of the thesis, but have nonetheless benefited greatly from his assistance. Mr Powell's detailed answers to my written questions have helped to clarify a number of important points, and provided a first-hand account of the listening habits and experiences of a young jazz fan in wartime London. He has also generously sent me a pre-publication manuscript relating to the landmark First English Public Jam Session of 1941, which he attended, as well as numerous copies of articles, photographs and concert programmes which are not available in any archive.

I was introduced to Mr Powell by Dr. Catherine Tackley of the Open University, a preeminent historian of British jazz with whom I shared a panel at the University of London in January 2013 (which coincidentally was held in the former headquarters of the Ministry of Information). She has been very helpful and encouraging of my work, and has been kind enough to send me an unpublished chapter of hers from a forthcoming publication. The comments of the reviewers for my forthcoming article in the *Jazz Research Journal*, which is edited by Dr. Tackley, were also extremely useful in sharpening my interpretations of a number of aspects relating to British jazz during wartime, and pushed me to consider the dominant discourse surrounding the historiography of Britain's home front in greater detail.

The international nature of the thesis has led me to a number of archives in Britain, Germany and North America, and I have been very professionally assisted on my many visits by the staff at the National Archives, Kew, the Bundesarchiv, Berlin and the National Archives and Records Administration at College Park, Maryland. I am grateful to Dr. Wolfram Knauer at the Jazzinstitut Darmstadt, Jeff Walden at the BBC Written Archives Collection and Suzanne Dubeau at the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections at York University, Toronto for their personal assistance in navigating the material at their institutions. David Nathan of the excellent National Jazz Archive at Loughton provided cordial support, in spite of the fact that our respective football teams Brentford and Leyton Orient were engaged in a bitter promotion battle during the latter part of the thesis.

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Numerous pleasant and enriching conversations have also been had with my fellow ‘propagandists’ Reeta Kangas and Michael Kliegl, as well as Berlin’s resident swing expert Stephan Wuthe. On Kate Donovan and Davidly’s radio programme *Play with Music and Words* I was given the opportunity to discuss jazz in the Third Reich for a new audience in November 2012, and the invitation of Kate Davison to speak at *Marx is Muss 2013* in Berlin offered a similarly welcome chance to present and debate these ideas outside of the academic milieu. While I have generally avoided engaging with the existential connotations of jazz during wartime in the thesis, such informal encounters have repeatedly challenged me to consider the more abstract aspects of the subject matter.

Last but not least I thank my parents, Chris and Inge, who have helped me over the years in ways too numerous to list, and more-or-less cheerfully resigned themselves to my return to the household during the periods when I was teaching at Kent. My mother’s prodigious proofreading efforts, together with those of Michael Kliegl and my brother Sam, have also saved me from countless errors great and small. I take full responsibility for any that may remain. And I dedicate the thesis to Olya, not only for having been a continuous source of love, support and kindred jazz appreciation, but also for having once uttered the famous last words: “You spend all the time reading about it anyway, why not do a PhD?”

Chapter One

Introduction and Historiography

“So it seems that Swing is mobilised and will play its part in the coming struggle.”

(B. M. Lytton-Edwards, October 1939)¹

¹ NJA *Melody Maker* ‘Keep the Swing Flag Flying: Because Men Get Into Khaki, It Doesn’t Mean That They Forget That They Are Rhythm Fans’ by B. M. Lytton-Edwards, October 1939, p.13. B.M. Lytton-Edwards was the pseudonym for the writing team Mary Lytton and Bettie Edwards.

Introduction

The thesis owes its genesis to Michael H. Kater's assertion that Charlie and his Orchestra, Joseph Goebbels' English-language propaganda jazz band, was established to "pay the enemy back in kind".² Kater's suggestion that the decision of the *Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda* (RMVP) to combine jazz music and propaganda was a direct response to the British use of jazz music in broadcasts to Germany caused me to reflect upon the importance of the international context in shaping wartime cultural propaganda. Subsequent enquiry revealed that existing studies in the field were country-specific, with only passing references made to the activities of other nations.³ By examining previously-overlooked propaganda projects and programmes, as well as reappraising others in the light of new evidence and the cross-referencing of materials from British, German and North American archives, I will demonstrate that respective nations' utilisation of jazz music as propaganda during World War II did not occur in a vacuum. It was shaped by the evolving relationship between Axis and Allied propaganda policies, which directly impacted upon and influenced one another, and thus the phenomenon can only be properly understood within an international frame of reference. The comparative analysis will challenge and elaborate upon earlier scholarly efforts in this area and make a significant contribution to a broader understanding of the subject.

The international scope of the thesis will also facilitate a re-evaluation of Goebbels' limitations as a propagandist. In the following chapters I will use British, German and American archive and interview materials to explore not only the Propaganda Minister's cynical and pragmatic willingness to contravene the Nazi *Weltanschauung* in the name of the war effort, but also the extent to which he was unable to come to terms with jazz as a medium for influencing German or enemy morale. In particular, I will demonstrate that he failed to capitalise on the

² Michael H. Kater, *Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992, p.130.

³ See for example Kater, *Different Drummers*, pp.122-124 with regard to Nazi Forces' predilection for Anglo-American broadcasts, Horst J. P. Bergmeier and Rainer E. Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves: The Inside Story of Nazi Broadcasting and Propaganda Swing*, New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1997, pp.155-158 for British monitors' and media reception of RMVP propaganda, Christina Baade, *Victory through Harmony: The BBC and Popular Music in World War II*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012, pp.48-49 for the popularity of Fécamp, Radio International with the BEF, and S. Frederick Starr, *Red & Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union*, New York: Limelight Editions, 1994, pp.188-194 for the unprecedented influx of American (jazz) music into the Soviet Union between 1941-1945.

opportunities presented in the early months of the war due to the dramatic reduction by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)⁴ of its Home Service entertainment output. Because hostility toward Germany was relatively low given the lack of initial military engagement, I will argue in Chapter Two that the RMVP missed opportunities to manipulate British public opinion through entertaining and subversive programming. Meanwhile, an inability to sufficiently cater to German Forces created openings for malevolent enemy projects which succeeded in combining exciting musical programming with misinformation, such as the Political Warfare Executive (PWE) stations *Soldatensender Calais* and *Kurzwellensender Atlantik*. By contrasting the work of Goebbels with PWE's Berlin-born propagandist Sefton Delmer, I will illustrate that the latter's resourcefulness and nuanced understanding of his target audience often resulted in far superior 'black' propaganda projects than the RMVP's often rather naïve efforts. Far from being "the war that Hitler won",⁵ I will draw on a wider range of sources and perspectives which indicate that propaganda was frequently employed with greater adeptness, intelligence and success by British and US agencies.

The problem was exacerbated for the RMVP because, although categorised as 'degenerate' music (*entartete Musik*) by the NSDAP, jazz was nonetheless hugely popular with younger Germans and Forces listeners.⁶ Goebbels' struggle to reconcile ideology and popular taste was characterised by the quixotic search for a *neue deutsche Unterhaltungsmusik* ('New German Entertainment Music'),⁷ and in Chapter Three and Chapter Four I will analyse these broadly unsuccessful attempts to impose popular culture 'from above'. Indeed, in spite of Goebbels' elevation of the provision of quality modern rhythmic music to the level of a national duty in wartime, his insistence on musical guidelines for dance bands and refusal to co-opt Anglo-American jazz for domestic and Forces' consumption led to convoluted and expensive efforts to cultivate a state-sponsored and suitably 'German' alternative. By

⁴ For purposes of accuracy, the acronym will be written as 'B.B.C.' in citations from contemporary documents and as the now-standard 'BBC' in the body of the text.

⁵ As asserted in the eponymous publication, see Robert Edwin Herzstein, *The War that Hitler Won: Goebbels and the Nazi Media Campaign*. New York: Paragon House, 1987.

⁶ See Michael H. Kater, 'Forbidden Fruit? Jazz in the Third Reich.' *The American Historical Review* 94.1 (February 1989), pp.11-43 and Will Studdert, "'The Death of Music": The Nazis' Relationship with Jazz in World War II.' *Skepsi* 5.2 (2013), pp.26-39 for the Nazis' relationship with jazz.

⁷ Although a number of similar euphemisms were used for the officially-commissioned attempts to foster a domestic alternative to Anglo-American jazz, I am using the umbrella term 'New German Entertainment Music' throughout the thesis for clarity and consistency.

offering the first scholarly analysis of the variety programme *Frohe Stunde am Nachmittag* ('Happy Hour in the Afternoon'),⁸ which Goebbels explicitly initiated for this purpose, I will shed new light on the weaknesses and internal contradictions of New German Entertainment Music that would also plague the more ambitious *Deutsches Tanz- und Unterhaltungsorchester* ('German Dance- and Entertainment Orchestra', henceforth DTUO) after *Frohe Stunde*'s demise.⁹ By contrast, Chapter Three will provide a substantial reappraisal of Hans Hinkel, a major figure in the NSDAP's attempt to mould German cultural life, whose role in the Third Reich still awaits more comprehensive scholarly attention. Utilising previously unpublished accounts from jazz musicians regarding Hinkel's private views on musical culture and policy in Germany, as well as his hitherto-overlooked popularity with jazz musicians, I will illustrate that Hinkel, who was responsible for radio entertainment between 1942-44 and the head of wartime *Truppenbetreuung* ('Armed Forces' entertainment'), was in fact a far more complex and pragmatic figure than prior scholarship has suggested. Furthermore, I will argue that his scepticism vis-à-vis German bands reproducing Anglo-American music was valid, based on the relative failures of projects such as *Frohe Stunde*, the DTUO and Charlie and his Orchestra. Based on the new evidence, he may well have privately preferred to utilise authentic American 'degenerate' music on the airwaves rather than inferior Germanic copies.

It was the original intention of the thesis to offer a comparative analysis of the international uses of jazz music as propaganda during World War II without restricting its focus to specific nations. It soon became clear, however, that the scope was overambitious, and the subsequent decision to focus on Britain, Germany and the USA has allowed me to develop comparative and nuanced analyses of the methodologies and problems of each of the three belligerents. Nonetheless, due to the later entry of the USA into the war, as well as the greater accessibility of European archives, inevitably the research presented in the thesis is weighted more heavily towards Britain and Germany. Moreover, on occasion the thesis explores

⁸ Elements of my research on *Frohe Stunde* have been discussed in a different context in my article in Massimiliano Sala (ed.), *Music and Propaganda in the Short Twentieth Century*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2014.

⁹ While no record of the programme's precise cessation could be traced at the Bundesarchiv, the last mention of *Frohe Stunde* is dated 21st October 1941, less than one month after the plans for the DTUO were initiated (see Chapter Three).

areas which are only peripherally within its remit, most notably by contributing the first academic study of the Japanese entertainment propaganda programme *Zero Hour*, which broadcast to US Forces in the South Pacific and appears to have involved self-reflexive sabotage on the part of its reluctant Anglophone participants. Retaining a degree of flexibility within the framework of the thesis has allowed me not only to examine important but overlooked areas of World War II propaganda, but also to elucidate the potential risks presented by the failure of the Special Services Division (SSD) to provide acceptable light entertainment for GIs in the South Pacific.

Indeed, the comparative nature of the thesis has highlighted not only the limits to Goebbels' effectiveness as a propagandist, but also the degree to which the British and US propaganda and cultural apparatuses similarly struggled to provide their Forces with appropriate and acceptable musical broadcasting. Building on the work of the historians Martin Doherty and Angus Calder,¹⁰ I will draw on a range of British sources to challenge the 'People's War' discourse of a harmonious home front. In doing so, I will demonstrate that Nazi propaganda broadcasts were potentially extremely dangerous for British morale, because they targeted existing currents of opinion and could seek to exacerbate domestic tensions in the absence of military engagement with the enemy. The BBC's self-perception as the nation's cultural educator will also be analysed and criticised regarding the more utilitarian requirements of broadcasting during wartime, and in Chapter Four I will review its controversial attempt to control popular music content via the bans on slush (overly-sentimental music) and 'jazzing the classics' (dance-oriented arrangements of classical melodies). This will entail using not only British sources, but also presenting an unprecedented and previously unpublished German perspective on British policy in an English-language talk delivered by jazz aficionado Wolf Mittler of the *Reichs-Rundfunk-Gesellschaft* (RRG).¹¹ Chapter Five will utilise a range of American sources to assay the various problems and challenges faced by the Office of War Information (OWI) in the USA; by looking at racial tensions and the violence towards the predominantly Mexican-American and African-American 'zoot' jazz

¹⁰ M. A. Doherty, *Nazi Wireless Propaganda: Lord Haw-Haw and British Public Opinion in the Second World War*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2000 and Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz*. London: Pimlico, 1992.

¹¹ 'Reich Broadcasting Corporation'.

subculture, I will draw parallels between the US and Britain in terms of the opportunities presented to the RMVP during periods of relative inactivity and boredom, described by the *British Medical Journal* in 1942 as the danger presented by the “monotony of waiting”.¹² By analysing conditions in Britain, Germany and the USA in tandem, the thesis will demonstrate that Nazi propaganda missed a number of opportunities to influence enemy listeners, and that these might have been better exploited by a more competent and pragmatic approach to jazz music and popular taste.

This introductory chapter will serve four purposes. Firstly, it will define two key terms, ‘jazz’ and ‘propaganda’, which are open to diverse interpretations in order to clarify the methodology and remit of the thesis. Secondly, it will provide an overview of the archives visited and important primary sources used as well as their respective significance in generating new knowledge. Thirdly, it will discuss the nature and quality of relevant existing secondary literature in order to illustrate both the work that has already been carried out in this field and define what remains to be done, highlighting the need for a comparative international approach to the subject matter. Finally, it will consider the complicated question of audiences for World War II jazz broadcasts and general issues relating to the analysis of the reception and relative success of propaganda. The initial task, however, must be to establish workable definitions of the two central elements to the thesis: jazz and propaganda.

Terminology

Defining Key Terms: Jazz

Our understanding of jazz music in the following chapters must be based on contemporary cultural realities and perceptions during World War II, rather than retrospectively from a modern-day perspective. The musicologist Christina Baade notes that during the war the BBC had difficulties distinguishing between dance music, jazz and swing,¹³ and indeed as late as 1943 a Listener Research questionnaire defined ‘swing’ as one of three subcategories of dance music

¹² R. D. Gillespie, ‘German Psychological Warfare: An American Survey.’ *The British Medical Journal* 1.4239 (4th April 1942), pp.445-448. Here p.447.

¹³ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, p.349.

(alongside ‘straight’ and ‘strict-tempo’ dance music),¹⁴ leading the radio critic ‘Detector’ (Edgar Jackson) of the jazz trade journal *Melody Maker* to protest that “B.B.C. Listener ‘Research’ into Dance Music *isn’t* [Listener Research]!”¹⁵ Not all at the Corporation laboured under such misapprehensions; Charles Chilton, the BBC’s leading wartime jazz broadcaster and producer, told me emphatically that ‘jazz’ and ‘dance music’ were mutually exclusive entities,¹⁶ and the contents and reputation of his ‘Radio Rhythm Club’ are evidence that his sentiment at the time was consistent with this.¹⁷ However, even *Melody Maker* devoted a great deal of coverage to dance bands, albeit because jazz was a minority taste and mainstream appeal was needed in order to remain profitable through sales and advertising revenue.¹⁸ Moreover, many dance musicians, including the popular Geraldo, jumped on the swing bandwagon during the ‘British swing craze’ of 1942, and dance band broadcasts over the BBC would usually offer ‘something for everyone’, from saccharine commercial tunes to ‘hot’ swing numbers.¹⁹

The boundaries were most fluid, of course, in the eyes of the non-specialist general public. For aficionados such as Chilton and his contemporaries in the USA or Germany, the subtleties between ‘jazz’ and ‘dance’ were easier to discern, and they broadly shared the view of Hans Blüthner of the illegal Berlin-Melodie-Club, which was active for most of the duration of the Third Reich, who insisted in a letter to the amateur historian Horst J.P. Bergmeier that the music of Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Bix Beiderbecke et al “was much too sacred to us to throw it into the dance pot”.²⁰ Indeed, the quasi-religious veneration of American jazz musicians over domestic groups, and the sharp distinction between jazz and dance music, is representative not only of the German jazz aficionados but also of their contemporaries in Britain.

¹⁴ BBC WAC R27/73/2 Internal Circulating Memo: ‘Listener Research Dance Music Enquiry’, 17th May 1943. The survey’s author admits that the terminology may be confusing to respondents and that it was “the best we could devise”.

¹⁵ NJA *Melody Maker* ‘B.B.C. Listener “Research” into Dance Music *isn’t*!’ by ‘Detector’, 19th June 1943, p.1.

¹⁶ Chilton interview 2012.

¹⁷ See Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, pp.105-130.

¹⁸ Jim Godbolt, *A History of Jazz in Britain 1919-50*. London: Northway Publications, 2005, pp.127-128.

¹⁹ Christina Baade, “‘The Dancing Front’: Dance Music, Dancing, and the BBC in World War II.” *Popular Music* 25.03 (2006), pp.347-368. Here p.350.

²⁰ JZD Hans Blüthner papers. Blüthner to Horst J.P. Bergmeier, 18th January 1984.

In Germany, the distinctions between jazz and dance music were further blurred due to the delayed introduction of jazz to the Weimar Republic.²¹ With American bands unable or reluctant to tour the country due to sanctions and inflation in the aftermath of World War I, the first jazz group from the USA did not reach German soil until 1924, and American record companies were reluctant to export to the economically weak Weimar Republic. German ‘jazz’ bands, in the absence of first-hand experience of the music, generally worked by grafting “ragtime syncopations and an uninhibited performance style” onto existing Wilhelmine genres such as military music, *Radaukapellen* (novelty ‘racket bands’) and, most notably, salon orchestras.²² The music historian J. Bradford Robinson points out that the most popular early German jazz groups (such as those of Dajos Béla, Barnabás von Géczy, Marek Weber and Bernard Etté) were simply salon orchestras which had been rechristened as jazz bands whilst essentially retaining the same structure under the leadership of a *Stehgeiger* (lead violinist), and a manual was even issued in 1928 providing instructions on how to convert a salon orchestra into a jazz band.²³ This model persisted in the German musical imagination and was to remain the dominant format of the jazz band right up to the end of the Third Reich.

The contemporary distinctions between jazz and swing, too, were complicated, and the subject of much debate in Britain among connoisseurs. Before and during World War II, British jazz discourse was dominated by what may broadly be termed ‘the primitivist position’,²⁴ which held that swing was a “popular [white] music which is a cheap imitation of that produced by Negro combinations”, while only (or predominantly) African-American musicians were considered to play authentic jazz.²⁵ According to this view, swing was a white, slick and commercial copy, while jazz was African-American, raw and instinctive. The primitivists’ false dichotomy can also be seen in the context of the political and cultural backlash during the 1930s against the racist ideology and rhetoric of the Nazis among British jazz fans, which also saw *Melody Maker* take a public stand against domestic anti-Semitism and draw

²¹ J. Bradford Robinson. ‘The Jazz Essays of Theodor Adorno: Some Thoughts on Jazz Reception in Weimar Germany.’ *Popular Music* 13.1 (January 1994), pp.1-25. Here p.4-5.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ See the extensive critique of the ‘primitivist position’ in Lee B. Brown, ‘Postmodernist Jazz Theory: Afrocentrism, Old and New.’ *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 57.2 (1999), pp.235-246.

²⁵ *Radio Rhythm Club* script dated 11th February 1943, cited in Baade, *The Dancing Front*, p.349.

attention to the injustices suffered by African-American musicians in the USA.²⁶ However, by 1977 Carlo Bohländer, a member of the wartime Frankfurt ‘Harlem’ Group,²⁷ could confidently and accurately state: “jazz is the umbrella- and collective term and swing is a style in this development”.²⁸

Defining Key Terms: Propaganda

The thesis will therefore include all of these musical genres and sub-genres in its examination of the uses of jazz as propaganda, for only in this way can it reflect contemporary cultural perceptions and usages. This necessity has become apparent during the research, and similarly it is only through the practical application of a semantic framework onto the source material that an appropriately flexible definition of ‘propaganda’ has been reached. The historian David Welch distils the essence of the RMVP’s domestic propaganda into “mobilisation and control”,²⁹ and notes that “whenever public opinion is deemed important, there we shall find an attempt to influence it.”³⁰ Welch’s assertion that in Germany “the political function of propaganda was to coordinate the political will of the nation with the aims of the State”³¹ was equally true of Britain and the USA during World War II, and the increasingly sophisticated use of not only ‘white’ propaganda (in which the source is declared), but also ‘grey’ and ‘black’ propaganda (in which the source is ambiguous or concealed respectively) requires a nuanced and multifaceted interpretation of the term propaganda itself.

In his Nuremberg defence, Hans Fritzsche, who led the RMVP’s Press Division from January 1939 until March 1942 and its Broadcasting Division from November 1942 until May 1945,³² arrived at a concise and suitably neutral definition of propaganda which will also serve the thesis; it is “the art of awakening thoughts or feelings in

²⁶ Godbolt, *A History of Jazz in Britain*, p.129.

²⁷ Kater, *Different Drummers*, pp.149-150. See also Michael Zwerin, *Swing under the Nazis: Jazz as a Metaphor for Freedom*. New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000, pp.48-56.

²⁸ Carlo Bohländer and Karl-Heinz Holler. *Jazz Führer*. Leipzig: Edition Peters, 1977. Bohländer 1977, p.18.

²⁹ David Welch, *The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002, p.2.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p.6.

³¹ *Ibid*, p.61.

³² Michael Balfour, *Propaganda in War, 1939-1945. Organisations, Policies and Publics in Britain and Germany*. London: Faber, 2010, p.508.

other people which they would not have thought or felt without this stimulus.”³³ Thus attempts to bolster morale also constitute propaganda, and yet are seldom considered to be such. It is important to recognise this because government agencies such as the RMVP, the Ministry of Information (MoI) and OWI used music and broadcasting in an organised and concerted effort to produce certain desired psychological or emotional effects in their own soldiers and civilians for the benefit of the war effort. The first task is to divest propaganda of the traditional pejorative associations which continue to limit contemporary perspectives on this form of communication,³⁴ and recognise it as a complex variety of processes with differing goals and relationships to the truth; the one consistent element in all propaganda is the attempt to exert some form of influence over the recipient.

Indeed, the manifold possible forms and purposes of propaganda will be demonstrated throughout the thesis. Consistent with the contemporary usage of the terminology in World War II, I will be interpreting psychological warfare as a component and variety of propaganda operations,³⁵ which saw Britain’s PWE, the USA’s Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB) and the Anglo-American Political Warfare Division/Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force (PWD/SHAEF) responsible for ‘grey’ and ‘black’ propaganda. This was conducted under the auspices of psychological warfare, and a 1942 review in the *British Medical Journal* of an American study of German psychological warfare found that propaganda was the outcome of “coldly scientific [psychological] enquiries”, the results of which were “scientifically compiled and then its effect on the masses at home and abroad carefully calculated.”³⁶ The problems of such claims to scientific accuracy will be discussed below with regard to public opinion research, but certainly the diversity of attempts to manipulate public opinion refute the crude definitions of propaganda parodied by the British civil servant and historian Michael Balfour, who suggested that “[a] spade cannot be called a spade but must be either a primitive tool for exploiting the toil of the down-trodden masses or else a nobly-

³³ Hans Fritzsche and Hildegard Springer, *Es Sprach Hans Fritzsche: Nach Briefen, Gesprächen und Dokumenten*. Stuttgart: Thiele, 1949, p.193.

³⁴ As observed in Welch, *The Third Reich*, 2002.

³⁵ See also John W. Riley, Jr. and Leonard S. Cottrell. ‘Research for Psychological Warfare.’ *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 21.1 (1957), pp.147-158. Here p.150.

³⁶ Gillespie, *German Psychological Warfare*, p.447. The article is reviewing a publication by Ladislav Farago for the [American] Committee for National Morale.

conceived instrument with which the honest labourer can expend his energies for the use of the community.”³⁷

However, Balfour’s own assertion that propaganda is usually undertaken “to induce action on the part of others”³⁸ is equally unsatisfactory. The use of music as a form of propaganda constitutes a more complex and abstract relationship between medium and message, as well as between communicator and recipient. US military intelligence operative Walter Cerf defined such a relationship in 1942 as the wielding of ‘cultural power’, a form of social power which “means the capacity of an individual (or group of individuals) to produce desired effects in other people and to prevent other people from exerting undesired influence upon him.”³⁹ Cerf observes that expressive media such as music and painting, like language, convey meaning on a sensory basis,⁴⁰ and can thus in theory be used by groups of individuals in order to exert cultural power over the recipient with the intention of inducing a particular response. Nonetheless, because the relationship between text and audience was an interactive process,⁴¹ these efforts could also result in what the philosopher Isaiah Berlin describes as the “unintended consequences, unforeseen accidental results not ‘made’ by the actors”.⁴² Welch, moreover, notes that Nazi propaganda content was itself influenced by existing public opinion rather than etched upon a tabula rasa,⁴³ and the attempts to use cultural power were similarly dictated by the tastes and prejudices of its potential audience. For the reasons outlined above, all organised attempts by state agencies to exert psychological influence, regardless of form or function, will be understood as propaganda in the following chapters.

Primary Sources

The international nature of the thesis has involved using archives in four different countries across two continents. The German sections of my research began at the Bundesarchiv in Berlin-Lichterfelde, which houses the surviving documents of the

³⁷ Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, p.423.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Walter Cerf, ‘Freedom of Instruction in War Time.’ *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 6.4 (Winter 1942), pp.576-587. Here p.581.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ As noted in Riley, Jr./Cottrell, Jr., ‘Research for Psychological Warfare’, p.150.

⁴² Isaiah Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas*. London: John Murray, 1990, p.63.

⁴³ David Welch, ‘Nazi Propaganda and the Volksgemeinschaft: Constructing a People’s Community.’ *Journal of Contemporary History* 39.2 (April 2004), pp.213-238. Here pp.215-216.

Nazi broadcasting, cultural and propaganda apparatuses. The papers of the RRG were particularly valuable as a selective window onto the debate and policy regarding music, particularly jazz and dance music, on German radio. The minutes of the RRG's meetings and conferences allowed me to gauge the degree of flexibility and pragmatism to which NSDAP bureaucrats were willing to commit, whilst the discovery of documents relating to the previously-overlooked *Frohe Stunde am Nachmittag* provided important new evidence of the laboured attempts to develop New German Entertainment Music. By demonstrating the difficulty of translating the open-minded rhetoric into successful programming, these sources highlighted the disconnect between theory and practice that would characterise Goebbels' own relationship with jazz music throughout the course of the war. The RMVP documentation relating to the DTUO, the Propaganda Minister's ambitious attempt to create a de facto State Jazz Orchestra on the Soviet model,⁴⁴ enabled me to reappraise this area of cultural propaganda and to link the orchestra's genesis to the failure of *Frohe Stunde*. Through the jazz-related correspondence of Peter Raabe's *Reichsmusikkammer* (RMK), the futility of the Nazi position in comprehending and dealing with the challenge posed by jazz became particularly apparent.⁴⁵

The papers of Hans Hinkel have been a further invaluable source at the Bundesarchiv. His various essays and speeches provide a counterweight to the pragmatic views espoused by Goebbels and the RRG's Director-General, Reichsintendant Heinrich Glasmeier;⁴⁶ indeed, Hinkel never publicly wavered from his 1933 assertion that radio should serve a didactic cultural-political role,⁴⁷ and is therefore generally considered by historians to have been either an uncultured opportunist or a philistine.⁴⁸ As noted in the introduction to this chapter, in Chapter Three I will challenge previous conclusions regarding Hinkel on the strength of unpublished sections of two interview transcripts which I viewed at the Michael H. Kater fonds in the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections at York

⁴⁴ For the various State Jazz Orchestras of the USSR, see Starr, *Red & Hot*, pp.175-180.

⁴⁵ See for example BA R65I/41 for the correspondence between Hinkel, Raabe and the retired Viennese music publisher Norbert Salb.

⁴⁶ For Glasmeier, see R55/695 Protokoll der Arbeitstagung Abteilungsleiter – Musik des Großdeutschen Rundfunks, 2 - 3 Oktober 1941, p.2. Georg Haentzschel of the DTUO, however, recalls Glasmeier as “the devil”, but spoke warmly of Hinkel (Haentzschel interview 1988).

⁴⁷ My italics. See BA R56I/83 (Microfiche 1) Hinkel an Goebbels, 12th June 1933.

⁴⁸ A.E. Steinweis, ‘Hans Hinkel and German Jewry, 1933-1941.’ *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 38.1 (1993), pp.209-19. Here p.211.

University, Toronto. During the late 1980s, Kater interviewed numerous protagonists from the era, accumulating a wealth of interviews and correspondence material which constitute a hugely valuable supply of unused first-hand accounts. The fonds also contain other important primary sources such as copies of Werner Daniels' newsletter, *Musikalische Feldpost* ('Musical Field Post'), which was circulated among jazz fans in the German military. The ability to use these fonds has enabled the integration of important oral history into the thesis in spite of the fact that the majority of the protagonists have long since passed away.

Among the many useful resources at the Jazzinstitut Darmstadt, I was able to view the personal papers bequeathed to the institute by members of the Third Reich's jazz community. The multitude of correspondence left by Hans Blüthner of the *Berlin-Melodie-Club*, as well as the often-unpublished manuscripts of GDR jazz expert Wolfgang Muth, were particularly helpful for the light they shed on jazz culture in Nazi Germany. Darmstadt's British equivalent, the National Jazz Archive at Loughton, holds CD-ROM copies of the complete *Melody Maker* back catalogue, which have proven invaluable. While the journal often voiced controversial opinions, and Charles Chilton commented plausibly that the regular attacks on the BBC were motivated by a desire to sell newspapers rather than genuine jazz advocacy, the journal remains an essential source for an understanding of the British jazz scene during World War II, as asserted by wartime aficionado Peter W.G. Powell.⁴⁹ While the varying quality of its commentaries and commentators must always be taken into account, it remains broadly representative of wartime jazz discourse in Britain and is an invaluable source for understanding this.

The BBC Written Archives Centre in Caversham houses the Corporation's file on *Melody Maker*, which, indicative of the necessity for a thesis of this nature, was opened for the first time since the end of the war in preparation for my visit. This has enabled me to study the BBC's own perspective on its troubled but broadly collaborative relationship with *Melody Maker*, which also involved the latter's journalists taking part as expert commentators on *Radio Rhythm Club*. Moreover, regular *Melody Maker* writer Spike Hughes served as an expert advisor to the BBC regarding the quality control of broadcast dance bands, and provided a regular flow

⁴⁹ Powell to the author, 4th February 2013.

of external criticism, albeit of varying quality and perspicacity. The various BBC departmental memoranda and correspondence relating to dance music policy and controversial initiatives such as the ban on slush and ‘jazzing the classics’, also kept at Caversham, provided an important insight into the weaknesses and cultural prejudices that hampered the BBC’s attempts to effectively use jazz as a psychological buttress for the Forces and civilians.

At the National Archives in Kew I worked primarily with the archives of the Foreign Office and the Home Office, the former containing the papers of PWE, including those relating to its various ‘black’ and ‘grey’ radio stations (euphemistically termed ‘Research Units’). The pioneering role of Sefton Delmer in using jazz and dance music for subversive purposes is often overlooked in the historiography of World War II propaganda, and yet, as I will demonstrate in Chapter Five by cross-reference with German sources, gave the Allies a powerful psychological advantage, caused the Nazi leadership great concern and was genuinely harmful to the German war effort. The Foreign Office papers also include notes on the reception of overt and covert German propaganda, with qualitative assessments and reports on the effectiveness of both German and Allied psychological operations. By using these sources in conjunction with materials from the Bundesarchiv in Berlin and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) monitors’ reports housed at the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland, I will comparatively analyse British, German and American ‘black’ efforts and their reception in the target countries.⁵⁰ In doing so, the thesis will explore comparisons between methodologies, and make a significant contribution to the field by reappraising the imbalanced view of Anglo-American psychological warfare cooperation⁵¹ and the alleged ineffectiveness of British propaganda.⁵²

The online archive of Mass Observation, the Sussex-based social research organisation, has also been immensely useful for examining areas such as jazz music, the audience for the broadcasts of William Joyce (aka ‘Lord Haw-Haw’) and

⁵⁰ Transmitters which existed specifically for Forces’ entertainment.

⁵¹ As represented in Christof Mauch, *Schattenkrieg gegen Hitler: Das Dritte Reich im Visier der amerikanischen Geheimdienste 1941 bis 1945*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1999.

⁵² See Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, p.438. His assertion that British propaganda “must (...) be said to have failed” will be refuted in Chapter Five with regard to the work of PWE/Delmer, Anglo-American cooperation under the auspices of PWD/SHAEP and the successful coordination of ‘black’ with military intelligence between 1943-45.

the psychological impact of the Blitz upon the citizens who lived through it. Of particular interest were the ‘file reports’, consisting of analyses compiled by the organisation based on both covert observation and information directly supplied through interviews. These must not be read as empirical evidence in spite of their apparent aspirations to scientific accuracy; no information such as participant numbers or methodology is provided, and accordingly numerical data from the reports is employed in the thesis with the appropriate caution. Nonetheless, the commentaries and recommendations by the reports’ authors are in themselves important historical documents, and the representations of contemporary British society and musical tastes is broadly supported by the other evidence. A further important discovery was a previously unpublished report compiled by Mass Observation in its occasional (and controversial) governmental advisory capacity for the Ministry of Supply; drawn up with the assistance of the songwriter Annette Mills, it represents the only known British attempt to set out a theoretical and psychological basis for jazz propaganda, and one that presages the later American integration of advertising methodologies into psychological warfare.⁵³

Moreover, the diaries kept for Mass Observation by correspondents from a range of backgrounds have allowed me to integrate highly individualised perspectives into the thesis. These provide first-hand accounts of important factors such as Lord Haw-Haw’s alleged popularity with workers in Gateshead, or the psychological impact of the Blitz on a Maida Vale housewife, and have been used to illustrate various factors such as fatigue, fears and anti-government sentiment which might have been exploited by more effective Nazi propaganda output. Nick Hubble, a biographer of the organisation, has noted, “Mass Observation material should never just be viewed as a source of illustrative quotes concerning various aspects of the wartime experience but needs to be read according to the logic of Mass Observation.”⁵⁴ Regarding the diaries, this logic includes a higher degree of self-reflexivity than might be found in a private journal, as well as the diarist’s potential perception of the Mass Observation staff as interlocutors. It must be considered that, consciously or

⁵³ *Mass Observation Online*. File Report 197 – Propaganda ideas (unsigned memo to Chief Public Relations Officer, Ministry of Supply), 13th June 1940..

⁵⁴ Nick Hubble, ‘Review of Mass Observation Online.’ *Reviews in History* (review no. 969: <http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/969>), October 2010. A number of critical essays are also available on the *Mass Observation Online* website containing further academic considerations such as class and gender in relation to the usage of the organisation’s work in the writing of social history.

unconsciously, the diarist is ‘writing for an audience’, and therefore Mass Observation diaries must be read with caution, whilst recognising that a significant part of their value as evidence results from their subjectivity and idiosyncrasies.⁵⁵ Indeed, the sheer multitude of voices and viewpoints available presents the researcher with the problem that their utilisation must be, to paraphrase Calder, “necessarily (...) rather opportunist and random”.⁵⁶ Hubble suggests that “[t]he apparent blurring of vision resulting from those simultaneous perspectives is indicative of the difference between Mass Observation and other ways of seeing. It is the task of the researcher to resolve this form of observation into focus,”⁵⁷ but it is equally important that this ‘focus’ does not entail placing too great an emphasis on personal accounts at the expense of an accurate reading of a mass event. I have therefore endeavoured to cross-reference significant information from the diaries with other sources whenever possible, for example by citing BBC Listener Research to corroborate diarists’ accounts of the reception of Lord Haw-Haw broadcasts in Chapter Two.

Additional valuable online resources have been the digitised Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) archive and *Hansard Online*. The FBI archive has allowed me to contribute the first scholarly study of the work of Iva Toguri D’Aquino (aka ‘Orphan Ann’) and the Japanese *Zero Hour* programme, broadcast to US Forces in the South Pacific. The transcripts, interview excerpts and other material provided in the files for D’Aquino’s controversial post-war treason trial have allowed me to explore this remarkable and unprecedented example of highly self-reflexive propaganda, which appears in content and presentation to be an attempt at sabotage of the programme’s propagandistic goals. Furthermore, the *Hansard Online* archive of Parliamentary speeches and debate has provided an advantageous window on contemporary British political discourse regarding such subjects as jazz, propaganda and public opinion surveys. I have integrated this into the narrative to illustrate areas of political discord, alternative opinions and the general Parliamentary climate on individual issues. In turn, this has helped to show that no consensus existed on seemingly

⁵⁵ Henry Durant’s British Institute of Public Opinion, by contrast, strived for a more ‘scientific’ accuracy in the vein of the American Gallup poll.

⁵⁶ Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz*, p.273. Here Calder does not refer specifically to Mass Observation.

⁵⁷ Hubble, ‘Review of Mass Observation Online’.

uncontroversial aspects of prosecuting the war, such as the purpose of broadcasting and the use of governmental propaganda.

The National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland contains the archives of OWI, which have allowed me to rectify the relative absence of scholarship on this important and yet neglected aspect of the US war effort, whilst providing the first study of OWI's work in an international context. This is particularly necessary because three quarters of OWI's budget was assigned to its Overseas Branch,⁵⁸ indicating its priorities and implicitly contradicting the historian Christof Mauch's mistaken assertion that OWI's main duty was to spread news of American victories. A much subtler reading of the activities and remit of Elmer Davis' organisation is required, and will be provided in Chapter Four and Chapter Five, with the latter containing analyses of OWI's attempts at curating and influencing the national mood, including countering racial tensions and domestic extremist propaganda. The FCC monitors' reports are an excellent resource for the American reception of Nazi propaganda, including content analyses and critical assessments. Based on these documents, in Chapter Four I have produced the first detailed scholarly analysis of the ambitious psychological warfare of the RMVP's *Station Debunk*.⁵⁹ The visible evolution and alteration of the content on a trial-and-error basis provides a detailed insight into Goebbels' naivety vis-à-vis the regional and cultural differences in the United States which resulted in the targeting of jazz music at rural Midwestern audiences.⁶⁰

The historical scope of the thesis has provided very few chances to generate new oral history,⁶¹ but in the British section of the research I benefited from contact to two protagonists of the wartime British jazz scene. Aficionado Peter W. G. Powell provided me with a wealth of reproduced primary documents and other material relating to jazz during the war, especially the landmark HMV First Public Jam Session in 1941, which he attended, and Ken Johnson's popular West Indian Dance

⁵⁸ NARA RG 306 Box 235 OWI, Elmer Davis 1942. Remarks of Elmer Davis, The New York Times Hall, 28th October 1942.

⁵⁹ Elements of my research on *Debunk* have been discussed in a different context in my article in Sala (ed.), *Music and Propaganda*.

⁶⁰ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, pp.220-221 offers a brief outline of the programme but surprisingly makes no mention of its initial jazz content. For Goebbels' cultural prejudices and condescension towards the USA see Studdert, 'The Death of Music', p.25.

⁶¹ As noted above in this section, an important exception has been the wealth of tapes and interview transcripts at the Michael H. Kater fonds.

Orchestra, with whom he toured. In addition to the copies of contemporary newspaper accounts, as well as his own articles, he has assisted me on a number of points relating to radio programmes, listening habits, German propaganda, the American Forces' presence in the UK, as well as general questions relating to jazz in Britain during the war. I was also able to interview the BBC's Charles Chilton and his wife Penny, herself a wartime employee of the BBC Italian Service, and their answers have proven invaluable in reassessing the role of the BBC early in the war, the BBC Forces Programme and Chilton's own *Radio Rhythm Club*. Moreover, I could prepare my lines of questioning by elaborating upon or avoiding areas already covered by the British jazz writer and historian Jim Godbolt in his extensive 1989 interview with Chilton, which is available online at the British Library Sounds collection. It is consistent with the dearth of evidence of reception of German propaganda jazz in British and American archives that, when asked, neither Powell nor the Chiltons were aware of the RMVP's wartime efforts in this respect.

Secondary Texts

The interdisciplinary nature of the thesis has included drawing on a diverse range of secondary literature to support the research. The starting point, as has been noted in the introduction, was German jazz propaganda, which is first referred to in print by Horst H. Lange in *Jazz in Deutschland. Die deutsche Jazz-Chronik 1900-1960*, published in 1966.⁶² This discography by Lange, a Berlin record collector and disc jockey in the immediate post-war period, contains no citations and is now greatly outdated from a historiographical perspective by the more recent works covering German jazz from a musicological, historical and sociological perspective.⁶³ Nonetheless, for many years it was the only book available on the subject of German jazz history, and certainly it dealt for the first time with the RMVP's Charlie and his Orchestra project and thus propaganda jazz in general. Published in 1977, Joachim-Ernst Berendt's *Ein Fenster aus Jazz* ('A Window of Jazz') acknowledges its debt to

⁶² Horst H. Lange, *Jazz in Deutschland: Die deutsche Jazz-Chronik 1900-1960*. Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1966.

⁶³ See for example Kater, *Different Drummers*, Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, Joachim Ernst Berendt, *Ein Fenster aus Jazz: Essays, Portraits, Reflexionen*. Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1977. See also Detlev Peukert, Jürgen Reulecke and Adelheid Gräfin zu Castell Rudenhausen (eds.), *Die Reihen fast geschlossen: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alltags unterm Nationalsozialismus*. Wuppertal: Hammer, 1981 and Detlev Peukert, *Volksgenossen und Gemeinschaftsfremde: Anpassung, Ausmerze und Aufbegehren unter dem Nationalsozialismus*. Köln: Bund Verlag, 1982.

Lange⁶⁴ but also fails to provide citations. Rather than being only a work of jazz historiography, it takes the form of a wide-ranging cultural and musicological analysis of the German and international jazz scenes of the past and present, and offers a series of prognoses for the future. The chapter on the history of jazz on German radio from 1924-1975 is of particular interest regarding the thesis,⁶⁵ and offers a cogent interpretation of the Nazis' relationship with 'degenerate' music, which Berendt usefully sets within a broader scheme of German cultural history. As Welch notes, far from being an historical aberration, Nazism belonged to an intellectual lineage dating back at least as far as late eighteenth-century *völkisch* romanticism,⁶⁶ and therefore the persecution of jazz must be understood as a continuation of deep-rooted hostility towards 'alien' and modern cultural production which had existed long before the NSDAP's seizure of power in 1933.⁶⁷

Berendt's pivotal role in the post-war promotion of jazz in West Germany has recently been given book-length attention by the cultural historian Andrew Wright Hurley,⁶⁸ but his contribution to the historiography of pre-war and wartime German jazz is best-served by his role as one of the key interviewees in Kater's *Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany*. Kater's modus operandi is broadly dictated by the question of the degree to which 'jazz' music and culture was a tool of resistance or compliance during the Third Reich, and he is thus too ready in some instances to pass judgement on acts of collaboration.⁶⁹ Tim Mason rightly points out with regard to the study of the Third Reich that "the [historian's] obligation is not an invitation to moralize about the past, but a command to understand in the broadest possible context. Understanding and explaining are themselves moral and political acts",⁷⁰ and Kater's description in a later book of the musical profession in the Third Reich as consisting of "gray people against a landscape of gray" would also have been sufficient commentary in this case.⁷¹ Nonetheless, the book remains the seminal

⁶⁴ Berendt, *Ein Fenster aus Jazz*, p.291.

⁶⁵ Ibid: pp.285-304.

⁶⁶ Welch, 'Nazi Propaganda and the Volksgemeinschaft', p.217.

⁶⁷ Berendt, *Ein Fenster aus Jazz*, p.289.

⁶⁸ Andrew Wright Hurley, *The Return of Jazz: Joachim-Ernst Berendt and West German Cultural Change*. New York: Berghahn, 2009.

⁶⁹ Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.119, p.120, p.135, p.200.

⁷⁰ Tim Mason, 'Endings and Beginnings.' *History Workshop* 30 (Autumn 1990), pp.134-150. Here p.127.

⁷¹ Michael H. Kater, *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and their Music in the Third Reich*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997, p.6.

study of jazz in the Third Reich, interweaving original research on a variety of cultural and political aspects with learned analysis, and the author's own background as an accomplished jazz musician lends weight to his musicological critiques, which are nonetheless supported where possible by the opinions of his expert correspondents and interlocutors.⁷² I will be interrogating Kater's sources from an international standpoint, and, by cross-referencing these with material from German, British and American archives, will engage with his findings in a critical intertextuality throughout the thesis.

A further significant contribution to the study of the RMVP's use of jazz was made by Horst J.P. Bergmeier and Rainer E. Lotz with *Hitler's Airwaves: the inside Story of Nazi Radio Broadcasting and Propaganda Swing*, a political history of Nazi English-language radio propaganda. The authors are not professional historians, and indeed announce from the outset that their respective strengths are biographical material and discographies.⁷³ As such, the book offers little by way of analysis and interpretation, providing instead minutiae relating to German radio propaganda activities and structures, alongside biographical sketches of the various protagonists. Like Kater, they were able to integrate a great deal of important oral history into their study, interviewing and corresponding with numerous musicians, broadcasters and former bureaucrats during the book's lengthy gestation process.⁷⁴ The chapter entitled 'Propaganda Swing'⁷⁵ is most relevant for the purposes of the thesis, and focusses on the two most prominent RMVP projects in this area, the DTUO and Charlie and his Orchestra. They also supply an overview of Goebbels' ambitious 1942 reorganisation of the RRG, which was intended to replace Party stalwarts with genuine experts in the respective fields, regardless of their political credentials, and effectively saw Hinkel taking control of all radio entertainment. Lotz provides a ninety-page discography of all traceable Nazi propaganda jazz recordings, complete with personnel, recording dates and lyrics, reconstructed from *Deutsche Grammophon* recording ledgers and interviews with surviving musicians. However, in Chapter Two I will discuss a previously unmentioned Nazi parody of 'Siegfried

⁷² See, for example, the discussions of the DTUO and Charlie and his Orchestra in Kater, *Different Drummers*, pp.129-134.

⁷³ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, p.vii.

⁷⁴ The research phase began at least as early as 1984. See JZD Hans Blüthner papers. Blüthner to Horst J.P. Bergmeier, 18th January 1984.

⁷⁵ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, pp.136-177.

Line', which not only predates all but one of the propaganda songs cited by Lotz,⁷⁶ but is also significant because the evidence suggests that Nazi anger at the British original of 'Siegfried Line' may have been the catalyst for the RMVP's policy of parodying British music. A further notable omission is the brief two-page treatment of *Station Debunk*, the RMVP's 'freedom station' (i.e. 'black' station) for the USA, which surprisingly makes no mention of its jazz content, and yet the shifting target audiences and use of music reveal important uncertainties and flaws in Goebbels' methodology. In Chapter Four I have rectified this situation with an extensive study of the station using Federal Communications Commission (FCC) monitors' reports.

The most recent addition to the canon of literature on German pre-war and wartime jazz is Stephan Wuthe's *Swingtime in Deutschland*. A leading figure in the revival of swing music and culture in Germany, Wuthe was personally acquainted with surviving aficionados and musicians, including Franz 'Teddy' Kleindin and Primo Angeli of Charlie and his Orchestra, and integrates decades of research into a book structured around the cultural and technical aspects of jazz and dancing in the Weimar Germany and the Third Reich. As such, it has been valuable as background, but much of the information is largely beyond the remit of the thesis. I have, however, cited his original research regarding the genesis of Charlie and his Orchestra to support my argument that the orchestra existed before it was commissioned by the RRG/RMVP. During a conversation with Wuthe in Berlin in December 2011, he told me that he had only cursorily covered the subject of propaganda jazz in his book because previous work in the area by Kater and Bergmeier/Lotz had rendered further literature in the field largely superfluous.⁷⁷ The thesis will demonstrate that adopting an international and comparative perspective on the uses of jazz as propaganda has in fact opened valuable new avenues of exploration and facilitated important new findings, as outlined in this chapter.

Although also constructed around oral history interviews with leading protagonists from the Third Reich jazz milieu, Mike Zwerin's *Swing under the Nazis: Jazz as a Metaphor for Freedom* is a far less reliable source than Kater and Bergmeier/Lotz. The book opens with the assertion that "[w]riting a good read came first. (...)

⁷⁶ The recording date for the Erhard Bauschke number 'British Soldier's Song' is 11th October 1939 (Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, p.251). The 'Siegfried Line' parody in question was picked up in 'late October [1939]', but Lord Haw-Haw mentioned the song on 6th October 1939.

⁷⁷ Conversation between the author and Stephan Wuthe, Berlin, 11th December 2011.

Names, dates, and places are factual, although it became increasingly difficult to separate imagination from fact. Imagination itself became one more fact. (...) Some characters are composites (...) The most evocative versions were used”.⁷⁸ Accordingly, the noted musician-turned-writer offers what is primarily a work of poetical journalism, lacking in historiographical credibility and of limited academic value. Zwerin’s self-professed emphasis on storytelling over accuracy renders his transcriptions of the interview material unreliable, although in some instances it was possible to check these against his correspondence with Hans Blüthner,⁷⁹ which is preserved at the Jazzinstitut Darmstadt. Nonetheless, while occasionally distorted by Germanophobia,⁸⁰ Zwerin’s analysis of the significance of jazz in the Third Reich is of use in explaining the problems that Goebbels and the Nazi cultural apparatus had in coming to terms with the art form from a philosophical perspective and can be considered a worthwhile addition to the literature on the subject.

The same caution must be used in handling the non-fiction work of Czech writer Josef Škvorecký, who experienced life as a jazz fan and amateur musician both in the Nazi Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and in Soviet-occupied Czechoslovakia. Škvorecký’s recurring themes as a novelist are jazz and repression in Nazi- and Soviet-controlled Czechoslovakia, and these preoccupations are carried over into his essays. His anecdotal evidence has been utilised by journalistic writers such as Zwerin as well as serious historians like the Sovietologist S. Frederick Starr, and continues to appear in contemporary articles on the subject.⁸¹ However, it must be noted that evidence such as the ten-point anti-jazz edict which Škvorecký claims to have seen in the Protectorate, and is sometimes cited verbatim as a primary source, is recounted from memory many years after the event.⁸² The fact that he assures us that it is “faithfully”⁸³ memorised is insufficient to admit this as concrete

⁷⁸ Zwerin, *Swing under the Nazis*, p.viii.

⁷⁹ Blüthner’s correspondence with others, such as the screenwriter Jonathan Feldman, was also useful for this purpose.

⁸⁰ See, for example, the treatment of Hans Blüthner as the ‘good German’ (Zwerin, *Swing under the Nazis*, pp.46-47).

⁸¹ See Zwerin, *Swing under the Nazis*, p.52 and pp.155-6, and Starr, *Red & Hot*, p.217. Here Starr cites a passage from Škvorecký’s novella ‘The Bass Saxophone’ as an “eyewitness account” of musical censorship. For a more recent example involving Škvorecký’s reminiscences being taken at face value as primary evidence, see Mike Dash, ‘Hitler’s Very Own Hot Jazz Band.’ Past Imperfect Blog, *Smithsonian Magazine*, May 2012.

⁸² Josef Škvorecký, *Talkin’ Moscow Blues: Essays about Jazz, Literature, Politics, Movies and Jazz*. Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1988, pp.86-87.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

evidence of Nazi cultural policy: indeed, to unquestioningly accept Škvorecký's reconstructions of documents is to disregard the complexity of human memory,⁸⁴ which recent advances in the field of neuroscience suggest is prone to embellishing negative past events with falsifications.⁸⁵ Moreover, cognitive research demonstrates that memory retrieval is a constructive process,⁸⁶ and semantic or associative similarity with later texts can lead to the integration of these subsequent experiences into the construction (or reconstruction) of earlier memories.⁸⁷ These warnings must be borne in mind with all oral history and first-hand accounts utilised in the thesis, which is often supplied by subjects who are recalling traumatic or unpleasant experiences⁸⁸ and wherever possible I have cross-referenced these with other sources.

Both Zwerin and Škvorecký appear to view the Nazi and Soviet dictatorships as morally equivalent totalitarian states. Whatever the other dangers of this approach, by interpreting the Third Reich as a monolithic 'totalitarian' entity, it risks obscuring the complexities and contradictions of Nazi cultural politics and their relationship with jazz. While considerations of the nature of totalitarianism are beyond the remit of the thesis, the following chapters will demonstrate the truth of Ian Kershaw's assertion that "the disadvantages of its deployment [as a concept] greatly outweigh its possible advantages in attempting to characterize the essential nature of the Nazi regime".⁸⁹ There is now manifold scholarly evidence that neither Stalin nor Hitler succeeded, as Hannah Arendt claimed, in "organizing the masses into a collective mass in order to back up their lies",⁹⁰ and the thesis will refute such intentionalist

⁸⁴ Indeed, the book's foreword by Škvorecký's University of Toronto colleague Sam Solecki suggests that "the emotional and intellectual force of his life has its origins (...) in the past." (Škvorecký, *Talkin' Moscow Blues*, p.7).

⁸⁵ C.J. Brainerd, L. M. Stein, R. A. Silveira, G. Rohenkohl, F. Reyna, 'How Does Negative Emotion Cause False Memories?' *Psychological Science* 19 (2008), pp.919-925. Here p.922.

⁸⁶ Daniel L. Schacter and Donna Rose Addis, 'The Cognitive Neuroscience of Constructive Memory: Remembering the Past and Imagining the Future'. *Philosophical Transactions: Biological Sciences* 362.1481 (2007), pp.773-786. Here p.774.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p.776.

⁸⁸ The surviving musicians' varying accounts of the genesis of Charlie and his Orchestra (see Chapter Three) offer an example of this. Charly Tabor captures the contradiction when he describes the enjoyable musical climate but concedes that "the fear, the fear was always there." (Tabor interview 1987).

⁸⁹ Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation (Second Edition)*. London: Edward Arnold, 1989, p.35.

⁹⁰ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Cleveland: Meridian, 1958, p.333.

readings of the Third Reich.⁹¹ Through the prism of culture, it will illustrate that structural determinants⁹² during wartime (for example, Forces' musical tastes) both limited the RMVP's capacity for ideological indoctrination and dictated the nature of the state-commissioned musical projects such as *Frohe Stunde am Nachmittag* and the DTUO.

Indeed, it is within the context of such structural complexities that Škvorecký is most useful. His powerful arguments, based on these personal experiences, as to why jazz music cannot simply be co-opted or replicated by a state have aided me in interpreting the sources I have worked with at the Bundesarchiv, although they also have broader implications for the BBC's struggles with popular taste such as the slush ban:

What sort of political connotations [did jazz music have]? Leftist? Rightist? Nationalist? The vocabulary of ideologues and mountebanks doesn't have a word for it. At the outset, shortly before the Second World War, (...) jazz didn't convey even a note of protest. (...) And no matter what [is said] to the contrary, the essence of this music, this "way of making music", is not simply a protest. Its essence is something far more elemental; (...) an explosive creative energy as breathtaking as that of any true art[.] (...) But of course, when the lives of individuals and communities are controlled by powers that themselves remain uncontrolled (...) then creative energy becomes a protest.⁹³

While this deals more explicitly with jazz's qualities as a form of artistic resistance, it can also be applied to the RMVP's struggle to create a popular alternative.⁹⁴ Škvorecký's reflections on the contradictions between jazz and politics have contributed to a definition of what the American conductor and musicologist Leon Botstein has elsewhere called "the historical significance of music as a result of its character".⁹⁵ Musical reception, notes Botstein, "goes well beyond notions of text",⁹⁶ and an explanation of Goebbels' struggle with jazz which restricts itself to the politico-cultural question of 'degenerate' art is insufficient. Even in the context of the RMVP's pragmatic wartime efforts and officially-backed initiatives to cultivate

⁹¹ Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship*, pp.61-81. See also Welch, *Nazi Propaganda and the Volksgemeinschaft*, 2004, pp.215-216. See also Richard Bessel, 'Functionalists vs. Intentionalists: The Debate Twenty Years on or Whatever Happened to Functionalism and Intentionalism?' *German Studies Review* 26.1 (February 2003), pp.15-20. Here p.16.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Škvorecký, *Talkin' Moscow Blues*, pp.83-84.

⁹⁴ See Studdert, 'The Death of Music'.

⁹⁵ Leon Botstein, 'Music in History: The Perils of Method in Reception History.' *The Musical Quarterly* 8.1 (Spring 2006), pp.1-16. Here p.14.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

an acceptable equivalent to jazz, the state's inability to replicate upon demand music which paralleled the "explosive creative energy" (and "true art") of jazz was a decisive factor in what I will argue was the inevitable failure of New German Dance Music.⁹⁷

The first scholarly work to explore in depth the relationship between jazz and a political regime was S. Frederick Starr's *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union*. First published in 1983, like Kater's *Different Drummers* it combines political, cultural and social history, albeit with a far broader temporal range and wider international perspective that takes into account the impact of American actions on Soviet policy.⁹⁸ Indeed, the unprecedented numbers of imports of American jazz music to the USSR during the war in the name of Allied solidarity, which also saw numerous Red Army jazz bands entertaining the Soviet Forces, would be a valuable subject of study in its own right.⁹⁹ Starr combines his credentials as a noted Dixieland jazz musician and a world-renowned scholar of Russia to provide a sweeping history of Soviet jazz that runs parallel to the evolution of jazz itself, from Cake-Walk lessons in Tsarist Russia to ethnic fusion jazz in the Soviet Caucasus of the 1980s. Initially intended as a translation of Alexei Batashev's monograph *Sovetskii dzahz* (Soviet Jazz),¹⁰⁰ the book is "retold from the standpoint of its significance to the history of Soviet culture as a whole",¹⁰¹ with a structure that is divided chronologically into twelve loose 'eras' which are designed to reflect either the musical, political or social developments relating to jazz music and Soviet affairs.

Some of the relevant literature relates more generally to aspects of propaganda. The first of these was the 1949 'memoirs' (a compilation of defence statements from the Nuremberg Trials, interview material and reminiscences of Moscow's Ljubjanka prison) of Hans Fritzsche, the head of German radio entertainment during the war, who was tried at Nuremberg as the most senior surviving RMVP representative. The book's brief foreword declares it to be "contemporary documents (...) intended as a contribution toward the clarification of events, the repercussions of which we are

⁹⁷ Studdert, 'The Death of Music'.

⁹⁸ For example Starr, *Red & Hot*, pp.94-106 and pp.188-194.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, pp.190-191.

¹⁰⁰ Batashev, Alexei. *Sovetskii Dzhaz; Istoricheskii Ocherk*. Unpublished monograph, Moscow, 1972.

¹⁰¹ Starr, *Red & Hot*, p.vii.

experiencing today.”¹⁰² Compiled by Fritzsche’s future wife, the former RMVP staff member Hildegard Springer, it leaves no room for critical handling of the dubious source material. Indeed, one of the chapters is entitled ‘Justification’,¹⁰³ and the book’s raison d’être of exculpating its subject in both the Nuremberg courtroom and the eyes of posterity do not lend it credence as a reliable source for objective clarification. Nonetheless, the chapter on ‘Propaganda Theories’ offers a useful account of radio warfare from Fritzsche’s perspective, reiterating the RMVP policy of attacking governments rather than populations¹⁰⁴ and admitting the “self-evident” German usage of propaganda as a means of attempting to cause rifts between the Allies.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, his complaints about the activities of Sefton Delmer and PWE inadvertently offer further evidence of Delmer’s success. Fritzsche denounces the British use of “pornographic depictions” on the clandestine station *Gustav Siegfried Eins (GSI)*,¹⁰⁶ which he contends were so crude that he refused to inflict the task of transcribing their content on his stenographers. While Fritzsche claims never to have used such measures, this was merely a question of remit; *GSI* was functioning as a ‘black’ station while Fritzsche himself was responsible for ‘white’ propaganda, and in Chapter Three of the thesis I will provide evidence that the RMVP indeed employed similar strategies. As has been noted above, the fact that Delmer was more successful than Goebbels in exploiting the medium and the potential of ‘black’ is a central component of the thesis.

Delmer’s autobiography *Black Boomerang* was published in 1962, and it is testament to the need for a thorough critical appraisal of the work of PWE and its associated agencies that, more than fifty years later, it remains the definitive text in this area. Delmer’s account is not scholarly, and provides no references for the translated Nazi sources supplied in the appendix. Furthermore, many of Delmer’s wartime conversations with leading historical actors are cited word-for-word, in spite of the fact that they are presumably reconstructions from Delmer’s memory. Nonetheless, both the PWE archives at Kew and the RMVP files at the Bundesarchiv

¹⁰² Fritzsche/Springer, *Es Sprach Hans Fritzsche*, p.5.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, p.149.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p.222.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p.225.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p.226. The station is incorrectly referred to by Fritzsche as ‘Gustav Siegfried II’.

seem to corroborate Delmer's account,¹⁰⁷ and the thesis will show that Delmer's central role as the creative force behind PWE's successful efforts was undisputed by his contemporaries. The book offers a leading protagonist's own commentary and reminiscences on his work and the genesis of the various 'black' projects, and has been an important point of reference for the thesis. Recently this has been complemented by the establishment of an online Sefton Delmer Archive,¹⁰⁸ a very useful resource which includes abridged translations of scripts from the bogus *Soldatensender* and the earlier *GSI*, as well as 'Evidence of Reception Reports' and unpublished essays by Delmer.¹⁰⁹

Delmer's son Felix describes Lee Richards, the editor of the *psywar.org* website which hosts the Sefton Delmer Archive, as "the authority on matters relating to PWE".¹¹⁰ Accordingly, Richards' book, *The Black Art: British Clandestine Psychological Warfare against the Third Reich*, is the most notable secondary literature relating to the work of Delmer's organisation.¹¹¹ However, Richards cites the scarcity of transcripts and recordings of the content of PWE radio projects as the principle reason for his book's focus on print propaganda, of which more evidence survives.¹¹² By comparatively exploring British, German and American archive sources, the thesis will demonstrate that sufficient documentary evidence exists to gauge the genesis, nature and impact of British 'black' radio activities such as *Gustav Siegfried Eins* and the counterfeit *Soldatensender*. It will thus elucidate important aspects of PWE's work which remains under-researched even by experts in the field.

David Garnett's *The Secret History of PWE: the Political Warfare Executive, 1939-1945* was written at the behest of PWE's Director-General,¹¹³ probably for the purposes of instruction in preparation for a potential 'next war' with the Soviet

¹⁰⁷See for example Fritzsche's statement in BA R58/636 [Microfiche 3] Abschrift aus dem Protokoll der Abendpressekonferenz, 21st September 1941. See also the accurate description of Gustav Siegfried I's activities and intentions in BA R58/953 Abschrift aus den Vertraulichen Informationen vom 22.10.41, Folge 50, der Partei-Kanzlei. Punkt 557: Feindliche Hetzsender.

¹⁰⁸ Hosted by the website www.psywar.org.

¹⁰⁹ The original documents are at the National Archives, Kew. See NA FO 898/72 (broadcast transcripts) and NA HS 6/696 (evidence of reception).

¹¹⁰ Felix Sefton Delmer to the author, 8th May 2014.

¹¹¹ Lee Richards, *The Black Art: British Clandestine Psychological Warfare against the Third Reich*. www.psywar.org, 2010.

¹¹² *Ibid*, p.2.

¹¹³ David Garnett, *The Secret History of PWE: the Political Warfare Executive, 1939-1945*. London: St Ermin's, 2002, p.xix.

Union,¹¹⁴ and remained in the Whitehall archives for over fifty years before it could finally be published in 2002 following the declassification of PWE's records. Garnett's study is thus written as an internal history and offers a detailed but myopic perspective on the organisation's work. The book was written for a practical and not a scholarly purpose, and entire areas of PWE's structure (such as finance) have been omitted, presumably because they were considered to serve no educational function.¹¹⁵ Little attention is given to cooperation with American agencies, which are dismissed as "[believing] in psychological warfare, if only as a variety of advertising",¹¹⁶ in spite of the important role that Anglo-American cooperation played from 1942 onwards in the coordination of military intelligence and psychological warfare, culminating in the joint PWD/SHAEF. Moreover, the declassification of not only British, but also German and American documents has rendered Garnett's study in many ways outdated, although the aforementioned dearth of works on the subject ensures it a continued relevance.

The lack of emphasis on Anglo-American cooperation is reciprocated by the historian Christof Mauch in his study of American 'black' propaganda operations, in particular those of William Donovan's Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Mauch focusses almost exclusively on American activities and sources, to the detriment of his reading of the international context. He states that "[a] monograph on the shadow war [*Schattenkrieg*] against Hitler must first and foremost describe the projects and activities of OSS",¹¹⁷ and yet he admits that British strategy and judgement are only taken into account insofar as they can be reconstructed from American archival sources and official accounts.¹¹⁸ British activities are thus relegated to the periphery, and PWE is mistakenly referred to as the Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB),¹¹⁹ indicating the degree of attention paid to the British aspect of Anglo-American operations. When Mauch writes that, in the propaganda war against Germany, "the American Secret Service systematically exploited the vacuum in the area of German entertainment music",¹²⁰ he is essentially placing all of the credit for British or

¹¹⁴ Ibid, p.xxii.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p.xxi.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p.xxii.

¹¹⁷ Mauch, *Schattenkrieg gegen Hitler*, p.16.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, p.212. Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB) was in fact Eisenhower's first Anglo-American organisation and a predecessor of PWD/SHAEF.

¹²⁰ Ibid, p.226.

Anglo-American innovations with US agencies, and thus distorting the pattern of events, since William Donovan's OSS was initially providing resources and expertise to support an existing British initiative.¹²¹ It is true, as he states, that 'Operation Musac' represented a genuine American contribution to the war effort,¹²² but it was broadcast over stations created by Delmer and PWE, which, in turn, used the powerful American 'Aspidistra' transmitter. Such efforts were collaborative, and can only be properly understood in relation to one another.

An attempt to situate the activities of OWI within a broader international discourse concerning the nature and structure of propaganda institutions was made by Allan Winkler in *Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information 1942-1945*. Winkler's account has been confirmed as accurate by OWI's Assistant Director Archibald MacLeish,¹²³ and unfavourably contrasts OWI with the allegedly more efficient RMVP.¹²⁴ In a review of the book, Theodore S. Hamerow disputes this conclusion, arguing instead that the RMVP was only superficially united on matters of policy. Hamerow suggests that Winkler's comparisons were not wide-ranging enough, and that he takes at face value assertions of OWI staff such as MacLeish and Robert Sherwood that they had no intention of copying the German propaganda model, interested as they were in presenting only "the truth".¹²⁵ Indeed, as will be demonstrated in Chapter Four, OWI Director Elmer Davis was frank about employing "the same techniques as Hitler" in order to weaken German resistance.¹²⁶ While subversive 'black' propaganda fell under the remit of OSS, and OWI attempted to cultivate a reputation for veracity, Davis acknowledged that the facts could be adjusted or edited to achieve a desired psychological impact in broadcasts to the enemy.¹²⁷ A major distinction between the RMVP and American propaganda operations was the decentralised nature of the latter, which, upon British

¹²¹ NA FO 898/61 'Closing down of Black' - Bishop to Donovan, 23rd April 1945.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Theodore S. Hamerow, 'Women, Propaganda and Total War.' *Reviews in American History* 7.1 (1979), pp.122-127. Here p.25.

¹²⁴ Allan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: the Office of War Information, 1942-1945*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1978.

¹²⁵ Hamerow, 'Women, Propaganda and Total War', p.25.

¹²⁶ NARA RG 306 Box 235 OWI, Elmer Davis 1942. Remarks of Elmer Davis, The New York Times Hall, 28th October 1942.

¹²⁷ NARA RG 306 Box 235 OWI, Elmer Davis 1942. Elmer Davis interview, *The New York Times Magazine*, 16th August 1942.

recommendation, saw the delegation of different areas of propaganda and information to different organisations.¹²⁸

Hamerow makes the case for viewing the German and American propaganda apparatuses as dichotomies consisting of “ideologues” and “realists”.¹²⁹ This approach, however, runs a similar risk of oversimplifying a variety of complex factors in which ideology and realism often were intertwined, most notably with the work of Goebbels, who combined ideological fanaticism with shrewd pragmatism. In the NSDAP, ideology and realism were not mutually exclusive entities, and it is impossible to separate the Party, as Hamerow does, into opposing factions of Teutonic supremacists (ideologues) and “*Wurst* and beer” traditionalists.¹³⁰ Moreover, the US government’s aforementioned British-inspired division of information (OWI) and intelligence (OSS) agencies in 1942 meant that the liberal leading figures at OWI were able to pursue a progressive social agenda, for example in advocating increased racial integration, since this was not only compatible with, but also essential to the war effort. While ideology could be a burden to the RMVP during the war, the reverse was often true for OWI, although, as Cerf argued, freedom of speech must include the right to criticise one’s own government,¹³¹ and Chapter Five will show that OWI was therefore obliged to tolerate virulent and potentially damaging domestic criticism or slander, often from extreme right-wing quarters.

The question of ideology and pragmatism is central to the thesis, and, as will be shown in the following chapters, this relationship took very different forms in each country. With regard to Nazi Germany, the study of the relationship of the arts and propaganda is a relatively recent development, and yet it is essential to an understanding of the work of Goebbels, who had a doctorate in German literature and had once possessed literary aspirations. First published in 1983, David Welch’s ground-breaking work on the Nazi film industry paved the way for the study of Goebbels’ activities in the realm of entertainment and culture in general. He notes that Goebbels’ ideas on the reconcilability of art and propaganda differed greatly from those of Hitler, who saw the two as mutually exclusive, and points to the

¹²⁸ This will be elaborated upon in the section on Elmer Davis and OWI in Chapter Four.

¹²⁹ Hamerow, ‘Women, Propaganda and Total War’, 126.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Cerf, ‘Freedom of Instruction in War Time’, p.580.

influence of the ‘Soviet example’ on the Propaganda Minister, who learned from the USSR that the propaganda content could be most effective when carefully packaged as entertainment.¹³²

Welch’s political history of German cinematic propaganda can be seen in the broader context of historiographical developments to which S. Frederick Starr’s work also belonged, namely the rediscovery of important and yet previously neglected areas of culture in dictatorships and the study of these within their political framework. This differs from the concomitant advances in *Alltagsgeschichte*, for example the innovative work of Detlev Peukert in West Germany, which tended to study the impact of political structures on individuals, as opposed to the integration, co-opting or production of cultural artefacts for use in the political realm. Writing at a time when neither film nor music as a form of propaganda were the object of mainstream historical study, Welch demonstrates the ways in which the Nazis’ *völkisch* ideology was reflected and perpetuated through German motion pictures, whether in romanticised representations such as *Der Ewige Wald* (‘Enchanted Forest’, 1936), or in attacks on the obstructive role the family could play in the attempt to build a National Socialist society.¹³³ This includes a study of the Nazis’ restructuring of the German film industry and the strict censorship imposed, which ensured that they had a monopoly over what was shown in cinemas and could exploit this to impose their own *Weltanschauung*, disguised as entertainment, on audiences.¹³⁴ The thesis will explore equivalent attempts with regard to New German Entertainment Music, a cultural enterprise with which the Propaganda Minister enjoyed far less success.

Audiences

Welch’s warning that, when analysing the effectiveness of films many years later, historians are “looking for evidence of influence and are therefore perhaps more likely to exaggerate what influence we might find,”¹³⁵ is equally valid for the thesis. In attempting to avoid this pitfall, it is imperative to consider the various sources for

¹³² David Welch. *Propaganda and the German Cinema: 1933 - 1945*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2001, p.35.

¹³³ See discussion of the protagonist’s parents in the film *Hitlerjunge Quex* (1933) in *ibid*, p.54. The role of parental socialisation was evident among the more affluent members of the Hamburg *Swing-Jugend* (Kater, *Different Drummers*, pp.160-161).

¹³⁴ See the *Reichslichtspielgesetz* (‘Reich Cinema Law’) of February 1934, discussed in Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema*, pp.13-18.

¹³⁵ Welch, *ibid*, p.263.

the analysis and interpretation of audience reaction in each of the countries studied, as well as the socio-cultural demographics of these audiences. This set of methodological difficulties is common to the study of all reception of culture during World War II, when there were still few efforts to measure public opinion. Because the attempts to do this varied from country to country, these must be considered separately in order to assess the nature and reliability of the evidence. However, before analysing target audiences' responses to jazz propaganda, it must first be ascertained who these audiences were.

The variety and possible combinations of religious, economic and regional identities lie beyond the remit of the thesis. As will be discussed below in Chapter Three, nascent attempts to gauge public opinion in Britain via the wartime social survey employed a cross-tabulation procedure in the hope of achieving a degree of scientific accuracy, but given the 'mass' character of radio listening it is sufficient here to confine ourselves to considering audiences in terms of broadly-sketched dichotomies. I have found no evidence of religious influence upon the reception of jazz in any of the countries discussed and thus, while it may have played a role (positively or negatively) in individual cases,¹³⁶ it has not warranted special consideration. The role played by gender will be considered in Chapter Two with special reference to Britain, but has not in general been relevant to the research.¹³⁷

A significant but inconclusive factor in the reception of music and propaganda is class background. Mass Observation registered the highest approval rates for 'jazz' among the working and artisan classes, although the statistics are mitigated by the organisation's extremely broad understanding of the genre, which included novelty tunes and popular song. On the other hand, the specialist Rhythm Club culture in both Britain and Germany was predominantly a middle-class phenomenon, and yet Charles Chilton, the man who arguably contributed most to serious jazz appreciation in Britain during the war, was himself a working-class cockney, which Christina Baade notes added to his appeal and credibility as a presenter.¹³⁸ Meanwhile, Kater

¹³⁶ Connections existed between at least several members of the Hamburg *Swing-Jugend* ('Swing Youth') and the Catholic *Weisse Rose* ('White Rose') resistance group in Munich (Kater, *Different Drummers*, pp.193-194).

¹³⁷ See Baade, *Victory through Harmony* and Luis Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance during World War II*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 2009 for issues relating to gender in British and American wartime jazz subcultures respectively..

¹³⁸ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, pp.111-112.

suggests that certain aficionados from the German lower middle class used jazz as a vehicle for upward social mobility,¹³⁹ but this statement is questionable in the light of jazz's 'degenerate' status within the official cultural discourse of the Third Reich. In Hamburg, the so-called *Swing-Jugend* ('Swing-Youth') were predominantly from cosmopolitan, bourgeois-liberal backgrounds, although Stephan Wuthe notes that the Hamburg scene in fact consisted of two cliques, with a corresponding working-class contingent who "preferred wild dancing to collecting records"¹⁴⁰ and emulated the expensive Anglophile dress sense of their wealthier peers¹⁴¹ as best they could with clothes bought at cheaper shops such as C & A and Peek and Kloppenburg.¹⁴² Moreover, the swings' Austrian counterparts, the *Schlurfs*, were pronouncedly proletarian,¹⁴³ and, in spite of aesthetic and cultural similarities to the *Swing-Jugend*, they more closely resembled Cologne's *Edelweisspiraten* ('Edelweiss Pirates') in terms of their class origins and overtly rebellious behaviour.¹⁴⁴ In the United States not only class but also race played a role in the 'Zoot' subculture, and the London 'Harlem' discourse contains racial (and racist) aspects which will be considered in Chapter Two. However, the broad popularity of swing music in the USA transcended both racial and economic distinctions, and the complex issue of race in American culture and society lies outside the subject matter of the thesis.

Nazi Germany, as has been made clear by Kater and Wuthe, possessed a vibrant jazz culture in spite of the regime's various attempts to eradicate it. Even an acceptance of Nazi ideology could be compatible with enjoyment of 'degenerate' music, as was demonstrated by the high-ranking Nazis and SS officers who attended live jazz performances in the bars of Berlin's Kantstraße or danced to it at official gatherings.¹⁴⁵ Such casual listeners notwithstanding, what may be termed 'German jazz culture' can broadly be divided into two audience groups. These consisted of the generally younger and more flamboyant *Swing-Jugend*, for whom the music served a

¹³⁹ Kater, *Different Drummers*, pp.82-83.

¹⁴⁰ Stephan Wuthe, *Swingtime in Deutschland*. Berlin: Transit, 2012, p.20. For proletarian *Swing-Jugend* see also Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.156.

¹⁴¹ Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.108.

¹⁴² Wuthe, *Swingtime in Deutschland*, p.20.

¹⁴³ See Anton Tantner, "*Schlurfs*": *Annäherungen an einen subkulturellen Stil Wiener Arbeiterjugendlicher*. Diplomarbeit am Institut für Zeitgeschichte der Universität Wien, 1993.

¹⁴⁴ For *Edelweisspiraten* see Wilfried Breyvogel (ed.), *Piraten, Swings und Junge Garde. Jugendwiderstand im Nationalsozialismus*. Bonn: Dietz, 1991 and Gertrud Koch and Regina Carstensen, *Edelweiss: Meine Jugend als Widerstandskämpferin*. Reinbek: Rohwolt, 2006.

¹⁴⁵ For Kantstraße see Brocksieper interview 1987. For the SS officers at Berchtesgaden see Angeli interview 1987.

predominantly utilitarian purpose as a background for dancing and parties, and the aficionados who congregated in 'Hot Clubs' in urban centres across the Reich,¹⁴⁶ although the boundaries between the groups could be fluid.¹⁴⁷ In embarking upon the thesis, I expected that the subject would bring me into more frequent contact with these groups and their activities than transpired, and during the research it became apparent that *Alltagsgeschichte* can be of limited use in the discussion of the cultural-political realm in which jazz music was utilised as propaganda. Such broadcasts were generally targeted at the layman in order to appeal to the broadest possible spectrum of listeners, so when analysing their goals and reception it is more effective to divide the audience into Forces and civilian categories.

Forces audiences can be regarded as essentially homogenous. While this overlooks obvious discrepancies in personal taste and the inevitable fact that some soldiers abhorred jazz,¹⁴⁸ radio listening in the Forces invariably occurred in groups and was therefore subject to the dictates of the majority. As will be demonstrated below, majority tastes in the German, British and American Forces favoured lively, modern music, with an emphasis on jazz and dance music in each case. Accordingly, from the German *Soldatensender*, the decentralised nature of which was hugely problematic for the RMVP, to the BBC Forces Programme (later General Forces Programme) and the United States government's delegation of Forces' entertainment away from OWI to the Special Services Division (henceforth SSD), tailored content was broadcast specifically with the more robust programming demands of the military in mind.

Civilian audiences, on the other hand, must be considered in terms of the differing tastes of rural and urban populations. Chapter Four will illustrate that the RMVP's targeting of jazz music at rural Midwestern populations in the USA via *Station Debunk* was an act of great cultural naivety, and surprising given that the RMVP was clearly aware of the differing tastes of Germany's own populace, taking pains not to

¹⁴⁶ JZD Hans Blüthner papers are an excellent source of correspondence, interviews and other material relating to the German 'Rhythm Club' culture. See also Kater, *Different Drummers*, pp.70-90.

¹⁴⁷ For example, serious musicians such as Charly Tabor in Berlin (Tabor interview 1987) and the Frankfurt 'Harlem' group, which included several major figures of the post-war West German jazz scene (Kater, *Different Drummers*, pp.148-151), also sported elements of the 'Swing' aesthetic.

¹⁴⁸ See for example Patric Stevenson, 'A Musician in the Ranks.' *The Musical Times* 82.1182 (1941), pp.291-93.

offend the more conservative sensibilities of rural listeners, even when it came to names of individual programmes.¹⁴⁹ Particularly useful for studying the domestic audience reception of broadcasts are the *Meldungen aus dem Reich* ('Dispatches from the Reich'),¹⁵⁰ a regular series of internal reports compiled by Otto Ohlendorf's *Sicherheitsdienst des Reichsführers-SS* ('Security Service of the SS-*Reichsführer*', henceforth SD), with which the public mood and opinion were gauged and summarised by informers, a methodology that resembles Mass Observation's own 'file reports' in Britain. Welch notes that, while they must be treated critically and there is disagreement over their value as evidence of public opinion in the Third Reich, the *Meldungen aus dem Reich* remain the best available source of this.¹⁵¹ Indeed, the blunt presentation of the SD's findings, which regularly drew attention to Goebbels' propaganda failures, earned Ohlendorf numerous enemies, including the Propaganda Minister himself. In June 1944, *Reichsleiter* Martin Bormann forbade all official trustees and employees of the NSDAP from providing information to the SD interrogators, complaining that "[t]he informers [*V-Männer*] of the SD apparently move only in negative circles".¹⁵²

The treatment of jazz music in the 'Cultural Areas' section of these dispatches allows us to test their reliability. Notably, on 6th March 1941, the SD asserted that complaints about "music in the style of Jewish jazz from the Weimar Republic" had been increasing in the last few months, and claimed it was "above all soldiers on leave from the front who express their distaste at the [musical] situation in the pubs in their homeland".¹⁵³ However, this contradicts the majority of other sources regarding Forces' tastes, which overwhelmingly demonstrate a predilection for jazz. Accordingly, this raises the question of bias, and lends weight to Goebbels' claims that the SD findings which were critical of the DTUO were inaccurate.¹⁵⁴ In considering the reports' disproportionate emphasis on the populace's hostility towards jazz, it is therefore important to bear in mind the clear disconnect between

¹⁴⁹ See for example Hinkel's insistence upon neutral (non-urban) titles for radio programmes, avoiding names such as *Groß-Stadt-Melodie* ('Big City Melody') and *Tempo-Tempo*. BA R55/695 (Microfiche 1) Rundfunksitzung, 2nd December 1941.

¹⁵⁰ Microfiche copies of which are available to view at the Bundesarchiv (BA R58/158).

¹⁵¹ Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema*, p.2 and Welch, 'Nazi Propaganda and the Volksgemeinschaft', p.215.

¹⁵² 'Der Sicherheitsdienst', *Der Spiegel* 51/1965.

¹⁵³ BA R58/158 *Meldungen aus dem Reich* Nr. 168, 6th March 1941.

¹⁵⁴ BA NS18/334 Tießler, betr. Musik im Rundfunk, 30th January 1943.

rural and urban receptions of jazz music, and because antipathetic responses towards the public playing of jazz (or what was taken as such) expressed in SD reports often stemmed from rural communities, these cannot be taken as indicators of broader public opinion. In utilising and interpreting such materials for the thesis, therefore, I have taken into account not just the contents of a source but also its geographical and socio-cultural context.

The reception and impact of Allied propaganda was inevitably difficult to measure, not least because the draconian punishments that could be meted out for the illegal listening to foreign broadcasts meant that it was unlikely to be discussed in public spaces. Therefore, the most useful sources for this are often the official German reactions to such projects. For example, the attempts of *Das Reich* and Hans Fritzsche to publicly denounce *GSI* as being of British origin¹⁵⁵ can be interpreted as evidence of the project's success.¹⁵⁶ Concerned listeners' letters to the RMVP, too, will be cited as evidence of the degree to which such stations were being listened to and the responses they elicited.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, the British PWE files have been particularly useful because information regarding the effectiveness and popularity of propaganda was readily available from interviews with POWs, as well as the bugging of POW accommodations. Other methods of information-gathering were also at PWE's disposal, as explained by an internal report in 1943:

In attempting to evaluate the success of an RU [Research Unit, i.e. 'black' station] from the available evidence (either direct from agents or refugees, or indirect from reactions in the country or countries to which it is addressed) it must be remembered that the volume of this evidence will vary. The two main factors affecting the volume of evidence are the number of intelligence channels from any country, and the technique of the RU (e.g. whether their content is sensational or not). Lack of evidence therefore should not be taken by itself as proof that an RU has failed in its object.¹⁵⁸

Nonetheless, in Chapter Three, I will reappraise the success of the most ambitious German jazz propaganda project, Charlie and his Orchestra, based on the almost

¹⁵⁵ In response to a rogue media report in Britain denouncing the station in March 1942 (see Chapter Four). See NA FO 898/60 PWE Research Units Germany (G3) Reports 1942. *National Review*, March 1942. Typed excerpt enclosed with Leeper to Lockhart, memo dated 6th May 1942. For the German article see NA FO 898/60 PWE Research Units Germany (G3) Reports 1942. 'Gustav Schweigt', *Das Reich*, 26th April 1942. Typed copy in German. PWE Research Units Germany (G3) Reports 1942.

¹⁵⁶ NA FO 898/51 PWE Research Units: Report on Object, Method and Effectiveness 1943.

¹⁵⁷ BA R55/1253 (Microfiche 4). Mende an RMVP, betr. 'Soldatensender Calais', received 6th December 1943.

¹⁵⁸ NA FO 898/51 PWE Research Units: Report on Object, Method and Effectiveness 1943.

complete absence of evidence of its reception in the British and American archives. This omission is significant because William Joyce, to whose programme the music was allegedly attached, received a great deal of attention from British monitors, and thus the fact that they appear to have been completely overlooked contradicts previous scholarly assertions regarding the group's notoriety.¹⁵⁹ The novelty of the orchestra as a 'propaganda jazz band' and the interest of contemporary readers in the subject matter has led, as per Welch's warning,¹⁶⁰ to evidence of its reception being sought too actively where in fact it is tenuous or non-existent.

Like German audiences, it is most useful to divide British and American listeners into civilian and Forces categories, but the emphasis on the urban/rural divide is less pronounced than in the German archival evidence; while London (the BBC) and New York (the 'Big Four' networks) functioned as centres of cultural power which attempted to exert influence on a national level, the *völkisch* ideology of the Nazis presupposed exaggerated deference to the conservative cultural tendencies of the rural population. In British broadcasting the far more apparent split is between admirers of 'serious' and 'light' (i.e. classical vs. jazz/dance) music, a conflict which has been characterised by Charles Chilton as "almost a racial thing".¹⁶¹ Moreover, it contained an aspect of classism and elitist snobbery which was reflected not only by the "angry Colonels" who inundated the BBC with colourful anti-jazz diatribes,¹⁶² but also the Corporation itself. In making the case for more entertainment on the radio, the BBC magazine *The Listener* argued:

The blunt truth is that a very great many of the people of this county – certainly a majority – are not affected (...) at all by Beethoven or Milton. They are simply bored by much great art; or they would be if they left their radio sets switched on. That is their misfortune; their lives are immeasurably poorer for the fact; and the B.B.C. always has been, and still is, doing its best to open the eyes and ears of the lowbrows to all that they are missing. But in a democratic state a great public body like the B.B.C. cannot dictate; it can only persuade. Nor can it ignore the tastes of such a very large proportion of its public.¹⁶³

Accordingly, the thesis will critique the manner in which the BBC's self-perception as the nation's cultural educator persisted during wartime to the detriment of its

¹⁵⁹ Particularly Kater, *Different Drummers* and Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*.

¹⁶⁰ Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema*, p.263.

¹⁶¹ Chilton interview 2012.

¹⁶² Chilton interview 1989.

¹⁶³ *The Listener*, 'On Programmes and Patriotism', 4th July 1940, p.10.

ability to connect with the tastes of the many listeners who preferred ‘lighter’ fare. BBC Listener Research has been useful in this respect, revealing for example that while only “one in seven” listeners enjoyed Wagner, the majority wanted to hear dance music in the evening programming,¹⁶⁴ and I have utilised other materials at the BBC Written Archives Collection such as memoranda and policy documents, as well as the critical *Melody Maker* articles from the National Jazz Archive, in order to examine the BBC’s complex relationship with popular music in World War II.

Conclusion

This introductory chapter has outlined the substantive contributions that the thesis will make to the broader academic discourse regarding the study of propaganda in World War II. Having discussed the most important primary sources and set out the relevant secondary literature, it has also demonstrated the necessity of a comparative study in this area. It has highlighted the benefits of both the international perspective and the focus on jazz and associated genres; the struggles of Britain, Germany and the USA to come to terms with and exploit this popular musical form provide valuable insights and reveal hitherto neglected strengths and shortcomings in the various propaganda apparatuses and policies.

In order to analyse these most effectively, the following chapters will be structured chronologically and divided into blocks separated by key events, with the intention of presenting and studying the conflict as four different psychological phases. Chapter Two will deal with the period from the outbreak of war in September 1939 until the beginning of the Battle of Britain on 10th July 1940; this will enable me to provide a comparative examination of the manner in which the British and the German information and propaganda apparatuses adjusted to the new situation and the role that jazz music played in these early wartime psychological activities. Chapter Three will discuss the period from the Battle of Britain until the eve of the bombing of Pearl Harbor on 7th December 1941 which resulted in the USA’s entry into the war. The following fourteen months, which saw what one commentator aptly called “the turning of the psychological tide”,¹⁶⁵ will be covered in Chapter Four,

¹⁶⁴ BBC WAC R44/342 BBC Listener Research Survey, November 1942.

¹⁶⁵ NARA RG 208 Box 6 Records of the Office of Facts and Figures, 1939-42, Bureau of Intelligence, Division of Information Channels, Daily Radio Digest, 21st April 1942.

concluding with the German defeat at Stalingrad. My final chapter will focus on the period from February 1943, which saw Goebbels declare ‘total war’ on the Allies at Berlin’s Sportpalast, until the end of the war.

A central component of the thesis is the reappraisal of Goebbels’ abilities based on the evidence of his insufficient wartime pragmatism with regard to German Forces’ musical tastes. This will be juxtaposed with a significant review of prior evaluations of Hinkel facilitated by the cross-referencing of valuable unused oral history interviews and the Hinkel papers at the Bundesarchiv. Furthermore, I will use British, German and American sources to analyse highly significant but neglected areas of propaganda historiography such as the Anglo-American cooperation on ‘black’ projects and the important work of Delmer and PWE. The thesis is the first comparative study of the activities of Britain, Germany and the USA in a major and yet under-researched area of propaganda and will facilitate a greater understanding of the dynamics and events involved in the radio propaganda war.

Chapter Two will explore the British jazz scene’s ‘mobilisation’ at the start of the war, with particular reference to *Melody Maker*. By providing the first scholarly discussion of the hedonistic ‘bottle party’ culture in London, and examining the ‘new kind of audience’ created in the Forces by the group-listening environment, it will demonstrate that the BBC’s poor start to the war failed to adequately cater to civilians and Forces listeners alike. Previous historiography will be challenged to prove that the popularity of William Joyce’s ‘Lord Haw-Haw’ broadcasts posed a genuine threat to Britain’s war effort, and that it was possible for allegedly harmless Nazi propaganda to resonate with sections of its British listenership in the boredom and inactivity of the ‘Phoney War’ and the ‘cultural blackout’. Indeed, the first months of the war, as will be shown, presented the RMVP with an excellent opportunity to fill the void with its own English-language entertainment programming.

Chapter Two

The ‘Cultural Blackout’: September 1939 – July 1940

“[T]hose who listen to the wireless will tell you that at present we can pick up in England from eight to 10 German stations daily. If our own broadcasts are not attractive, if the news is dry, if the entertainment is mediocre, and if the music is of a low standard, which is what people complain of, the listener just turns the button and he gets a foreign broadcast. He may very well tune in to a German programme for its entertainment value, but he also gets a full measure of German propaganda, skilfully delivered and in excellent English. Do not let us undervalue the possible effects of this.”

(Sir Samuel Hoare, House of Commons, 11th October 1939)¹

¹ *Hansard Online*. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 11th October 1939. Vol. 352 §398-399. The discrepancy “eight to 10” is in the online transcript.

Introduction

On 2nd September 1939, *Melody Maker* ran a front-page article explaining how the war – “should the crisis break the wrong way” - would affect the jazz world and its protagonists.² That same day, a seventeen-year-old Romford schoolgirl observed in her Mass Observation diary that, on a cinema visit, newsreel footage of Chamberlain was wildly applauded, whilst Mussolini’s appearances were greeted with hissing. “[W]hat an anticlimax it would be,” she noted, “if there were no war!”³ At 11 o’clock the next morning, however, the British ultimatum to Hitler expired and war was declared, with France joining Britain as its own ultimatum expired at 5 pm.⁴ The American CBS network’s Berlin correspondent William L. Shirer opened his evening broadcast with the words: “Hello. The war is on” and reported that German radio was “playing a stirring piece from the Fourth Symphony of Beethoven. Sometimes the music stops and the proclamations which the German Führer issued at noon today are re-read (...) Then the music goes on and people huddle close to their sets for the next piece of news (...)”.⁵

The German population met the declaration of war with “reluctant loyalty”⁶ rather than widespread popular enthusiasm,⁷ and Shirer found “no excitement (...), no hurrahs, no throwing of flowers – no war fever, no war hysteria” on the streets of Berlin.⁸ Nonetheless, the quick succession of military victories in the early months of the war, skilfully exploited by Goebbels in popular newsreels,⁹ ensured a growing degree of national consensus; it was only with the turning of the military and psychological tide that this consensus waned.¹⁰ Initial British propaganda strategy was largely disingenuous, with the BBC’s European Service concentrating its efforts on attacking Hitler and insisting that a Nazi victory was impossible;¹¹ an unconvincing message in the months of the *Blitzkrieg*. It is debatable whether or not

² NJA *Melody Maker* ‘Crisis Consequences: A Jazz Accompaniment to the March of Time’, 2nd September 1939, p.1.

³ Dorothy Sheridan (ed.), *Wartime Women: a Mass-Observation Anthology of Women's Writing, 1937-1945*. London: Phoenix, 2000, pp.52-53.

⁴ A.J.P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War*. London: Penguin, 1977, p.335.

⁵ William L. Shirer, *This is Berlin: Reporting from Nazi Germany 1938-40*, London: Random House, 1999, p.75.

⁶ Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, p.148.

⁷ Welch, *Politics and Propaganda*, p.120.

⁸ Shirer, *This is Berlin*, p.75.

⁹ See Welch, *Politics and Propaganda*, pp.119-129.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.73.

¹¹ Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, pp.167-170.

the lectures on morality to the German people, described by the contemporary American sociologist Kenneth Burke, apparently without irony, as “a liberal university of the air”,¹² were as useless as Sefton Delmer later claimed.¹³ There is evidence that Germany possessed a surprising political diversity, even at levels of influence,¹⁴ but in the first year of the war, it was Germany that was conducting its propaganda campaign from a position of strength, supported as it was by mounting victories.

This chapter will therefore focus primarily on aspects of British morale, and German attempts to diminish it, during the period from the outbreak of war on 3rd September until the eve of the Battle of Britain in summer 1940. Firstly it will explore *Melody Maker*'s response to the declaration of war and the journal's advocacy of the role that jazz and dance musicians could play in maintaining national morale and psychologically strengthening the British Forces; this will be followed by an analysis of the BBC's initial wartime measures regarding jazz and the establishment in January 1940 of the entertainment-oriented BBC Forces Programme. By referring to the journal's content and the Corporation's previously unopened *Melody Maker* file in its Written Archives Collection, as well as my 2012 interview with Charles and Penny Chilton, I will shed new light on the relationship between *Melody Maker* and the BBC; I will also discuss the important but neglected question of authorship in the journal and the necessity of understanding the backgrounds and prejudices of individual journalists in using this important source. Together these themes will elucidate the early wartime British broadcasting situation and the ways in which official acceptance of jazz was accelerated by the dictates of the war. Furthermore, using Metropolitan Police reports from the winter of 1939-1940, I will contribute the first scholarly discussion of “bottle parties”, a pre-war phenomenon which profited from the increased demand for hedonistic nightlife in wartime. This will enable me to explore the unofficial contribution of jazz music to the maintenance of morale, and the impact that this subaltern ‘Harlem in London’ culture had on British jazz and

¹² Kenneth Burke, ‘War and Cultural Life.’ *American Journal of Sociology* 48.3 (November 1942), pp.404-410. Here p.410.

¹³ Sefton Delmer, *Black Boomerang*. London: Secker and Warburg, 1962, p.40.

¹⁴ See Eric Kurlander, ‘Between Detroit and Moscow: A Left Liberal “Third Way” in the Third Reich.’ *Central European History* 44.02 [2011], pp.279-307.

in nurturing the American-style jam sessions which would reach the BBC from 1941.¹⁵

I will also use primary sources such as the BBC Written Archives Collection and Mass Observation to reappraise the content and the reception, both official and public, of the initial broadcasts of the key figure in Nazi English-language broadcasting to Britain, William Joyce, aka Lord Haw-Haw. I will conclusively demonstrate that historians such as Kater and the Joyce biographer Peter Martland overlook the potential threat of Joyce's work, and mistakenly believe that the state-sanctioned policy of ridiculing Lord Haw-Haw through media such as comic strips and Music Hall in fact complemented the RMVP's methodology of encouraging repeated listening through entertainment and/or laughter. This debatable British policy, combined with the BBC's slow start to the war during the so-called cultural blackout, presented Goebbels with an excellent opportunity to gain listeners and psychological influence. However, as will be demonstrated, he failed to adequately take advantage of this by providing an alternative entertainment programme tailored to British tastes. I will show that Goebbels' later problems with English-language entertainment propaganda were presaged by the deficiencies of these initial efforts to lower British morale. I will also consider the American 'Big Four' networks' position on the war and the British and American efforts to foment interventionist opinion in the United States. Thus the chapter will explore and expound upon important aspects of the first year of the war which have been largely overlooked, ignored or misrepresented by prior scholarship.

Britain

Melody Maker and the BBC

While German radio was co-opting Beethoven in order to inspire a martial mentality amongst the populace, the 9th September 1939 edition of *Melody Maker* found the journal in a similarly warlike spirit. The front page was divided into two parts, one ("Our Job Now") outlining the new responsibilities acquired by the musical press, and the other ("Your Job Now") targeted at British musicians and emphasising the

¹⁵ Some aspects relating to *Melody Maker*, the BBC and bottle parties in Section One of this chapter are also discussed in my article, "We've got a Gig in Poland!": Britain and Jazz in World War II', which is expected to be published in the *Jazz Research Journal* 6.3 in autumn 2014.

importance of music for wartime morale. Even the comic strip *Billy Plonkit and His Band*, a weekly feature which followed the exploits of a hapless jazz group, saw its heroes mobilised. Their wartime premiere depicted Plonkit's group marching, complete with khaki uniforms, rifles and kit bags, as the band leader stares determinedly into the distance. The nonchalant caption reads: "Cheerho, Fellers. We've got a gig in Poland!"¹⁶

This mobilisation of Plonkit's fictional group was symbolic of the general mobilisation of the jazz scene that was to take place that autumn,¹⁷ although the gravity of the situation was tempered with a tongue-in-cheek approach to international developments which, to paraphrase the historian Martin Doherty, can perhaps be described as "bravado disguised as humour disguising fear".¹⁸ *Melody Maker* repeated a new joke that, like the Soviet Union and Germany, the feuding dance musicians Bert Ambrose and Jack Harris were rumoured to be about to sign a non-aggression pact,¹⁹ and the South-West London Rhythm Club saw fit to assemble a whimsically entitled 'Supreme War Council', which decided unanimously that they should "continue to grind out jazz propaganda each Sunday between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. at their headquarters", with an offer being extended to members of newly-defunct Rhythm Clubs to join for no extra cost.²⁰

One week earlier, *Melody Maker* had insisted that jazz would be an active protagonist in the coming conflict:

It is argued that jazz, in particular, being a virtual prerogative of youth, will be practically stilled by the mobilisation of the young men who now create it. That is a fallacy. Come what may, there will not even be a lull in jazz. (...) Music, indeed, comes right into its own in times of national menace: much more so than in times of prosperity, because it is the main prop of any country's morale, and nothing can be so important to a State as that its people should be inspirited to endure danger and stress with buoyant cheerfulness."²¹

¹⁶ NJA *Melody Maker* 'Billy Plonkit and His Band' by Bernard Greenbaum, 9th September 1939, p.1.

¹⁷ As if to illustrate the point, the regular artist Dick Empsom was absent on Air Raid Precautions [A.R.P] duty so the strip was drawn in his style by Bernard Greenbaum.

¹⁸ Doherty, *Nazi Wireless Propaganda*, p.90.

¹⁹ NJA *Melody Maker* 'War Wit', 9th September 1939, p.3.

²⁰ NJA *Melody Maker* 'Rhythm Club Carries On', October 1939, p.1.

²¹ NJA *Melody Maker* 'Crisis Consequences: A Jazz Accompaniment to the March of Time', 2nd September 1939, p.1.

If much of *Melody Maker*'s humour upon the outbreak of war revolved around the juxtaposition of the macro-significance of international politics with the micro-significance of musical politics, there was, nonetheless, an earnest and adamant acknowledgement of the potentially crucial role that musicians could play in the war. In a front-page feature on 9th September entitled 'Our Job Now/Your Job Now', the journal's technical editor Dan S. Ingman made this clear, albeit via a series of crude analogies with the practices of 'jungle savages' which are not altogether dissimilar to the pejorative terminology employed in Nazi attacks on jazz music, and belied the journal's generally progressive stance towards racism:²²

Music has been used as an incentive to fighting men from time immemorial. If we are to believe that the savages of the jungle are merely a reflection of our earlier selves, then we can say with confidence that from the earliest dawn of time mankind has used music to stir himself up.

The throbbing of jungle tom-toms has a stimulating effect on the warriors who dance to it. Savage tribes the world over prepare themselves for battle with music of some kind (...).²³

Although clumsily made, Ingman's essential thesis regarding the important motivational role of music during wartime was valid, and well-substantiated by British, American and German research into their respective Forces' (and enemies' Forces') tastes at the time. It was therefore imperative that the BBC was quick to alter its policy in response to the new situation, but it failed to do so. The first weeks of the war saw a 'cultural black-out' as a result of restrictive air-raid precautions such as the ceasing of television broadcasts and all commercial radio stations,²⁴ and the closure of football grounds, theatres, public museums and cinemas,²⁵ as well as many places of nocturnal entertainment.²⁶ The BBC Home Service was the Corporation's sole radio channel, and even this was reduced to a skeleton staff, with most employees being sent home. *Melody Maker*'s criticism of the new limited service was vehement, and an article in the journal's October edition entitled 'B.B.C.

²² Godbolt, *A History of Jazz in Britain*, p.129.

²³ *NJA Melody Maker* 'Your Job Now' by Dan S. Ingman, 9th September 1939, p.1.

²⁴ *NJA Melody Maker* 'Wartime Broadcasting' by 'Detector', 9th September 1939, p.2.

²⁵ Charles Chilton, *Auntie's Charlie*. London: Fantom Publishing, 2011, p.126.

²⁶ *NJA Melody Maker* 'Keep the Swing Flag Flying' by B. M. Lytton-Edwards, October 1939, p.13.

Defends Its Great Wartime Flop' bemoaned "the deplorable drop in the standard of broadcast entertainment since the war".²⁷

The early Home Service wartime output has been well-documented by Christina Baade,²⁸ who notes that gramophone sales in Britain doubled during September and October 1939.²⁹ This figure supports B. M. Lytton-Edwards'³⁰ pessimistic prediction in the same October edition³¹ of *Melody Maker* that, due to the BBC's poor performance and the cultural black-out, "it looks extremely probable to me that the gramophone alone will keep us amused during the war."³² The problem, indeed, was also raised in Parliament by Labour MP Arthur Greenwood:

In these rather dull and dreary days there is something to be said for increasing brightness. (...) I hear everywhere complaints about the "weeping Willy" programmes that we have been given. We have to remember that in the conditions of war, with the limitations there are in public entertainment outside the homes, the B.B.C. becomes the main avenue of public entertainment for millions of our people. In these days of train restrictions, lighting restrictions, restrictions here, there and everywhere, and the determination on the part of the Government to make the life of everybody as miserable as possible, it would be well if we could have some brighter entertainment from the B.B.C.³³

The BBC's output was centred on the overworked Canadian organist Sandy Macpherson, whose popularity could not prevent growing frustration at the lack of variety on the airwaves.³⁴ The BBC's Variety Department, which had been evacuated to an ostensibly secret location code-named 'Exbury' (Bristol),³⁵ was employing one band per fortnight beginning with the renowned dance band of Jack Hylton,³⁶ whose first broadcast was praised by Edgar Jackson as sounding "just like a first-rate American outfit, the brass being really superb".³⁷ Jackson was less enthused by the 'Swing Ramblers', a new group which performed on two consecutive nights in September, suggesting that "[a]s far as I can ascertain this

²⁷ NJA *Melody Maker* 'B.B.C. Defends its Great Wartime Flop' by 'Special Investigator', October 1939, p.6.

²⁸ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, pp.35-47.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p.40.

³⁰ The pseudonymous writing team Mary Lytton and Bettie Edwards.

³¹ The magazine was initially reduced to monthly issues due to wartime austerity measures.

³² NJA *Melody Maker* 'Keep the Swing Flag Flying' by B. M. Lytton-Edwards, October 1939, p.13.

³³ *Hansard Online*. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 11th October 1939. Vol. 352 §377.

³⁴ Chilton interview 2012.

³⁵ NJA *Melody Maker* 'The "M.M." Asks The B.B.C...', October 1939, p.6.

³⁶ BBC WAC R44/342 E. C. Thompson to Hytch et al, re: Dance Band Situation. 20th September 1939.

³⁷ NJA *Melody Maker* "'Detector' Reviews Our Wartime Radio To-Date', October 1939, p.6.

combination was recruited from the B.B.C. Variety Orchestra. If that's wrong I have sincerely to apologise, for more laughably amateurish attempts at swing I have never heard (...).³⁸

However, there were also indications in *Melody Maker's* October attacks on the BBC's early wartime output of the more constructively critical role that the journal could play. In a section entitled "The 'M. M.' Asks The [sic.] B.B.C.," it launched a slew of highly critical and bluntly-worded questions directly at the national broadcaster which nonetheless contained some valid points that reflected the BBC's own priorities:

Is it beyond the wit of all the men at the B.B.C to devise and provide a continuous daily entertainment radio service of 24 hours as a means of keeping up the spirits of the populace in general and civil defence workers in particular?

Cannot [BBC Director-General] Mr. Ogilvie realise that, after the conclusion of the B.B.C.'s midnight news, there is nothing for these listeners to do but tune into the violent anti-British propaganda emanating from a treacherous renegade [Lord Haw-Haw] in Germany, whose "music hall act," though unconsciously funnier than Arthur Askey still makes any decent stomach revolt?

(...) What's wrong with giving listeners instead plenty of dance music by plenty of bands?

Why has British radio got to be the world's worst bore?³⁹

The potential for such criticism to have an impact on BBC policy was evident from a memorandum from Godfrey Adams, the Director of Programme Planning, dated 1st August 1939. Adams anticipated "a reaction from the public that our purge of dance music has been too severe. We ought perhaps, therefore, be prepared for some concession if pressure is considerable".⁴⁰ On 20th September the Corporation's West of England Press Officer A. J. P. Hytch reported "considerable interest in the dance band situation from specialist papers such as *Melody Maker*" and requested "a line on future plans" with which to feed the media,⁴¹ thus indicating the degree to which the BBC paid attention to the journal and took account of its readers' views from the outset of the war. Charles Chilton would later assert that *Melody Maker's* criticisms

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ NJA *Melody Maker* 'B.B.C. Defends its Great Wartime Flop' by 'Special Investigator', October 1939, p.6.

⁴⁰ BBC WAC R44/342 Internal Circulating Memo: D.P.P. [Director of Programme Planning] to P.P. [Programme Planning], 17th August 1939.

⁴¹ BBC WAC R44/342 A.J.P. Hytch, re: Dance Music, 20th September 1939.

were predominantly motivated by the desire to sell newspapers,⁴² while Christina Baade describes the journal's "passionate advocacy for American music"⁴³ vis-à-vis the BBC. The reality, however, was more complicated, and it is imperative to consider the individual journalists before interpreting the significance of their statements.

***Melody Maker* Journalists: Propaganda and 'Jacksonese'**

A nuanced reading of the relationship between *Melody Maker* and the BBC is necessary because the evidence suggests that Ray Sonin's editorial policy allowed the personalities and prejudices of individual journalists to assert themselves. Thus, while we can speak of the BBC as a homogenous entity insofar as the various differences of opinion expressed in memoranda, correspondence and meetings nonetheless resulted in tangible policies, *Melody Maker* was shaped by opinionated writers whose views and goals may have been at a variance with those of their colleagues. Significantly, there was a fundamental disagreement between 'Mike' (the critic and composer Spike Hughes) and 'Detector' (Edgar Jackson) as to whether the BBC or the license payer should dictate musical programming, with Jackson arguing that "the listeners (...), through their license fees, pay the piper, so they, and they alone, have the right to call the tune."⁴⁴ This issue has been overlooked by previous scholarship, and yet the fact that two of the most prolific *Melody Maker* journalists disagreed on such a central issue is essential to an understanding of the journal's relationship with the Corporation; while Hughes was broadly supporting the status quo, Jackson was in effect giving popular taste primacy over the state-controlled, propagandistic uses of music. His seemingly innocuous comment is in fact a complete rejection of the way in which the BBC shaped its wartime musical policy.

It is therefore of paramount importance that consideration is given to the identity of the individual journalist, insofar as it is provided. And yet in spite of her frequent use of *Melody Maker* as a source, Baade attributes quotations without comment. The provocative weekly columns of 'Mike' ("You may hate his views... You may

⁴² Chilton interview 2012.

⁴³ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, p.10.

⁴⁴ BBC WAC R44/342 Typed copy of *Melody Maker* article, 'Detector' Interviews the B.B.C. on its Anti-Slush Campaign'. Undated.

disagree with him... but you read him!”),⁴⁵ which garnered regular angry responses on the journal’s letters page, cannot be understood without taking into account the increasing classical tendencies of its author, who would later write the biography of the Glyndebourne Opera⁴⁶ and admitted in 1951 that “I must have bored the pants of the average reader, who can only have been completely bewildered by my preoccupation with the harmonic drabness of popular music[.]” For Hughes, the column, which started with the purpose of reviewing records, merely “provided a convenient peg on which to hang theories and propaganda. Gradually, however, the records were forgotten, and just the theories and the propaganda remained.” He abandoned the column in the middle of the war “through sheer psychological inability to take any further interest in the type of music with which my column was supposed to be concerned[.]”⁴⁷ This disillusionment, together with his subsequent curriculum vitae, therefore provide context for Hughes’ controversial contributions which were far from being the “passionate advocacy for American music” described by Baade.⁴⁸

The writings of Edgar Jackson, the journal’s most vocal and prolific jazz ‘advocate’, need to be handled especially carefully. Baade appears to acknowledge that Jackson/‘Detector’ are the same author,⁴⁹ but while she notes that ‘Detector’ took a hiatus between February-October 1940, there is no mention of Jackson’s “multi-pseudonymous”⁵⁰ nature, or the probability that he was behind the stylistically similar work of ‘Eavesdropper’ and ‘Dabbler’ which appeared in the journal in the interim.⁵¹ Moreover, there are a number of mitigating factors which must be considered when discussing his views. Born in Edgware in 1895 to a Jewish family, Jackson changed his original surname (Cohen), and his ambivalent relationship to his own background may, Jim Godbolt plausibly asserts, have been a reason for his own “highly offensive attitude to, and descriptions of, black musicians”.⁵² Jackson

⁴⁵ NJA *Melody Maker* ‘Pop Tunes and Tchaikovsky’, 17th August 1940, p.5.

⁴⁶ Spike Hughes, *Glyndebourne: A History of Festival Opera*. Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1981.

⁴⁷ All citations attributed to Spike Hughes in this paragraph are from Spike Hughes, *Second Movement*, London: Museum Press Limited, 1951, pp.113-114.

⁴⁸ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, p.10.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p.121.

⁵⁰ Godbolt, *A History of Jazz in Britain*, p.23. See also *ibid*, p.33.

⁵¹ See for example NJA *Melody Maker* ‘Pity the Poor Leader!’ by ‘Eavesdropper’, 7th September 1940, p.9, and NJA *Melody Maker* ‘Raid-io’ by ‘Dabbler’, 28th September 1940, p.5. In the latter article, ‘Dabbler’ praises the BBC for a forthcoming programme presented by Edgar Jackson.

⁵² Godbolt, *A History of Jazz in Britain*, p.19. For more on Jackson see also *ibid*, pp.19-34.

was the first editor of *Melody Maker*, and his reign saw repeatedly-emphasised racist bias and “determined efforts to smother interest in the genre’s [jazz’s] genuine music”,⁵³ positing “a critical dichotomy between black and white jazz, coming down heavily in favour of the latter.”⁵⁴

While the newspaper subsequently adopted a more enlightened stance under the editorship of Ray Sonin, Jackson was reinstated and became its most vocal critic of the BBC during the war.⁵⁵ As the journal’s radio critic (using the pseudonym ‘Detector’) and jazz critic (under his own name), he was in a position of particular influence, but his voluminous wartime contributions must be interpreted within the context of his rather clownish reputation among his contemporaries. For example, when Baade notes that ‘Detector’ praised Leslie Perowne of *Radio Rhythm Club*’s “engaging presentation” of the life of the West Indian bandleader Ken ‘Snakehips’ Johnson,⁵⁶ which belatedly appeared six months after Johnson’s death in the Café de Paris bombing on 8th March 1941, she neglects the context and interprets Jackson’s positive reaction at face value. The ostensibly straightforward praise was in fact the result of a bitter exchange between Perowne and Jackson; one month earlier, Perowne had complained in an internal BBC circulating memorandum of Jackson’s “hardly fair journalistic criticism”, containing “definitely offensive” comments and “deliberately misleading remarks” regarding *Radio Rhythm Club*.⁵⁷ Shortly before the release of the Jackson article cited by Baade, Perowne noted in another memorandum:

I spoke in no uncertain terms to Edgar Jackson myself one day [about his criticisms of *Radio Rhythm Club*]. This would appear to have had some effect, because he has toned down considerably. You will be amused to hear that he rang me up after my broadcast on Ken Johnson last Wednesday, and showered me with praise to an almost embarrassing extent, saying that it was about the best programme he had heard in years. Let’s hope that these views are represented in the sordid periodical for which he writes.⁵⁸

Thus the personality of Jackson and his relationship to the BBC and *Radio Rhythm Club*, to which he sometimes contributed, are inextricable from an interpretation of

⁵³ Ibid, p.30.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p.36.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p.161.

⁵⁶ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, pp.126-127.

⁵⁷ BBC WAC R44/342 Internal Circulating Memo: Perowne to D.P.A., 15th August 1941.

⁵⁸ BBC WAC R44/342 Internal Circulating Memo: Perowne to D.P.A., 11th September 1941.

his printed opinions. Without elaborating, Perowne hints that it “would be pleasant if we could inform the readers of the *Melody Maker* of the real reason for Jackson’s jaundice”,⁵⁹ and Charles Chilton suggested in 2012 that Jackson’s agenda was defined by self-promotion, recalling that “[h]e was always saying ‘not enough jazz [on the BBC]’ – what he really meant was ‘not enough me!’”⁶⁰ Indeed, by May 1943 the BBC was actively avoiding employing Jackson, with Chilton writing to Spike Hughes:

I am asking you now whether you would like to take over Edgar Jackson’s spots in the [Radio Rhythm] Club. I have been told not to use him unless it is absolutely necessary. I think you will agree that none of the programmes he puts over for the Club is necessary.⁶¹

Therefore, while Baade may be technically right when she states that Jackson was one of the “more knowledgeable critics”,⁶² his views cannot be treated simply as those of an expert jazz advocate. Chilton described him in retrospect as “a bit of an idiot”⁶³ and Jim Godbolt assigned the idiosyncratic journalist his own language (“Jacksonese”);⁶⁴ meanwhile in the same interview Chilton spoke highly of Spike Hughes, who was respected enough in his capacity as a composer and critic to be commissioned as an adviser by the BBC in its internal quality control process for contract dance bands in 1943.⁶⁵ Ray Sonin, indeed, also participated as expert commentator on *Radio Rhythm Club* without attracting any of the controversy that surrounded Jackson.⁶⁶ *Melody Maker* is an inestimable source of British jazz opinion and advocacy during the war, but it is essential to bear in mind that its writers had individual tastes or agendas and enjoyed varying degrees of credibility with the Corporation. Authorship and context must constantly be considered in analysing its output.

⁵⁹ BBC WAC R44/342 file. Internal Circulating Memo: Perowne to D.P.A., 15th August 1941.

⁶⁰ Chilton interview 2012.

⁶¹ The underlining is Chilton’s own. BBC WAC R44/342 Charles Chilton to Spike Hughes, cc. Gramophone Director, 12th May 1943.

⁶² Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, p.116.

⁶³ Chilton interview 2012.

⁶⁴ Godbolt, *A History of Jazz in Britain*, p.138.

⁶⁵ BBC WAC R27/73/2 ‘Report on the Four BBC Contract Dance Bands and Victor Silvester’s Band’ by Spike Hughes. Circulated by Controller (Programmes) 1943.

⁶⁶ See for example NJA *Melody Maker* ‘Your Editor Airs’, 24th January 1942, p.1. The BBC WAC *Melody Maker* file (R44/342) makes no mention of specific problems relating to Hughes or Sonin.

A New Kind of Audience

In one sense, at least, the BBC was quick to enliven its output in response to the war by lifting of the ban on the broadcasting of dance music on Sundays, to which it had been stubbornly adhering, with immediate effect.⁶⁷ Baade argues that this measure, which was popular with a majority of listeners under the age of thirty,⁶⁸ was taken to prevent Britons from tuning into continental or enemy offerings,⁶⁹ but the reality is more complex. In his argument for a ‘mnemonic turn’ in the cultural historiography of the Great War, the historian Steven Heathorn asserts that the conflict accelerated the advance of modernism and “dealt a serious blow to official bourgeois culture”,⁷⁰ and a similar trend is also evident in World War II’s cultural impact on British and German broadcasting. While the need to keep listeners’ dials tuned to British wavelengths was certainly a primary concern, the move was also tantamount to an acknowledgement of the importance of dance music in helping listeners to retain “an even balance”⁷¹ during the early days of the war; the lifting of the ban represented the first blow against official bourgeois culture in wartime Britain, and ‘Detector’ plausibly suggested that it would perhaps have taken years to implement during peacetime.⁷² He recorded hearing Duke Ellington’s *Birmingham Breakdown* and Ethel Waters singing *Dinah* on the BBC as early as Sunday 3rd September, calling it “a real treat to find this lighter and more enlivening music at a moment when we certainly need cheering up,”⁷³ and the next month observed that “we had more Swing record programmes in the first four weeks of the war than we had in any preceding six months.”⁷⁴

⁶⁷ NJA *Melody Maker* ‘Wartime Broadcasting’ by ‘Detector’, 9th September 1939, p.2.

⁶⁸ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, p.49.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p.58. However, in other aspects of BBC policy Baade does take into account broader morale-related issues.

⁷⁰ He is citing the historian Robert Wohl. Steven Heathorn, ‘The Mnemonic Turn in the Cultural Historiography of Britain’s Great War.’ *The Historical Journal* 48 (2005), pp.1103-1124. Here p.1105.

⁷¹ *Hansard Online*. Civil estimates, 28th May 1940. Vol. 361 §495. The phrase belongs to Labour MP George Muff (see the section on ‘Cooper’s snoopers’ Chapter Three).

⁷² NJA *Melody Maker* ‘Wartime Broadcasting’ by ‘Detector’, 9th September 1939, p.2.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ NJA *Melody Maker* “‘Detector’ Reviews Our Wartime Radio To-Date’, October 1939, p.1.

More revolutionary still were the developments in Forces' entertainment⁷⁵ taken in the wake of BBC Director-General Frederick W. Ogilvie's visit to the BEF in January 1940, where he found an audience of predominantly young men listening in groups whose demands were thus very different from those of the BBC's standard domestic target audience.⁷⁶ *The Times* of London stated of his findings that:

Listening conditions were entirely novel, and that the choice was not dictated by a change of taste on discarding *mufti* [civilian clothing], but rather by a change in conditions.

Where, individually, a listener might have preferred more serious entertainment the dictates of the majority demanded lighter fare; listening was done in groups; that was to say that no programme was selected unless it was acceptable to at least half-a-dozen listeners at once.⁷⁷

Chilton recalls that wartime single-programme Home Service "broadcast infinitely sort of popular, sugary music (...) or Sandy McPherson playing the bloody organ for four hours – and people got fed up with it. They started protesting".⁷⁸ The situation was exacerbated in these group listening conditions, and Chilton maintains that Ogilvie found that the Forces "didn't even listen to the BBC because there was nothing that they liked, except occasionally on Wednesday night there was *Jazz Club*".⁷⁹ Accordingly, the French commercial broadcaster Fécamp, Radio International, which broadcast in several languages (including German) and played a Forces-oriented repertoire which included plenty of jazz and dance music, enjoyed great popularity with the BEF until it was closed by French authorities on 7th January 1940 as a result of 'security concerns'.⁸⁰ However, no such measures could be taken against the Nazi propaganda with which Hamburg inevitably barraged the BEF, "putting out stuff they knew the troops would like",⁸¹ including jazz music, and

⁷⁵ For the bureaucratic conditions of the genesis of the BBC Forces Programme, see Asa Briggs, *The War of Words*. London: Oxford UP, 1970, pp.125-140. See also the more jazz/dance music- and gender-oriented treatment in Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, pp.47-55.

⁷⁶ "[A] single listener sitting in solitary concentration by his own fireside." *Radio Times*, cited in Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, pp.52-53.

⁷⁷ *The Times Digital Archive*. 'Programmes for the Forces: B.B.C. Entertainment 63 Hours Weekly.' *The Times* [London], 15th February 1940, p.4.

⁷⁸ Chilton interview 2012.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, p.49. For Fécamp, see Briggs, *The War of Words*, pp.126-129.

⁸¹ Chilton interview 2012.

British Forces tuned in eagerly to the broadcasts of British Nazi propagandist William Joyce, aka Lord Haw-Haw.⁸²

The result of Ogilvie's visit to France was the BBC Forces Programme, although in reality his visit merely confirmed what the Corporation had already been aware of regarding Forces' tastes. Prior scholarship has overlooked the fact that plans were in fact already afoot for a complete daily programme for the Forces prior to Ogilvie's trip, with *The Times* of London reporting on 28th December 1939 that specially-tailored "dance music, theatre organ, variety, light music and sports broadcasts" were scheduled to be broadcast on an experimental basis via the Home Service every evening from 7th January 1940.⁸³ The framework was thus already in place to satisfy the BEF's demands for "a purely light entertainment channel, including jazz and popular music, which is what they got, even on Sundays,"⁸⁴ and accordingly, sixty-three out of the new Forces Programme's eighty-four hours per week consisted of specially-produced entertainment, with the remaining twenty-one hours being taken from the Home Service. The BEF, as Ogilvie put it, were to be "partners in the service" and were encouraged to register their criticisms and complaints regarding its output.⁸⁵

A piece written for *Melody Maker* by the popular bandleader Joe Loss upon his return from entertaining the BEF in France provides a vivid picture of the audience for the new programme:

Well, what did I see? I saw the best audiences in the world ... I saw a most marvellous camaraderie between officers and men... I saw hardbitten soldiers crying with joy while they yelled out choruses... in fact, I saw enough to convince me positively that dance bands stand absolutely and unquestionably right on top as far as entertainment for the troops is concerned.

A dance band contains everything that a soldier needs. It gives him lightness, brightness and noise... rhythm to exhilarate him... friendliness from hearing the tunes that he knows and loves so well[.]

⁸² Chilton, *Auntie's Charlie*, p.128. See also Harold N. Graves, Jr., 'Lord Haw-Haw of Hamburg: The Campaign against Britain.' *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 4.3 (September 1940), pp.429-442.

⁸³ *The Times Digital Archive*. 'B.B.C. Programmes for the Forces: Light Entertainment Every Evening'. *The Times* [London], 28th December 1939, p.4.

⁸⁴ Chilton, *Auntie's Charlie*, p.128. See also Briggs, *The War of Words*, pp.125-140 and Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, pp.47-55.

⁸⁵ *The Times Digital Archive*. 'Programmes for the Forces: B.B.C. Entertainment 63 Hours Weekly'. *The Times* [London], 15th February 1940, p.4.

(...) [Officers who censor letters] told me that, after a dance band show, the letters home contain an enthusiasm, a gaiety, and a whole-hearted appreciation that are never equalled at any other time.

(...) [I]t's highly important to remember all the time that the men who go to a show want to be *entertained, not educated*.

(...) I used to ask the boys "Do you like swing?" and the yell of approval I got back every time nearly blew the roof off.⁸⁶

Loss' account is of particular relevance to the thesis for a number of reasons. Firstly, his description of Forces' tastes is consistent with the findings of Ogilvie, and is confirmed by other evidence of British, American and German Forces' predilections. However, his depiction of the soldiers transcends the masculine "soldier-hero" archetypes which Baade notes the BBC was cultivating in its media representations of the BEF.⁸⁷ Loss depicts high-spirited and homesick young men whose uses for dance music were both for emotional uplift and for the creation of a closer bond with the home front, thus paralleling Hans Hinkel's assertion that one of the primary functions of wartime broadcasting was "to form a link between you [the soldiers] and the homeland."⁸⁸ Secondly, he places deliberate emphasis on the (temporary) relaxation of hierarchies and the forging of a national community through the medium of entertainment, not just between "officers and men" and music 'stars' and audiences, but also extending as far as the Royal Family; the Duke of Gloucester, at a Command Performance in France, is described by Loss as having "joined in all the fun, [and] sang the choruses with the best of 'em", and "particularly asked for no formalities, (...) even to the extent of my greeting the audience with my usual 'Hello, fellers, how are you?'" Finally, and perhaps most importantly, is Loss' italicised emphasis of the fact that the troops "want to be *entertained, not educated*", a fact which had radical ramifications for British broadcasting.

Inevitably, however, the popularity of jazz was not universal and some lovers of 'serious' music in the Forces were incensed. In an August 1941 article for *Musical Times*, Patric Stevenson claimed:

⁸⁶ NJA *Melody Maker* 'What I Saw in France' by Joe Loss, 24th February 1940, p.3. The italics are in the original article.

⁸⁷ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, pp.51-53.

⁸⁸ BA R56I/110 (Microfiche 2) 'Zur Eröffnung Soldatensendungen Hilversums'. Undated transcript, presumably ca. 1942 (see the reference to Hilversum in Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, p.245).

[Radios in the barrack-room have] been the greatest curse and trial in my life as a recruit. That wretched receiver was never silent as long as there were men in the room. Should I find myself alone, I would seize the opportunity of switching it off, merely to find that the blare from the set in the next hut was almost as bad. (...) Readers can well imagine what torture it was for one who loves the classics, and to whom Delius, Elgar, Strauss and Sibelius are the gods of this earth, to be forced to listen to an over- amplified and distorted reproduction of the more popular periods of the B.B.C. Forces programme (or similar fare) blared out by a loud-speaker from early morning till after ‘lights out.’ The average young man of this generation seems to have a permanent (...) craving for a background (...) of ‘swing music,’ or something with ‘rhythm’ in it[.]⁸⁹

An internal BBC document noted that such “unsolicited correspondence, unsupported by planned enquiries, is often misleading. This is particularly so when (...) the subject of the correspondence is something upon which some people feel strongly.”⁹⁰ Indeed, Stevenson’s condescension is reasonably indicative of the “almost (...) racial”⁹¹ divide between lovers of jazz and classical music at the time, and this sentiment was echoed by the BBC Press Officer B. B. Chapman, who drew a distinction between “good [i.e. classical] music” and “variety” in a letter to the *Musical Times* in November 1941.⁹² Nonetheless, the sudden wartime elevation in the status of jazz music at the BBC in response to the dictates of war exacerbated the situation for its detractors, and Chapman acknowledged that the Corporation’s continued efforts to extend classical repertoire on the Forces Programme were directly contrary to “majority opinion”.⁹³ It also, however, offers a detailed picture of radio-listening habits in the barracks which is antipathetic to jazz and yet complements and verifies the accounts of Loss and Chilton regarding its popularity with the Forces, as well as the findings of Ogilvie.⁹⁴ Moreover, his reference to the “craving for a [musical] background” is particularly significant because, as Baade notes, background or “tap listening” had previously been discouraged by the BBC and yet was promoted for the BEF as a means of bonding within the group

⁸⁹ Stevenson, ‘A Musician in the Ranks’, pp.291-293.

⁹⁰ NA HO 186/313 Anti-British Propaganda Broadcasts. ‘Hamburg Broadcast Propaganda: Summary of the Results of an Enquiry into the Extent and Effect of its Impact on the British Public During the Winter 1939-40’, 21st March 1940, p.7. Similar misgivings were voiced in *The Listener*. ‘Broadcast Music during 1939’ by Scott Goddard, December 1939.

⁹¹ Chilton interview 1989.

⁹² B.B. Chapman, ‘The Forces Programme.’ *The Musical Times* 82.1185 (November 1941), pp.412-413.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Briggs, *The War of Words*, pp.130-138.

environment.⁹⁵ World War II did not only accelerate the retreat of official bourgeois culture on British airwaves; this culture, as represented by the state-controlled BBC, was also to be complicit in the creation of a popular alternative.

‘Harlem London’: Hedonism and Jazz on the Home Front

The increased market for upbeat musical entertainment was also reflected on the home front by a surge in the demand for nightlife, which also found contemporaneous parallels in Berlin, where William L. Shirer noted on 29th October 1939 that citizens were “flocking (...) as never before” to theatres, operas and concerts.⁹⁶ *Melody Maker* noted in its post- VE-Day “Dance Band History of the War”:

After we had experienced two months of war, the West End was humming again, and the restaurants, night clubs, etc., were experiencing one of the biggest booms known.

Examples of this were shown by figures at the Café de Paris and the Café Anglais, (...) [which] were pulling in record crowds.

(...) Four more bands came back to town during December, Jack Harris and Lew Stone’s outfits went into the El Morocco.⁹⁷

Sid Colin, guitarist and vocalist with the Royal Air Force Dance Band (aka The Squadronaires), also later observed that the “public’s appetite for entertainment seemed suddenly to have become insatiable. (...) Even the Blitz did nothing to dampen the spirits of people who would never, it seemed, run short of excuses for a night on the town.”⁹⁸ Indeed, revellers remained undeterred even after the bombing of “the best air-raid shelter in town”,⁹⁹ the Café de Paris in London’s West End, on 8th March 1941, which killed Ken ‘Snakehips’ Johnson and Dave ‘Baba’ Wilson of the popular West Indian Dance Orchestra and “some 30 members of the Café’s

⁹⁵ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, p.53.

⁹⁶ Shirer, *This is Berlin*, p.117.

⁹⁷ *NJA Melody Maker* ‘Dance Band History of the War’ by Rex Pardoe, 19th May 1945, p.5.

⁹⁸ Sid Colin, *And the Bands Played on*. London: Elm Tree, 1977, p.122.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p.123.

clientele and staff”.¹⁰⁰ “The West End paused for a moment of horrified silence” recalls Colin, “then the dance went on.”¹⁰¹

This nightlife is inextricable from the development of British jazz during World War II. It proved a hothouse for the culture of ‘jam sessions’ which the Soviet Ambassador to the USA, Alexander Troyanovsky, suggested in 1941 was a contributing factor to the rapid worldwide spread of jazz music.¹⁰² Accordingly, many of the musicians who would be subsequently broadcast over the BBC (via such outlets as *Radio Rhythm Club* and the HMV/*Melody Maker* First Public Jam Session of November 1941) actively participated in these speakeasy-style bottle parties¹⁰³ at which after-hours jam sessions were the norm.¹⁰⁴ Bottle party (or “drinking club”)¹⁰⁵ culture was a pre-war phenomenon dating back at least as early as 1932,¹⁰⁶ but it flourished in the early months of the war in the atmosphere of psychological tension and boredom. Musicologist Catherine Tackley notes that *Radio Rhythm Club*, initiated in June 1940, “drew on blackness and the jam session as tropes of authentic jazz”,¹⁰⁷ and these signifiers of authenticity were evident in a number of the bottle party venues, which ranged from up-market establishments such as Regent Street’s Coconut Grove¹⁰⁸ and the Paradise (both of which featured Harry Parry at various points during the war), as well as seedier locales in which the best jazz was to be found. Sid Colin asserts:

It was at the other end of the spectrum that the true nightclub spirit asserted itself. In the basements below dress shops and Italian cafés, in the streets and alleys around Piccadilly and Soho, in the clip joints with their scruffy waiters, peroxided hostesses and I-have-an-uncle-in-the-Mafia proprietors, that’s where the real musical action was. Most of these places employed the statutory five-piece band, a group that would be augmented and enhanced as night-time shaded into the wee small hours by

¹⁰⁰ Peter W. G. Powell, ‘First English Public Jam Session 1941.’ Draft MS. (Subsequently published in *Jazz Journal*, May 2013).

¹⁰¹ Colin, *And the Bands Played on*, p.123.

¹⁰² In an article on American culture of *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo* (‘Soviet Art’), published 18th September 1941. Cited in Starr, *Red & Hot*, p.192.

¹⁰³ See Colin, *And the Bands Played on*, pp.62-63.

¹⁰⁴ Godbolt, *A History of Jazz in Britain*, p.194.

¹⁰⁵ Powell to the author, 4th February 2013.

¹⁰⁶ See for example NA MEPOL 2/4482 Bottle Parties on “C” Division: Licensing Offences 1932-1936, NA MEPOL 2/4494 Shim Sham or Rainbow Roof Unregistered Clubs: Bottle Parties and Sale of Liquor out of Hours 1935-1938 and NA HO 45/18488 LIQUOR LICENSING: Bottle parties. 7th May 1932 – 3rd November 1938.

¹⁰⁷ Catherine Tackley (in press), ‘Race, Identity and the Meaning of Jazz in Post-Second World War Britain’ in Stratton, Jon and Nabeel Zuberi (eds.) *Black Music in Post-Second World War Britain* (Ashgate). Draft chapter dated 2013.

¹⁰⁸ Also referred to in some sources as Cocoanut Grove.

musicians who, their nights' work over in the West End restaurants, drifted thither (...) to 'sit in' and play a little jazz.¹⁰⁹

Jim Godbolt, too, recalls that "in this sub-world of night people the preference was for jazz rather than for formal dance music", and recalls with reference to the famous, West Indian-owned Jig's Club on Wardour Street that "many Archer Street jazzmen visited the club (and others like it) 'after hours', escaping from the gilded fleshpots of their normal employment. In these less acceptable (socially speaking) environs where the air was undoubtedly fouler they (musically speaking) could breathe more freely."¹¹⁰

However, it is significant that, whilst on the surface the flourishing nightlife fits the broader 'People's War' discourse of a socially and politically cohesive Britain, a closer inspection reveals a more complex picture. This ranges from isolated incidents such as the aftermath of the Café de Paris bombing, which saw the looting and plundering of valuables from the dead and the wounded,¹¹¹ to the alleged threat that unregulated nightspots posed to the war effort. The latter concern led to the matter of bottle parties being raised on several occasions in Parliament, and on 18th March 1940 Sir Patrick Hannon, the Conservative MP for Birmingham Moseley, decried the "very deplorable state of things in the City of London when young soldiers are, from time to time, brought within the ambit of these obnoxious places".¹¹² Indeed, besides the problem that soldiers and "wage earners"¹¹³ appear to have partaken in the unlicensed music, dancing and alcoholic consumption at bottle parties, which the government estimated operated between 10 p.m. - 6 a.m., was the additional use of coal, electricity, gas, food and other valuable commodities.¹¹⁴ The question of entertainment for soldiers on leave, however, complicated the matter of clamping down on such premises without offering alternatives, and the Home Secretary Sir John Anderson acknowledged that on Saturday 20th and 27th April 1940, experimental measures had been taken in the capital to allow licensed drinking in "suitable" restaurants until 2 a.m., "with the object of providing for members of the Forces on leave adequate facilities for entertainment in the late evening under proper

¹⁰⁹ Colin, *And the Bands Played on*, pp.65-66.

¹¹⁰ Godbolt, *A History of Jazz in Britain*, p.192.

¹¹¹ Calder, Angus, *The People's War*. London: Panther, 1971, p.204.

¹¹² *Hansard Online*. 'Bottle Parties', 18th March 1940. Vol. 358 §1648.

¹¹³ *Hansard Online*. 'Bottle Parties', 27th June 1940. Vol. 362 § 591.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*.

conditions and at reasonable prices.”¹¹⁵ Anderson would not directly answer a query from Robert Morgan, Conservative MP for Stourbridge, as to whether the tentative efforts were “intended to reduce the menace of the bottle party”,¹¹⁶ but the latter phenomenon’s popularity certainly appears to have influenced the decision. Again the status quo was ceding ground to public demand in the name of maintaining wartime morale.

The El Morocco bottle party on Albermarle Street in Soho, which opened its doors on 6th December 1939,¹¹⁷ has been overlooked by historiographies of the war, but contemporary parliamentary debates and later recollections of protagonists indicate that it was broadly representative of the phenomenon. Indeed, the Metropolitan Police informed the Home Office on 8th April 1940 that it was “typical of many [bottle parties]”.¹¹⁸ As police witness reports cited below testify, the El Morocco falls firmly into the category of what Colin refers to as “clip joints”, although for its first month on a nightly basis it featured two small jazz groups led by the popular bandleaders Lew Stone (“and his Band”) and the American Jack Harris (“and his El Morocco Orchestra”),¹¹⁹ with revellers promised “Gay Company, Good Food, the best Bands!”¹²⁰ and a demi-monde ambience created by the black walls and pink curtains.¹²¹ The police received several complaints about the El Morocco based on the alleged immorality practiced within, as well as the noise created by patrons in the small hours outside the club. An anonymous letter addressed to the Home Secretary but apparently sent to the Metropolitan Police claimed:

There is a war on – and we fail to understand why you continue to allow Night Clubs and Bottle Parties to flourish. (...) Rich Men with money to burn and Degraded Women are the patrons nightly of these horrible places. (...) Nothing but Drink and Dissipation [sic.] [occur] and [it] is a positive disgrace during this wartime period.

¹¹⁵ *Hansard Online*. ‘Bottle Parties’, 2nd May 1940. Vol. 360 §873-875. The facilities were also available to civilians.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ It was previously located at 42/3 Dean Street. See NA MEPOL 2/4501 El Morocco Bottle Party Execution of a Warrant, 15th November 1937.

¹¹⁸ NA MEPOL 2/4501 El Morocco Bottle Party (handwritten note ‘4A’), summary report to the Home Office. To Brook, unsigned, 8th April 1940.

¹¹⁹ NA MEPOL 2/4501 El Morocco advertising card, Christmas/New Year 1939-40.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ NA MEPOL 2/4501 *London Evening Standard* (cutting). ‘Harlem London’ by Ian Coster, 2nd January 1940.

One of the worst Bottle Party Clubs is El Morocco (...). it is a scandal and should be closed down at once.¹²²

The proprietor of the El Morocco was an ex-City worker named Mark Godfrey, who according to the Metropolitan Police was “a most dangerous man” with a lengthy criminal record.¹²³ The *London Evening Standard*, however, regarded the El Morocco predominantly as a source of entertaining gossip, probably due to the fact that it was also frequented by the “carriage trade” (upper-class and wealthy patrons) and titled celebrities such as Lady Charles Cavendish, aka Adele Astaire. In the newspaper’s *Lighter London* column written by Ian Coster, Godfrey’s establishment in particular was singled out on 2nd January 1940 as evidence of the emergence of a new “Harlem London”, and, in an indication of the crude racism of the environment in which black musicians were operating within that time,¹²⁴ Coster cites Godfrey’s intention “to open up a real Negro club like the Plantation in New York, with a ceiling of half a water-melon and Harlem Whoopie”.¹²⁵

Metropolitan Police files on the El Morocco substantiate Sid Colin’s recollection with regard to bottle parties in general that undercover police officers, “instantly recognisable though they invariably were, were for ever [sic.] haunting the joint in the hope of catching him [the proprietor] out[.]”¹²⁶ Moreover, although Colin suggests that the “minions of the law” could be easily identified,¹²⁷ the El Morocco was under police surveillance and on several occasions undercover officers were able to enter the venue to partake in the illegal drinking or dancing. Their witness statements offer an insight into the nightlife of the so-called Harlem London during December 1939-January 1940; the initial reconnaissance of the El Morocco bottle party, for example, found that the basement of 13 Albermarle Street “is about 45’ by 24’ [feet] and contains a number of tables set round a central dancing floor. The lighting is subdued but the premises, as a whole, are very well-appointed. Dance hostesses of the prostitute type are employed to entertain guests and coax them to

¹²² NA MEPOL 2/4501 To the Home Secretary (handwritten note ‘6A’). Unsigned, undated.

¹²³ NA MEPOL 2/4501 El Morocco Bottle Party (handwritten note ‘4A’), summary report to the Home Office. To Brook, unsigned copy, 8th April 1940.

¹²⁴ See also Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, pp.122-129.

¹²⁵ NA MEPOL 2/4501 *London Evening Standard* (cutting). ‘Harlem London’ by Ian Coster, 2nd January 1940.

¹²⁶ Colin, *And the Bands Played on*, p.64.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

buy drinks. A cabaret entertainment is given.”¹²⁸ The witness statement of PC John Lynch dated 13th January 1940 observed that “[a]n orchestra of six were playing dance music on the left of [the] entrance. About a dozen couples were dancing and approximately 50 persons were present. All of them appeared to be in possession of intoxicating liquor.”¹²⁹

For those in the jazz community, the El Morocco and its ilk represented a “microcosmic Harlem in the heart of town”,¹³⁰ with twenty-seven known bottle parties operating in the West End by March 1940.¹³¹ Less celebrated than upmarket venues such as the Café de Paris and the Paradise, or the predominantly black, “marijuana-scented”¹³² surroundings of the Nest and Jig’s Club, during its brief lifespan the El Morocco was nonetheless a significant enough fixture in the jazz world for its various music personnel changes to make the *Melody Maker* headlines several times, and to be featured in its May 1945 retrospective of wartime dance band activity. When Lew Stone was replaced by Ron Joynes and his Hawaiians, the journal insisted that Stone’s departure “has nothing whatever to do with the place being raided [by the police] on Monday night”,¹³³ and Sydney Kyte’s replacing of Jack Harris the next week was also front-page news.¹³⁴ The headlines on 3rd February 1940 also announced that Miff Ferrie’s band would help to “hold the fort”¹³⁵ for a week, providing a stripped-down seven-piece version of his twelve-piece stage band prior to the latter’s forthcoming performance at the London Palladium and national tour.¹³⁶ This bottle party, then, represented a clear link between Soho’s criminal milieu and the British jazz scene, and when it was finally closed in August 1940 at the Home Office’s behest (along with other Soho bottle parties the Paradise, the Stork, the Boogie-Woogie, the Hi-de-hi and Mac’s) for the reason that “Drunkenness takes place on the premises”, the *Melody Maker* ran it as a

¹²⁸ NA MEPOL 2/4501 El Morocco Bottle Party (handwritten note ‘4A’), summary report to the Home Office. To Brook, unsigned copy, 8th April 1940.

¹²⁹ NA MEPOL 2/4501 Statement of Witness: John Lynch, 13th January 1940.

¹³⁰ Colin, *And the Bands Played on*, p.67.

¹³¹ *Hansard Online*. ‘Bottle Parties’, 4th April 1940. Vol. 359 §299.

¹³² Colin, *And the Bands Played on*, p.67.

¹³³ *NJA Melody Maker* ‘Lew Stone Leaves El Morocco’, 29th January 1940, p.1.

¹³⁴ *NJA Melody Maker* ‘Sydney Kyte for El Morocco: Jack Harris Leaves’, 3rd February 1940, p.1.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *NJA Melody Maker* ‘Miff Ferry Taking Band On Stage’, 3rd February 1940, p.1.

front page story and optimistically reported the bottle parties' collective intention to appeal the decision.¹³⁷

The 'Harlem' nickname inevitably invites parallels with the 'Harlem in Montmartre' described by the anthropologist and Africanist William A. Shack, which emerged in inter-war Paris thanks to the large influx of African-American jazz musicians and aficionados to the city.¹³⁸ This perhaps reflects a degree of escapism from the gravity of the situation in which Londoners found themselves, as well as a general fascination with Harlem in British jazz. Indeed, *Melody Maker* included a feature entitled "Harlemese as She is Spoke", probably written by New York correspondent Leonard Feather, which even purported to introduce readers to the nebulous local vernacular.¹³⁹ The superficial race-based assumptions of the nickname ignored the fact that the wartime London scene featured predominantly British-born or West Indian musicians, although some African-American GIs stationed on British soil would frequent West End clubs from 1942 onwards.¹⁴⁰ As musicologist Catherine Tackley notes, due to racial prejudice many of London's black musicians were unable to find well-paid work, and were restricted instead to playing at bottle parties and in small clubs.¹⁴¹ Although there were notable exceptions to this rule, such as the West Indian Dance Orchestra's ill-fated residency at the Café de Paris, bottle parties and other disreputable establishments remained an important source of employment for black musicians.

While there was a BBC ban on broadcasts from "vice ridden" premises such as Jig's Club,¹⁴² ways were found to circumvent this, such as when the Jig's Club band under Cyril Blake (featuring the Trinidad-born electric guitar pioneer Lauderic Caton) made four live records for the Regal-Zonophone label in December 1941¹⁴³ which "capture the raw excitement" of the venue".¹⁴⁴ The discs were sold at the "bargain price" of two shillings, which *Melody Maker* noted "will enable a fan of the most

¹³⁷ NJA *Melody Maker* 'Closed Bottle Parties will Appeal', 3rd August 1940, p.1.

¹³⁸ William A. Shack, *Harlem on Montmartre: A Paris Jazz Story between the Great Wars*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 2001.

¹³⁹ NJA *Melody Maker* 'Harlemese as She is Spoke: Part Three', 5th April 1941, pp.6-7.

¹⁴⁰ Val Wilmer, 'Harlem Nights in Deepest Mayfair.' *The Guardian*, 17th February 1999.

¹⁴¹ Tackley, 'Race, Identity and the Meaning of Jazz.'

¹⁴² Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, p.128.

¹⁴³ NJA *Melody Maker* 'Bargain-Price Swing on Regal-Zonophone', 24th January 1942.

¹⁴⁴ Godbolt, *A History of Jazz in Britain*, p.194.

limited means to keep up with current jazz”,¹⁴⁵ and were subsequently broadcast over the BBC,¹⁴⁶ albeit in the “localized space” of *Radio Rhythm Club*.¹⁴⁷ Due to the increase in demand for jazz music caused by the war, a number of the musicians from these bottle party sessions would become regular fixtures at the BBC, promoted to the airwaves in the name of morale. This culminated in the First English Public Jam Session on 16th November 1941, produced under the auspices of HMV, *Melody Maker* and the BBC. Peter W. G. Powell, a London wartime jazz aficionado who attended and stewarded the session as a teenager, recalls that, “in the main jam sessions were only to be heard in drinking clubs (in Soho) during the night hours or in rhythm clubs so this event was a first and very significant.”¹⁴⁸ The significance of the famous event, indeed, was that this subterranean world of small-hours jam sessions, which had fomented in venues such as the El Morocco, reached the airwaves to a “tumultuous reception” from a 1000-strong audience,¹⁴⁹ and included various members of Harry Parry’s Radio Rhythm Sextet (themselves resident at the Coconut Grove bottle party),¹⁵⁰ as well as survivors from Ken Johnson’s West Indian Dance Orchestra. The jam session’s progression from the bottle parties and Rhythm Clubs to the airwaves was, as Powell notes, “a milestone for British jazz”,¹⁵¹ and would from 1941 directly contribute to an improvement in the quality of the BBC’s indigenous jazz output.

The USA and Interventionism

The US jazz scene, meanwhile, was already mobilising on Britain’s behalf. Shortly before Christmas 1940, a midnight benefit concert was held at the Apollo Theatre in Harlem, New York, to fund a rolling kitchen for those left homeless by air raids in the East End of London,¹⁵² attracting “a capacity crowd of Harlem socialites and jitterbugs from uptown and downtown”.¹⁵³ A number of African-American and white jazz stars were invited to participate, and this partisan engagement in spite of

¹⁴⁵ NJA *Melody Maker* ‘Bargain-Price Swing on Regal-Zonophone’, 24th January 1942.

¹⁴⁶ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, p.127.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Powell to the author, 4th February 2013.

¹⁴⁹ Powell, ‘First English Public Jam Session 1941’.

¹⁵⁰ NJA *Melody Maker* ‘A Musician Braves the Blitz’ by Harry Parry, 21st December 1940, p.15.

¹⁵¹ Powell to the author, 4th February 2013.

¹⁵² NJA *Melody Maker* ‘Harlem Helps Us’, 23rd November 1940, p.10.

¹⁵³ NJA *Melody Maker* ‘Harlem Turns Out in Force to Help London Bomb Victims’, 21st December 1940, p.10.

official US neutrality was also reflected by the pro-British line of *DownBeat*, the most influential outlet of jazz opinion in America. With a monthly wartime circulation of around 80,000 copies,¹⁵⁴ *DownBeat* reported the experiences of jazz fans and musicians in Europe, offering a one-sided reading of events which fostered sympathy not only for the British but also for the inhabitants of occupied countries. On 15th August 1941, for example, it described the fate of ‘Happy’ Harry Harden (real name David Stoljarovič), the Czechoslovak-Ukrainian bandleader who “fled Hitler’s Gestapo organization, and after nine months of travel finally found refuge in America. Harden (...) was forced to leave his life’s savings of \$25,000 with the Gestapo.”¹⁵⁵ Moreover, on 1st October 1941 *DownBeat* reported that the Gestapo had banned a popular (unnamed) orchestra from giving concerts in Hamburg due to its performances of “Anglicized or Negro music”, and reminded its readers with some exaggeration that “American jazz music was outlawed by Hitler years ago. But frequently word leaks out that the Gestapo was forced to ‘penalize’ orchestras in the Reich for performing jazz music.”¹⁵⁶ In the same edition, the journal noted:

What jazz is in existence in blitz-torn Europe has been squeezed by Hitler’s ersatz “kultur” into noble little Switzerland. That is, of course, not counting England [i.e. Britain] where jazz runs free, so far as it can with a great many of the musicians engaged in active service.

(...) In France, the issue of jazz recordings has virtually ceased since jazz is frowned upon by the Nazis and negro musicians are forbidden to record.¹⁵⁷

However, while the historian Eric Hobsbawm has convincingly pointed to extreme left-wing tendencies in the pre-war British jazz scene,¹⁵⁸ *DownBeat* operated within certain cultural and ideological strictures, generally refraining from featuring African-American musicians on its front covers¹⁵⁹ and operating within a patriotic discourse that treated communism and Nazism as moral equivalents. An article published on 1st August 1940 decried alleged American communist members of the Musicians’ Union as “foreign rats [boring] from within to undermine our country,

¹⁵⁴ *DownBeat (Online)*. ‘About Down Beat: A History as Rich as Jazz Itself – Writers on a Long Leish’. Undated.

¹⁵⁵ JZD *DownBeat* ‘Fled Hitler, Now “Happy” Harden Makes a Comeback’, 15th July 1941, p.5.

¹⁵⁶ JZD *DownBeat* ‘Hitler Ban Breaks Up Ork’, 1st October 1941.

¹⁵⁷ JZD *DownBeat* ‘Continental Jazz Has Been Squeezed into Switzerland’, 1st October 1941.

¹⁵⁸ Francis Newton, *The Jazz Scene*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1961, p.241. ‘Francis Newton’ was Hobsbawm’s pseudonym as a jazz critic.

¹⁵⁹ *DownBeat (Online)*, ‘About Down Beat: A History as Rich as Jazz Itself – Writers on a Long Leish.’ Undated.

our ideals and our free institutions”,¹⁶⁰ and thus demonstrated at least the preconditions for isolationist sentiment.

Nonetheless, *DownBeat*'s allegiances were clearly reflected in its descriptions of the plight of Europe's jazz protagonists. In a similar manner to the broadcasts of London-based CBS correspondent Ed Murrow, the journal stressed the resilience and bravery of the British in the face of German aggression, for example in a short piece on 1st August 1940 reporting the interruption by an air-raid of a concert in Newcastle-upon-Tyne:

Air-raid sirens shrieked at midnight as Nazi bombers roared over the English coast, but Sid Millward and his Nit Wits persuaded a thousand dancers to “keep trucking on down” (...).

Alto-saxist Millward and his music encouraged the crowd to disregard the sirens and kept them happy until the dance ended two hours later.¹⁶¹

Thus *DownBeat* filtered European news items to American readers within this shared cultural paradigm which transcended national boundaries. The violent adjectives (“shrieked” and “roared”) juxtapose with the bravery of the British musicians and dancers, and certainly were not intended to encourage a neutral interpretation of the incident, and this can be said of the general position of the journal towards events in Europe prior to America's entry into the war.

Certainly Gallup polls from the period suggest that American public opinion firmly supported the British side of events, if not yet active intervention; indeed, research conducted on behalf of the US-based Institute for Propaganda Analysis concluded in 1940 that “the findings of Dr. Gallup's Insitute read like the conclusions of a British Blue Book.”¹⁶² And on September 1st 1939, as German Forces crossed the Polish border, a Gallup poll found that 87% of Americans thought that Germany had “no legitimate demands on Danzig”.¹⁶³ A.J.P. Taylor's unfounded assertion that “[a]ll [America] had to offer was moral disapproval; and this was turned less against the dictators than against the powers who failed to resist them”, and “maintain[ed] an

¹⁶⁰ JZD *DownBeat* ‘Communists And [sic.] Nazis Should Be Run Out of the Country’ by “C.C” (Carl Cons). 1st August 1940, p.10.

¹⁶¹ JZD *DownBeat* ‘British Truck While Nazis Drop Bombs’, 1st August 1940.

¹⁶² Harold Lavine and James Wechsler. *War Propaganda and the United States*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1940, p.43. Blue Books were documents commissioned for the British Foreign Secretary.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, p.43.

even-handed neutrality which usually benefited the aggressor”,¹⁶⁴ is contradicted by the work of the European correspondents for the ‘Big Four’ networks,¹⁶⁵ which reflected Roosevelt’s interventionist agenda.

A ‘Basic Plan for a Public Relations Administration’ was approved by the joint Army-Navy board almost as soon as war broke out in Europe, and submitted to the White House on 10th June 1940, the day that Italy joined the German attack on France.¹⁶⁶ This was intended to pave the way for the development of a propaganda apparatus with which to win over sceptical portions of the American populace to the interventionist cause by informing them of the gravity of the European situation and its implications for the United States. Like Neville Chamberlain, who was initially reticent about the creation of MoI as a state propaganda instrument in Britain,¹⁶⁷ and presumably similarly mindful of the pejorative connotations which had remained attached to propaganda since the Great War, Roosevelt took no position regarding the Plan, relying instead on private individuals and organisations to “marshal the opinion”¹⁶⁸ of American citizens toward interventionism. Commercial radio, indeed, played an important part in the transition of dominant American public opinion from isolationist to interventionist. All four major networks broadcast round-the-clock coverage of political and military developments,¹⁶⁹ making a name for reporters such as Raymond Gram Swing, H. V. Kaltenborn, Edward R. Murrow and Elmer Davis, the future head of OWI.¹⁷⁰ The historian Alfred Haworth Jones has noted that Murrow’s reports from London “presented an intentionally sympathetic view of the English, while the tone of William L. Shirer’s voice as he broadcast from Berlin, as well as his much-publicized difficulties with Nazi censors, left little doubt as to his attitude toward the Third Reich.”¹⁷¹ With 82.8% of Americans owning radio sets by

¹⁶⁴ Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War*, p.165.

¹⁶⁵ ABC, CBS, Mutual and NBC.

¹⁶⁶ Richard W. Steele, ‘Preparing the Public for War: Efforts to Establish a National Propaganda Agency, 1940-41.’ *The American Historical Review* 75.6 (1970), pp.1640-1653. Here p.1641.

¹⁶⁷ *Hansard Online*. British News and Propaganda, 29th November 1938. Vol. 342 §239.

¹⁶⁸ Ernest Angell, ‘The Civilian Morale Agency.’ *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 220 (1942): Organizing for Total War, pp.160-67. Here p.161.

¹⁶⁹ Alfred Haworth Jones, ‘The Making of an Interventionist on the Air: Elmer Davis and CBS News 1939-41.’ *Pacific Historical Review* 48.1 (February 1973), pp.74-93. Here p.75.

¹⁷⁰ Gerd Horten, *Radio Goes to War: The Cultural Politics of Propaganda during World War II*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 2003, pp.29-30 pp.34-39.

¹⁷¹ Haworth Jones, ‘The Making of an Interventionist on the Air’, p.75.

1940,¹⁷² these anti-Nazi eyewitness accounts from Europe “projected a picture of the world quite incompatible with the impression on many landlocked listeners’ minds.”¹⁷³

It is significant that these broadcasts, which brought the war “into America’s living room”¹⁷⁴ and helped to nurture pro-British sympathies, were relayed by private networks and only made possible through sponsorship, thus presaging the convergence of commercial and patriotic agendas that was to play a significant role in American wartime domestic propaganda.¹⁷⁵ The RMVP, too, attempted to use broadcasting to influence American opinion during the first year of the war, often in the form of informal, intimate ‘chats’ with the listener, featuring American broadcasters and frequently utilising colloquialisms (i.e. “don’t you think?”) in order to create an illusion of impartiality and reason.¹⁷⁶ However, the majority of opinions on the American airwaves broadly espoused an interventionist agenda, due also to the fact that domestic broadcasters’ dependence upon sponsorship allowed the Roosevelt administration to remove the most prominent and vitriolic isolationist commentators such as Boake Carter and Father Charles Coughlin;¹⁷⁷ by placing pressure on the sponsors of these programmes, it was possible to force them off the air without needing to risk the potentially negative publicity of official censorship, a strategy noted by the German government, which attempted to utilise the silencing of Coughlin, “well known for his fight against Jewry and Bolshevism”,¹⁷⁸ to denounce Roosevelt’s “ruthless tinkering with such liberties as freedom of thought and freedom of the Press”¹⁷⁹ in their English broadcasts to the USA.

William Joyce and Early German Propaganda to Britain

While early German wartime broadcasts to the United States were aimed, as a contemporary American commentator suggested, “apparently at a mass audience

¹⁷² According to the Decennial Census conducted by the US Census Bureau, cited in William C. Ackerman, ‘The Dimensions of American Broadcasting.’ *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 9.1 (1945), pp.1-18. Here p.3.

¹⁷³ Haworth Jones, ‘The Making of an Interventionist on the Air’, p.75.

¹⁷⁴ A phrase coined by Edward Bliss Jr. in relation to television coverage of the Vietnam War, cited in Horten, *Radio Goes to War*, p.31.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, pp.113-115.

¹⁷⁶ Graves, Jr. December 1940.

¹⁷⁷ Horten, *Radio Goes to War*, pp.33-34.

¹⁷⁸ NARA RG 262 Box 1 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 10th – 16th April 1942 (dated 18th April 1942), p.7.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*.

with high school education or less”¹⁸⁰ (perhaps reflecting the contempt with which Goebbels held American culture),¹⁸¹ RMVP programming for Britain was both more cerebral and more popular, targeted at a variety of potential defeatist factions and centred around its most talented English-language broadcaster, William Joyce, aka Lord Haw-Haw. Born to Irish parents in Brooklyn, New York in 1906, Joyce grew up in Galway before his Loyalist family fled to England, where in 1933 he applied for a British passport and joined Oswald Mosley’s British Union of Fascists (BUF).¹⁸² Expelled from the BUF in 1937 for unknown reasons, he formed the National Socialist League before escaping to Germany in August 1939, joining RRG’s English-language section and trialling successfully as a newsreader in September 1939,¹⁸³ initially broadcasting under the pseudonym ‘Wilhelm Fröhlich’. Unhappy with both the style and the substance of the material which he was given by the RMVP, Joyce was soon writing not only his own ‘Germany Calling’ scripts but also almost single-handedly producing the material for the Nazis’ secret stations broadcasting to England.¹⁸⁴

The ‘Haw-Haw’ moniker was coined by the *Daily Express* radio critic ‘Jonah Barrington’¹⁸⁵ and originally applied to several broadcasters, including Wolf Mittler and Norman Baillie-Stewart,¹⁸⁶ before the RMVP capitalised on its success by attributing it solely to its most talented Anglophone employee, revealing his true identity via the German Overseas Service on 3rd August 1940.¹⁸⁷ It is significant, however, that this publicity coup was facilitated almost single-handedly by the British media with the complicity of the government. The composite character Lord Haw-Haw was not merely, as Asa Briggs has suggested, a product of “the love of the British press for personalizing policies and the atmosphere of boredom during the early months of the war”;¹⁸⁸ the BBC and MoI actively encouraged the public ridicule of German propaganda, which was described by Barrington as the “healthy

¹⁸⁰ Graves, Jr., ‘Lord Haw-Haw of Hamburg’, p.602.

¹⁸¹ Studdert, ‘The Death of Music’, p.26.

¹⁸² Peter Martland, *Lord Haw Haw: The English Voice of Nazi Germany*. Richmond, Surrey: National Archives, 2003, p.18.

¹⁸³ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, p.100.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p.101.

¹⁸⁵ ‘Jonah Barrington’ was the nom de plume of the composer and critic Cyril Carr Dalmaine.

¹⁸⁶ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, pp.107-110.

¹⁸⁷ Martland, *Lord Haw-Haw*, p.42. Bergmeier and Lotz incorrectly state that Joyce’s identity was made known on 3rd April 1941 (Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, p.101).

¹⁸⁸ Briggs, *The War of Words*, p.139.

British laughter [at Haw-Haw]”.¹⁸⁹ The manifold social uses of humour (for example as a tool for resistance and subversion) have recently been highlighted by the sociologist Ebenezer Obadare, who also cites Gary Alan Fine’s conclusion that humour can “sustain the morale and the cohesion of groups”.¹⁹⁰ Nonetheless, within the context of the RMVP’s propaganda methodology, the appropriateness of such state-sanctioned subversion appears questionable, as was noted by the British public opinion pollsters Henry and Ruth Durant in 1940:

It was the London sensational press which really “made” [Haw-Haw]- which gave him his name and discovered him for the public. He was prominently featured as absurd, screamingly funny, hilarious entertainment. Evidently the purpose of this publicity was to dis- credit [sic.] the German broadcasts from the start. But, on the contrary, its immediate impact was to gain for them a growing audience.¹⁹¹

Moreover, it is paradoxical that in spite of the employment of ridicule as the chief means of defence against Haw-Haw, his broadcasts were taken extremely seriously at official levels. The naivety of the British response to Haw-Haw, which conversely contributed to the popularity of his broadcasts (*Daily Mirror* columnist ‘Cassandra’ went so far as to “urgently ask” all readers who were able to tune in to German propaganda to do so)¹⁹² is inadvertently revealed in a letter from the BBC Director-General Frederick W. Ogilvie to Sir Campbell Stuart, head of the Enemy Propaganda Department,¹⁹³ in December 1939. The “Haw-Haw question”, wrote Ogilvie, “is of great importance. We have never regarded it as the joke which it is supposed to be by some”.¹⁹⁴ He noted that, in conjunction with MoI, the BBC had instigated the nucleus of what was to become its Listener Research surveys in order to gather quantitative data regarding the public’s reception of Joyce’s broadcasts. Ogilvie argued:

That Haw-Haw should be countered is of course agreed entirely: the only problem concerns the methods. It is undeniable that he is widely listened to at present: what is more doubtful is how listeners react to him.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, p.143.

¹⁹⁰ Ebenezer Obadare, ‘The Uses of Ridicule: Humour, “Infrapolitics” and Civil Society in Nigeria.’ *African Affairs* 108.431 (2009), pp.241–261. Here p.248.

¹⁹¹ Henry Durant and Ruth Durant. ‘Lord Haw-Haw of Hamburg: His British Audience.’ *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 4.3 (September 1940), pp.443-450. Here p.443.

¹⁹² Briggs, *The War of Words*, p.143.

¹⁹³ See Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, pp.87-89.

¹⁹⁴ NA HO 186/313 Anti-British Propaganda Broadcasts. Ogilvie to Stuart, 26th December 1939, p.1.

Some believe him, others do not; many, consciously or unconsciously, probably absorb a good deal of what he says. Such popularity as he has may pass, or it may not. (...)

We are already doing much to counter him, and plans are at hand for doing much more. Ridicule being one of the most powerful weapons in the armoury (a cartoon of [David] Low's may be worth half-a-dozen speeches). Haw-Haw is frequently guyed in our Variety programmes, - by skilled radio artists like [Arthur] Askey or the Western Brothers.¹⁹⁵

However, as an article in *The Times* of London on 28th December 1939 pointed out, "laughter plays a part in their [the Nazis'] scheme of propaganda. Dr. Goebbels learnt in his fight for power that repetition can break down resistance to ideas."¹⁹⁶ This was ironic, since Ogilvie had, in his letter to Campbell Stuart, singled out *The Times* for criticism for its daily publication of Haw-Haw's broadcast times and wavelengths, thus "day after day in effect act[ing] as enemy distributing-agent".¹⁹⁷ The dangers of repeat listening were also highlighted in 1940 by Henry and Ruth Durant, who observed that "[p]eople tuned in 'to have a good laugh,' but then, having acquired the habit, some began to think 'there may be something in what he says'",¹⁹⁸ and this is further substantiated by Ogilvie's analysis of the content of his broadcasts, which was designed to appeal to existing currents of political thought and bore marked similarities to domestic journalism:

Haw-Haw is not the clumsy craftsman he is sometimes imagined to be, nor is his work by any means "all lies" which merely need showing up. He is obviously a well-informed syndicate; [sic.] and a great deal of his material is taken directly and quite fairly accurately from British sources, and is carefully shaped towards different sections of the British public in turn. Some of the talks on working class housing, for example, or unemployment, are almost indistinguishable from articles in *The Daily Herald* or *The New Statesman*, even when they are not verbatim quotations of them. Some of the talks about India or Palestine or about our alleged sabotaging of the League of Nations in the last few years might have come straight from *The News Chronicle* or the *Manchester Guardian*. Anti-semitic [sic.] material runs closely parallel with *Action*; and so on. How are talks like these supposed to be effectively answered at 9.30 p.m. unless you are ready to suppress half the newspapers in this country the next morning?¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ *The Times Digital Archive*. 'In Germany To-day: War by Wireless'. *The Times* [London], 28th December 1939, p.5.

¹⁹⁷ NA HO 186/313 Anti-British Propaganda Broadcasts. Ogilvie to Stuart, 26th December 1939, p.2

¹⁹⁸ Durant/Durant, 'Lord Haw-Haw of Hamburg', p.443.

¹⁹⁹ NA HO 186/313 Anti-British Propaganda Broadcasts. Ogilvie to Stuart, 26th December 1939, pp.2-3.

The BBC's Listener Research found in January 1940 that one in six listeners tuned in regularly to Hamburg, three were occasional listeners and two never listened; by comparison four in every six listened to the BBC news. It concluded that

[t]he blackout, the novelty of hearing the enemy, the desire to hear both sides, the insatiable appetite for news and the desire to be in the swim have all played their part in building up Hamburg's audience and in holding it together. The entertainment value of the broadcasts, their concentration on undeniable evils in this country, their news sense, their presentation and the publicity they have received in this country, together with the momentum of the habit of listening to them, have all contributed towards their establishment as a familiar feature on the social landscape.²⁰⁰

The potential significance of Joyce's considerable British listenership is often underestimated or misinterpreted by historians. Kater's dismissive assertion that "[t]he British listened more to Joyce's broadcasts because the names of freshly captured Allied soldiers would regularly be spelled out, while at the same time they found Haw-Haw's bathos amusing, if not a nuisance"²⁰¹ is conclusively refuted by the evidence, not least the findings of the BBC's own extensive research into the variety of reasons why Britons tuned into Hamburg.²⁰² Moreover, Joyce biographer Peter Martland's insistence that "[initially] people came to regard all the blustering sneering claims he [Haw-Haw] made as one big joke"²⁰³ is an oversimplification which mistakes the BBC-endorsed policy of ridiculing Lord Haw-Haw for evidence of his failure. The tendency is to retrospectively dismiss the threat posed by Haw-Haw in view of his subsequent decline in listening figures and the increasing obsolescence of his propaganda following the Battle of Britain and the downturn in German military fortunes, but this does not accurately reflect the nature of the potential threat he posed. Surveyed listeners frequently stated that a possible side

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, pp.3-4.

²⁰⁰ NA HO 186/313 Anti-British Propaganda Broadcasts. 'Hamburg Broadcast Propaganda: Summary of the Results of an Enquiry into the Extent and Effect of its Impact on the British Public during the Winter 1939-40', 21st March 1940, p.1. This report offers a detailed account of BBC Listener Research's methodology of gathering information.

²⁰¹ Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.134.

²⁰² See for example NA HO 186/313 Anti-British Propaganda Broadcasts. 'Hamburg Broadcast Propaganda: Summary of the Results of an Enquiry into the Extent and Effect of its Impact on the British Public during the Winter 1939-40', 21st March 1940, p.1.

²⁰³ Martland, *Lord Haw-Haw*, p.43.

effect of tuning into Hamburg was that it “may depress or frighten people”,²⁰⁴ and this was reiterated by the psychiatrist W. A. Sinclair in the BBC’s magazine *The Listener*, who warned in February 1940 that “[the Nazis] are not trying to argue with you: they are trying to depress you”.²⁰⁵

Joyce’s broadcast was placed immediately after the BBC news when two-thirds of Britons were already at their radio sets,²⁰⁶ and used the strong Hamburg wavelength, which was deliberately positioned very close to that of the BBC and therefore only a minor dial adjustment away.²⁰⁷ From the outset, Haw-Haw was a cause of genuine concern at both public and government levels;²⁰⁸ it is remarkable, therefore, that as late as 1944 America’s FCC was still habitually attributing the title “Lord Hee Haw” [sic.] to the American Nazi propagandist Fred Kaltenbach in its internal communications²⁰⁹ and indeed had its own “Hee Haw” [sic.] file²¹⁰ with which to record the frequency of Kaltenbach’s broadcasts from Berlin. The name’s origin in very British class distinctions and the storm of publicity that accompanied Joyce’s early broadcasts to Britain were apparently lost on the FCC monitors.

In tandem with the intended short-term psychological effects of Haw-Haw’s broadcasts was a longer-term strategy of alienating listeners from the government and to convincing Britons that the war was contrary to their own interests. Michael Balfour argues that, during the Phoney War, “suggestions that the [British] Government was inefficient, half-hearted, short-sighted and corrupt – a staple theme – echoed the views of an appreciable part of the British public. But the natural inference was that a new team was needed to prosecute the war more vigorously – hardly what the Germans wanted!”²¹¹ However, this view fails to take into account

²⁰⁴ NA HO 186/313 Anti-British Propaganda Broadcasts. ‘Hamburg Broadcast Propaganda: Summary of the Results of an Enquiry into the Extent and Effect of its Impact on the British Public during the Winter 1939-40’, 21st March 1940, p.15.

²⁰⁵ Sinclair 1940, p.403.

²⁰⁶ NA HO 186/313 Anti-British Propaganda Broadcasts. ‘Hamburg Broadcast Propaganda: Summary of the Results of an Enquiry into the Extent and Effect of its Impact on the British Public during the Winter 1939-40’, 21st March 1940, p.1.

²⁰⁷ Durant/Durant, ‘Lord Haw-Haw of Hamburg’, p.444.

²⁰⁸ Senior figures at the BBC expressed their discomfort at the popularity of the Lord Haw-Haw propaganda broadcasts as early as one week into the war (Doherty, *Nazi Wireless Propaganda*, p.99). For the public’s reaction see Briggs, *The War of Words*, p.141.

²⁰⁹ See for example NARA RG 262 Box 2 FCC Suggestions for Overseas Propaganda.

²¹⁰ NARA RG 262 Box 2 Indexes to Foreign Broadcasts 1941-45 Index of Broadcasts by Kaltenbach (“Lord Hee Haw [sic.]”).

²¹¹ Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, p.140.

the ‘left-wing’ and simultaneously anti-Semitic dialectic employed in the Haw-Haw broadcasts, in which the British ruling class were attacked as representatives of ‘Jewish’ business interests.²¹² These themes were also re-stated in the musical propaganda which apparently framed Haw-Haw’s programme throughout the war, and as early as October 1939 BBC monitors picked up a syncopated interpretation of the popular 19th century hymn ‘Onward Christian Soldiers’ performed by Erhard Bauschke’s swing orchestra with lyrics which asserted that British soldiers would “Fight and die for Jewry/As we did before/You must die for Poland/Pay your debt of thanks/To your benefactors/International banks!”²¹³ As with the lyrics of Charlie and his Orchestra, it is probable that the text was written by William Joyce, featuring as it does his staple motifs of anti-Semitism and hostility to international financiers, coupled with the caustic wit that characterised his news commentaries. The inference encouraged by Joyce is clearly that the war should not be “prosecute[d] more vigorously”,²¹⁴ but that it should not be prosecuted at all because it was for the benefit of ‘Jews and bankers’, not British interests, and this idea was repeatedly emphasised in the Haw-Haw broadcasts and the lyrical content of Charlie and his Orchestra.

The BBC’s Listener Research regarding the potential resonance of the subjects addressed in Haw-Haw’s broadcasts found that by far the most successful line of attack (deemed effective by 14.1% of respondents) was left-wing agitation, by describing and emphasising “British social conditions, unemployment, distressed areas, slums, and working class distress in wartime”.²¹⁵ Next were the inadequacy of British old-age pensions (5.1%) and criticisms of British colonial policy and the handling of India and Palestine (3.4%). Importantly, allegations of Jewish influence in Britain (0.8%) and charges of governmental inefficiency and corruption (0.8%) were rarely mentioned.²¹⁶ Since these represented staple themes for Haw-Haw (and later lyrical content for Charlie and his Orchestra), Hamburg appears to have erred in pursuing anti-Semitic themes when there were abundant “undeniable [social] evils”

²¹² See for example Martland, *Lord Haw-Haw*, p.43 and Briggs, *The War of Words*, p.144.

²¹³ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, p.293.

²¹⁴ Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, p.140.

²¹⁵ NA HO 186/313 Anti-British Propaganda Broadcasts. ‘Hamburg Broadcast Propaganda: Summary of the Results of an Enquiry into the Extent and Effect of its Impact on the British Public during the Winter 1939-40’, 21st March 1940, p.16.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

to exploit. Edith Dawson, a housewife in Gateshead, offered an indicator of both Hamburg's problems and its opportunities in a series of diary entries for Mass Observation in January 1940. Whilst claiming that Haw-Haw "speaks much truth re[garding] Jews",²¹⁷ she showed relative indifference to his anti-Semitic attacks on Leslie Hore-Belisha. Her conclusion that Hore-Belisha's efficiency as British War Minister was more important than his Jewish heritage ("Jew? No matter what race [he is] if he gets things done")²¹⁸ suggests a prioritisation of the national interest over personal prejudices, and may help to explain why anti-Semitic propaganda for British audiences was generally unsuccessful, in spite of the fact that, as Martin Doherty has demonstrated, considerable anti-Jewish sentiment existed in Britain at the time.²¹⁹ Nonetheless, Dawson praised Haw-Haw as "show[ing] up the capitalist system and in a jovial way" and being "good for socialism here [in Britain]".²²⁰ "Wouldn't miss him now," she wrote on 16th January 1940. "Tom [diarist's husband] and I know he speaks the truth on (...) social & other problems – I love his voice & manner. Tom speaks at work to men. More & more people 'fed up' with war. Say Haw-Haw was right that 'Conservatives found this war a veritable godsend'."²²¹

Her descriptions of workers and families not only listening to but also publicly discussing Haw-Haw's ideas contradict the BBC report's assertion that "[i]t is significant that the Hamburg points which meet with any substantial measure of approval from listeners are all ones which could [be], and frequently are, made within this country and are accepted as perfectly legitimate criticisms in no way inconsistent with a desire to prosecute the war to its successful conclusion. Genuinely defeatist propaganda appears to fall on singularly unreceptive ears".²²² The left-wing pacifist and journalist Denis Argent, too, wrote to Mass Observation that war was inevitable because "the whole propaganda machine is against peace. Capitalists are making money from war (...) & the Trade Unions are probably on the whole in favour of continuance because of vast [amount of] arms & war industries

²¹⁷ *Mass Observation Online*. Diarist No. 5296, 9th January 1940.

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, 6th January 1940.

²¹⁹ See Doherty, *Nazi Wireless Propaganda*, p.99, pp.117-118, pp.144-146 and pp.162-166.

²²⁰ *Mass Observation Online*. Diarist No. 5296, 16th January 1940.

²²¹ *Ibid*.

²²² NA HO 186/313 Anti-British Propaganda Broadcasts. 'Hamburg Broadcast Propaganda: Summary of the Results of an Enquiry into the Extent and Effect of its Impact on the British Public during the Winter 1939-40', 21st March 1940, p.16.

employment”.²²³ Haw-Haw’s attempts to merge such anti-capitalist scepticism with anti-Semitism, together with the RMVP’s aforementioned propaganda methodology of breaking down listeners’ resistance by repetition, could potentially have been more fruitful than it ultimately was. That Hamburg’s attempts to undermine Britain’s social cohesion would ultimately fail was by no means a foregone conclusion.

Indeed, it is significant that the BBC adapted its output to meet the challenge presented by the German broadcasts, and Ogilvie’s assertion in the letter to Sir Campbell Stuart that “[t]he best defence is attack, and it should be attack on British terms, not Haw-Haw’s”,²²⁴ was unrealistic. Ogilvie objected to the suggestion that the BBC engage a speaker to counter Joyce’s broadcasts on the grounds that it would represent a propaganda coup for the RMVP, and this opinion was seconded by Goebbels, who noted in his diary on 5th January 1940 that “[the British are] talking about him [Lord Haw-Haw], and that’s worth a great deal. In London they want to employ someone to speak against him. That would be the best thing that could happen to us.”²²⁵ For Ogilvie, this would place the ‘British Haw-Haw’ on the defensive from the outset, and Joyce could then “vary his bowling according to the batsman”.²²⁶ Instead, the immediate British response to Haw-Haw was the necessary shedding of inhibitions about subjectivity on the BBC Home Service.²²⁷ The Corporation maintained its valuable reputation for truthful news reporting, but supplemented this with refutations of Nazi claims in programmes such as W. A. Sinclair’s *The Voice of the Nazi*, a monthly broadcast which ran from December 1939 to May 1940,²²⁸ as well as a dramatised series on the history of the NSDAP entitled *In the Shadow of the Swastika*.²²⁹

However, the BBC would later adopt the strategy of responding to the RMVP on its German Service. Sefton Delmer, who would later characteristically proclaim that he “had no great belief in the dry and dreary business of debating with the Nazis over the ether, an exercise of which the B.B.C. with its flock of would-be M.P.s was over-

²²³ *Mass Observation Online*. Diarist No. 5010, October 1939, p.49.

²²⁴ NA HO 186/313 Anti-British Propaganda Broadcasts. Ogilvie to Stuart, 26th December 1939, p.5.

²²⁵ Elke Fröhlich (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*. Teil 1 Band 4 (1.1.1940-8.7.1941). München: K. G. Saur, 1993, p.170.

²²⁶ NA HO 186/313 Anti-British Propaganda Broadcasts. Ogilvie to Stuart, 26th December 1939, p.3.

²²⁷ Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, p.143.

²²⁸ Doherty, *Nazi Wireless Propaganda*, p.102.

²²⁹ NA HO 186/313 Anti-British Propaganda Broadcasts. Ogilvie to Stuart, 26th December 1939, p.2.

fond”, was nonetheless employed by the Corporation in June 1941 to listen to Hans Fritzsche “doing his weekly pep-talk for the German public over Radio Berlin. Then, an hour and a half later, I was to tear Fritzsche to pieces with a reply over the German service of the B.B.C.”²³⁰ Delmer’s post-war claim that the concept “oozed human interest and listener appeal”²³¹ appears on the surface to be negated by the steady decline in Fritzsche’s own listening figures during the course of the war,²³² thus indicating that at least one half of the bout was being increasingly avoided by their German audience. It is probable that the concomitant increase in German listener figures for British broadcasts (estimated by the Gestapo to be one million at the end of 1941 and fifteen million by the autumn of 1944)²³³ was more due to the progressive decline in the credibility of RMVP propaganda than Delmer’s own contributions,²³⁴ but it certainly affected Fritzsche into modifying his medium. He subsequently protested at the Nuremberg Trials that “in my opinion the tone [of my wartime broadcasts] always stayed several grades behind the severity of the tone of my opponent”.²³⁵

William Joyce was probably also responsible for scripting the programmes of the New British Broadcasting Station (NBBS), which first aired on 25th February 1940 and continued until the end of the war,²³⁶ thus indicating the value which the RMVP placed on the project. Like Goebbels’ later effort *Station Debunk* (described by Foreign Office monitors as an “American counterpart” to NBBS),²³⁷ NBBS purported to be run by disgruntled patriots, and a senior BBC official noted in November 1945 that the station’s activities had initially “caused considerable concern to the authorities in this country”.²³⁸ The station was fascist in character and its material was found by the BBC to be “well chosen [sic.] and ably handled”,²³⁹ while its target audience was considered by the British monitor to be of a higher

²³⁰ Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, p.61.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² See BA NS118/337 Notiz für Pg. Tießler – betr. Politische Zeitungsschau von Hans Fritzsche, 29th March 1943.

²³³ Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, p.96.

²³⁴ Welch, *The Third Reich*, pp.144-156.

²³⁵ Fritzsche/Springer, *Es Sprach Hans Fritzsche*, p.226.

²³⁶ NA FO 898/52 ‘New British Broadcasting Station’, 31st August 1942.

²³⁷ NA FO 898/52 ‘Station Debunk’, 31st August 1942.

²³⁸ Cited in Doherty, *Nazi Wireless Propaganda*, p.90.

²³⁹ NA FO 898/52 ‘New British Broadcasting Station’, 31st August 1942.

social class than the other three German ‘freedom stations’ to Britain.²⁴⁰ At a House of Commons debate on 25th April 1940, Unionist MP Dr. James Little raised the issue of NBBS, which was “disseminating German propaganda of a mischievous kind, by giving untruthful talks on imaginary happenings in the United Kingdom and elsewhere over the British Empire, concluding the programme with ‘God Save the King’ and gramophone selections.”²⁴¹ Little claimed that many of his constituents were unaware of the station’s German origins, as was the Bengali novelist and academic Sudhindra Nath Ghose, who described it in his April 1940 diary for *Mass Observation* as a British ‘pirate’ station and cited discussions with friends as to why it was not jammed.²⁴²

Indeed, the post-war BBC report called the NBBS programmes “rather clever broadcasts to begin with and rather above the average... [the Nazis’] best effort really”.²⁴³ Its methodology was noted by another *Mass Observation* correspondent who picked up the station in Liverpool in July 1940:

I was trying to get America on the short-wave band, and heard this station, giving out advice to the Britishers [sic.]. We were to be invaded at any moment, and there were five hints given, which the announcer asked people to write down, and if they could, distribute them amongst their friends. It was simply propaganda to incite people to take up their baggage and start wandering, and thus adding to the confusion, similar to what happened in Belgium and France. They didn’t say where people were to go to (...). I particularly noted the last hint “Have your money ready. The banks will be closed.” This I suppose, is to make people rush to the banks and take out all their money. The proceedings ended with the National Anthem. I have never heard such impudence in all my life.²⁴⁴

It is noteworthy that this same tactic of sowing panic and encouraging civilians to clog the roads and create confusion and logistical difficulties would be employed more effectively by the Anglo-American PWD/SHEF in Germany in 1945, and there is no evidence to suggest that the advice given by NBBS were followed (or to support Bergmeier and Lotz’s assertion that NBBS broadcast times were listed in British newspapers). Other features of the NBBS were ‘first aid hints’, which detailed the gruesome injuries that might be sustained during an air raid (very similar

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ *Hansard Online*. New British Broadcasting Station, 5th April 1940. Vol. 360 §376-377.

²⁴² *Mass Observation Online*. Diarist No. 5082: April 1940.

²⁴³ Cited in Doherty, *Nazi Wireless Propaganda*, p.90.

²⁴⁴ *Mass Observation Online*. Diarist No. 5341: July 1940. The errors in grammar and punctuation are from the original document.

in nature to Sefton Delmer's 'English lesson' for German Forces over the BBC German Service in 1940),²⁴⁵ as well as details of German invasion plans and coded messages to alleged saboteurs in Britain. However, the station was hampered by bad reception and unconvincing material; when it finally introduced a regular entertainment feature, 'The Off-Duty Programme', every Sunday at 4 p.m. (starting on 6th March 1941), the British monitors noted that it consisted of "recordings of modern music interspersed with weak jokes with a political moral."²⁴⁶ By the summer of 1942 even this laboured attempt at propagandistic light entertainment had begun placing more emphasis on propaganda than on entertainment,²⁴⁷ but by that point the 'psychological tide' had already turned in Britain's favour.

Conclusion

The BBC's poor start to the war and the 'cultural blackout' represented an opportunity upon which the RMVP failed to capitalise. The void created by the closure of all channels but the BBC Home Service, and the weakness of its initial entertainment output, saw many listeners turning to foreign broadcasts or the gramophone for entertainment, but this was gradually filled by the BBC Forces Programme in January 1940 and the progressive improvement of the Home Service. The Forces Programme itself was a response to a wholly new kind of audience with unique requirements and listening habits, and this served to further the cause of jazz in British broadcasting. Also important from the point of view of the musicological development of British jazz was the phenomenon of "Harlem in London", a psychological by-product of the boredom and tension of the Phoney War which saw the jam session culture fostered in informal subterranean environs; as will be shown in the following chapter, this too would bear fruit on the British airwaves via public jam sessions and the specialist *Radio Rhythm Club*. Furthermore, the (intermittently constructive) criticism of *Melody Maker* during this period set the tone for an unofficial wartime collaboration between the journal and the Corporation, and I have highlighted for the first time the importance of consideration of individual journalists' backgrounds when utilising *Melody Maker* as a source of wartime jazz advocacy.

²⁴⁵ Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, p.21.

²⁴⁶ NA FO 898/52 'New British Broadcasting Station', 31st August 1942.

²⁴⁷ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, p.205.

This chapter has demonstrated that the period between September to December 1939 offered the RMVP the chance to tailor entertainment broadcasts to the needs of British listeners and thus win a regular audience. In the absence of genuine widespread animosity toward Germany (although the historian Ian McLaine is exaggerating when he states that during the Phoney War “hatred of the enemy did not exist”),²⁴⁸ a light programme offering “plenty of dance music by plenty of bands”²⁴⁹ stood a real chance of gaining popularity, as had the French station Fécamp, Radio International. The cabaret performances which accompanied William Joyce’s programmes in the early months of the war made little impact at either public or governmental level, as can be judged by the almost complete lack of evidence of their reception in the considerable contemporary documentation concerning Lord Haw-Haw. Meanwhile, the NBBS, initiated in February 1940, alternated its commentaries with modern dance music but was not to have a dedicated entertainment feature for another thirteen months. Thus Goebbels failed to provide a convincing and genuinely entertaining alternative to fill the void during the ‘cultural blackout’ in Britain, and by early 1940 the BBC had established the Forces Programme and the novelty of ‘listening to the enemy’ was already wearing off, with listening figures for Haw-Haw declining from February 1940 onwards.²⁵⁰ Unlike the Berlin-born Sefton Delmer, Goebbels lacked a sophisticated understanding of the target audience for his Anglophone propaganda, and while Joyce was successful when he focussed on social critiques, his anti-Semitism was received with indifference by the majority of British listeners. As will be demonstrated throughout the thesis, the RMVP lacked the pragmatism and cultural understanding to fully exploit the potential of entertainment as a form of propaganda to the enemy.

The possible threat, however, has continuously been downplayed by historians of the era. Contemporary American commentator Stanley Washburn noted that morale is “a varying factor [which] ebbs and flows with vicissitudes and victories,”²⁵¹ but the

²⁴⁸ Ian McLaine, *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War II*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1979, p.137.

²⁴⁹ *NJA Melody Maker* ‘B.B.C. Defends its Great Wartime Flop’ by ‘Special Investigator’, October 1939, p.6.

²⁵⁰ NA HO 186/313 Anti-British Propaganda Broadcasts. ‘Hamburg Broadcast Propaganda: Summary of the Results of an Enquiry into the Extent and Effect of its Impact on the British Public during the Winter 1939-40’, 21st March 1940, p.8.

²⁵¹ Stanley Washburn, ‘What Makes Morale?’ *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 5.4 (Winter 1941), pp.519-531. Here p.519.

absence of either of these led to a heightened awareness of domestic social and political problems, as occurred in the USA during 1942, which the RMVP and its star Anglophone broadcaster sought to exacerbate. The questionable policy of encouraging the ridicule of Lord Haw-Haw, thereby effectively advertising and popularising Nazi propaganda in Britain, demonstrates a naivety and a lack of awareness vis-à-vis Goebbels' propaganda methodology, which *The Times* had already noted was based on encouraging repeated listening.²⁵² Indeed, the retrospective dismissal of the threat posed by Haw-Haw does not reflect the contemporary concern at his attempts to exacerbate domestic political grievances in the boredom of the Phoney War, and Ian McLaine plausibly asserts that “[i]t seems as if the Ministry of Information was longing for the real war to begin in much the same way as the public”.²⁵³ Chapter Three will further explore the social and political complexities on the British home front with regard to public opinion and propaganda, as well as RMVP efforts to use jazz to foster discord in Britain whilst simultaneously nurturing a Germanic alternative to the ‘degenerate’ music in the Reich. With the beginning of the Battle of Britain on 10th July 1940, jazz was to prove an increasingly important weapon for both sides in the radio propaganda war.

²⁵² *The Times Digital Archive*. ‘In Germany To-day: War by Wireless’. *The Times* [London], 28th December 1939, p.5.

²⁵³ McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, p.55.

Chapter Three

‘Hot’ War: July 1940 – December 1941

“[J]azz is a major interest in the mass life of Britain. It can undoubtedly be used as a major influence on morale. (...) Jazz (...) remains the biggest unorganised channel of propaganda which exists.”

(Mass Observation, November 1939)¹

¹ *Mass Observation Online*. File Report 11 A – Jazz and Dancing, November 1939, p.26.

Introduction

The early summer 1940 saw, as Goebbels noted in his diary on 23rd May, “[h]ard times for Albion!”² Defeat in Norway, the capitulation of the Low Countries and the fiasco of Dunkirk had taken their toll, and a report based on public opinion surveys and research by Mass Observation and the British Institute of Public Opinion found “a general feeling of distrust and depression”³ amongst the populace, and MoI concluded that “public morale was at a low ebb”.⁴ Furthermore, this was exacerbated by the psychological stress of the impending Battle of Britain. One Maida Vale housewife criticised the BBC for offering “sentimental stodge about E.N.S.A entertainments for factory meal-times - an impression that all is good in a lovely world – and all the time we’re going further and further over the edge of the precipice that ends in defeat. If only we needn’t be soothed and uplifted and blindfolded all the time our collapse wouldn’t be so bad if it comes. If only we could face facts and know what we’re up against!”⁵ In the USA, meanwhile, the magnitude of the European crisis was emphasised in the talks of anti-Nazi broadcasters such as MBS London correspondent Raymond Gram Swing, who reported over the Home Service of the BBC on 1st June:

The intervening month since I have reported on actions and opinions in the United States has been incomparably momentous. It has seen the smashing of the ‘little’ Maginot line, the defeat of a great Army; it has seen the conquest of the Low Countries; but it has seen the destruction of more than that – the destruction of many concepts, even concepts of warfare.(...) It has destroyed thoughts here – comfortable, secure thoughts. It has wiped out a false feeling of distance, a general complacency.⁶

This chapter will firstly analyse the social and political discourse regarding radio entertainment in Britain during summer 1940 and argue, in the spirit of Angus Calder and Martin Doherty,⁷ for a more complex understanding of British society than the ‘People’s War’ discourse of a politically and socially cohesive Britain allows. This will include utilising Mass Observation diaries and parliamentary debate relating to jazz and entertainment, as well as the findings of the MoI public

² Fröhlich (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels* 1.4, p.170.

³ The phrase belongs to Ian McLaine (McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, p.59).

⁴ Cited in *ibid*, p.60.

⁵ *Mass Observation Online*. Diarist No. 5427, 11th August 1940.

⁶ ‘Flanders and the U.S.A.’ by Raymond Gram Swing. Talk delivered on 1st June 1940, reprinted in *The Listener*, 6th June 1940, p.1080.

⁷ See Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* and Doherty, *Nazi Wireless Propaganda*.

opinion canvassers ('Cooper's snoopers'). The comparative nature of the thesis will thus not only contribute to a broader understanding of social and psychological conditions in Britain on the eve of the Blitz, but also set the context for both MoI and the RMVP's attempts to influence these through the medium of entertainment. I will also discuss the reasons behind the belated establishment of MoI, and its controversial attempts to gauge public opinion in Britain through the deployment of 'Cooper's snoopers'. Following from my argument above in Chapter Two that the first months of the war presented Goebbels with an unprecedented opportunity to manipulate British public opinion, I will demonstrate that by the end of the 'Phoney War', the potential audience for German musical broadcasts was dwindling as the BBC increasingly took steps to cater to the demands of Forces and civilians. Moreover, using material from my 2012 interview with Charles and Penny Chilton, I will explore Chilton's semi-educational BBC programme *Radio Rhythm Club* within the broader international context and argue that the Forces' demand for upbeat music could also serve a didactic function that was ironically consistent with the BBC's perception of itself as the nation's cultural educator, which in turn increased demand for 'authentic' jazz on British airwaves.

I will also reappraise Charlie and his Orchestra, the RMVP's first organised attempt to exploit the British predilection for jazz and dance music. In doing so, I will make the case for William Joyce's authorship of the group's propaganda lyrics by referring to a previously undiscovered 'Siegfried Line' parody from a Lord Haw-Haw broadcast in October 1939. The song predates all but one of the recordings listed in Rainer Lotz's discography, and contains lyrics that bear a striking resemblance to those used in the 'Charlie' recordings. This section will also review the conflicting accounts of the group's genesis, utilising unpublished sections of Kater's interviews with the musicians to support the case that the orchestra was not, in fact, commissioned by Goebbels, but that an existing band elected Lutz Templin as its leader and was integrated into the RMVP's plans in early 1940. Furthermore, I will challenge the evidence presented by Kater and Bergmeier/Lotz with regard to the group's reception and alleged impact; by utilising British sources, including the Mass Observation archive and the Foreign Office and Home Office files relating to the reception of foreign propaganda, as well as the American FCC monitors' reports, I will demonstrate that there is in fact an almost complete lack of evidence of their

reception in Britain and the USA. The comparative nature of the thesis will facilitate a critical engagement with the existing scholarship on the orchestra, and allow me to correct inaccuracies and errors resulting from the narrower focus of single-country studies.

Drawing on the unused interview materials at the Michael H. Kater fonds, I will also reappraise the role of Hans Hinkel, a significant figure in Nazi cultural life who nonetheless has largely been neglected by prior scholarship. The reason for Hinkel's ever-increasing influence over cultural affairs over the course of the war has so far eluded scholars, who have broadly portrayed him as either uncultured opportunist or a dogmatically rigid philistine. These conclusions are supported by his published writings and recorded statements, leading Bergmeier to describe him as "the self-appointed warden of Aryan culture".⁸ However, using previously overlooked material from Kater's interviews with the jazz musicians Georg Haentzschel and Fritz Brocksieper, I will argue that his public statements with regard to culture in fact disguised a more pragmatic side with regard to the cynical exploitation of jazz music for the Nazi cause. This will be contrasted with Goebbels' theoretical flexibility, often expressed but never effectively translated into practice with regard to radio entertainment. This re-evaluation of both Hinkel and Goebbels will contribute towards a clearer understanding of their work and of National Socialist wartime cultural propaganda in general.

New evidence of Goebbels' attempts to create a New German Entertainment Music that would provide an ideologically acceptable and sufficiently 'German' alternative to jazz will be presented in a discussion of the short-lived 1941 entertainment programme *Frohe Stunde am Nachmittag* ('Happy Hour in the Afternoon'). This project has so far received no mention in previous scholarship, and yet was extremely significant because it was commissioned by Goebbels to solve the problem presented by German Forces' predilection for Anglo-American jazz. I will demonstrate that there was no theoretical basis for New German Entertainment Music beyond a series of musical restrictions, and that the difficulties which the RMVP had with this project were inevitably to be repeated with the subsequent high-profile DTUO. Based on the timing of the cessation of *Frohe Stunde* and the

⁸ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, p.159.

founding of the DTUO, I will make the case for connecting the failure of the former directly to the foundation of the latter.

Britain

‘Cooper’s Snoopers’ and Public Opinion

Given its delayed and uncertain genesis, it is unsurprising that MoI had a poor start to the war. On 29th November 1938, Neville Chamberlain deflected a question from Labour MP Arthur Henderson as to whether the government would consider establishing a Press and Propaganda department to deal with anti-British propaganda broadcast by “certain other countries”.⁹ He stated that the government “attach[es] great importance to the maintenance of the well-recognised tradition of objectivity and independence in the provision of news by British agencies (...) and they would deprecate any action that might be interpreted as an effort to introduce official control”.¹⁰ Moreover, resistance to the idea of a state propaganda apparatus was so great in Britain that the matter was debated in Parliament as late as 11th and 12th October 1939. Chamberlain’s November 1938 statement remained his public position until 15th June 1939, when he announced the intention to set up a Foreign Publicity Department of the Foreign Office, which was effectively a skeleton MoI to be enlarged upon the outbreak of war, whilst still maintaining that the government had no intention to set up a “Ministry of Information or Propaganda” in peacetime.¹¹ Accordingly, it was not until 4th September 1939 that MoI formally came into existence, while its German counterpart, the RMVP, had been active since 13th March 1933. Lord Macmillan, a Scottish barrister, was appointed Minister of Information (a position described by Library of Congress staff member Cedric Larson as “the most difficult and thankless assignment of his long and respectable career”),¹² and surrounded by an Advisory Council of illustrious Britons which included the BBC Director-General Frederick W. Ogilvie. Nonetheless, after two fiascos regarding the release of information, the American weekly *Time* could claim that “[i]f Lord Macmillan's first task was to undo Britain's reputation for cleverness,

⁹ *Hansard Online*. British News and Propaganda, 29th November 1938. Vol. 342 §239.

¹⁰ *Ibid*. See also Cedric Larson, ‘The British Ministry of Information.’ *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 5.3 (Autumn 1941), pp.412-431. Here p.413.

¹¹ *Ibid*, pp.412-414.

¹² *Ibid*, p.416.

he could not have started more brilliantly. Nobody could accuse Britain's propaganda of functioning smoothly last week. It was clumsy, amateurish, slow-starting, gave an impression like that of a sincere but badly staged show in which stagehands dropped things during big speeches, and the curtain came down at the wrong time.”¹³

During a cabinet reshuffle on 5th January 1940, MacMillan was replaced as Minister of Information by the former BBC Director-General John Reith.¹⁴ Chamberlain's government itself, however, was increasingly beleaguered, and Alfred Duff Cooper recalls that, after accumulating Allied defeats, by late April 1940 there was a feeling developing in London's parliamentary circles “which was shared and strengthened by members of the Forces returning on leave, that there was something grievously wrong with the conduct of the war”.¹⁵ The failure of the Norwegian campaign resulted in a heated two-day debate in Parliament, followed on 10th May by the German invasion of Holland and Belgium; Chamberlain was subsequently convinced to resign, choosing Winston Churchill (over Lord Halifax) as his successor on “the very day when Hitler launched the real war upon Europe”.¹⁶ The new government was a coalition drawn up along strict party lines, and Churchill removed Reith as Minister of Information, “apologetically”¹⁷ offering the post to Duff Cooper, whilst raising the ministerial status and stipulating that the Minister should henceforth attend all War Cabinet meetings in order to be informed of all developments.

The events in France and Norway also served to nurture a strong feeling of British exceptionalism which was to manifest itself in a variety of ways. The psychologist W. A. Sinclair suggested over his *The Voice of the Nazi* programme for the BBC that the word “morale”, presumably too neutral and cosmopolitan, be replaced with “guts”,¹⁸ which represented an attempt to enshrine in language the sentiment expressed by the famous David Low cartoon captioned “Very Well, Alone!” In the cartoon, an isolated British soldier is depicted “standing defiantly on a shore nearly

¹³ Cited in *ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.428-429.

¹⁵ Alfred Duff Cooper, *Old Men Forget*. Bungay, Suffolk: Richard Clay, 1953, p.277.

¹⁶ For Duff Cooper's account of the debates and events surrounding Chamberlain's resignation see Duff Cooper, *Old Men Forget*, pp.277-280.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.280.

¹⁸ *The Listener*, ‘Points from Letters’, J.R. Phillip, 8th August 1940, p.206.

engulfed by waves and shaking his fist at a sky full of Nazi planes”,¹⁹ which, as Timothy Garton Ash has noted, represented a heightening of the British self-perception as being an island nation, distinct from the continent.²⁰ Morale, however, was too complex a concept to be distilled in this fashion, and Duff Cooper pointed out in Parliament that it was dependent on manifold and often mundane elements which transcended such simplified notions of courage and fortitude.²¹ Reith had already initiated steps to measure these factors by way of doorstep opinion polls, and with Duff Cooper’s approval, the wartime social survey was started in summer 1940 in order to gauge “what regulations were causing unnecessary distress, what shortages were being most felt and where, in fact, the shoe was pinching.”²² This very modern form of morale analysis was considered necessary because “censorship forbade the airing of certain grievances in the press”,²³ and, as Henry Durant noted, the government would almost certainly fail to gauge the state of national morale “if reliance is placed on independent, objective facts such as food supply or the number of bombs dropped by the enemy on the home population. These factors must pass through and into people’s consciousness before they express themselves as an effect on the state of morale.”²⁴

Although the initiative was prepared before Duff Cooper took office, the ensuing furore in the national press saw much vitriol directed upon the new Minister of Information, with the canvassers nicknamed ‘Cooper’s snoopers’ and MoI accused of spying. A Maida Vale housewife noted in a Mass Observation diary that her friends worried that it was “the thin end of the fascist wedge, because simple questioning may so easily turn into bullying”,²⁵ and this parallel with Nazi domestic suppression was also raised in Parliament by Conservative MP Archibald Southby.²⁶ Indeed, this popular misunderstanding of MoI’s remit is in itself indicative of the confusion surrounding the Ministry’s role in British public life; the perceptive Maida Vale diarist argued that MoI’s role was misunderstood and accused the press of self-

¹⁹ Wendy Webster, “‘Europe against the Germans’: The British Resistance Narrative, 1940-1950.” *The Journal of British Studies* 48.4 (October 2009), pp.958-982. Here p.958.

²⁰ Cited in *ibid.*

²¹ *Hansard Online*. War-time Social Survey, 1st August 1940. Vol. 363 §1547-1548.

²² Duff Cooper, *Old Men Forget*, p.287.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Henry Durant, ‘Morale and its Measurement.’ *American Journal of Sociology* 47.3 (November 1941), pp.406-414. Here p.411.

²⁵ *Mass Observation Online*. Diarist No. 5427, 11th August 1940.

²⁶ *Hansard Online*. War-time Social Survey, 1st August 1940. Vol. 363 §1523.

interest in its attacks on the government, and of spreading “that overwo[r]ked fallacy that M.I.’s function is limited to external propaganda. Who has thus defined and delimited the M.I.’s function? Of course, the press, who want a monopoly with regard to the expression of public opinion.”²⁷ The analogies with the Third Reich, however crude and inaccurate, did reflect genuine public (and dubious media) concern that MoI was a symptom of a wartime condition which even a sympathetic American public opinion analyst had described in 1939 as “totalitarian democracy”.²⁸

Rather than the feared application of political pressure on those canvassed, the surveys aspired to scientific accuracy; the repetition of specific questions clustered around the central theme of the respondent’s views on the conduct of the war²⁹ was designed to allow the emergence of opinion ‘curves’ and the tracking of movements of opinion, while the securing of personal information such as religious denomination and gender was intended to facilitate cross-tabulation and the identification of the ways in which a respondent’s background mitigated his or her answers.³⁰ Moreover, the survey was also used to collect public feedback on the BBC’s increasing emphasis on ‘light’ entertainment, and thus provided ammunition against culturally conservative critics of the policy, allowing Duff Cooper to cite in Parliament the social survey’s findings that 90% of those canvassed “did not resent” music hall entertainments on the wireless.³¹ His chief antagonist in this debate was the Labour MP for Stoke-on-Trent, Andrew MacLaren, who lamented “the bastard form of Yankee low-down jazz music [on the BBC]. (...) [I]f instead of that pseudo-variety we had our own native talent it could have given us clean variety instead of the stuff we have had to tolerate”.³² MacLaren continued:

The wireless is so precious now that we cannot afford to lose a minute in any form of entertainment which gives to the world a false impression of the mental condition of the people of this country. I do not say that we should always have Beethoven or Sibelius, because I know there are varying degrees

²⁷ *Mass Observation Online*. Diarist No. 5427, 11th August 1940. Scepticism vis-à-vis the motives for media criticisms of MoI was also voiced by Larson, ‘The British Ministry of Information’, p.423.

²⁸ James R. Mock and Cedric Larson, *Words that Won the War: The Story of the Committee on Public Information 1917-1919*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1939, p.vi.

²⁹ Durant, ‘Morale and its Measurement’, p.413.

³⁰ See for example the conclusions in Henry Durant, ‘Public Opinion, Polls and Foreign Policy.’ *The British Journal of Sociology* 6.2 (June 1955), pp.149-158. Here pp.154-155.

³¹ *Hansard Online*. War-time Social Survey, 1st August 1940. Vol. 363 §1553.

³² *Hansard Online*. War-time Social Survey, 1st August 1940. Vol. 363 §1554.

of taste among the people, but have we fallen so low that in these solemn moments, when the entire nation, nay, the entire Empire, is listening to every syllable of a speaker conveying the solemnity and the enormity of the menace before us, that immediately the last syllable has died away on must come the most appalling trash to which it is possible for man to listen? (...) I know there will be critics who say that we must keep up the spirit of the people, but even if there be something in that argument, imagine the feelings of women waiting to hear something about the fate of their sons or their husbands when on come some trivial nigger boys, the corner men of a minstrel troupe. It is simply appalling.³³

MacLaren is voicing an outspoken opinion, and fellow MP George Muff rightly suggested that he was “not an ordinary listener. He is what I should term an extraordinary listener”.³⁴ It is nonetheless interesting to note that there was still no universal consensus regarding radio entertainment’s function in wartime. Dismissing the BBC/MoI methodology of using radio entertainment as a stimulus to civilian and Forces’ morale, he advanced the argument that radio’s function was primarily to project an image of Britain’s resilient mind-set outwards for the benefit of foreign listeners. There are also remarkable similarities between these complaints and the observations of an SD report dated 20th October 1941 that “educated circles” had expressed their astonishment at the idea that “the hitherto predominantly light, pure entertainment music broadcast [on German radio] is justified in these decisive days of our nation’s struggle for survival”.³⁵ Moreover, MacLaren makes an almost *völkisch* case for favouring indigenous British music over “degenerate” American-style numbers on the airwaves:

The crooner and the jazz band are a foreign importation and are not native to this land. They come here from the backwoods of America and have the rhythm of the nigger running through them, with all that it implies. They do not belong to our people. (...) We have our own musicians and composers, our Elgars, as well as the native song and harmony of the three countries that compose this Kingdom. Let us exploit them. (...) There are other kinds of music, native to the country and more suitable to the occasion. (...) Whatever may be our predilections or taste in this matter, I think the Committee is united in believing that the instrument of broadcasting is far too valuable to be thrown away in rubbishy or degenerate forms of entertainment.³⁶

³³ *Hansard Online*. Civil estimates, 28th May 1940. Vol. 361 §490.

³⁴ *Hansard Online*. Civil estimates, 28th May 1940. Vol. 361 §495.

³⁵ BA R58/1090 SD-Leitabschnitt München, 20th October 1941.

³⁶ *Hansard Online*. Civil estimates, 28th May 1940. Vol. 361 §490.

This argument strikingly parallels the racist rhetoric of certain German critics,³⁷ as well as the arguments of Hans Hinkel in favour of concentrating on German musical traditions rather than creating inferior replicas of an American cultural form. Furthermore, MacLaren's suggestion that broadcasting should be used to promote an atmosphere of solemnity and gravity in Britain, rather than to curate the national mood and maintain morale, was similar to Goebbels' own approach. The Propaganda Minister routinely used sombre radio content, the closure of entertainment venues and bans on dancing in an attempt to cultivate a desired sense of unity with the Front during military campaigns or following defeats³⁸ and, as will be shown, modified musical programmes' content so as not to offend citizens in areas affected by air raids.³⁹ There is no evidence that such a strategy was employed by Britain during the war, and while controversial initiatives such as the anti-slush campaign saw the BBC attempting to cultivate a more virile form of popular music at the expense of sentimental pieces, radio does not appear to have ever been used as a means of artificially suppressing the national mood. Indeed, George Muff best summarised the growing political consensus on concessions to light entertainment in wartime, concluding that "even in these critical times when you switch on the wireless and you hear something that may be termed light, it certainly has a tendency, not exactly to exhilarate you, but it keeps what is wanted in these days, an even balance."⁴⁰

Radio Rhythm Club

The increase in 'light' music on the wireless, however, also transcended such utilitarian wartime requirements as morale building. It came to serve a didactic function through *Radio Rhythm Club*, a dedicated jazz programme initiated by Charles Chilton and Leslie Perowne of the BBC Variety Department in June 1940. Having joined the BBC as a messenger boy in 1933, Chilton developed a passion for jazz whilst working as an assistant at the Corporation's gramophone library two years later. *Melody Maker* noted Chilton's impeccable swing credentials, having

³⁷ See for example BA R65I/41 Norbert Salb an Goebbels, betr. Verbot der Jazz und ähnlich entarteter Musik [in Sachsen], 12th July 1943. See also BA R56I/41 for the ensuing correspondence between Salb, Hinkel and Raabe. For Nazi anti-jazz rhetoric, see also Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, pp.136-140 and Studdert, 'The Death of Music'.

³⁸ Willi Boelcke, *Wollt Ihr den totalen Krieg? Die geheime Goebbels-Konferenzen 1939-43*. Herrsching: Manfred Pawlak, 1989, p.333.

³⁹ BA R18/328 Tießler, betr. Rundfunksendungen nach Fliegerangriffen, 25th March 1943.

⁴⁰ *Hansard Online*. Civil estimates, 28th May 1940. Vol. 361 §495.

attended meetings of the No. 1 Rhythm Club in London,⁴¹ where he “was so impressed by jazz that he actually got a swing outfit going in the sacred confines of the B.B.C.”⁴² He subsequently assisted Perowne and Harman Grisewood, the Assistant Director of Programme Planning from 1939-41, on their swing programmes, and at seventeen years old became “probably (...) the youngest person ever to have spoken about jazz topics on the air” at the BBC.⁴³ Shortly after its first broadcast, ‘Eavesdropper’ described *Radio Rhythm Club* that month as “one of the most interesting series of programmes for swing fans that the B.B.C. has ever undertaken. (...) The B.B.C. Rhythm Club is the final and ultimate gesture – a sort of non-aggression pact between Swing and officialdom, and everybody is happy.”

However, the programme’s semi-educational approach ensured that it not only catered to the jazz audience, but also expanded it. Just a month after the programme started, the same Bolton nightclub owner who had told *Mass Observation* about the unpopularity of war-themed jazz songs noticed an increase in his clientele’s appreciation of ‘authentic’, American-style jazz:

The war doesn’t seem to have stopped music coming through from America. (...) And a few more people are being educated in modern jazz standards because the BBC seems to be putting on more short programmes of jazz. They have short record recitals, with a short commentary on the artists and the history of jazz, and that sort of thing.⁴⁴

Indeed, Chilton summarised the goal of *Radio Rhythm Club* as “treating jazz seriously the way that they [the BBC] treated chamber music seriously.”⁴⁵ This raises interesting parallels with Hans Hinkel’s comments upon the foundation of the DTUO, which was conceived as a ‘light’ counterpart to the Berlin Philharmonic.⁴⁶ The new programme replaced *Kings of Jazz*, another Chilton/Perowne collaboration which had presented musical illustrations of the careers of legendary American jazz musicians, focussing on a different artist each week,⁴⁷ and thus could hope to build on the achievements of its predecessor. It was targeted at existing and would-be jazz

⁴¹ *NJA Melody Maker* ‘B.B.C. Rhythm Club: Future Programmes’ by ‘Eavesdropper’, 22nd June 1940, p.5.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Mass Observation Online*. File Report 295 – On Jazz (Bolton) (AH), 25th July 1940, p.2.

⁴⁵ Chilton interview 2012.

⁴⁶ BA R56I/34 Gutterer and Hinkel [et al], 29th September 1941.

⁴⁷ Chilton interview 2012.

aficionados, and in May 1940 *Melody Maker* reported that the forthcoming programme would have the “primary intent (...) to explain jazz”, featuring “contrasting styles and combinations, white and coloured jazz etc.” and would replicate the proceedings of a Rhythm Club, with Chilton as the host and “[m]embership of the club (...) extended to all who listen”.⁴⁸ Chilton recalls that “I used to give record recitals and so on [at Rhythm Clubs], but on the whole I avoided them if I could ‘cos they were over-enthusiastic,”⁴⁹ and insists that the programme’s name did not dictate its structure or character. “I thought it was a good title,” he asserts, “and then I put anything (...) [in the programme] that was topical [and] belonging to jazz”.⁵⁰

The inaugural edition of *Radio Rhythm Club* was broadcast over the Forces Programme at 10.20 p.m. on 8th June 1940. Indeed, while the unassuming Chilton denies any ulterior motive for his programme, stating that “I didn’t think I was aiding morale, I was just playing what I liked”,⁵¹ the significance of its potential popularity with the Forces would certainly have been clear to the BBC in accordance with Ogilvie’s findings on his visit to the BEF in January of that year. Besides its popular appeal, the programme was also a critical success, with Bill Elliott, the founder of the No. 1 Rhythm Club, writing at the end of 1940:

In my opinion, 1940 has been one of the best years for rhythm fans since the jazz bug first bit this country way back in 1919.

(...) It is true that we have not had any star American bands or musicians over here in person, but the B.B.C on the air have more than made up for that[.]

(...) [T]he Radio Rhythm Club has featured (...) programmes of special records not to be obtained over here that would in the normal course of events never be heard by the average rhythm fan.⁵²

As of October 1940, moreover, *Radio Rhythm Club* had its own house band, the Radio Rhythm Club Sextet, which was led by Harry Parry and featured the Cardiff-born guitarist Joe Deniz (also of Ken Johnson’s West Indian Dance Orchestra), as well as a young and exceptionally talented blind pianist named George Shearing, who would achieve post-war fame in the United States. The group had been spotted

⁴⁸ *NJA Melody Maker* ‘B.B.C. Launching Radio Rhythm Club’, 1st June 1940, p.1.

⁴⁹ Chilton interview 2012.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Chilton interview 2012.

⁵² *NJA Melody Maker* ‘This Year of Swing Blitz – 1940’ by Bill Elliott, 28th December 1940, p.2.

by Chilton during a residency at the St. Regis Hotel in Cork Street, London, following which they would perform afterhours at the Coconut Grove bottle party, with Parry sometimes sleeping at the club after doors closed at 5 a.m. to avoid the perilous journey home through the blackout.⁵³ Of the decision to employ them, Chilton recalls:

I at once knew this band was almost exactly what I was looking for. Its music was fresh and the players were keen and of an exceptional high standard. Most of their enthusiasm came as a result of a smiling Welsh clarinet player whose arrangements, especially regarding the handling of riffs (...), gave me great pleasure.⁵⁴

The St. Regis Quintet were subsequently broadcast on the BBC, where they were well-received by the listening public, and Parry then converted his band into the Radio Rhythm Club Sextet, with extra credibility lent by the fact that he was managed by Bill Elliott.⁵⁵ Even *The Times* was impressed; although it complained in 1942 that the group “plunge[s] into displays of virtuosity in which they are liable to lose themselves”,⁵⁶ a later review in the same pages found that Parry “conducts his Radio Rhythm Club Sextet with style and energy”.⁵⁷ The group was increasingly afforded the kind of public adulation that was unprecedented on British shores, receiving a “very long and loud ovation as soon as the signature tune was heard” at the London Palladium on 8th September 1941.⁵⁸ “Many hundreds of people” were turned away from Watford Rhythm Club’s Ball in January 1942,⁵⁹ and record-breaking crowds attending their Variety tour the same year.⁶⁰ Indeed, it is testament to their success that the band’s line-up changes were deemed newsworthy by America’s *DownBeat*, which duly acknowledged them as “Britain’s most popular jazz combo.”⁶¹

Chilton was called up for service in the RAF in January 1941, where he joined the jazz and dance musicians who were recruited “in their hundreds”⁶² by Wing

⁵³ *NJA Melody Maker* ‘A Musician Braves the Blitz’ by Harry Parry, 21st December 1940, p.15.

⁵⁴ Chilton, *Auntie’s Charlie*, p.130.

⁵⁵ *NJA Melody Maker* ‘Radio Rhythm Club Gets Own Band’, 19th October 1940, p.7.

⁵⁶ *The Times Digital Archive*, ‘Stoll Theatre.’ *The Times* [London], 11th March 1942, p.6.

⁵⁷ *The Times Digital Archive*, ‘Stoll Theatre.’ *The Times* [London], 24th June 1942, p.6.

⁵⁸ Chilton 2011, p.139.

⁵⁹ *NJA Melody Maker* ‘Watford Jive Night’, 31st January 1942, p.2.

⁶⁰ Baade, *The Dancing Front*, p.359.

⁶¹ *JZD DownBeat* ‘Parry Changes Men in Rhythm Sextet’, 1st March 1942, p.2.

⁶² Colin, *And the Bands Played on*, p.120.

Commander O'Donnell, the RAF's Director of Music. These amateur groups supplemented more ambitious Services projects, most notably the RAF Dance Orchestra (aka the Squadronaires), a "crack dance band" which featured recently drafted members of various famous groups such as those of Bert Ambrose, Eddie Carroll, Jack Harris, Brian Lawrance and Oscar Rabin,⁶³ although other high-profile combinations included The Blue Rockets (Royal Army Ordinance Corps), The Blue Mariners (Royal Navy) and The Skyrockets (RAF Balloon Command).⁶⁴ The Squadronaires had been intended to entertain the BEF on the continent, but following the fall of France they instead found themselves stranded in Uxbridge with abundant time to rehearse and experiment, although their music remained in the Glenn Miller mould and the group's guitarist Sid Colin is exaggerating when he calls them "without a doubt the finest swing band ever to be heard outside America".⁶⁵ The Blue Mariners' music was "emphatically (...) entirely secondary to their Naval duties",⁶⁶ but official recognition of their "great moral-raising [sic.] powers"⁶⁷ led to repeated Forces concerts, and the band was sent to Normandy shortly after the D-Day landings to entertain the same invasion Forces whom the RMVP had been attempting to intimidate with a prolonged and consolidated jazz propaganda campaign from 1942 onwards.⁶⁸ Moreover, such bands could also be coordinated with and integrated into MoI operations. For example, the Blue Rockets and other smaller Army formations under the musical direction of bandleader Miff Ferrie (who had also played at the El Morocco 'bottle party') were featured in a forty-minute short film entitled *Swinging into the Attack*, which was to be shown in the USA and Britain and emphasised the military training of musicians.⁶⁹ The film was produced by the Strand Film Co. under direction of MoI, and *Melody Maker* reported that it was to constitute "an immense slice of propaganda for our fine Army."⁷⁰

The role of Services bands was not to educate but to entertain and provide the Forces with what Joe Loss described as the "friendliness from hearing the tunes that he

⁶³ *Mass Observation Online*. File Report 295 – On Jazz (Bolton) (A[lec]H[ughes]), 25th July 1940, pp.4-5.

⁶⁴ Colin, *And the Bands Played on*, p.121.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *NJA Melody Maker* "Blue Mariners" off to Continent Again', 12th May 1945, p.2.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, pp.334-342.

⁶⁹ *NJA Melody Maker* 'Miff Ferrie-ing Army Swing Propaganda to U.S.', 6th March 1943, p.2.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

knows and loves so well”,⁷¹ or, in Glenn Miller’s words, “a much-needed touch of home”.⁷² The more challenging and didactic *Radio Rhythm Club* continued in Chilton’s absence, with Harry Parry taking over as presenter and his Sextet now making bi-monthly appearances on the air. The popularity of the programme (which earned the approval of a remarkable 92% of Forces listeners)⁷³ and Parry’s accessible arrangements led to a belated ‘British swing craze’ of 1942, which saw even successful dance band leaders such as Geraldo jumping on the swing bandwagon⁷⁴ and created a corresponding degree of disenfranchisement among aficionados.⁷⁵ Nonetheless, the programme retained the support of *Melody Maker*, and Charles Chilton points out that by involving journalists such as Spike Hughes, Ray Sonin and Edgar Jackson in the programmes as expert commentators, he succeeded in neutralising at least some of the potential criticism from the journal, stating that “once (...) I invited them to take part in the jazz programmes, the *Melody Maker* were very sympathetic to the BBC, and certainly to the [Radio] Rhythm Club”.⁷⁶ Indeed, Chilton admits in retrospect that the journal’s praise of Parry’s group was “a bit (...) over the top”, with George Shearing’s presence in the group being in his opinion the key to the group’s success.⁷⁷

In December 1942, Parry was asked by the BBC to step down and Chilton returned to the helm. The reason for Parry’s dismissal was ostensibly that Chilton’s new post as an RAF radio communication instructor allowed him the time to return to presenting and producing the programme,⁷⁸ although his heavy drinking and attendant unreliability were also factors in his removal from the programme.⁷⁹ The RAF band of Buddy Featherstonhaugh (“pronounced Fan-shaw”)⁸⁰ replaced Parry’s group as the new Radio Rhythm Club Sextet,⁸¹ and by late 1943 Chilton had rejected the live jam session format and the increasingly mainstream swing idiom in favour of record recitals focussing primarily on Golden Age jazz and other historical

⁷¹ NJA *Melody Maker* ‘What I Saw in France’ by Joe Loss, 24th February 1940, p.3.

⁷² Cited in Starr, *Red & Hot*, p.186.

⁷³ Baade, *The Dancing Front*, p.359.

⁷⁴ NJA *Melody Maker* ‘Geraldo Swing Club Invitation’, 3rd April 1943, p.1.

⁷⁵ See Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, p.121.

⁷⁶ Chilton interview 2012.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, p.121.

⁷⁹ Chilton interview 2012.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid. See also NJA *Melody Maker* ‘Featherstonhaugh’s R.A.F. Six Appointed New Radio Rhythm Club Sextet’, 29th May 1943, p.1.

material. Christina Baade notes that dance bands and Services orchestras such as the Squadronaires had integrated swing idioms into their music, while swing stars such as Parry and Stephane Grappelli had made live broadcasts for other BBC programmes, and thus the success of *Radio Rhythm Club* in popularising small-band swing had jeopardised its own distinctiveness.⁸² Cyril Blake's Jig's Club Band, the West Indian group resident at the eponymous West End bottle party, provided musical illustrations,⁸³ thus further entrenching the products of bottle party culture on British airwaves. The shift towards jazz history was reminiscent of the programme's predecessor *Kings of Jazz*, and by shunning the 'British Swing Craze' which it had helped to initiate, the programme reasserted its leading role within the British jazz scene. It had become a common cause for the journalists, broadcasters and fans alike, and *Melody Maker* protested vociferously in 1943 when it was taken off the air for two months.⁸⁴ *Radio Rhythm Club* was, as Peter W. G. Powell remembers, "compulsory listening".⁸⁵

Jazz as Propaganda

As noted above, the semi-didactic nature of *Radio Rhythm Club* was an exception to the rule of the BBC's light broadcasting, which was largely channelled towards utilitarian programming such as the upbeat 'Music While You Work', envisaged as background music for factory workers to increase productivity and reduce the sense of monotony in the workplace.⁸⁶ Indeed, there was an increasing awareness in government circles that light entertainment could be deployed to actively stimulate certain desired responses from an audience. Mass Observation, whose relationship with the government came under scrutiny in Parliament⁸⁷ and which served in an irregular advisory capacity to MoI,⁸⁸ was commissioned to advise the Ministry of Supply on the potential effectiveness of integrating musical entertainment with a political moral, and the summary of its findings delivered to the Ministry's Chief Public Relations Officer on 13th June 1940 made a strong case for the procedure:

⁸² Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, p.121.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *NJA Melody Maker* 'Radio Rhythm Ration Slashed!', 6th March 1943, p.1.

⁸⁵ Powell to the author, 4th February 2013.

⁸⁶ See Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, pp.60-81.

⁸⁷ *Hansard Online*. War-time Social Survey, 1st August 1940. Vol. 363 §1517-1556.

⁸⁸ Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, pp.71-80.

I think dance music, jazz lyrics are the most potent form of unconscious influencing. So far any of these lyrics which have touched on your problems have tended to have an effect [which is] the reverse of the one you aim at. For instance, Laurence Wright and Annette Mills' tune "Please leave my butter alone". Annette Mills wrote this because a phrase just happened to come up at a party she was at. She could just as well have written it the other way around, from a pro-margarine angle. She is a typical example of a first-class jazz writer (Booms a Daisy, Hitler, etc) and cabaret star who feels dissatisfied with the content of jazz words and is anxious to tie this up with something of general use and topicality.⁸⁹

This extensive report argued that 'jazz' would be the most effective vehicle for such messages, although the document's understanding of the genre lacks nuance and appears to be synonymous for modern popular music in general. Annette Mills, whose role in British (and inadvertently also German)⁹⁰ wartime propaganda has been completely ignored by prior scholarship, would act in an advisory capacity to Mass Observation in this respect from 1941. The concerns for British governmental use of music as propaganda were very different from those in Germany, where musicians were obliged to operate within the state-defined confines of the RMK; Mills pointed out in a memorandum to Harrison that British bands, to varying degrees depending on their integrity, tended to accept bribes from music publishers to 'plug' songs at their concerts in order to popularise them.⁹¹ Propaganda songs, on the other hand, were unpopular with songwriters and publishers alike. Because they would be listened to or sung but not purchased, they represented at best popular morale-boosting entertainment and not sales. Musicians were even more reluctant to play such numbers and, according to Mills, charged a fee of £5 per plug, as opposed to the £3 they demanded for standard commercial songs.⁹²

Mills advocated forming a small, government-sponsored song-writing department "specialising in the psychology of advertising in song",⁹³ although this proposal was never adopted. It is interesting to note that Mills' progressive approach towards

⁸⁹ *Mass Observation Online*. File Report 197 – 'Propaganda ideas' (unsigned memo to Chief Public Relations Officer, Ministry of Supply), 13th June 1940.

⁹⁰ According to the RRG's ledgers, a German recording of Annette Mills' composition 'Booms A Daisy' was made by an unidentified big band ca. October 1939, featuring male choir vocals in English (Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, p.253).

⁹¹ The practice is detailed in *Mass Observation Online*. File Report 11 A – Jazz and Dancing, November 1939, pp.18-21. See also Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, p.29.

⁹² *Mass Observation Online*. File Report 197 – 'Propaganda ideas' (unsigned memo to Chief Public Relations Officer, Ministry of Supply), 13th June 1940.

⁹³ *Mass Observation Online*. File Report 795 – Songwriters, Mills to Harrison, enclosed memorandum. 17th July 1941, p.3.

exploiting the commercial sector's experience in the psychological manipulation of consumers ('propaganda' in the Bernaysian sense)⁹⁴ was in itself far more reflective of the American approach towards psychological warfare, which held that propaganda was "similar in many ways to modern advertising".⁹⁵

It should (...) be a Government concern to support a song with a topical appeal; something to cheer people up at a critical moment, to get over an unpleasant and vital bit of information in a palatable form, to give courage, in fact to use the easiest and quickest way into the hearts and minds of the people, that of music [and] song.⁹⁶

The department's remit, she suggested, should be "to write quickly and well any ideas the government wants to put over, or to submit ideas themselves, using the emotional appeal at the moment needed, and disguised as entertainment".⁹⁷ This should be done in conjunction with a publisher or publishers to enable maximum publicity and exploitation of the songs, with permission granted to the BBC to use the songs as the occasion demanded.

Mills' assertion that such a scheme "would amaze the authorities with its colossal success" was overly optimistic,⁹⁸ not least because it failed to take into account what a contemporary American social worker called "[the intangibility of] the guidance of the public mind",⁹⁹ as is demonstrated at various points in the thesis, it was extremely difficult to accumulate accurate empirical data regarding the ways in which propaganda was processed by and acted upon its audience. However, an earlier Mass Observation report, published in November 1939, had observed that the potential for hugely popular combinations of jazz and propaganda was evident from the beginning of the war, citing Jimmy Kennedy and Michael Carr's 1939 composition 'The Washing on the Siegfried Line'¹⁰⁰ as evidence. Indeed, published at a time when British foreign policy statements vis-à-vis Germany were still

⁹⁴ See Edward Bernays, *Propaganda*. London: Routledge, 1928.

⁹⁵ Lee Richards (pub.), *The Psychological Warfare Division Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force: An Account of its Operations in the Western European Campaign, 1944-1945*. Bad Homburg, 1945. Digitally published by www.psywar.org, 2007, p.11.

⁹⁶ *Mass Observation Online*. File Report 795 – Songwriters, Mills to Harrison, enclosed memorandum. 17th July 1941, p.3.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ The last four words have been erased by hand, presumably by Harrison, whose initials are suffixed to an earlier handwritten alteration.

⁹⁹ Florence S. Adams, 'Guidance of the Public Mind.' *Social Forces* 16. 1 (October 1937), pp.83-86. Here p.83.

¹⁰⁰ Henceforth referred to as 'Siegfried Line'.

“exceedingly polite, logical and un-bellicose”,¹⁰¹ the song satisfied the wishes of ordinary people who wished to escalate the tone towards Germany and “get a bit rougher”;¹⁰² Mass Observation suggested that “the difference of the jazz sentiment and a speech by Halifax was about the same as the difference between the street pamphlets and the daily press. In each case the former represented the stronger feelings of the masses”¹⁰³ and the report declared that jazz was a crystalliser, rather than a maker, of opinion. This is true insofar as the music publishers were ‘merely’ responding to market demand by producing amusing, patriotic songs; “jazz took the initiative of brass,” suggests the report, “and smashed the Siegfried Line to pieces, to the great satisfaction of the civilian population.”¹⁰⁴ The bond between the Forces and the home front was accentuated by the song’s use of the first-person plural instead of the singular, thus by implication including the listener and allaying any potential feelings of civilian inferiority to the young soldier-protagonist writing home. As observed by Joe Loss with regard to his visit to the BEF in France, music functioned as a means of binding the national community at a time when military engagement with the enemy remained absent.

A handwritten appendix also notes the perceived distinctions between British and German propaganda songs:

[The *Engel-Land Lied*] has a stirring line and is continually being broadcast, usually as sung by a male chorus. It is definitely a mass song & easy to sing, but was put out by Goebbels’ Ministry of Propaganda. It is played immediately after German news bulletins – there is no corresponding song that could be sung after the English news. Jazz has its patriotic songs but they are of another world from that of the BBC announcer.¹⁰⁵

Angus Calder and Martin Doherty have drawn attention to the inaccuracies of the perception of Britain’s Home Front as socially and politically cohesive, which is inherent in the ‘People’s War’ discourse,¹⁰⁶ and the RMVP could hope (as discussed above in Chapter Two) to exploit very real dissonances within British society. Nonetheless, an idea of British exceptionalism was conveyed through contemporary media, and the Forces’ propensity for frivolous popular songs was utilised to

¹⁰¹ *Mass Observation Online*. File Report 11 A – Jazz and Dancing, November 1939, p.22.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.29.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 26b.

¹⁰⁶ Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* and Doherty, *Nazi Wireless Propaganda*.

promote the idea of a uniquely British relationship between music and morale which persists today;¹⁰⁷ the BBC magazine *The Listener* summed up this sentiment on 4th July 1940 by claiming that “the British Armies marched to victory in the last war singing not ‘Rule Britannia’ or ‘Land of Hope and Glory’, but ‘Tipperary’ or ‘Who’s your lady friend?’”¹⁰⁸ However, as Timothy Garton Ash has noted, British historiography is not alone in emphasising ‘exceptional’ national traits as defined against those of supposedly more homogenous neighbours,¹⁰⁹ and the German Forces’ penchant for crude, altered versions of popular songs (as exploited by Delmer’s *Soldatensender*) as well as sentimental or homesick numbers such as ‘Lili Marleen’ and ‘*Es geht alles vorüber*’, contradict such simplified theses regarding the exceptionality of British tastes. Moreover, as the thesis repeatedly highlights, a predilection for jazz and dance music transcended questions of nationality and was evident not just among British, German and American Forces, but permeated popular taste from fascist Italy¹¹⁰ to the furthest-flung Soviet Republics.¹¹¹

The novelist J. B. Priestley set the tone for juxtaposing exceptional Britain with monolithic Germany by claiming over the BBC that the Germans would never have made the blunders that led to the Dunkirk fiasco, but nor would they have achieved the triumph in adversity with the resultant hastily improvised evacuation. “That vast machine of theirs can’t create a glimmer of that poetry of action which distinguishes war from mass murder,” he argued on 5th June 1940. “It’s a machine – and therefore has no soul.”¹¹² Sir Robert Vansittart, then the government’s nominal Chief Diplomatic Advisor,¹¹³ launched a series of chauvinistic anti-German broadcasts and pamphlets in which he traced the history of German barbarism back almost two millennia to Armenius (Hermann).¹¹⁴ This rhetoric also surfaced in a more subtle fashion in the BBC’s justification of its reorientation towards ‘lighter’ musical fare,

¹⁰⁷ See for example *Private Eye* magazine editor Ian Hislop’s comments juxtaposing humorous British trench songs with allegedly militaristic German trench songs (no examples are provided for the latter) of the Great War in ‘The Long Long Trail’, BBC Radio 4 Archive Hour, broadcast 4th January 2014.

¹⁰⁸ *The Listener*, ‘On Programmes and Patriotism’, 4th July 1940, p.10.

¹⁰⁹ Timothy Garton Ash, ‘Is Britain European?’ *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), 77.1 (January 2001), pp.1-13. Here pp.6-7.

¹¹⁰ Fabio Presutti, ‘The Saxophone and the Pastoral. Italian Jazz in the Age of Fascist Modernity’. *Italica* 85.2/3 (Summer - Autumn, 2008, pp.273-294).

¹¹¹ See Starr, *Red & Hot*, especially pp.181-203.

¹¹² *The Listener*, ‘Excursion to Hell’ by J. B. Priestley, 13th June 1940 (broadcast 5th June 1940), p.1123.

¹¹³ Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, p.312.

¹¹⁴ *Hansard Online*. Sir Robert Vansittarts [sic.] broadcasts, 18th February 1941. Vol. 118 §388-410.

with the Corporation's magazine *The Listener* stating of the 'English' [sic.]¹¹⁵ approach to song:

When an Englishman rises to an occasion, he does not make a song about it; he makes a song about a young lady from Armentières or some other subject of the same nature. He has no objection to sentimentality; in fact he wallows in it. But the object of his sentimentality is never his country, as the Frenchman's is *la Patrie* and the German's *das Vaterland*. (...) Still, when the Englishman stops singing or enjoying frivolous nonsense, we may indeed fear for England – for Englishmen will no longer be Englishmen.¹¹⁶

However, this allegedly unique British taste for frivolity was certainly not reflected in the bulk of the leading music publishers' early output of martial-spirited war songs, with Mass Observation noting two months into the war that “[t]he glorification of the soldier, which occurs in almost every [British] war tune, (...) seems to have gone over-far.”¹¹⁷ Indeed, far from being a simple procedure of providing the Forces with “frivolous nonsense”, the act of discerning what Britons wanted to hear was in fact a commercially-driven process of trial and error on the part of the music publishers, and subject to enquiries through the nascent art of listener research on the part of the BBC (see Chapter Two) and public opinion monitors such as Mass Observation. The reasonably new broadcast medium meant that songs could be produced and disseminated en masse, and thus their genesis and function differed from the songs of World War I, which, according to the Great War veteran and song chronicler John Brophy, “are the songs of homeless men, evoked by exceptional or distressing circumstances; the songs of an itinerant community, continually altering within itself under the incidence of death and mutilation.”¹¹⁸

In World War II this itinerant community was catered to by the wireless. As such, it was provided with ‘ready-made’ war songs, although as the thesis demonstrates, such texts could of course be altered, parodied or corrupted by either official propaganda apparatuses or the public mind. As in the USA from December 1941, the British publishing companies that published and promoted war songs were concerned above all with anticipated profit, with patriotic causes of secondary

¹¹⁵ For the etymological confusion regarding usage of ‘England’ and ‘Britain’, see Krishnan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003, pp.1-18.

¹¹⁶ *The Listener*, ‘On Programmes and Patriotism’, 4th July 1940, p.10.

¹¹⁷ *Mass Observation Online*. File Report 11 A – Jazz and Dancing, November 1939, p.29.

¹¹⁸ John Brophy and Eric Partridge, *The Daily Telegraph Dictionary of Tommies' Songs and Slang, 1914-18*. Barnsley: Frontline, 2008, p.15.

importance.¹¹⁹ This ‘Tin Pan Alley’ approach to war songs¹²⁰ was often out of step with listeners’ demands, and the evidence suggests that already one year into the war the public was tiring of songs which explicitly dealt with it, with such songs constituting a high percentage of early British wartime output. Mass Observation noted in November 1939 that the seven leading music publishers had produced twenty-five war songs between them, constituting 43% of their overall “current releases”.¹²¹ 49% of the remaining published songs were “plain love songs” (many written or released before the war), 2% were ballads (with no war references) and 5% were comic (with no war references). Of the war songs, approximately half were humorous and dealt exclusively with troops in France, and approximately half were serious.¹²² However, besides the escapist or ‘normalising’ value of songs which ignored the conflict (“We like to tune in on light programs as we see enough war without having to hear about it every time we turn on the radio”, wrote an American soldier later in the war),¹²³ British music publishers also quickly discovered war songs had a tendency to become quickly outdated due to the military situation. In July 1940 the manager of a local dance hall in Bolton told Mass Observation:

The popular tunes are certainly NOT connected with the war. We have had to scrap one or two – things like ‘The Siegfried Line’ and ‘Somewhere in France with you’. It’s not much good singing about Somewhere in France now. (...) We don’t bother with tunes like ‘There’ll Always [sic.] be an England’. We feel it is better that they [the customers] should be cheerful with tunes with romance and love [:] moon, June stuff like that. They were there before Hitler and they will be there after him.

(...) No, when they come here they don’t want to sing a lot of victory songs, England for ever songs, and that sort of thing. They just want to relax. We are doing our little bit towards the stability of the world in general. We are giving them relief so that they can face their duties again.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ Kathleen E. R. Smith, *God Bless America: Tin Pan Alley Goes to War*. Lexington: Kentucky UP, 2003, p.18.

¹²⁰ *NJA Melody Maker* ‘U.S. Tin Pan Alley Goes to War’, 17th January 1942, p.1.

¹²¹ *Mass Observation Online*. File Report 11 A – Jazz and Dancing, November 1939, p.25. The precise timeframe for the data is not stated, only that the songs are “current” as of November 1939.

¹²² *Ibid.* The Mass Observation report is, however, flawed in its calculations; it erroneously states that the amount of humorous and serious war songs was “just over half” in each case, and the combined percentages only amount to 99%.

¹²³ NARA RG 208 Box 6 Records of the Director and Predecessor Agencies: Records of the Director 1942-45. Programs – 10 Radio 1943. Snyder to FCC (c/o AACCS Radio Station, New York), 29th May 1943.

¹²⁴ *Mass Observation Online*. File Report 295 – On Jazz (Bolton) (A[lec]H[ughes]), 25th July 1940, p.2.

The problematic relationship between the content of war songs and the military realities were also commented upon by the journalist Mike Levin in *DownBeat* in June 1942, who complained of “syrupy” American war songs on the grounds that the war was “so vast in extent that when the average guy sings *Johnny Doughboy Found a Rose in Ireland* - and then hears twenty thousand men were killed that day in Russia - he feels like a silly ass.”¹²⁵ Nonetheless, the *Daily Telegraph* reported on 6th October 1939 that the “incurable flippancy” of ‘Siegfried Line’ had at least succeeded in greatly offending the German government, as evidenced by the indignant references to the song over German wireless broadcasts in English. “This is not a soldiers [sic.] song,” stated Lord Haw-Haw, “because soldiers do not brag. It was not written in the soldiers’ camps but by the Jewish scribes of the BBC.”¹²⁶ The RMVP’s response was to broadcast a parody of the song on Haw-Haw’s programme, performed in English and mocking Britain’s shortage of fresh fish:

We’re gonna cry out stinking fish until the end of time
 Have you any fish, Britannia dear?
 We’re gonna cry out stinking fish until the end of time
 Because the hot-air war is here
 Whether the aroma is bad or fine
 We’ll advertise all without a care
 We’re gonna cry out stinking fish until the end of time
 If fresh fish still remains too dear.¹²⁷

Broadcast before the end of October 1939, this version pre-dates by at least a month the earliest German parody of the song acknowledged in Rainer Lotz’s discography, which was recorded on 29th November and featured anti-Semitic lyrics.¹²⁸ It offers the most concrete early evidence to support Kater’s claim, which provided the idea for the comparative approach of the thesis, that the Germans initially began to employ jazz music as propaganda in order to pay the British back in kind.¹²⁹ Moreover, it initiated the RMVP’s own campaign of ‘propaganda jazz’ which would test the veracity of Mass Observation’s suggestion that jazz, “with its international

¹²⁵ JZD *DownBeat* ‘New War Songs Are All Too Syrupy! They Lack Grimness’ by Mike Levin, 1st June 1942, p.14.

¹²⁶ *Mass Observation Online*. File Report 11 A – Jazz and Dancing, November 1939, pp.27-28.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, pp.294-295.

¹²⁹ Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.130.

message and easily-organised subtle impacts, is a potent weapon, and one which we possess and Germany does not.”¹³⁰

Germany

Charlie and his Orchestra

In January 1940, the intermittent musical propaganda content of the Lord Haw-Haw broadcasts took on a formalised structure with the addition of a house jazz band under the leadership of the saxophonist Lutz Templin. The precise nature of the orchestra’s genesis is the subject of some confusion, and it remains unclear whether the orchestra evolved organically or was commissioned by the RMVP. Trumpet player Charly Tabor recalls that “the idea came first and foremost from Goebbels: ‘they have to play jazz’”,¹³¹ a claim which is seconded by the drummer Fritz Brocksieper,¹³² although this is somewhat contradicted by the musicians’ assertions that the group existed prior to Templin’s arrival. Nonetheless, according to Brocksieper, the German members of the band were invited to attend a screening of Chaplin’s *The Great Dictator* at Goebbels’ private cinema.¹³³ Indeed, together with their DTUO colleagues, they were familiar enough with his presence to privately nickname the club-footed Propaganda Minister ‘half-past six’ (*halb Sieben*) due to the way in which he dragged one leg as he walked.¹³⁴

Kater writes that it was for “reasons not yet clear [that] the thirty-eight-year-old Lutz Templin, a relatively minor saxophonist originally from Dusseldorf, who had been playing with his own small group in and around Berlin for years and who was not even a party member, was commissioned to build up a versatile jazz band that could handle the most demanding tasks.”¹³⁵ In fact, Templin’s appointment was much less surprising than Kater suggests, not least because Goebbels’ October 1941 reshuffle of the RRG¹³⁶ saw him offering senior positions to experts unfettered by either Party ties or ideological constraints; while the singer Evelyn Künneke’s remark that the

¹³⁰ *Mass Observation Online*. File Report 11 A – Jazz and Dancing, November 1939, p.28.

¹³¹ Tabor interview 1987.

¹³² Brocksieper interview 1987.

¹³³ See the Brocksieper interview in Florian Steinbiss and David Eisermann, *Propaganda Swing: Dr Goebbels Jazz Orchestra*. Chicago: International Historic Films, 2004.

¹³⁴ Haentzschel interview 1988.

¹³⁵ Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.131.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, pp.124-125.

orchestra consisted of “not exactly the sort of people the Nazis usually wanted to play cards with”¹³⁷ may be strictly accurate in an ideological sense, Templin’s appointment can be taken as an indication that by early 1940 the RRG (with or without Goebbels’ intervention) was already placing a premium on experience and capability rather than Party loyalty. Moreover, the suggestion that Templin was commissioned to build up an orchestra is highly debatable, and Brocksieper recalls that the musicians elected the “incredibly sweet” Templin themselves.¹³⁸ Indeed, the two conflicting stories related by former band members involve both Templin assuming the leadership of pre-existing groups,¹³⁹ originally led by either Rudy Arendt or Arnd Robert, although it is possible given the similarity of the accounts, each of which involves Templin taking over from an untalented nephew of a well-placed official, and the similarity of the names that the same bandleader is implied. They are nonetheless consistent with one another insofar as Templin was chosen by the musicians, and in each account the bandleader he replaced (Arendt or Robert) was described as the untalented nephew of a well-placed official.

The accounts of the size of the group inherited by Templin vary,¹⁴⁰ but it expanded rapidly to include at least twenty musicians at any one time.¹⁴¹ German musicians in the band initially received a *UK-Stellung* (‘reserved occupation’ status) declaring their work indispensable to the war effort, but the majority were eventually drafted and replaced by foreigners,¹⁴² predominantly Dutch, Belgians and Italians, who were working of their own free will and handsomely paid.¹⁴³ Much like the nomination of Templin as bandleader, the musicians belonged to a tightly-knit clique on both social and professional levels, and would recommend one another for jobs such as the Templin group, the DTUO and the radio dance orchestra of Willi Stech. The musicians worked “ceaselessly”,¹⁴⁴ and Brocksieper describes a schedule consisting of making four programmes daily with Templin before working with Stech in the

¹³⁷ Künneke, cited in Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, p.160.

¹³⁸ Brocksieper interview 1987.

¹³⁹ See the contradictory accounts given by the group’s clarinet player, Franz ‘Teddy’ Kleindin, in Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, pp.150-151 and Wuthe, *Swingtime in Deutschland*, p.25.

¹⁴⁰ In Steinbiss/Eisermann, *Propaganda Swing*, Brocksieper recalls that Templin inherited a fourteen-man orchestra (excluding the string section), but he tells Kater that it was originally eight or nine musicians (Brocksieper interview 1987).

¹⁴¹ Zacharias interview 1988.

¹⁴² In some instances the draft could be avoided with medical papers obtained from a cooperative physician named Dr. Schmidt. See Brocksieper interview 1987.

¹⁴³ Angeli interview 1988.

¹⁴⁴ Brocksieper interview 1987.

evening, and on Sundays the “whole Templin clique” would record with the orchestra of Willy Berking or synchronise music for UFA films with Theo Mackeben.¹⁴⁵ Moreover, just as London jazz musicians would follow up their regular employment in respectable hotels or restaurants with late-night jam sessions in the disreputable ‘bottle parties’, so too the musicians of Templin and the DTUO would move from their official paid employment to work in the bohemian environs of afterhours bars such as the *Groschenkeller* on Berlin’s Kantstraße or the *Insel* in Schöneberg, where Brocksieper had first discovered the talented Primo Angeli for the RRG.¹⁴⁶

A comparison of the wartime jazz nightlife in the English and German capitals offers interesting parallels in spite of the very different political and cultural realities. As in London’s Soho, the nocturnal landscape of Berlin’s own West End was scattered with speakeasy-style establishments which provided a relaxed and permissive musical and social environment that fostered freedom of expression. The *Groschenkeller* used a porter and a bell system to alert the musicians to the arrival of RMK agents searching for evidence of incriminating musical material, for example numbers by Jewish or African-American composers, which could result in arrest by the Gestapo,¹⁴⁷ and the violinist Helmut Zacharias remembers that “it was such an adventure, it seemed to us like being an actor in a crime thriller.”¹⁴⁸ However, unlike the London bottle parties and jam sessions, which would reach the BBC airwaves on *Radio Rhythm Club*, the Berlin jazz demi-monde, although also heavily frequented by Party members in civilian attire,¹⁴⁹ remained clandestine by necessity. It must remain a matter of conjecture whether or not this ‘hot’ music, played by first-rate jazz musicians, might have been more effectively utilised for recordings and broadcasts by the RMVP.

Nonetheless, as a group strictly catering to foreign audiences in neutral or enemy territory, Charlie and his Orchestra recorded the latest Anglo-American numbers and “was supposed to play very modern, American-style” music.¹⁵⁰ Conversely, the

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Brocksieper interview 1987.

¹⁴⁷ Kater, *Different Drummers*, pp.137-138.

¹⁴⁸ Zacharias interview 1988.

¹⁴⁹ Brocksieper interview 1987.

¹⁵⁰ Tabor interview 1987.

musicians were thrilled that their broadcasts would be heard abroad, and Charly Tabor asserts that “it was the greatest thing for us [knowing] that we would be heard in the USA”.¹⁵¹ Various accounts of the ways in which the music was collected exist; according to Norman Baillie-Stewart, Schwedler travelled to neutral and occupied countries to gather “the latest English [sic.] dance music”,¹⁵² while both the Czechoslovak accordionist/arranger Karel Běhounek and bass player Otto Tittmann assert that Templin recorded American radio programmes “straight off the air”¹⁵³ onto flexible Decelith acetate, and individual pieces were selected by the arrangers themselves. Běhounek’s detailed account of the complex transcription process lends his version of events credibility, with the arranger recalling that “listening to the [acetate] sheets wasn’t as easy as it looked at first. They were recorded off short- or medium wave. Many parts were barely audible due to atmospheric disturbances or fading. But a bit of imagination helped with the task...”¹⁵⁴ Friedrich Meyer, who arranged for the orchestra with Franz Mück before taking over at *Soldatensender Belgrad* in 1942, notes that the orchestra was exempt from the ideological guidelines which constrained domestic broadcasts and live performances, and thus there was “no question of Jewish influence”.¹⁵⁵

A previously unpublished memorandum in the BBC Written Archives sheds new light on the extent to which the RMVP utilised this process. It cites an account provided by an acquaintance of the Consul General in Zurich, and passed on to the British authorities, which offers a detailed example of how jazz material could be collected by the RMVP. Contrary to an assertion by Templin bass player Otto Tittmann that “we were the only band in the whole of the [German] radio doing this”,¹⁵⁶ the memorandum, dated 10th July 1942, indicates that the practice was more widespread:

[The Consul General’s acquaintance] offered lunch on the Trelleborg - Sassnitz ferry to two half-starved and penniless Germans returning from Norway after having apparently blown their last penny on a farewell beano in Oslo. Grateful for the meal, they related that they were musicians and members

¹⁵¹ Ibid. See also similar sentiments expressed in the Zacharias interview 1988.

¹⁵² Cited in Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, p.155.

¹⁵³ Karel Běhounek, *Erinnerungen*. Unpublished, undated MS, pp.110-111 and Tittmann, cited in Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, p.172.

¹⁵⁴ Běhounek, *Erinnerungen*, p.111.

¹⁵⁵ Hielscher/Meyer interview 1988.

¹⁵⁶ Cited in Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, p.172.

of the Foreign Detachment of the German Propaganda Service. Their duties comprised listening in to British broadcasts and copying down our latest jazz and other tunes on records, from which the music was then written out for German bands who were trained and rehearsed to reproduce this music as faithfully as possible. German stations then sent out this music, interspersed with English news, also copied from the reports of our agencies or broadcasts, but this news was doctored by being interlarded with a couple of lines here and there of genuine German poisonous stuff, in the hope that the differences between the one and the other would escape the notice of the listener. These musicians have been playing to the German troops in Norway on “Ensa”¹⁵⁷ [sic.] lines.¹⁵⁸

Given the comparatively excellent pay received by members of Charlie and his Orchestra,¹⁵⁹ and the different propaganda methodology described here, it is unlikely that these penniless arrangers were working for Templin. Indeed, their plight suggests that musicians of lesser status than the likes of Templin, Běhounek and Meyer were also in the employ of the RMVP and granted ‘listening-in permits’, and thus the practice of recording and recreating Anglo-American compositions may have been more widely spread than has previously been assumed. Moreover, the use of jazz music to attract listeners to news broadcasts laced with “poisonous”¹⁶⁰ distortions was an identical process to that used by Sefton Delmer’s counterfeit *Soldatensender*. The fact that the broadcasts in question were clearly ‘black’ or ‘grey’ can be surmised due to the musicians’ description of the doctoring of British news stories with the express purpose of misinformation. Because they were targeted at Britain, their most likely outlet would have been the RMVP’s ‘freedom station’ NBBS, which, as noted in Chapter Two, purveyed “German propaganda of a mischievous kind”¹⁶¹ and involved such entertainment features as the ‘Off-Duty Programme’ combining modern music and heavy-handed political humour.¹⁶²

We can ascertain, therefore, that the process of copying and reproducing jazz broadcasts was not restricted to the Templin band and extended to the RMVP’s ‘black’ ventures. Charlie and his Orchestra, on the other hand, was a ‘white’ project which was designed to combine musical carbon-copies of Anglo-American hits with satirical political content. While, as noted above, Lord Haw-Haw’s broadcasts had

¹⁵⁷ ENSA - Entertainments National Services Association.

¹⁵⁸ BBC WAC R27/73/1 K.A. Wright to Overseas Music Director, ‘Use by Germany of British Music’, 10th July 1942.

¹⁵⁹ Brocksieper interview 1987 and Angeli interview 1988.

¹⁶⁰ BBC WAC R27/73/1 K.A. Wright to Overseas Music Director, ‘Use by Germany of British Music’, 10th July 1942.

¹⁶¹ *Hansard Online*. New British Broadcasting Station, 5th April 1940. Vol. 360 §376-377.

¹⁶² NA FO 898/52 ‘New British Broadcasting Station’, 31st August 1942.

included musical parodies since October 1939, these were soon established as a regular ‘Political Cabaret’ feature on the programme, presented by an employee in the Foreign Ministry’s broadcast department (‘Kultur-R’) named Karl Schwedler, aka ‘Charlie’.¹⁶³ The cabaret consisted of English comedy sketches intermingled with live jazz band broadcasts, and Brocksieper asserts that as political programming to Britain it fell under the remit of the shortwave station’s *Oberspielleiter* (production manager) Werner Bergold, “a great guy and an anti-Nazi as well.”¹⁶⁴ Of the programme’s structure, Brocksieper remembers:

[T]he whole thing began at the beginning of 1940. Eventually we were working every day apart from Sunday for the KWS [*Kurzwellsender*]. Charley [sic.] was given his lyrics. The lyrics were produced by specialists at the Promi [RMVP]. (...) [We played on] live broadcasts which were recorded, also by the British, that’s where the records which we now have come from. It was called “Germany Calling”. First we played a few numbers, and then came the announcement: ‘Germany Calling’.¹⁶⁵

‘Charlie’ therefore preceded William Joyce’s own segment, and must have appeared roughly at the point that the main BBC evening news ended; as noted above in Chapter Two, this was a deliberate RMVP strategy to win inquisitive listeners wanting to hear ‘the other side of the story’, and the Hamburg frequency was very close to that of the BBC Home Service, making it an easy switch.

The general methodology of the songs was for Schwedler to deliver the lyrics of the original composition for a verse or two, before making a satirical announcement to herald the propaganda target of the piece (i.e. “Here is Winston Churchill’s latest tear-jerker”),¹⁶⁶ after which the original lyrics would be replaced with political parody. Occasionally, however, the song would be played entirely ‘straight’ with no political message, which the German jazz expert Wolfgang Muth plausibly suggests was a psychological trick to create “deliberate confusion” amongst listeners by varying the lyrical methodology.¹⁶⁷ Inconsistency and unpredictability, indeed, were

¹⁶³ For a brief biographical sketch of Schwedler, see Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, p.154.

¹⁶⁴ Brocksieper interview 1987. According to Brocksieper’s account of the Templin orchestra’s genesis, Bergold was the uncle of bandleader Rudi Arendt, whom Templin replaced.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ From ‘You’re Driving me Crazy’, lyrics reprinted in Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, p.302. See Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 in *ibid*, pp.249-342 for the most comprehensive available transcriptions of lyrics, as well as recording dates, locations and personnel.

¹⁶⁷ Wolfgang Muth, ‘Swing und Propaganda: Jazz in der Zeit des Faschismus, Teil III.’ *Sonntag* 26 (1984), p.8.

central components of this unusual project, and while Kater notes that “Goebbels and his team had no qualms over the fact that this latest idea would be thoroughly out of character for a well-aligned [German radio] network which had been lauded abroad, from Cape Town to Vancouver, for its rejection of the universal ‘jazz fad’,”¹⁶⁸ it was in fact entirely consistent with the Propaganda Minister’s Machiavellian philosophy of foreign propaganda. Large amounts of money were set aside for expert personnel, first-rate instruments and production,¹⁶⁹ and the orchestra’s importance can be gauged by the fact that it was to complement the high-profile Haw-Haw broadcasts, which Goebbels considered “fabulous”¹⁷⁰ and had already been singled out for praise from Hitler.¹⁷¹ This faith in the project can be attributed to the fact that the Propaganda Minister, whilst grappling with the problem of the popularity of swing and jazz with German civilian and Forces listeners, was well aware that these ‘degenerate’ art forms were equally, if not more, popular abroad¹⁷² and assumed that they would be well-received by British (and later American) audiences.

The timing of the orchestra’s formation is also significant. For all of the bravado and confidence displayed in his diary, during the summer of 1940 Goebbels repeatedly returned to the question of whether Britain would hold out against German air raids.¹⁷³ Whilst recording “subtle signs of inner disintegration,”¹⁷⁴ “strong discord”¹⁷⁵ and a “significant psychological impact”¹⁷⁶ of air raids on the British populace,¹⁷⁷ he concluded that “[l]ost sleep won’t bring a people down. Demoralisation occurs only after destruction and fear.”¹⁷⁸ Although Goebbels was delighted with William Joyce’s work,¹⁷⁹ it was clear that Lord Haw-Haw “explaining the situation to the English”¹⁸⁰ alone was not having the desired effect on British

¹⁶⁸ Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.131.

¹⁶⁹ See Muth, ‘Swing und Propaganda’, p.8, and Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.131.

¹⁷⁰ Fröhlich (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels* 1.4, p.319.

¹⁷¹ See *Ibid.*, p.8.

¹⁷² Muth, ‘Swing und Propaganda’, p.8.

¹⁷³ See for example Fröhlich (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels* 1.4, p.217 (“England restlos niederzuschlagen. Aber das ist noch nicht so ganz sicher”). See also *ibid.*, p.319 (“Wie lange soll England das noch aushalten? Vielleicht erleben wir ein Wunder!”) and *ibid.*, p.301 (“Schon jetzt kommen sehr pessimistische Stimmen aus London. Aber Genaues kann man natürlich nicht sagen. Man kennt die englische Widerstandskraft zu wenig”).

¹⁷⁴ Fröhlich (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels* 1.4, p.296.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ Goebbels cites “a contact in New York” as the source of this rather vague information.

¹⁷⁸ Fröhlich (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels* 1.4, p.310.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.319.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

morale. Thus with musical assertions from Schwedler that “life [in Britain] is bare, gloom and misery everywhere”,¹⁸¹ Goebbels sought to assist this perceived disintegration through the medium of entertainment; the initial recordings targeted at Britain, whilst playing on the same anti-Churchill and anti-Semitic themes, almost invariably referred to the perceived (or desired) psychological impact of German air raids on the British populace. Mass Observation diaries kept during the Blitz offer evidence of the manifold ways in which the bombing raids could impact upon the public mind, with the Maida Vale correspondent reporting on October 14th 1940 that “I dreamt that [diarist’s friend] Mrs. B. was standing by me and shaking me violently awake, repeating the word ‘bang’ over and over. I woke up with a fearful start (my lips actually forming the word bang, I think), then, a split second after waking, I heard the actual bomb impact!”¹⁸² On 8th November, a foreign shipping correspondent in Glasgow reported that a joke about the likelihood of bombing raids that night had “thrown half of the women in the office in to [sic.] the depths of despair” due to their hatred of the sound of the air-raid siren. “I am sure that these people project their own feelings on to [sic.] this quite inanimate object,” she concluded.¹⁸³

An examination of the lyrical content of these early ‘Charlie’ broadcasts reveals a coherent dual strategy for the psychological manipulation of British listeners, in which Schwedler would remind them of their immediate suffering due to air raids, and then place the blame for the situation on Churchill, whose coalition government had refused Hitler’s ‘peace offer’ in July 1940. Lord Haw-Haw’s diatribes against ‘Siegfried Line’ in October 1939 and subsequent musical parody of the song indicate that William Joyce, who wrote his own scripts, had played an active role in the RMVP’s early forays into propaganda jazz, and it is highly likely that he was the moving spirit behind the project’s lyrics, an assertion which is supported by his daughter Heather Piercey’s recollection that “he would sing all sorts of songs [to me as a child] (...). Also some Irish rebel songs but he rather parodied them.”¹⁸⁴ Nonetheless, due to lack of evidence the question of authorship will remain a matter of conjecture. As observed above in Chapter Two with regard to Haw-Haw, the

¹⁸¹ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, p.298.

¹⁸² *Mass Observation Online*. Diarist No. 5427, 14th October 1940.

¹⁸³ *Mass Observation Online*. Diarist No. 5390, 8th November 1940.

¹⁸⁴ See Piercey-Beckett interview, *The Guardian* 2005.

lyrics also attempted to appeal to various existing sentiments among Britons such as anti-Semitism and socialist resentment of ‘plutocrats’; an FCC monitor stated later in the war that “German radio hammers away at political dessionion [sic.] in England and uses practically every possible means to discredit Churchill’s leadership”,¹⁸⁵ and Charlie and his Orchestra was heavily utilised in this respect. For example, ‘When Day is Done’ (autumn 1940) attempts to depress the British into defeatism on the one hand, and create active resentment against the Prime Minister on the other:

This hopeless war is Churchill’s war
It’s not too late, we’ll get rid of him
Day and night we have alarms
Big fires all over town
London life has lost its charm
These air raids get us down.¹⁸⁶

Likewise, ‘Black-Out Blues’ (St. Louis Blues), in what Bergmeier and Lotz note is a rare case of Nazi propaganda personifying a racist stereotype, depicts “a negro from the London docks”¹⁸⁷ suffering due to the Blitz and blaming his plight on Churchill. Moreover, Bergmeier and Lotz plausibly suggest that the song’s lyric “feeling tomorrow like I feel today” is a reference to the Luftwaffe’s sixty-five consecutive nightly air-raids on London from 7th September 1940; again the intended effect is to remind civilians of their suffering and to attribute it to “Churchill’s bloody war”.¹⁸⁸ Conversely, ‘The Sheikh of Araby’ (late 1940) is sung from Churchill’s perspective, with the Prime Minister lamenting: “My charming war is a tragedy – I’m at the mercy of Germany!”¹⁸⁹ This device, in which the song is sung from the perspective of a major political figure, personality or even a personified nation, was used frequently and served the dual function of providing an intermediary on whom the German animosity could be focussed, thus avoiding a direct attack on the listener (which could have led to greater resistance to the message), whilst also attempting to turn the audience against the figure or nation lampooned in the song. Goebbels explicitly stated this policy at his daily conference on 7th July 1940, at which he

¹⁸⁵ NARA RG 262 Box 1 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 16th - 22nd January 1942 (dated 24th January 1942), p.15.

¹⁸⁶ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, p.301.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p.308.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, pp.306-307.

“emphasised yet again the necessity of always only attacking Churchill and his plutocratic clique, but never the English people as such. Churchill himself has burned all of his bridges, so that some sort of agreement with England is out of the question while he is still at the helm”¹⁹⁰.

The integration of music and propaganda also allowed entertainment and commentary to be combined in a single feature. This had already been attempted with the Political Cabaret, and would later be used by the *Off-Duty Programme* on NBBS and *Station Debunk* to the USA, but arguably music stood greater chances of success as a propaganda vehicle than “weak jokes with a political moral”,¹⁹¹ and this approach avoided wasting usable propaganda airtime on ‘straight’ music alone in order to hold an audience. America’s OWI would later note that features such as messages from POWs in news programmes were very good at attracting listeners, but had the adverse effect of reducing the time available for the news and propaganda content of the programme.¹⁹² Integrating the political message into the musical content offered a way out of this propagandist’s impasse, and all in a musical style that was demonstrably popular with its target audience.

Nonetheless, the sheer lack of evidence of the reception of Charlie and his Orchestra recordings is problematic. Although connected to Haw-Haw’s high-profile programme,¹⁹³ the recordings simply attracted little if any media or political attention in Britain and the USA at the time they were produced. Neither the BBC’s resident wartime jazz expert Charles Chilton nor his wife Penny, herself a BBC Italian Service employee at the time, or the London-based aficionado Peter Powell were aware of the band’s existence when asked about it, and this itself is a clear indication of the project’s lack of impact, as the novelty value alone would have made it a talking point in broadcasting and jazz circles alike. Moreover, a great amount of official and media attention was devoted in Britain to the dangerous ‘novelty’ broadcasts of Lord Haw-Haw, which allegedly featured the songs, and the BBC (as

¹⁹⁰ Boelcke, *Wollt Ihr den totalen Krieg?*, p.78.

¹⁹¹ This was the Foreign Office monitors’ description of the content of the Nazi ‘black’ station NBBS. NA FO 898/52 ‘New British Broadcasting Station’, 31st August 1942. For specific content of the Political Cabaret see Brocksieper’s recollections in Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.133 and in Steinbiss/Eisermann, *Propaganda Swing*.

¹⁹² NARA RG 208 Box 15 Office of Control Progress Report, 15th November – 15th December 1943.

¹⁹³ See for example Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.133 and Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, pp.157-158. See also Wolf Mittler’s interview in Steinbiss/Eisermann, *Propaganda Swing*.

noted above in Chapter Two) encouraged public parodies and mockery of Haw-Haw as a means of neutralising their threat. No such evidence exists in the case of ‘Charlie’, whose colourful attempts to demoralise the British with jazz music would surely also have been an appealing target for the media and the public alike. Nor does the Mass Observation archive contain a single reference to the orchestra, although Lord Haw-Haw is mentioned no fewer than 418 times,¹⁹⁴ and MO diarist Denis Argent, himself a jazz fan, fails to make a single reference to them. The same is true of the British monitors and the American FCC’s weekly reports on English-language propaganda from Hamburg, which otherwise offer thorough analyses of German psychological warfare efforts. In researching the thesis I have been unable to reconcile the overwhelming evidence that Charlie and his Orchestra were featured on Haw-Haw’s programme and the near-complete lack of any evidence of their reception.

Nonetheless, it is clear that Kater and Bergmeier/Lotz have placed undue emphasis on the sources which provide ‘evidence’ of British feedback. Bergmeier cites a *Daily Express* article from September 1944 which praises the musical contents of the Lord Haw-Haw broadcasts as being (or having been)¹⁹⁵ “excellent”, and interprets this as evidence of the positive reception in Britain of Charlie and his Orchestra; however, it is highly unlikely that the article was referring to this project. On the one hand, by September 1944 the group had relocated to Stuttgart without vocalist Charlie Schwedler, and since the orchestra’s songs were essentially ironic ‘commentary’ on current affairs (and the last known propaganda recording was made over one year earlier, in mid-1943), it is doubtful they would have been re-aired by the RMVP in September 1944. On the other hand, even had an earlier broadcast been replayed, it is similarly implausible that a serious British newspaper would publicly laud German jazz numbers laced with increasingly obsolete Nazi propagandistic bravado. Unreliable, too, is the account given by Kater of British POWs being played the records and breaking them to pieces “after a fair examination on German-provided gramophones”,¹⁹⁶ the only source of which is anecdotal evidence traced back to

¹⁹⁴ See *Mass Observation Online*.

¹⁹⁵ The time frame of the broadcasts referred to in the *Daily Express* is unclear; it appears to refer to Haw-Haw’s programme in general rather than specific broadcasts.

¹⁹⁶ Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.106.

Wolfgang Muth, who offers no information as to the story's origins;¹⁹⁷ it is highly unlikely that the RMVP would have wasted time and resources seeking to demoralise individual POWs, whose morale once captured was of negligible value or interest. Nor does Kater provide any other evidence of the records' reception by Allied listeners beyond qualitative assessments of the propaganda itself.¹⁹⁸ The only source I have found that seems to pertain directly to a listener's opinion of Charlie and his Orchestra is an account related by the arranger Friedrich Meyer of a conversation with a Jewish-American Sergeant in Bremen in September 1945. "[H]e told me that he listened to the Europa-Sender [sic.] before the advance on Paris because of the wonderful jazz music," recalls Meyer, "and there was always some idiot interrupting with propaganda lyrics. That was the Templin band."¹⁹⁹

Hans Hinkel

Although Charlie and his Orchestra may appear an outlandish project within the racist and anti-modernist scheme of the Nazi ideology, it was in fact merely symptomatic of the broader international wartime cultural discourse in which the boundaries between propaganda and entertainment were blurred beyond recognition. It was precisely the same methodology which had been outlined in Mass Observation's proposals for a combination of jazz and propaganda, even on more apparently banal issues such as encouraging the consumption of margarine. In Germany, utilisation of jazz music as a vehicle for propaganda was a policy that was consistent with Goebbels' disregard of ideological contradictions in material for foreign audiences. His adjutant Hans Hinkel, on the other hand, has been depicted by previous historiography as a rigid and uncultured ideologist, and thus the reasons for his leading role in the Third Reich's cultural apparatus during the war have not been satisfactorily explained. However, findings made during the process of research for the thesis have cast new light on this important RMVP bureaucrat which necessitates an extensive reappraisal of prior academic analyses of his character and capabilities.

Prior scholarship of Nazi cultural propaganda has invariably cast Hinkel as a reactionary figure. Bergmeier, for example, cites his ideas as a counterweight to

¹⁹⁷ Muth, 'Swing und Propaganda', p.8.

¹⁹⁸ Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.134.

¹⁹⁹ Hielscher/Meyer interview 1988.

Hitler's statement on 10th April 1942 that propaganda broadcasts to Britain should "include a lot of musical material of a kind that appeals to the British, so as to get them more and more accustomed to tuning in to our stations if they cannot get what they want on their own stations."²⁰⁰ Hinkel is cited as saying twelve days later at a broadcasting planning meeting:

On no account should the stations in question be allowed to frame any political news bulletins targeting a particular country with music that is representative of that country. For example, imitating distinctively English and American music is in his [Hinkel's] opinion undesirable, and on the contrary, he is firmly of the view that this kind of broadcast must be framed with really good German music.²⁰¹

While superficially this idea places Hinkel at odds with the pragmatic methodology of Goebbels, and appears closer to the *völkisch* cultural ideas of Alfred Rosenberg²⁰² in terms of the primacy of German musical achievements in European culture, it in fact constituted an advocacy for utilising 'authentic' and internationally respected German cultural products as opposed to replicating those of the target country since German jazz musicians could not reasonably be expected to compete with the genuine article; indeed, it is an identical case to that advocated by Andrew MacLaren MP in the House of Commons with regard to favouring British music over jazz on the airwaves.²⁰³ Moreover, Hinkel's argument is utterly consistent with Mass Observation's suggestion, which I have refuted above in this chapter, that Germany possessed no indigenous jazz capabilities. This same sentiment was echoed by the outstanding Austrian trumpet player Charly Tabor of Charlie and his Orchestra, who admitted that "at heart I think Viennese waltzes would have been better [to transmit abroad]. Because they've got better jazz music over there than the way we were playing it. We played it really well. But the Americans would hardly have tuned in and said: 'Oh, there's a German jazz orchestra!'"²⁰⁴

Hinkel's curriculum vitae offers plenty of evidence of pragmatic inclinations. Born in Worms in 1901, he joined the NSDAP on 10th September 1920 and was a veteran

²⁰⁰ Cited in Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, p.136.

²⁰¹ Cited in *ibid*.

²⁰² For an edited and translated collection of Rosenberg's writings on the *völkisch* aesthetic, see Robert Pois (ed.), *Alfred Rosenberg: Selected Writings*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1970, pp.126-174.

²⁰³ Cited and discussed above in this chapter.

²⁰⁴ Tabor interview 1987.

of the Beer Hall Putsch of 9th November 1923.²⁰⁵ In 1929 he founded the Berlin section (and later led the Prussian section) of Alfred Rosenberg's *völkisch* politico-cultural advocacy group, the *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur* ('Combat League for German Culture'), and edited their newspaper *Deutsche Kulturwacht* ('German Culture Watch') from 1932,²⁰⁶ at the same time managing Goebbels' own paper *Der Angriff*²⁰⁷ ('Attack') and co-founding the *Kampfverlag* ('Combat Publishing House') with Otto and Gregor Strasser of the NSDAP's so-called 'left wing'.²⁰⁸ Michael Balfour observes that, in working with three rival factions within the Party, Hinkel displayed "sufficient ideological flexibility, not to mention energy",²⁰⁹ and this approach allowed him to align himself increasingly with Goebbels, whose Party career was in the ascendancy, as opposed to the increasingly obsolete Rosenberg and the black-listed Strassers. On 6th May 1935, Goebbels promoted the violently anti-Semitic²¹⁰ *SS-Sturmbannführer* Hinkel to Secretary-General of the Reich Chamber of Culture (RKK). On 1st March 1942 the Propaganda Minister bestowed upon him the responsibility for the RRG's entire entertainment and artistic programme,²¹¹ to which was added the role of Reich Film Intendant in 1944.²¹²

While Hinkel's successful career in the pre-war NSDAP apparatus can be attributed to his bureaucratic ability, work ethic and ideological zeal, his increasing influence over cultural affairs over the course of the war has proved less easy to explain. Having left university without a degree and, unlike Goebbels and Hitler, demonstrating no particular interest in culture or the arts,²¹³ it is certainly strange that a reactionary such as Hinkel should be delegated so much power over Nazi wartime cultural policy by Goebbels. Alan E. Steinweis notes:

²⁰⁵ Steinweis, 'Hans Hinkel and German Jewry', p.210.

²⁰⁶ Joel Sachs, 'Some Aspects of Musical Politics in Pre-Nazi Germany.' *Perspectives of New Music* 9.1 (1970): pp.74-95. Here p.88.

²⁰⁷ See Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.34 and Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, p.16.

²⁰⁸ Steinweis, 'Hans Hinkel and German Jewry', p.210. See also Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, p.34.

²⁰⁹ Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, p.16.

²¹⁰ See Hans Hinkel papers (BA R56I/110) and Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.38. See also Steinweis, 'Hans Hinkel and German Jewry', p.210 and Lily E. Hirsch, 'The Berlin "Jüdischer Kulturbund" and the "After-Life" of Franz Schubert: Musical Appropriation and Identity Politics in Nazi Germany.' *The Musical Quarterly* 90.3/4 [2007], pp.469-507. Here p.473.

²¹¹ BA R56I/110 (Microfiche 2). Hans Hinkel papers. Excerpts from a four-page biography of Hinkel (author unknown), produced on the occasion of his appointment as Reich Film Intendant (*Reichsfilmintendant*) in March 1944.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ See Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.34 and Steinweis, 'Hans Hinkel and German Jewry', p.210.

Hinkel established himself as a leading NSDAP spokesman on artistic and cultural matters. Yet he possessed no artistic training or special experience in cultural affairs. Whether he was a “philistine”, as [Willi Boelcke] has alleged, is a matter of interpretation, but there was certainly little in his experience to qualify him for the decisive role he would be called upon to play in German artistic and cultural life after 30th January 1933.²¹⁴

Moreover, while he proved himself to have been an efficient administrator in his multiple peacetime tasks,²¹⁵ for example overseeing “the cultural and intellectual ghettoization”²¹⁶ of Jewish life in the Third Reich, wartime conditions called for the very different talents of pragmatism and a capacity for compromise. Hinkel wrote to Goebbels as early as June 1933 that, alongside its task of entertaining and informing the listener, radio should serve “*above all* a state-building and cultural-political function”,²¹⁷ and his many essays and speeches delivered during the course of the war testify that he never abandoned this position. Instead, he argued that cultural support (*kulturelle Betreuung*) for the military was “in the truest sense the realisation of our German socialism (...) The union of the sword and the lyre - as embodied in the cultural support for our soldiers – is the most glorious symbol of the German victory over the antagonistic, outdated, plutocratic world.”²¹⁸

Goebbels, on the other hand, had always emphasised that radio should provide entertainment rather than serve a culturally didactic role.²¹⁹ As has been shown above in this chapter, he was willing to place extensive funds and resources at the disposal of a jazz band to beam ‘degenerate’ music to enemy and neutral countries, and he was similarly aware that most listeners did not want “National Socialism set to music”,²²⁰ striving to find a middle ground that was acceptable to Nazi ideologists and yet popular with the German public. The evidence certainly supports Kater’s assertion that “during the war years, [Goebbels] had to make allowances in the interest of high policy, perhaps to the detriment of his private preferences”,²²¹ but in

²¹⁴ Steinweis, ‘Hans Hinkel and German Jewry’, p.210.

²¹⁵ Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, p.17.

²¹⁶ Hirsch, ‘The Berlin “Jüdischer Kulturbund” and the “After-Life” of Franz Schubert’, p.473.

²¹⁷ My italics. BA R56I/83 (Microfiche 1) Hinkel an Goebbels, 12th June 1933.

²¹⁸ BA R56I/110 (Microfiche 3) Draft version of the essay ‘Der Einsatz unserer Kunst im Kriege’ by Hans Hinkel (1941), pp.252-257. The finished essay was published in *Der deutsche Film* 5, No. 11–12 (May–June 1941).

²¹⁹ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, p.141.

²²⁰ The phrase belongs to Bergmeier/Lotz (ibid).

²²¹ Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.38.

fact this wartime policy was, in terms of broadcasting philosophy, essentially an extension of the Propaganda Minister's pragmatic pre-war approach.

Unpublished excerpts from Michael H. Kater's interviews with Fritz Brocksieper and DTUO bandleader Georg Haentzschel provide evidence of Hinkel's private ideas, as well as his dealings with jazz musicians, which necessitates a considerable re-evaluation of his character and opinions.²²² Brocksieper recalls that Hinkel accompanied many of the jazz musicians from Charlie and his Orchestra on the Wehrmacht tours in France in their guise as *Tobis*²²³ *Starkasten* ('Tobis Box of Stars'), which they were obliged to undertake approximately three weeks per year as an extension of their shortwave work.²²⁴ He remembers Hinkel as a good-looking, intelligent and very pleasant man, albeit "a terrible Nazi",²²⁵ while Haentzschel recalls that he was "a big, stately man [...] (...) He also had a pronouncedly diverse education [*einer ausgesprochen nicht einseitigen Bildung*]. He was multi-faceted."²²⁶ Moreover, in Haentzschel's estimation, "For us [jazz musicians], Hinkel's arrival was a very positive thing".²²⁷

Furthermore, Brocksieper alleges that during a conversation on a bus journey to the Front with a different formation, which included former Scala²²⁸ director Otto Stenzel and the singer Marika Röck, Hinkel took him into his confidence on a number of issues. Firstly, he told Brocksieper that he believed Goebbels should establish a record label specifically for American jazz recordings, including those of Louis Armstrong. He also admitted that, in the classical music realm, great soloists were now rare in Germany; he claimed to have invited the famous Polish-Jewish pianist Arthur Rubenstein to visit the Third Reich, and even extended an offer to "Aryanise" him, both of which Rubenstein declined. He had also invited the young Jewish-American violinist Yehudi Menuhin to visit Germany, but Menuhin had similarly refused. Contrary to Willi Boelcke's conclusion that Hinkel was a

²²² Haentzschel interview 1988.

²²³ Name derived from *Tobis Filmkunst* GmbH, the state-controlled film producer.

²²⁴ Brocksieper interview 1987.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Haentzschel interview 1988.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ A leading Berlin cabaret during the Third Reich, largely destroyed during a bombing raid on the city on 22nd November 1943.

philistine,²²⁹ Brocksieper found him to be “internationally versed in the arts”²³⁰ and felt that it was apparent how much he wanted to attract great soloists to Nazi Germany.²³¹ The alleged invitation of Jewish musicians is ironic in view of Hinkel’s key role in the removal of Jews from German life throughout the 1930s,²³² but would be consistent with Steinweis’ assertion that Hinkel was capable of “exhibit[ing] a surprising degree of respect towards individual members of the German-Jewish community,”²³³

It is possible that the close contact with the Forces which Hinkel experienced as manager of such variety tours led him to revise previously held positions and consider a more pragmatic approach. Brocksieper recalls a concert in the winter of 1940-41, moderated by the celebrity sports commentator Rolf Wernicke, in which the members of *Tobis Starkasten* played in thick winter coats in a basic wooden shed in front of over one hundred soldiers.²³⁴ After approximately one hour of Horst Winter performing strictly German numbers, the crowd became unruly and began calling out for them to “play a real jazz tune” (*Spiel mal ‘nen anständigen Jazz*), and requesting forbidden numbers by African-American and Jewish composers such as ‘Tiger Rag’, ‘St. Louis Blues’ and ‘*Bei Mir Bist Du Schön*’. Positioned at the side of the stage, Hinkel began waving away the requests, which were increasing in volume. Finally he took to the stage and used the primitive PA system to inform the crowd that the band was not allowed to play “English or Jewish” numbers, and that they should leave the musicians in peace. Oranges and apples began flying at the stage, at which point Hinkel told the musicians to play what the crowd wanted and promptly fled the scene.²³⁵

Hinkel’s assertion that “really good German music”²³⁶ would lead to superior results with foreign audiences is as questionable as his vague prescription of a “union of the sword and the lyre” for the Wehrmacht.²³⁷ If Brocksieper’s assertions are correct, it

²²⁹ Steinweis, ‘Hans Hinkel and German Jewry’, p.210.

²³⁰ Brocksieper interview 1987.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Hirsch, ‘The Berlin “Jüdischer Kulturbund” and the “After-Life” of Franz Schubert’, p.473.

²³³ Steinweis, ‘Hans Hinkel and German Jewry’, p.210.

²³⁴ Brocksieper interview 1987.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Hinkel, cited in Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, p.136.

²³⁷ BA R56I/110 (Microfiche 3) Draft version of the essay ‘Der Einsatz unserer Kunst im Kriege’ by Hans Hinkel (1941), pp.252-257.

is entirely possible that Hinkel would have preferred to broadcast ‘straight’ American jazz music rather than inferior copies. However, while Brocksieper’s and Haentzschel’s recollections indicate that, in private, Hinkel adopted a more pragmatic stance towards musical policy than his public statements suggest, there is no record of him ever voicing or publishing such ideas. With his personal experience of the jazz predilections of the German Forces,²³⁸ Hinkel would certainly have understood that their British counterparts had similar inclinations. Indeed, while Wagner was popular with “about one in seven”²³⁹ British respondents to a BBC Listener Research survey in 1941, it found that “dance music was the preference of the majority for the beginning and the end of the day”.²⁴⁰ Patric Stevenson’s August 1941 article for *Musical Times*, whilst lamenting the fact that many British soldiers would simply turn off the wireless if offered anything other than jazz and light entertainment, provided a graphic illustration of listening culture in the barracks:

What was profoundly disturbing was the repulsion evoked by the mention of such names as Mozart, Borodin or Walton. Before a bar of the music could be heard, some ignoramus would leap to his feet and twiddle the control till a transmission of ‘swing’ or ‘variety’ could be obtained. If nothing of this type was available the set would be turned off with an oath about the rottenness of the programmes.

(...) One further scrap of conversation may be recorded. The [BBC] Forces [Programme] fare had been on continuously all the evening, and when everyone was in bed the announcer stated that ‘we now came to a programme of chamber music - a Schubert work played by the Catt...’ but we heard no more, because a moan went up: ‘Chamber Music? Blimey, no! A’m not ’avin’ any of that b— stuff!’ and an emissary was hastily sent to retune the receiver. So instead of Schubert I had more ‘swing.’²⁴¹

Stevenson also quotes “a letter from a friend (...) confined to a [hospital] ward in Eire,”²⁴² who reported that “I don’t know who was in charge of the [radio] set, but it was a firm-minded person who dealt in a summary fashion with anything that threatened to bear a dim resemblance to ‘classical’ music.”²⁴³ These accounts are supported by the BBC’s own research of the Forces’ musical preferences discussed in Chapter Two, and it is therefore highly unlikely, in this sort of group listening

²³⁸ For example on tours to the Front with members of Templin’s orchestra under the auspices of *Tobis Starkasten*.

²³⁹ BBC WAC R44/342 BBC Listener Research Survey, November 1942.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ Stevenson, ‘A Musician in the Ranks’, pp.291-292.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, p.291.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp.291-93.

environment ruled by majority tastes, that the Nazi propaganda offensive would have benefited from reliance on German classical music.

Brocksieper “can’t remember”²⁴⁴ if Hinkel was ever among the many Nazis who came with their girlfriends or in groups to the lively jazz bars around Berlin’s Kantstraße early in the war.²⁴⁵ Nonetheless, the sympathetic impression the SS-*Sturmbannführer* and ‘Old Fighter’ made upon the two prominent German jazz musicians offers sufficient clues as to why he was chosen to enact the progressive reforms between October 1941 and February 1942, regardless of the fact that he was neither an expert in popular music nor “unobstructed by the blinkers of Nazi ideology”.²⁴⁶ The disparity between the views expressed in Hinkel’s reactionary writings and speeches and the benevolent pragmatist remembered by Brocksieper and Haentzschel reveals a contradictory personality, more multi-faceted and complex than is conventionally supposed, and yet one that is thoroughly consistent with the “ideological flexibility”²⁴⁷ displayed by this hard-line Nazi throughout his long and varied career.

New German Entertainment Music: *Frohe Stunde am Nachmittag*

The difficulty of finding the appropriate music with which to woo enemy listeners was matched by the problems the RMVP and the RRG had in providing suitably upbeat but ideologically acceptable programming for German Forces, which were exacerbated by the fact that the British were well aware of the German predilection for jazz. A BBC report on the German audiences for British programming dated 25th August 1942 quotes an American journalist who had recently departed Berlin as saying that “young people, even fanatical Nazis, would go to considerable lengths (...) to listen to our light musical programmes, particularly jazz”,²⁴⁸ and the wartime aficionado Hans Blüthner’s later assertion that “anybody who liked jazz couldn’t have been a Nazi”²⁴⁹ simply does not stand up to the evidence. The most prominent example of this was the leading German pianist and bandleader Willi Stech, who

²⁴⁴ Brocksieper interview 1987.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, p.16.

²⁴⁸ NA FO 898/41 European Intelligence Papers Series 2, Number 9. BBC Studies in European Audiences – The European Audience of British Broadcasts in English. 25th August 1942.

²⁴⁹ Zwerin, *Swing under the Nazis*, p.24. See also JZD Hans Blüthner papers. Blüthner to Jonathan Feldman, 22nd September 1987.

combined a successful swing career with an ideological commitment to the NSDAP, of which he was also a member, and allegedly remained a convinced Nazi even after 1945.²⁵⁰ Moreover, Primo Angeli of Charlie and his Orchestra describes officers and SS functionaries at a party in a hotel at the Nazi resort of Berchtesgaden dancing enthusiastically to his jazz band and states that “they only wanted hot music”,²⁵¹ while trumpeter Charly Tabor remembers that soldiers at the barracks in Smolensk “always wanted to listen to jazz [*schräge Musik*], [as well as] a few *Heimat* songs (...) The officer said ‘jazz!’ so we played it. The pilots were the best, they were even more modern. They knew all of the numbers.”²⁵²

Goebbels, of course, was well aware of the problem. In June 1941, the same month as Germany’s invasion of the Soviet Union, he published an essay in *Das Reich* entitled ‘The Relaxation of Radio Scheduling during Wartime’²⁵³ in which he argued, as paraphrased in the protocol of the RMVP evening press conference on 15th June, that “[s]ome listeners only want to listen to operas, some want symphonies, and some want marches or dance music etc. The front – and that is of course the most important thing – needs relaxation, it wants to listen to light, lively music.”²⁵⁴ Indeed, a 1941 survey of active German Forces’ musical preferences for the Soldatensender confirmed this.²⁵⁵ In the Crimea 70% requested modern dance and entertainment music, while in the Ukraine those with a rank of battalion commander and lower said they preferred modern rhythmic music. The Luftwaffe emphasised that programmes on *Soldatensender Central* “could not be hot enough”, while ‘infrequent listeners’ asked almost without exception for jazz music “to liven themselves up”. In Lapland almost all respondents demanded plenty of light music, adding: “The crazier, the better”.²⁵⁶ The situation was exacerbated as the Nazi war effort deteriorated, leading to a progressive increase in the demand for robust jazz music during the course of the war. A memo from Hans Hinkel to Goebbels in

²⁵⁰ Haentzschel interview 1988.

²⁵¹ Angeli interview 1988.

²⁵² Tabor interview 1987. *Schräge Musik* was a Third Reich euphemism referring explicitly to jazz, so I have translated it as such. *Heimatlied* roughly translates as ‘a song of the homeland’, but due to the specific and untranslatable cultural context of *Heimat* I have left this word untranslated.

²⁵³ BA R58/1090 ‘Auflockerung des Rundfunkprogramms im Kriege’ by Joseph Goebbels. *Das Reich*, June 1941.

²⁵⁴ BA R58/1090 Protokoll der Abendspressekonferenz (RMVP), 15th June 1941.

²⁵⁵ See Briggs, *The War of Words*, pp.130-131 and Chilton, *Auntie’s Charlie*, p.128.

²⁵⁶ BA R56I/41 Wünsche der aktiven Truppe an die Soldatensender, 1941. Those in the Ukraine filled out a questionnaire, but it is not stated how exactly the other groups expressed their opinions.

February 1944 admitted that *Soldatensender Belgrad* was popular because it played “the hottest dance music”,²⁵⁷ and there was a steady rise in complaints about programmes that were considered “schmaltzy” and “unmanly”.²⁵⁸

As will be discussed in Chapter Five, asserting control over the *Soldatensender* was hugely problematic for the RMVP, and the degree of de facto independence they enjoyed allowed them to ignore domestic guidelines regarding the playing of jazz. Meanwhile, the centrally-controlled *Reichsender* were to cater to the growing jazz demand within an ideologically acceptable framework. New programme guidelines issued on 26th September 1941 stated that between 10.15 p.m. and midnight on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday German radio was to broadcast 50% entertainment music and 50% modern dance music. On Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday the mix was to be 60% entertainment music and 40% modern dance music.²⁵⁹ The guidelines emphasised that the evening programme should be “as lively, as varied and as colourful as possible. In individual cases I ask for the emphasis to be on swinging pieces, and to place a tune with a particularly exciting effect at the beginning and end of each programme.”²⁶⁰ However, the attention paid by the RVMP and the RRG to Forces’ tastes was not a new phenomenon. The hugely successful command performance *Wunschkonzert für die Wehrmacht*, which was broadcast from *Haus des Rundfunks* in Berlin between 1st October 1939 and 25th May 1941, was structured around live performances of musical requests sent in from soldiers,²⁶¹ and took place in front of an invited audience of soldiers and medics. Indeed, Hans-Jörg Koch notes that the command performance format was “almost as old as [German] broadcasting itself”,²⁶² and this popular programme consciously served as a bond between the Forces and the Home Front. “For the duration of the programme,” observes Koch, “the audience in the auditorium, the listeners at home

²⁵⁷ BA R56I/41 (Microfiche 1). Hinkel an Goebbels (cc: ‘Staatssekretar’ [Gutterer]), 10th January 1944.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ BA R58/1090 (Microfiche 2) Neue Programm-Richtlinien, 26th September 1942.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ See Hans-Jörg Koch, *Wunschkonzert: Unterhaltungsmusik und Propaganda im Rundfunk des Dritten Reichs*. Graz: Ares, 2006.

²⁶² Ibid, p.112.

and the faraway soldiers became a community congregated in an imaginary place.²⁶³

However, Goebbels also believed that the variety format could serve not just as a jukebox entertainment for the strengthening of the national community, but also fulfil a progressive function as an arena in which the type of music which the Forces desired could be honed and developed. To this end, in January 1941 he initiated a programme called *Frohe Stunde am Nachmittag* ('Happy Hour in the Afternoon'), which was to serve the express purpose of developing New German Entertainment Music. This nebulous concept essentially implied a form of jazz music which was sufficiently purged of 'non-Aryan' elements to be acceptable to the ideologists, and yet exciting and uplifting enough to keep the Forces tuned to German wavelengths. It was a state initiative which utterly lacked a theoretical or popular base, as was made clear by an attempt to define it in an essay for the journal *Unterhaltungsmusik* by the head of the Lower Saxony RMK Wolfgang Helmut Koch in 1942:

If one considers the music performed in bars, coffee houses and other such leisure venues from the perspective of the National Socialist worldview [...], one is forced to realise that most of what is on offer in these places has little or absolutely nothing to do with culture; it instead gives the impression that Jewish and Bolshevistic artistic forms are still trying to achieve validity. [...] But there is another form of art which wants nothing more than to exist, to rejoice in its pure form, its happy sound, its carelessness and rest in itself as a static art that follows only the laws of beauty and therefore serves relaxation [...] it is the art that almost comes from itself to the listener, playfully and entertainingly taking him from everyday life to a place where freedom and happiness make their home.²⁶⁴

The vagueness of this esoteric terminology, utilised by a senior RMK official, highlights the emptiness of the concept, and throughout the war attempts to nurture a New German Entertainment Music were largely based on imposing restrictions upon existing dance bands. *Frohe Stunde* was to be no exception to this rule. The first broadcast was planned for 10th April 1941, but did not in fact take place until 9th July, perhaps due to disagreement on the precise purpose of the programme. There was some initial confusion as to whom it should be aimed at, and the minutes of a radio department listening session five days after the first broadcast noted that the first meeting on the subject "gave the impression that *Frohe Stunde am Nachmittag*

²⁶³ Ibid, p.114.

²⁶⁴ BA R56II/179 'Die Unterhaltungsmusik im Rahmen der Neugestaltung des deutschen Musiklebens' by Wolfgang Helmut Koch. *Unterhaltungsmusik*, 1942.

is above all for the entertainment of the German housewife. (...) Later meetings, particularly in June, decided that *Frohe Stunde* should primarily serve the propagation of new German entertainment music.”²⁶⁵ On 28th June it was agreed that the propagandistic purpose of the programme was the development of good German entertainment music, with the “propagandistic secondary aim” being to cater to “the German housewife”.²⁶⁶ Since it can be assumed that tamer fare would have been generally targeted at the latter, it is representative of the broader problems of the RMVP and RRG with creating a ‘New German Entertainment Music’ that they failed to see how mismatched these two goals were if they were attempting to replace jazz with something exciting enough to be acceptable to the soldiers at the Front. There is also an evident lapse in bureaucratic communications, since it had already been expressed on 21st February that cultivating entertainment music in accordance with Goebbels’ wishes was the programme’s *raison d’être*.²⁶⁷

A variety programme similar to *Frohe Stunde* was timed to coincide with the publication in *Das Reich* of Goebbels’ essay ‘Radio in Wartime’, and its subsequent broadcast on all German radio stations at 8 p.m. that evening, as a practical illustration of Goebbels’ argument. A reading of the essay was to be followed by “a particularly rich and colourful entertainment programme which will have something for everyone, from the most beautiful melodies of our great masters to the upbeat offerings of film and variety artists and the exciting rhythms of our best dance orchestras”,²⁶⁸ indeed, the emphasis on the rhythmic element of the dance music as opposed to the melodic qualities is significant, and the programme included Barnabás von Géczy and the accordion virtuoso Albert Vossen, both of whom were well-versed in the swing idiom and would later be involved with the DTUO. This was evidently in the spirit of wartime cultural compromises advocated by Goebbels in his essay, given that the Nazis’ rejection of jazz from a musical standpoint centred

²⁶⁵ BA R58/158 Abt. Rundfunk, Ref. Bartholdy, betr. Frohe Stunde am Nachmittag, 14th July 1941.

²⁶⁶ BA R58/158 Hauptreferat Rundfunkbeobachtungen und Rundfunkwissenschaft, betr. Sitzung am 26.6.41 über den Start “Frohe Stunde am Nachmittag” im Ministerium, 28th June 1941.

²⁶⁷ BA R58/158 Abteilung M an Abteilung Rdf., im Hause, betr. Ausbau der Unterhaltungsmusik, 21st February 1941.

²⁶⁸ BA R58/158 Leiter Rundfunk i.V.: ORR: Diewerge an Glasmeier, 16th June 1941.

in no small part on the use of the syncope²⁶⁹ and the emphasis on rhythm over melody.²⁷⁰

The first edition of *Frohe Stunde* took place on 9th July 1941 to much fanfare. Intensive “propaganda” for the event was “of decisive importance”,²⁷¹ and alongside the posters and distribution of the schedule in factories and businesses, there were also announcements made in the national press, indicating the degree of priority that the RMVP attached to this venture. The event took place in six bars and cafés in Berlin and featured “popular military- and entertainment bands, as well as soloists from the world of music, dance and acrobatics”.²⁷² It was not a success, however, and the radio taskforce meeting five days later complained that “materials and methods used in the Berlin bars and in particular the second-rate bands offered German radio no opportunity to cooperate.”²⁷³ This might have been foreseen, since five days earlier the Radio Executive had written to the RMVP that the propagandistic goals could only be achieved if the fluidity of such a public event could also be experienced by the listener.²⁷⁴ It is certainly remarkable that a programme which Goebbels had expressly stated²⁷⁵ was primarily for the development of German entertainment music, and was intended to be broadcast nationally, should include so many visual acts which obviously could not be integrated into a radio programme.

Judging by the in-house communication relating to this short-lived radio venture, the last mention of which is dated 21st October 1941,²⁷⁶ things did not improve a great deal. It was plagued by the technical difficulties of integrating the performances into an effective radio broadcast, not to mention the artistic shortcomings. A listening session on 5th September 1941 decided that “[a] collective listening to the wax recordings of the last ‘Happy Hour in the Afternoon’ on 13th August (...) resulted in the decision that a broadcast of these recordings from the event would only give the

²⁶⁹ Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.31.

²⁷⁰ See Goebbels’ statement from the ministerial meeting of 1st February 1941, cited in Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, p.140.

²⁷¹ BA R58/158 Mentberger, Leiter der Fachgruppe Schankgewerbe an RMVP, 6th January 1941.

²⁷² BA R58/158 Text für Rundfunkdurchsage für Frohe Stunde am Nachmittag, 7th July 1941.

²⁷³ BA R58/158 Abt. Rundfunk Ref. Bartholdy, Betr: Frohe Stunde am Nachmittag, 14th July 1941.

²⁷⁴ BA R58/158 Reichssendeleitung an RMVP, 4th July 1941.

²⁷⁵ BA R58/158 Abteilung M an Abteilung Rdf., im Hause, betr. Ausbau der Unterhaltungsmusik, 21st February 1941.

²⁷⁶ BA R18/328 Vorlauf für den Herrn Minister, betr. Frohe Stunde am Nachmittag, 21st October 1941.

impression of a certain lack of quality.”²⁷⁷ Indeed, it is unclear how the programme’s secondary audience, the German housewife, received this awkward combination of circus, operetta and social dance groups, but it is certain that the programme failed to fulfil its primary propagandistic function - the development of German entertainment music. An in-house memo sent two months later, after a quality control check of the latest German dance bands, reveals Goebbels’ views on the art which *Frohe Stunde* had supposedly fostered:

The Minister did not at all agree with this demonstration for the following reasons:

- 1.) because bad bands were chosen,
- 2.) because the male and female singers were even worse.²⁷⁸

Moreover, because the attempts to develop New German Entertainment Music were more prohibitive than prescriptive in nature, the bands which came closest to delivering the ‘hot’ music desired by large sections of the Forces were the foreign orchestras active within the Reich. These orchestras made live broadcasts for the RRG in front of Forces audiences in Berlin, which were popular with their target audience but proved controversial and attracted the attention of the Gestapo. An SD report regarding transmissions of a performance by Ernst van ’t Hoff at Berlin’s Delphi-Palast in late March 1941 was poorly received in Saxony according to the observers. It noted:

The objection is made that the arrhythmic was consciously accentuated by the orchestra. The otherwise popular hit ‘Do you hear my secret call’ [*Hörst du mein heimliches rufen*] was turned into “a real nigger dance” through peculiar syncopated accompaniment. Feedback from Westphalia says that most of the numbers played by the star attraction orchestra [*Attraktionsorchester*] of Ernst van ’t Hoff consisted of jazz music that sounded “as if they came straight out of the jungle”. “One cannot imagine that soldiers were present at the ‘Delphi’ who had faced the enemy, otherwise they would have beaten the orchestra out of the concert hall” (for example [an opinion from] Münster).²⁷⁹

This adds weight to Goebbels’ argument that SD reports were biased against his pragmatic wartime programming measures,²⁸⁰ particularly given the fact that, in spite of the resentment they provoked in some quarters, such broadcasts were

²⁷⁷ BA R58/158 Abteilung Rundfunk Ref. Bartholdy, betr. Frohe Stunde am Nachmittag, 5th September 1941.

²⁷⁸ BA R58/158 Direktor Pro, [an] Herrn Ministerialdirektor Hinkel im Hause, 6th November 1941.

²⁷⁹ BA R58/158 Meldungen aus dem Reich Nr. 174, 27th March 1941.

²⁸⁰ BA NS18/334 Tießler, betr. Musik im Rundfunk, 30th January 1943.

demonstrably popular with the Forces. Significantly, while these live broadcasts represented an example of the Propaganda Minister successfully implementing musical concessions to the Forces' demands, reactionary opinions such as those cited by the SD continued to dictate the cultural discourse in the Third Reich, and in practice the Gestapo could veto RMVP, RMK or RRG measures if they were deemed to contradict to the Nazi *Weltanschauung*. Although, unlike jazz aficionados such as Hans Blüthner, Van 't Hoff's critics appear to have missed the fact that his signature theme at the Delphi, *Alles wird gut* ('Everything will be fine'), a tune adopted as a symbol by the dissident Hamburg 'Swing Youth'²⁸¹ because it was based on the first four notes of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, which bore similarities to the Morse code 'V' used by the BBC as its calling signal to Germany,²⁸² by 1942 the orchestra had folded under Gestapo pressure over their 'hot' and 'Jewish' style in spite of RMK protests that the group enjoyed great popularity.²⁸³ Van 't Hoff was arrested before relocating to the RMVP-controlled Radio Hilversum (which also employed the popular swing band *Het Ramblers*) and forming a new orchestra, working there from May 1942 until March 1944 until musical transgressions led to his being rearrested and losing his contract.²⁸⁴ Nonetheless, it is testament to the failure of New German Entertainment Music that these Dutch swing groups were resident at a station which Hans Hinkel had declared upon its opening was to present "special German artistic achievements".²⁸⁵

The futility of the struggle to define and nurture these 'German artistic achievements' is strikingly embodied by *Frohe Stunde*, and it is therefore strange that this particular project of Joseph Goebbels has been utterly overlooked by historians. Moreover, the last mentions of the programme in the German archives (21st October 1941) broadly coincide with the first reference to the DTUO (29th September 1941);²⁸⁶ the latter project is rightly afforded a great deal of attention by

²⁸¹ Kater, *Different Drummers*, pp.168-169. Kater mistakenly claims that it was based on Beethoven's *Eroica* (Third Symphony).

²⁸² JZD Hans Blüthner papers. Blüthner to Jonathan Feldman, 24th September 1987.

²⁸³ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, p.161.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p.245.

²⁸⁵ BA R56I/110 (Microfiche 2) 'Zur Eröffnung Soldatensendungen Hilversums'. Undated transcript, presumably ca. 1942 as Van 't Hoff was broadcasting on the station by May 1942 (Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, p.245).

²⁸⁶ BA R56I/34 Gutterer an Hinkel, 29th September 1941.

Kater and Bergmeier/Lotz²⁸⁷ as Goebbels' single most significant attempt to appease German soldiers and civilians with jazz-like music and a 'State Jazz Orchestra' along the lines of those in the Soviet Union, and yet both projects shared the same goal: the development of a New German Entertainment Music as an alternative to jazz.²⁸⁸ Technical difficulties aside, the qualitative problems experienced in the programme which forbade "swing and jazz-hot" and yet aspired to replace them with an exciting 'German' alternative, presaged the contradictions and problems which were to face the DTUO. As will be discussed below in Chapter Four, Goebbels' inability to learn from the mistakes of *Frohe Stunde* would have implications for his subsequent, high-profile attempt to foster indigenous dance music through a de facto 'light' counterpart to the Berlin Philharmonic.

Conclusion

The parallels between the increasing awareness on the part of the British and German propaganda apparatuses of the role that jazz could have in matters of morale-building and propaganda are manifold. While Chapter Two illustrated the impact of German broadcasting on the initiation of the BBC Forces Programme, this chapter has demonstrated that German anger at the 'Siegfried Line' song was the direct cause of the previously unmentioned October 1939 RMVP parody version about "stinking fish" which was broadcast on Lord Haw-Haw's programme. Together these support the central argument of the thesis that the use of jazz music as propaganda did not emerge in a vacuum, but was an evolving relationship between various national policies. Moreover, through its focus on Mass Observation reports, this chapter has provided the first scholarly analysis of the early attempts, together with songwriter Annette Mills, to create a theoretical framework for 'propaganda jazz' that was grounded in advertising psychology, which, as will be discussed in Chapter Five, heavily influenced American propaganda methodology. By documenting British struggles with the concepts of propaganda and public opinion surveys, and refuting notions of British exceptionalism as expressed through music, this chapter has also challenged the nationalist 'People's War' discourse.

²⁸⁷ See Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, p.144-148 and Kater, *Different Drummers*, pp.124-130.

²⁸⁸ For the Soviet State Jazz Orchestras, see Starr, *Red & Hot*, pp.175-180.

In addition to making these new contributions to the study of wartime cultural propaganda, this chapter has also utilised unused evidence to reappraise areas which have already been the subject of academic attention. I have analysed the methodology of Charlie and his Orchestra and drawn similarities between the group's lyrical content and the work of Lord Haw-Haw (see Chapter Two), which, together with Haw-Haw's direct involvement in the earliest RMVP musical parodies in October 1939, make a strong case for his involvement in the subsequent project. The chapter has also demonstrated that the lyrical substance of these recordings was designed to reflect existing areas of public opinion in Britain, and that the psychological tensions during the Battle of Britain may indeed have been more fruitfully exploited than transpired to be the case. However, the international focus of the thesis has allowed me to ascertain the dearth of British and American sources regarding Charlie and his Orchestra, and thus conclude that the extent of the project's reach and notoriety are overstated by Kater and Bergmeier/Lotz, who rely on inconclusive or anecdotal sources. Furthermore, it appears that the group's failure was inevitable due to the target audience's inexplicable lack of awareness of the project, rather than a result of resistance on the latter's part to the propaganda messages or the insufficient musical standard. Thus it is important not to make, as Kater does, value-based judgements regarding the inevitability of the failure of the project which implicitly and erroneously accept the idea that sections of the British audience were immune to arguments of an anti-Semitic or anti-capitalist nature.²⁸⁹

Whether or not the RMVP's combination of jazz and political cabaret was, as Kater somewhat contradictorily claims, "ingenious",²⁹⁰ is more debatable, and this chapter has demonstrated that the 'Germanic' alternative advocated by Hinkel stood little chance of success with British audiences. However, by reappraising Hinkel's character in the light of the unused Fritz Brocksieper and Georg Haentzschel interviews, I have also presented new evidence which refutes the prevailing view of this important bureaucrat as an ideologically rigid reactionary. By contrast, the well-documented pragmatism of Goebbels has been re-evaluated through the previously overlooked *Frohe Stunde am Nachmittag*, which preceded the more ambitious DTUO and was to serve the same purpose of nurturing an indigenous New German

²⁸⁹ Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.134.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p.130.

Entertainment Music. Significantly, Hinkel's alleged desire to distribute American jazz via a state-controlled German record label, whilst ideologically irreconcilable with NSDAP cultural policy, may have been a more effective and financially viable alternative. No such plan was ever implemented, however, and when the homeland of jazz entered the war, it was to have not only dramatic military but also propagandistic implications. Chapter Four will focus on the period between the bombing of Pearl Harbor and German defeat at Stalingrad, and elucidate key aspects of entertainment and propaganda during 'the turning of the psychological tide'.

Chapter Four

Turning the Psychological Tide:

December 1941 – February 1943

“The value of psychological warfare and propaganda has been recognized ever since the first cave man let out a yell to scare his enemy before he swung at him with a stone axe. The methods have been somewhat refined since then”.¹

(Elmer Davis, Director of the U.S. Office of War Information, 28th October 1942)

¹ NARA RG 306 Box 235 OWI, Elmer Davis 1942 – Remarks of Elmer Davis, The New York Times Hall, 28th October 1942.

Introduction

“No sooner did the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor,” noted *Melody Maker* on 17th January 1942, “than a scramble ensued among publishers. Mills Music were the first to register the title ‘We’ll Always Remember Pearl Harbor’: Sammy Kaye is also publishing a song of the same title, and yet another song to see the light of day is called ‘Remember Pearly Harbor’.”² The USA declared war on Japan on 8th December 1941, and Goebbels observed in his diary the same day that Germany was now engaged in a “World War in the truest sense of the word”.³ Three days later, Germany and Italy reciprocally declared war on the USA in accordance with the Tripartite Pact. Besides the military implications of a powerful new belligerent entering the conflict, the Allies now had America’s immense resources in the field of popular culture at their disposal. Indeed, Tin Pan Alley’s rush to copyright sentimental song titles presaged the significant role that music was to play in the Anglo-American war effort.

Nonetheless, there exists negligible prior scholarship which takes into account the international context of the USA’s uses of music for both domestic morale and propaganda to the enemy. This chapter will make a number of contributions to historiography of the period by drawing on previously uncited American archive materials, shedding light not only on American activities but also on German efforts to manipulate public opinion in the USA via the medium of entertainment. Firstly, it will use FCC monitors’ reports and RMVP directives to examine initial German propaganda lines to the USA following the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The FCC reports will then be used to facilitate a reappraisal of the English-language propaganda programme *Station Debunk*, which takes into account for the first time its jazz content and offers a valuable insight into the broader machinations of RMVP policy during 1942. This will be followed by the discussion of a hitherto unmentioned RMVP jazz programme in English entitled ‘Bill and Mary – the jolly announcers’, which will use a review of the programme in Werner Daniels’ *Musikalische Feldpost*, held at the Michael H. Kater fonds, to reveal a previously

² NJA *Melody Maker* ‘U.S. Tin Pan Alley Goes to War’, 17th January 1942, p.1. The original article erroneously refers three times to “Pearl Harbour” [sic.]; I have corrected rather than highlighted this in the quotation for reasons of readability. For Tin Pan Alley songs of World War II, see also Smith, *God Bless America*.

³ Elke Fröhlich (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*. Teil 2 Bande 2 (October-December 1941). München: K. G. Saur, 1993, p.443.

unexplored propaganda jazz methodology. The DTUO will also be reconsidered within the international context using both interview material from the Kater fonds and the Bundesarchiv documents relating to the orchestra's genesis.

By drawing on the OWI files at the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland, the chapter will seek to rectify the relative lack of scholarship on the work of OWI and Elmer Davis. While Christof Mauch has explored the propaganda operations of SSD,⁴ the role of OWI and its relationship with its British counterparts has been largely overlooked by scholars of American propaganda. OWI's apparently slow realisation of the value of music for the entertainment of its own troops will be discussed, and contrasted with the BBC's theoretical prioritisation of 'light' music for Forces and civilians. However, by re-evaluating the Corporation's bans on slush and 'jazzing the classics', I will demonstrate that the BBC's continued difficulties with jazz and dance music were largely of its own making. In this context I will also cross-reference an important but previously overlooked German commentary on British dance music policy by Wolf Mittler of the RRG. By comparatively assessing German, American and British problems in the field of jazz music, the chapter will establish that, in each case, the difficulties were often the avoidable results of the respective cultural and political contexts.

Germany

The German government received no prior notice from the Japanese about the attack on Pearl Harbor. However, Bergmeier's assertion that, because Berlin was caught off-guard by America's sudden entry into the war, the Nazis' psychological warfare strategy vis-à-vis the United States was hastily improvised,⁵ is refuted by Goebbels' diary entry of 7th December 1941. The Propaganda Minister noted in the hours preceding the attack that "USA-Japan relations are still in limbo, but the situation is escalating on a daily basis. If it has not yet come to the outbreak of the crisis, this is probably due to the fact that neither party has had the courage to push things to the extreme."⁶ Concluding that Japan was merely delaying its attack to see how the military situation develops, Goebbels nonetheless clearly expected it to come. He

⁴ See Mauch, *Schattenkrieg gegen Hitler*.

⁵ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, p.321.

⁶ Fröhlich (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels* 2.2, p.445.

assessed Roosevelt's own plans for 1943, whilst also admitting that American public opinion is "rather unanimously" united behind the President regarding the impending conflict with Japan.⁷ The following day, Goebbels optimistically stated that "I assume that the Japanese still have a fair bit [militarily] in reserve, because they generally practice very cautious, tradition-bound conservative politics; they would not jeopardise their Empire so easily".⁸ He described the atmosphere of "pure joy" at the *Führer Hauptquartier* which had greeted the news of the attack. "If we win this round," he wrote, "nothing else will stand in the way of the realisation of Germany's dream of world power. The chances have never been as good as they are today. So we have to use them."⁹

Moreover, Goebbels claimed that, although the German people were resigned to a long war, the domestic atmosphere was extremely positive;¹⁰ a highly debatable assertion in the light of available evidence. An anonymous American informant stationed in Germany painted a very different picture of the German state of mind at the time, citing casualties in Russia, loss of at least one relative per family and the bombing of German cities as contributing factors to a demoralising sense of déjà vu, and claiming that "the minds of the German people have become filled with pictures of the results of the last war."¹¹ With Operation Barbarossa entering its first winter, Goebbels at least conceded that "one worries a lot for our troops in the East, above all due to the sudden outbreak of icy weather", and acknowledged that there was a rapid increase in scarcity of supplies, above all potatoes and coal, on the home front.¹²

With the USA also having entered the war, Goebbels' optimism already appeared to be more of a belief in Germany's ability to triumph over adversity, as was evident from his insistence that the mounting difficulties would be overcome based on his experiences in the pre-1933 NSDAP. "Also in the old days in the Party I always worked best in a crisis," he asserted, "and it is the same today. I will try more and

⁷ Ibid, p.446.

⁸ Ibid, p.453.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid, p.447.

¹¹ NARA RG 208 Box 7 Records of the Office of the Director and Predecessor Agencies: Records of the Director 1942-45. Propaganda 1942 – Memorandum re: Proposed Propaganda for Use in Germany. Unsigned, undated (1942).

¹² Fröhlich (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels* 2.2, p.447.

more to adapt the inner attitude of the German people to the situation; so I will do all that I can to ensure that, the tougher the storms shall be roaring overhead, the tougher the nation will be that stands to oppose them.”¹³ The lapse into bombastic metaphor that accompanies this defiant statement is an indicator of the future direction of Nazi propaganda, which increasingly came to rely on mythology to fill the void left by the increasing absence of good news.¹⁴ This shift occurred most notably from December 1941, and Goebbels’ stated goal here of “adapt[ing] the inner attitude of the German people to the situation” hints at a shift in the Propaganda Minister’s methodology toward the primacy of emotion over reason.¹⁵ The joyous stoicism evident in this diary entry, written on the day the USA declared war on Japan, appears to be a harbinger for the nihilistic rhetoric of the impending ‘total war’.

Initial Nazi Propaganda Themes to the USA

However, while Goebbels’ diary entries suggest that he was expecting and welcomed the USA’s entry into the war,¹⁶ his initial propagandistic response was cautious. The minutes of the Propaganda Minister’s morning conference on 16th December 1941,¹⁷ in which he set out this new framework for psychological operations regarding the new belligerent, suggest a degree of anxiety about the USA’s cultural resources:

The Minister demands the following propagandistic measures against the USA:

1. The production of writings based on German intelligence that objectively prove that the USA possesses almost no culture of its own, and that their cultural creations are largely derived from European achievements. Within this context, disputes with American films should also take place.
2. Alongside this, popular writings should be distributed which are aimed at the broad masses in Germany, but above all the youth, which illustrate that the uncritical acceptance of certain American measures, for example jazz music etc., demonstrates a lack of culture. Here,

¹³ Ibid, pp.447-8.

¹⁴ See Welch, *The Third Reich*, pp.144-156.

¹⁵ Fröhlich (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels 2.2*, pp.447-448.

¹⁶ Ibid, p.445.

¹⁷ For the nature of these conferences, see Welch, *The Third Reich*, p.118.

amongst others, attention should be drawn to the grotesque misrepresentations which are found, for example, in the transforming of Bach's music into jazz music.¹⁸

Goebbels subsequently asserted that enough anti-American sentiment existed in Germany at that time, and therefore these materials should be held in store for such a time as "the wave [of anti-American hostility] ebbs and a friendlier honouring of American culture takes its place, as has been periodically visible in relation to England during the war".¹⁹ Nonetheless, this reluctance to attack American culture was consistent with Germany's relatively respectful tone towards the USA in the first month of 1942,²⁰ itself indicative of the degree to which the RMVP was slow in adjusting to the new situation. Moreover, the focus on immunising Germans (and predominantly German youth) against the potential appeal of American jazz music and films indicates this was also a pre-emptive defensive measure against the USA's potential 'cultural power'. In both of these readings, Nazi policy reveals itself to be respectful, overcautious and indecisive.

The FCC, on the other hand, appears to have overestimated the RMVP's ability to adapt to the new situation. "Now that Germany and the United States are at war," wrote a monitor on 12th December 1941, "certain changes in the strategy of German shortwave propaganda to this country may be expected as well as continued emphasis on many of the old propaganda lines."²¹ The same report noted that the new situation had "at least a temporary effect on BBC propaganda strategy",²² with appeals to fear and requests for the USA to participate in the war giving way to a third major theme of "stress on American attitudes".²³ However, the monitor's prophesy regarding Nazi propaganda proved to be incorrect. An FCC report dated 31st January 1942 noted that German broadcasts, whilst increasingly confident, still primarily reserved their wrath for Britain and the British Empire:

With current success [in Libya and the Battle of the Atlantic] and with the apparent strengthening of German lines in Russia, Berlin's radio propaganda reveals increasing confidence (...). In spite of submarine victories against the United States, however, Berlin still does not carry out any vigorous

¹⁸ Boelcke, *Wollt Ihr den totalen Krieg?*, p.199.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ NARA RG 262 Box 1 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 23rd – 29th January 1942 (dated 31st January 1942), p.8.

²¹ NARA RG 262 Box 1 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 5th – 11th December 1941 (dated 12th December 1941), p.A-1.

²² Ibid, p.R-1.

²³ Ibid.

and well-defined propaganda campaign against the United States. Britain and the British Empire, particularly Australia, continue to occupy the centre of attention in ideological warfare.²⁴

The report concludes that “[i]t is remarkable that more attention is not given in German broadcasts to the American [political] scene. Indirectly, Berlin shows considerable respect for American strength, and still does not display much hostility.”²⁵ Nonetheless, the RMVP persisted with attacks on “plutocrats and Jews”,²⁶ and by February a new pattern was emerging in the broadcasts of high-profile American Nazi broadcasters such as Fred Kaltenbach and Douglas Chandler.²⁷ Indeed, ideology coloured their programmes to such an increasing degree that a monitor described Germany’s isolationist appeals to have turned into “a full-blown Fascist creed for America: it is true Americanism to stay at home, to fight and overthrow the Jews and politicians now in power, whose ultimate objective is the establishment of Communist rule in the United States and the purge of native, Christian elements.”²⁸

Chandler broadcast under the pseudonym ‘Paul Revere’, and this symbolic appropriation of a hero of the Revolutionary War was indicative of the new RMVP line to the USA, which an FCC monitor summarised as an attempt to create a proactive patriotic resistance, as opposed to a PR campaign for the Third Reich or the Nazi war effort. “German propaganda,” noted the monitor, “is primarily attempting to promote [a fascist] mentality in America rather than to whitewash Nazi Germany. If successful to any degree, this strategy will create dissension and consequent weakness within the United States. If completely successful, it would, of course, result in American acceptance of the Axis world scheme.”²⁹ Meanwhile, continued anti-British propaganda sought to create a rift between the USA and Britain. Earlier that month, the FCC had observed:

Items dealing with discord between the United States and Britain are noticeably increased this week. German broadcasts play on the old theme that the United States is absorbing Britain while at the same

²⁴ NARA RG 262 Box 1 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 23rd – 29th January 1942 (dated 31st January 1942), p.4.

²⁵ Ibid, p.8.

²⁶ Ibid, p.7.

²⁷ See for example the monitor’s report in NARA RG 262 Box 1 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 20th – 26th February 1942 (dated 28th February 1942), p.4.

²⁸ Ibid, p.1.

²⁹ NARA RG 262 Box 1 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 20th – 26th February 1942 (dated 28th February 1942), p.6.

time “symptoms of the progressive Briticization [sic.] of the United States are multiplying:” United States propagandists are now copying British lies (...).

At the same time a tremendous British debt is being piled up in the United States; vast sums of money from the U.S. Navy budget are being used to repair British ships in American Navy yards. Berlin warns Americans that just as in the last war, American taxpayers will have to take over these debts.

The landing of American troops in Ireland is seized upon this week by Berlin to support the familiar charge that the British are getting the Americans to do their fighting for them. “The British are perfectly willing, as always, to fight to the last drop of Iowa blood...”. (...) Appeals of this nature are typically directed to the “real Americans of the Middle West,” rather than to the “drugstore cowboys of New York’s suit and garment industry.”³⁰

Two weeks later, a monitor observed that the anti-British propaganda line reached its climax with an attempt to exploit American psychological reactions to British failures. Berlin warned Americans not to jeopardise their own safety by intervening in the conflict,³¹ and employed the “familiar strategy” of attempting to smear the Roosevelt administration with claims of Jewish, plutocratic and Bolshevist influence in order to exacerbate domestic political rifts.³² The large numbers of radio owners in the USA meant that the RMVP had a potential audience of approximately seventy-five million Americans for these efforts to encourage isolationist sentiment and nurture domestic dissent.³³ Given the isolationist tendencies among portions of the American population, most notably in the Midwestern United States,³⁴ as well as the existence of Nazi and fascist sympathisers in sections of the European immigrant communities, Goebbels could expect at least some degree of ‘friendly’ listeners.

Jazz Propaganda to the USA

As with its broadcasts for British audiences, the RMVP utilised entertainment as a means of gaining listeners for its English-language propaganda to the USA. In an attempt to stoke isolationist feelings, Charlie and his Orchestra had already attacked

³⁰ NARA RG 262 Box 1 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 30th January – 5th February 1942 (dated 7th February 1942), p.7.

³¹ NARA RG 262 Box 1 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 13th – 19th February 1942 (dated 21st February 1942), p.4.

³² Ibid, p.7.

³³ See NARA RG 208 Box 6 Records of the Director and Predecessor Agencies: Records of the Director 1942-45. Programs – 10 Radio 1943. Memorandum from Keith Kane, Chief of Bureau of Intelligence, to Nicholas Roosevelt, Deputy Director [of OWI].

³⁴ See for example Ray Allen Billington, ‘The Origins of Middle Western Isolationism.’ *Political Science Quarterly*, 60.1 (March 1945), pp.44-64, and William G. Carleton, ‘Isolationism and the Middle West.’ *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 33.3 (December, 1946), pp.377-390.

the interventionist Roosevelt in 1941 as a puppet of the Soviet Union, Wall Street and “the Jew” (i.e. alleged Jewish business or political interests) in a parody of ‘I’ve Got A Pocketful of Dreams’.³⁵ This approach was maintained in subsequent recordings,³⁶ in keeping with Goebbels’ dictum that only the leaders of an enemy state, and not its citizens, should be attacked in propaganda broadcasts, which in turn paralleled Chamberlain’s famous assertion that “we have no quarrel with the German people”.³⁷ In this way, the Propaganda Minister was also keeping options open regarding possible peace agreements with a different US administration, an approach which he had also taken with regard to Britain in the first year of the war.

A variant of this methodology was employed in the popular broadcasts of Mildred Gillars, nicknamed ‘Axis Sally’, who was accompanied in her programmes by a live orchestra playing jazz and swing numbers, and used the popular ‘Lili Marleen’ as her theme song.³⁸ A flamboyant Midwesterner, Gillars’ peak monthly income of three thousand *Reichsmark* reflects the importance attributed to her work by the RMVP. She would express sympathy with “the boys in their odious task of having to carry out the orders of Roosevelt, Churchill and the Jewish gangsters”, whilst taunting them about the whereabouts of their wives and girlfriends back at home.³⁹ Although Henry Mitgang, the wartime editor of the GI magazine *Stars & Stripes* (Oran-Casablanca and Sicily editions), recalls that “[t]hose of us in the Army in North Africa who listened to ‘Axis Sally’ (...) liked the familiar jazz recordings but laughed at her phony blandishments”,⁴⁰ the perceived comedy value of such Nazi broadcasts led to repeated listening, which was at the heart of Goebbels’ propaganda technique. Moreover, it is also highly plausible that Axis Sally’s messages appeals to base instincts such as jealousy and self-preservation resonated at some level with sections of her listenership.⁴¹

As far as can be ascertained, Bergmeier/Lotz 1997 contains the only previous scholarly mention of one of the RMVP’s most ambitious projects to the USA,

³⁵ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, p.314.

³⁶ *Ibid*, pp.319-342.

³⁷ As noted in Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, p.149.

³⁸ Richard Lucas, *Axis Sally: The American Voice of Nazi Germany*. Philadelphia: Casemate, 2010, p.2.

³⁹ Cited in Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, p.127.

⁴⁰ Herbert Mitgang, ‘In This Air War, the Nazis Fired Words and Music.’ *The New York Times*, 8th September 1997.

⁴¹ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, p.127.

Station Debunk.⁴² Surprisingly, given their general emphasis on jazz music, the brief sketch they provide of the programme's activities makes no mention of its musical content, beyond its signature tune 'Carry Me Back to Old Virginny'.⁴³ However, both the choice of jazz as a means of attracting a Midwestern target audience and the trial-and-error approach which is evident in *Debunk*'s evolution from the FCC monitors' reports, are highly significant. Precisely because it so clearly adhered to the Nazi propaganda line, a study of *Debunk* offers an insight into the flawed methodology of Nazi propaganda to the USA in early 1942.

Purporting to be an American dissident enterprise, *Debunk* was first noted by the FCC on 23rd March 1942, and featured a mix of anti-Roosevelt, anti-British, anti-Semitic and isolationist propaganda.⁴⁴ A monitor recorded the standard format as follows:

While the program consists largely of a talk by "Joe Scanlon," it introduces a few variety features. Each of the four programs heard so far has begun with intermittent phrases from the Star Spangled Banner, has been interrupted near the middle by more or less "hot" jazz, and has ended with either "My Country 'Tis [sic.] of Thee", or "The Star Spangled Banner". An easy informality is maintained by a dialogue procedure: the program is introduced by "Mac", who turns it over to "Joe" and interrupts him with exactly the right question when the monologue gets lengthy. Slang, colloquialisms, and invective are used, and occasionally mild profanity. Several signs indicate that the program is aimed at relatively unsophisticated groups: there are direct references to farmers; and many of the colloquialisms are distinctly rural. The middle west [sic.] appears to be the geographical area towards which the broadcasts are primarily directed.⁴⁵

'Joe Scanlon' was in fact a former US Embassy employee named Dr. Herbert John Burgman.⁴⁶ The targeting of the Midwest in his broadcasts is consistent with the monitor's observation in early February 1942 that Nazi propaganda to the US was trying to create a division between the inland population and the "drugstore

⁴² FCC monitors refer to it variously as Station Debunk, debunk, Station DEBUNK, and Station D.E.B.U.N.K. In the body of the text I am using the first variant, but for the sake of accuracy I am using the other variants in my citations as and when they occur in the original documents.

⁴³ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, pp.220-221.

⁴⁴ NARA RG 262 Box 1 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 20th – 26th March 1942 (dated 28th March 1942), p.15.

⁴⁵ NARA RG 262 Box 1 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 20th – 26th March 1942 (dated 28th March 1942), p.14.

⁴⁶ Additional voices on the programme included the US-born Nazis Edward Vieth Sittler and Charles Sittler (Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, pp.220-221).

cowboys” of New York.⁴⁷ Evangelical language was heavily utilised, with New York and Washington, D.C. referred to as “Sodom and Gomorrah” respectively, while the programme also declared that Midwestern farmers’ boys were sacrificed at the “Altar of Mammon”.⁴⁸ By attempting to foment opposition to the war in a traditional stronghold of isolationism,⁴⁹ the RMVP was following the same approach as its ‘black’ stations to Britain; wartime BBC employee George Orwell observed that “each strain of German propaganda [to Britain] corresponds to one existing, or at any rate potential, defeatist faction”.⁵⁰ A monitor’s comparative analysis of the propaganda lines taken by *Debunk* and official German broadcasts, moreover, showed that *Debunk* was part of and entirely consistent with RMVP policy at that time:

Station DEBUNK follows the current propaganda line almost word for word. In fact, it is so patently German propaganda that one gets the impression no serious attempt is being made to conceal its source. Perhaps German propagandists hope that publicized speculation about its source will call attention to the existence of this station and build an audience for it.⁵¹

The attempt to use jazz and dance music as a means of attracting listeners was also in keeping with prior RMVP methodology. However, on 11th April 1942, the FCC suggested that *Debunk*’s poor musical resources betrayed its Nazi origins:

Seeking to win its way into American hearts, Station Debunk, early in its broadcast, regularly plays an American dance record, in addition to the “The Star Spangled Banner.” This device is not too effective, however, since like *Debunk*’s slang, the records are somewhat dated. They include such numbers as “Flat Foot Floogie with the Floy Floy,” “Hold Tight” and “Whistle While You Work.” In fact, one of the commentators confesses, “Mac has been fiddling around here with his half-dozen records as though he owned a great selection of the latest dance hits.” This would tend to confirm the impression noted in a previous Analysis, that *debunk* is not taking serious pains to conceal its sponsorship from discriminating listeners.⁵²

⁴⁷ NARA RG 262 Box 1 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 30th January – 5th February 1942 (dated 7th February 1942), p.7.

⁴⁸ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, p.221.

⁴⁹ For the origins of Midwestern isolationist sentiment, see Billington, ‘The Origins of Middle Western Isolationism’. See also Carleton, ‘Isolationism and the Middle West’.

⁵⁰ Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (eds.). *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell: Volume 2: My Country Right or Left 1940-1943*. London: Secker and Warburg, 1968, p.213.

⁵¹ NARA RG 262 Box 1 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 20th – 26th March 1942 (dated 28th March 1942), p.15.

⁵² NARA RG 262 Box 1 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 3rd – 9th April 1942 (dated 11th April 1942), pp.13-14.

Indeed, due to the programme's adherence to the RMVP line, the monitors' reports on *Debunk* are a particularly valuable source because they reveal the weaknesses of broader German policy. *Debunk* was a project in a continual state of flux, with a visibly shifting geographical target audience and musical content. Nonetheless, the monitor observed in April 1942 that it pursued a coherent short-term objective of disrupting the war effort and discrediting the Roosevelt administration, with a concomitant long-term goal of providing a basis for anti-democratic arguments.⁵³ It also reflected a general trend in German propaganda, which "has been shifting from mere opinion persuasion to direct suggestions for mild forms of action: form groups, listen to the radio, get certain books from libraries or write to Congressmen".⁵⁴ This clear propagandistic aim was to be achieved, as with Lord Haw-Haw's broadcasts to Britain, by using entertainment as a means of gaining a regular audience. Henry and Ruth Durant had observed with regard to Lord Haw-Haw that people "tuned in 'to have a good laugh,' but then, having acquired the habit, some began to think 'there may be something in what he says,'" and it was clearly intended that the banter of 'Joe' and 'Mac' should serve the same function.

Debunk was clearly hampered, however, by the contradiction between the target audience and the musical selections which were supposed to induce them to repeated listening. This difficulty is unsurprising, because the large rural population of the Midwest constituted an unlikely market for hot jazz. Conversely, in July 1941 *DownBeat* had noted "tremendous demand" in the region for polkas and Bohemian music,⁵⁶ perhaps reflecting the European origins of many Midwestern residents.⁵⁷ The RMVP displayed considerable cultural naivety in targeting a predominantly urban musical form at a largely rural audience; appearing to belatedly realise this, those behind *Debunk* changed its musical policy at the end of June 1942. The FCC monitor reported:

Debunk broadcasts are no longer introduced by Mac's merry chatter and selections of shop-worn dance music. Instead, with only "Carry me back to Old Virginia" as a tuning-in signal, the station

⁵³ NARA RG 262 Box 2 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 8th – 14th May 1942 (dated 16th May 1942), p.8.

⁵⁴ NARA RG 262 Box 1 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 10th – 16th April 1942 (dated 18th April 1942), p.1.

⁵⁵ Durant/Durant 1940, p.443.

⁵⁶ JZD *DownBeat* 'Fled Hitler, Now "Happy" Harden Makes a Comeback', 15th July 1941, p.5.

⁵⁷ For Midwestern demographics see Billington, 'The Origins of Middle Western Isolationism', p.52.

now regularly serves up “choice news items of the day” at the beginning of each broadcast, in the form of “flashes” from Hoboken, Washington, Alexandria and other points. Further references to current events now also appear frequently in the main body of the broadcast.⁵⁸

This alteration of the station’s structure and the introduction of ‘news flashes’, which had been pioneered in the broadcasts of Fred Kaltenbach in 1940,⁵⁹ presaged a geographical shift in terms of the target audience. Evidently the RMVP was dissatisfied with *Debunk* and felt that it was failing to achieve its goals. Therefore, by July 1942, *Debunk*’s focus moved from the Midwest to the Southern States, and the content of the informal dialogue between ‘Mac’ and ‘Joe’ was modified to appeal to a different type of listener:

[T]he Jews who “poured into Europe from the East after World War number one” are likened to “the carpet-baggers who poured into the southern states after the Civil War,” well described (here Scanlon again reveals himself as slightly behind the times in his literary tastes) in “Gone With the Wind”.

The (...) Civil War reference also fits into the pro-southern pattern which has lately appeared on *Debunk*, hitherto primarily middle-western in appeal—a shift which may indicate that, in the opinion of the Station, as the war proceeds pre-December 7th isolationist arguments are becoming less fruitful than agitation among the draftees. We have already noted the adoption of the theme-song “Carry Me Back to Old Virginy [sic.]”⁶⁰

The RMVP’s uncertainty in ascertaining an appropriate target audience for its divisive agitprop, and the abandonment of the dated American jazz and dance records, make it possible to trace the formulation and revising of policy through the activities of *Debunk*. It appears from the FCC report dated 4th July 1942 that the musical sections of the programme were dropped, and that no attempt was made to appeal to southern musical tastes. However, like its “shop-worn dance music”, *Debunk*’s political message was becoming outdated. As the monitor notes in the above citation, with the USA now actively involved in the war, isolationist appeals were fast becoming obsolete, and the programme increasingly shifted towards

⁵⁸ NARA RG 262 Box 2 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 26th June– 2nd July 1942 (dated 4th July 1942), p.9.

⁵⁹ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, p.221.

⁶⁰ NARA RG 262 Box 2 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 24th – 30th July 1942 (dated 1st August 1942), p.10.

attempts to decrease Forces' morale and desire to fight, rather than persuading Americans to "form groups (...) or write to congressmen."⁶¹

At the beginning of September 1942, Werner Daniels, a jazz fan serving in the Wehrmacht, picked up another Nazi jazz propaganda programme targeted at Allied Forces, entitled *Bill and Mary, the Jolly Announcers*. He mockingly reported the contents of this in his bi-monthly jazz newsletter, *Musikalische Feldpost*, which was to be copied and passed around jazz fans in the German Forces.⁶² This programme has been overlooked by previous scholarship, and yet, like *Debunk*, it serves as a valuable indicator of both RMVP methodology and the limitations imposed by the poor access to Anglo-American cultural resources. Interestingly, however, this programme appears to have shunned all Anglo-American music on principle and is therefore dependent on music of predominantly German origin. Daniels' unflattering review of the programme stated:

The station is called *Sender Calais* [Station Calais], but it's not actually in Calais. It's one of the German European Stations which are situated where their effect has the best chances of success with the intended audience. It seems to be broadcast from Berlin or somewhere else centrally-located.

The MCs make a particularly authentic impression. One listens to their announcements: There are no dry grammatical constructions, no, their knowledge of the language and the people seem to be drawn from experience. At least they act as if this is so. After each record the announcer breaks into huge cheers: Gaspar Cassadó has just played a solo (more accurately, the turntable [has just played the solo]). Visibly (or audibly) moved, the announcer seems to have tears of emotion in his eyes. He exclaims emotionally: "Well, well, and well and so, so, so! That was pretty fine! O.k., Gaspar!"

Above all, the good man doesn't seem to have looked properly in his dictionary. He describes every single track as "a very fine selection", even though a "selection" is more of a potpourri or an extract. But that doesn't make any difference to him. All tracks are "very fine selections": [for example, the songs] *Morning Newspapers* (Morgenblätter) and "Is your little Heart still free, Baby?", by which he doubtless means "I can't give you anything but Love, Baby". But what wouldn't one do to Germanise one's audience [by altering the name of the original American composition]?

[...] Above all, they have difficulty with programme design. On principle, they don't want to play jazz music. The military listeners won't go for chamber music so easily. What to do? *Very simple! A*

⁶¹ NARA RG 262 Box 1 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 10th – 16th April 1942 (dated 18th April 1942), p.1.

⁶² Copies are housed at CTASC MFP – Werner Daniels. See also Kater, *Different Drummers*, pp.120-121.

little bluff! Successively we hear: Barnabas Geczy and his Boys, Emmanuel Rambour “and his Rhythm Fellows”, Wilfried Krüder “and his Swing Kings”.

How about William Furtwangler “and his Hot Shots”? *Make so weiter, Station Calais!*⁶³

While it is noteworthy that Daniels was demonstrating a degree of audacity given the heavy penalties he could have faced had the newsletters been discovered by the authorities, this account is primarily of value to the thesis because it highlights a previously unexplored RMVP methodology with regard to the use of jazz music as propaganda. It provides evidence that Nazi propaganda broadcasts also rechristened German dance orchestras with Anglophone names in the hope that this would hold more appeal to enemy listeners in search of jazz and swing. This practice had its origins in the stunted growth of German jazz music in the Weimar Republic, when salon orchestras rebranded themselves as ‘jazz bands’ without altering their musical style or content.⁶⁴ Nonetheless, the reliance on German material is surprising, because Daniels’ assertion that jazz was avoided on principle was incorrect. The RMVP readily utilised jazz in projects for foreign audiences, such as Charlie and his Orchestra and *Debunk*, and it is thus unclear why it resorted to such an unconvincing ruse in this instance.

New German Entertainment Music: The DTUO

The intensifying of Germany’s propaganda onslaught to the USA also saw Nazi broadcasts occasionally adopting a shriller tone, which the FCC commented “contrasts markedly with the restraint and calm superiority that German propaganda has affected in the past.”⁶⁵ In late May 1942, American Nazi propagandist Robert Best attacked Allied “propaganda kikes” and the creation of a “Jew-nited States”,⁶⁶ and the following “childish taunts”⁶⁷ were picked up by the FCC on an official broadcast from Germany:

⁶³ CTASC MFP – Werner Daniels. The words originally written in English have been italicised to distinguish them from the translated passages. The last line is an English-German hybrid version of the German expression “*mach so weiter*” (“keep up the good work”). Wilhelm Furtwängler was the conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic from 1922-1945.

⁶⁴ Bradford Robinson. ‘The Jazz Essays of Theodor Adorno’, pp. 4-5.

⁶⁵ NARA RG 262 Box 2 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 22nd – 28th May 1942 (dated 30th May 1942), p.8.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

Come on, Churchill! Come on, Kikes! Come on, Jewed-up bums! Come on, whoever wishes to attack European civilization! Germany is ready to talk to you in your own language of bombs until you cry quite as Churchill has already had to do twice.⁶⁸

This new aggressive line coming from Berlin was, the monitor suggested, “less convincing as propaganda than it is revealing as an expression of the Nazi emotional condition”,⁶⁹ although Best’s broadcasts were of limited usefulness as a litmus test of his employers’ views. Bergmeier notes that Best often clashed with Nazi censors who sought to tone down his coarse delivery, and a disclaimer was added before at least one of his broadcasts to distance German radio from the contents of his programmes.⁷⁰

Nonetheless, the monitor’s observation that the Nazi propaganda apparatus was on the defensive was broadly correct. On 21st April 1942, Archibald MacLeish’s Office of Fact and Figures (OFF) noted a broadcast by the American radio commentator Morgan Beatty, in which Beatty claimed to detect a change in tone coming from Berlin and Tokyo. Hitler, in a radio appeal for the German Red Cross, had claimed that Germany’s defeat at the hands of “a barbaric enemy (...) would mean the end of everything.”⁷¹ Beatty picked up on the significance of the phrase “the end of everything”, and suggested that the reason why Germany and Japan were issuing claims of victory and broadcasting exaggerated statistics of Allied losses was because “obviously they’re fully conscious of the turning of the psychological tide.”⁷² Moreover, Hitler’s apocalyptic language anticipated the RMVP’s strength-through-fear methodology, which was to become a leitmotiv in Nazi propaganda following defeat at Stalingrad.⁷³

Inevitably, the unexpectedly prolonged war and the increasing odds mounting against Germany were also taking a psychological toll on the country’s population. On 17th July 1942, the Swedish newspaper *Truts* repeated a joke which had been heard in Berlin by a Swedish businessman. Mocking the attempts of Nazi propaganda to cast the drawn-out hostilities and increasingly bleak situation in a

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, p.68.

⁷¹ NARA RG 208 Box 6 Records of the Office of Facts and Figures, 1939-42, Bureau of Intelligence, Division of Information Channels – Daily Radio Digest, 21st April 1942.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ See Welch, *The Third Reich*, pp.138-139.

positive light, locals were heard to announce to one another: “Due to its great success, the war will be extended!”⁷⁴ Welch has observed that political jokes were a popular vehicle for criticism of the Nazi regime,⁷⁵ and this particular example indicates public acknowledgement of the growing chasm between the claims of Nazi propaganda and the military and political reality. Furthermore, it encapsulates the changing mood within the Reich regarding the war, which was brought home to Germans not only through Allied bombings of their cities and towns, but also through its increasing presence in everyday life. The Berlin street scene had changed dramatically since the early days of the war, and a Swiss correspondent’s report published in the summer of 1942 highlighted the visibility of the physical impact of the war in the German capital:

The many groups of young war invalids whom one meets frequently prove that the Eastern campaign was something quite different from the Blitz victory over Poland and internally weakened France. The number of blind and one-eyed [sic.] that one sees is striking.

(...) To the new Berlin picture belong also numerous buildings under construction by workmen wearing striped prison clothes. The shortage of workers forced the authorities to utilize the prisoners, who are said to be mostly political prisoners and are every evening transported back to the prison in big police vans.⁷⁶

To reflect the new sombre mood, bans on social dancing were in place several days a week, and on 12th November 1942 the *Rheinische Landeszeitung* went so far as to question the need for culture given the increasingly difficult situation. “The German heart needs culture (*Kultur ist dem deutschen Menschen Herzensbedürfnis*)”, suggested the newspaper. “Yet some people ask, quite correctly, in these days when spiritual burdens increase rather than decrease, whether all the cultural efforts are really needed. Especially in badly bombed towns such doubts are comprehensible.”⁷⁷

However, as the thesis has consistently demonstrated, wartime conditions greatly increased rather than decreased the demand for culture and entertainment,

⁷⁴ NARA RG 208 Box 203 Conditions – Morale – Germany – Bureau of Overseas Intelligence Central Files. German Guidance Notes, 20th July 1942, p.4.

⁷⁵ Welch, *The Third Reich*, p.149.

⁷⁶ Cited in NARA RG 208 Box 203 Conditions – Morale – Germany – Bureau of Overseas Intelligence Central Files. German Intelligence Notes, German Internal Conditions, 3rd August 1942, p.4. The newspaper in which the article originally appeared is not stated.

⁷⁷ NARA RG 208 Box 203 – Conditions – Morale – Germany – Bureau of Overseas Intelligence Central Files. German Intelligence Notes (German Internal Conditions – Is Culture Necessary?). Article dated 23rd October 1942, cited 12th November 1942.

particularly at times of intense stress. With regard to jazz, this was extremely problematic for the RMVP and RRG. Unwilling and unable to play genuine Anglo-American jazz music to the German fighting forces, and given the failure of prior attempts to foster a New German Entertainment Music such as *Frohe Stunde am Nachmittag*, Goebbels attempted to conclusively resolve the issue by commissioning the DTUO. As noted above in Chapter Three, the genesis of the orchestra broadly coincided with the demise of *Frohe Stunde*, and the latter had also been commissioned by the Propaganda Minister with the express purpose of nurturing quality German dance music.⁷⁸ Thus it is probable that there was a causal relationship between the two projects.

The fact that the orchestra represents Goebbels' most ambitious attempt to settle the problem of entertainment music once and for all can be traced to the disappointing progress of New German Entertainment music through the course of 1941. A message from Leopold Gutterer, Goebbels' Secretary of State, to Hans Hinkel and his colleagues dated 29th September 1941 announced:

We have equipped the [Berlin] Philharmonic Orchestra with sufficient supplies and at the same time done precious little for cultivating entertainment music. (...)

It cannot be ignored that the cultivation of first-class entertainment music and with it a first-class orchestra is a duty of the Reich.⁷⁹

Franz Grothe was personally selected by Goebbels to be the artistic director, and was to "play roughly the same role as [Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra's conductor Wilhelm] Furtwängler".⁸⁰ Given the freedom to choose a second director of the orchestra, Grothe opted for his friend Georg Haentzschel, a founder member of the leading pre-war jazz band *Die Goldene Sieben* ('The Golden Seven') who had been working predominantly with film scores since the start of the war.⁸¹ Reflecting its position as a *Reichsorchester*, the DTUO was to have the same status and wages as the Berlin Philharmonic; Haentzschel recalls that this was to be kept confidential so as not to make Furtwängler's musicians jealous, which suggests that, among German

⁷⁸ BA R58/158 Abteilung M an Abteilung Rdf., im Hause, betr. Ausbau der Unterhaltungsmusik, 21st February 1941.

⁷⁹ BA R56I/34 Gutterer an Hinkel [et al], 29th September 1941.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ For Grothe and Haentzschel see Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, p.143.

musicians, a dichotomy existed that was similar to the jazz/classical divide in Britain. Grothe and Haentzschel were clearly considered important enough to become well-acquainted with Goebbels, whom Haentzschel remembers as extremely highbrow, with “no ear for jazz. But he had a casual manner.”⁸²

The Propaganda Minister established the DTUO with the aim of conclusively resolving the issue of New German Entertainment Music by making concessions to Forces’ tastes, by marked contrast with *Frohe Stunde am Nachmittag*, which had concomitantly pursued a “propagandistic secondary aim” of catering to “the German housewife”.⁸³ Reflecting Goebbels’ dissatisfaction with the quality of German dance musicians,⁸⁴ the orchestra’s personnel was to be exclusively first-rate, and its broadcasts were also intended to fulfil a didactic function. Initially the DTUO broadcast every fourth Saturday evening, and soon Wednesday afternoon repeats were implemented in order to give other professional musicians an opportunity to study the superior arrangements and technique, and thus keep abreast of contemporary music developments.⁸⁵ Moreover, Haentzschel claims that Goebbels also wanted “to have the prestige that the English had with their orchestras”. It was often said, he asserts, that the DTUO was expected to be “the best diplomat for us abroad, better than any ambassador” following the German *Endsieg*.⁸⁶

The immediate *raison d’être*, however, was to help maintain German Forces’ morale.⁸⁷ Although the dance music proclivities of a considerable portion of the German Forces were well-documented, the Luftwaffe was notorious in this respect.⁸⁸ Accordingly, Kater points out that Luftwaffe pilots were particularly susceptible to British propaganda, due to their contact with the enemy and “because of their urbanity, their knowledge of English, and their legendary penchant for swing music”.⁸⁹ Haentzschel claims that the BBC news broadcasts were of much less interest to the pilots than the swing music, although he also suggests that “they were

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ BA R58/158 Hauptreferat Rundfunkbeobachtungen und Rundfunkwissenschaft, betr. Sitzung am 26.6.41 über den Start “Frohe Stunde am Nachmittag” im Ministerium, 28th June 1941.

⁸⁴ BA R58/158 Direktor Pro, [an] Herrn Ministerialdirektor Hinkel im Hause, 6th November 1941.

⁸⁵ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, p.147.

⁸⁶ Haentzschel interview 1988.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ For the Luftwaffe and jazz, BA R56I/41 Wünsche der aktiven Truppe an die Soldatensender, 1941) and BA R56I/41 (Microfiche 1). Hinkel an Goebbels (cc: ‘Staatssekretar’ [Gutterer]), 10th January 1944. See also Haentzschel interview 1988 and Tabor interview 1987.

⁸⁹ Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.126.

pilots, [and] essentially not Nazis”, and this alleged apathy of many Luftwaffe pilots to the National Socialist doctrine may therefore have rendered them more susceptible to the BBC’s habit of “debating with the Nazis over the ether”.⁹⁰

While Haentzschel is surely accurate in claiming that deterring the Luftwaffe from listening “permanently” to the BBC was a prime motivation for the establishment of the DTUO,⁹¹ the precise nature of its genesis remains a matter of dispute. Kater cautiously relates the “often-told story” of Luftwaffe ace Werner Mölders meeting Franz Grothe in a ski lodge in the Austrian Alps in the winter of 1940-41, during which Mölders confided to Grothe that “if only the German stations were broadcasting decent music in the American style, then Luftwaffe pilots could stop tuning in to the BBC.”⁹² According to this account, Grothe declared that musicians were available in the Reich who would be capable of such a task, and the two men subsequently plotted to convince Goebbels to create an orchestra for this purpose. The group’s trombonist Walter Dobschinski offers a similar but less detailed account, recalling that pilots and U-Boat crews only listened to English [sic.] stations, and Hinkel, Goebbels and Goering were well aware of the fact. Thus “German officers complained to the Nazi bigwigs, they [said they] didn’t want ‘sappy’, ‘old-fashioned’ German dance music, but ‘modern, beautiful music’ à la England. The DTUO was founded as a result.”⁹³

However, while figures such as Mölders and Grothe may indeed have been in positions to influence the Propaganda Minister,⁹⁴ it is most likely that pressure from military quarters was only part of the reason for the instigation of the orchestra. Significantly, the establishment of the DTUO is utterly consistent with the general pragmatic evolution of RRG policy. This culminated in Hinkel’s 1942 reforms in which the “corrupt”⁹⁵ old guard were removed in favour of non-Party experts such as Haentzschel and Grothe, but was in fact preceded by a number of measures initiated

⁹⁰ As lamented by Delmer (Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, p.61).

⁹¹ Haentzschel interview 1988.

⁹² Kater, *Different Drummers*, pp.126-127.

⁹³ Dobschinski interview 1987. Here Dobschinski also claims that Grothe led an orchestra for *Truppenbetreuung* prior to joining the DTUO.

⁹⁴ Haentzschel remembers that Grothe got on well with both Goebbels and Hinkel and was in a position to influence them (“*Franz hatte ein geneigtes Ohr bei Hinkel und bei Goebbels*”, Haentzschel interview 1988). Kater draws attention to Goebbels’ fascination with the Luftwaffe and respect for individual pilots, of whom Mölders was the best-known (Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.126).

⁹⁵ Haentzschel recalls that “many old faces were still working for the radio, there was a degree of corruption [*einem gewissen Filz*] there” (Haentzschel interview 1988).

by Goebbels throughout the course of 1941. *Frohe Stunde am Nachmittag* was expressly described on 21st February 1941 as an attempt to improve the quality of German dance music in accordance with the Propaganda Minister's wishes,⁹⁶ and the RRG's increase in evening dance music output in September 1941 was timed to follow the publication of his pragmatic essay 'The Relaxation of Radio Scheduling During Wartime' in *Das Reich*.⁹⁷ Haentzschel was himself in charge of sixteen different RRG stations broadcasting dance music after the 1942 reforms, and describes the DTUO as going "hand-in-hand with German radio".⁹⁸ The evidence suggests that the DTUO is best understood as the most ambitious project of a broader wartime trend towards liberalisation of broadcast entertainment, in consultation with the military, as had already occurred in Britain with the foundation of the BBC Forces Programme in January 1940.

The preconditions were promising. A list was compiled of the first-rate musicians required for the project, in spite of the fact that many of them were under contract to various entertainment venues and film studios in the Berlin area. Talented musicians were now extremely scarce because most German nationals had now been drafted, and the DTUO candidates were given a *UK-Stellung* on the grounds of their indispensability to the war effort. The guitarist Hans Korseck, who by the accounts of his contemporaries was one of the few innovators of genius in German jazz, was also recalled from his work as a field doctor on the Eastern Front to join the DTUO, but was killed on the night before his return. His widow recalls that he had once performed for Goebbels aboard a boat on the Wannsee in Berlin, and afterwards became so "extraordinarily excited" about missing the opportunity to assassinate the Propaganda Minister that she worried he may attempt to do so in the future.⁹⁹ The anecdote offers further indications of both Goebbels' proximity to jazz musicians and the moral complexities that could be involved in individual cases of musical collaboration with the RMVP.

⁹⁶ BA R58/158 Abteilung M an Abteilung Rdf., im Hause, betr. Ausbau der Unterhaltungsmusik, 21st February 1941.

⁹⁷ BA R58/1090 (Microfiche 2) Neue Programm-Richtlinien, 26th September 1942.

⁹⁸ Haentzschel interview 1988.

⁹⁹ Hilde Korseck interview 1988. For the testimonies of his contemporaries, see Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.61 and pp.127-128.

Those selected for the orchestra were informed that they were released with immediate effect from their existing contracts, often to the indignation of their current employers. The director of the *Theater des Volkes* protested in a letter to the RMVP on the 9th April 1942 that, without the two musicians who were leaving for the orchestra, he would have to close the theatre down.¹⁰⁰ However, as Goebbels wrote in a note to Hinkel on 10th March 1942:

I have acknowledged the foundation, upon my orders, of the German Dance- and Entertainment Orchestra. I ask you ensure that the musicians chosen for this orchestra are available without exception by 1st April of this year. Insofar as their existing employments exceed the 1st April deadline, I request that you approach their managers asking for them to be released for this date. In this you should point out the orchestra's obligatory special cultural, propagandistic and representative tasks.¹⁰¹

When the managers continued to complain to Hinkel, the Propaganda Minister intervened personally. In the words of the pro forma letter sent by the RKK to the musicians' employers, the orchestra's goals "can only be achieved if all positions are occupied by the strongest talents. When compared with the needs of the German Dance- and Entertainment Orchestra, other interests must be subordinated to the task at hand and, above all, to the wishes of [Dr. Goebbels]."¹⁰²

Nonetheless, unlike the BBC Forces Programme, the DTUO was not a success with its target audience. The reasons for this can be found in Haentzschel's contradictory analysis of the DTUO's achievements:

With the [DTUO] we swung, we really swung. And yet ultimately we were almost only allowed to play German numbers because of the ban [on playing compositions from belligerent countries].

(...) The style was also missing, we weren't allowed to have any chorus refrains, not even for radio recordings, because the people back at home said, oh, if there are still vocal recordings over there then they would be better off fighting at the Front.

Here the German and British attitudes toward vocalists, perceiving them as shirkers who were superfluous to the war effort, appear to coincide. The *Musical Times* wrote in 1942 that male and female crooners in Britain must have been physically unfit,

¹⁰⁰ BA R56I/34 Intendant Theater des Volkes to Oberregierungsrat Scherler, Propagandaministerium, 9th April 1942.

¹⁰¹ BA R56I/34 Goebbels an Hinkel, 10th March 1942.

¹⁰² BA R56I/34 Gutterer, i.A. Präsident der Reichskulturkammer [Goebbels] an Universum Film A.G., 10th March 1942.

“because it is inconceivable that their ‘vocal’ occupations are of the reserved type”,¹⁰³ and such prejudices were also implicit in the BBC’s handling of the slush debate. The DTUO was hampered by such counterproductive RMVP guidelines from the outset, which appear to have been more to placate civilian critics than Forces listeners. In deference to the Nazi criticism of a perceived rhythmic emphasis in jazz, moreover, the rules stipulated that the violins in the orchestra carry the melody.¹⁰⁴ Genuine jazz fans in Germany were inevitably left unimpressed with the results.¹⁰⁵

The combination of musical quality and artistic compromise, however, appeared to please nobody. A memorandum signed by the RMVP’s Walter Tießler, “Goebbels’ go-between to the *Führerhauptquartier*”,¹⁰⁶ on 30th January 1943 relayed an SD report which suggested that the orchestra’s lively upbeat offerings were deemed inappropriate by the German people, contradicting Goebbels’ reports of the DTUO’s popularity with its target audience:

The SD has pointed out that the music of the Entertainment- and Dance Orchestra [sic.] doesn’t reflect the current mood of the populace.

Dr Goebbels ordered Party Member Gutterer to inform the SD that they were quite alone in this view.

Only yesterday the commodore of a pilot squadron again explained to him how the troops welcome the music that is played on the radio.¹⁰⁷

The British and German sources regarding Delmer’s *Soldatensender* indicate that the orchestra’s arrangements were in fact insufficiently exciting to deter German Forces from tuning into superior enemy musical broadcasts. Nonetheless, the domestic opponents of jazz complained bitterly about ‘degenerate’ music on the airwaves. In a letter to the RKK dated 10th July 1943, a Dresden office manager named Bruno Veith attacked the “Jewish-niggerised music that is being offered to radio listeners on a daily basis by the so-called Dance- and Entertainment Orchestra [which] is comparable to the worst excesses of the Weimar Republic. (...) It corrupts the German spirit and poisons above all our youth, who today only know dance music in

¹⁰³ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, p.138.

¹⁰⁴ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler’s Airwaves*, p.148.

¹⁰⁵ Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.129.

¹⁰⁶ The phrase belongs to Willi Boelcke (Boelcke, *Wollt Ihr den totalen Krieg?*, p.129).

¹⁰⁷ BA NS18/334 Tießler, betr. Musik im Rundfunk, 30th January 1943.

the form of these miserable efforts that breathe the Jewish spirit.¹⁰⁸ In reality, a few smuggled elements of genuine jazz notwithstanding,¹⁰⁹ the “worst excesses” of the Weimar Republic were never approached. The DTUO was, to paraphrase S. Frederick Starr’s assessment of the similarly hamstrung State Jazz Orchestra of the USSR, “safe to the point of tedium”.¹¹⁰

There was some limited crossover between musicians of the DTUO and Charlie and his Orchestra. However, a dichotomy existed between the RMVP’s two leading jazz bands, in which Templin’s orchestra was considered to have greater capacity for individual expression and stronger jazz credentials. Notably, Haentzschel asserts that Fritz Brocksieper declined to perform with the DTUO because he felt it would damage his jazz credibility.¹¹¹ This is confirmed by Brocksieper’s own account, with the drummer claiming that he refused because the DTUO played inferior and overly commercial jazz.¹¹² “We in the [DTUO] were always equals among equals,” recalls Haentzschel, “and a star like Freddie wouldn’t have fit in so well”.¹¹³ This egalitarian regime at the DTUO was alleged by its business manager Sergius Safronow to have contributed to the increasing lack of discipline in the orchestra throughout 1943. A memorandum signed by Wilhelm Stuckart on 1st April 1943 cited Safronow as suggesting that Grothe and Haentzschel’s informal and familiar approach with the musicians, with many of whom they had had longstanding working relationships, may have diminished their authority and encouraged dissent.¹¹⁴ Stuckart ruefully observed that only one Party member was to be found in the orchestra, and declared that such a great number of musicians in one place presented “a political danger spot”.¹¹⁵

The orchestra was removed to Prague in autumn 1943 after the bombing of the concert hall of the Reich Chamber of Theatre (RTK).¹¹⁶ Haentzschel and Grothe were finally sacked in January 1944 for musical transgressions, which culminated at the time of their dismissal with a programme being withdrawn from broadcast at the

¹⁰⁸ BA R56I/41 Bruno Veith an RKK, betr. Rundfunk, 10th July 1943.

¹⁰⁹ See Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.129.

¹¹⁰ Starr, *Red & Hot*, p.175.

¹¹¹ Haentzschel interview 1988.

¹¹² Brocksieper interview 1988.

¹¹³ Haentzschel interview 1988.

¹¹⁴ BA R56I/110 (Microfiche 1) ‘Vermerk’, (Stuckart), 1st April 1943.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Haentzschel interview 1988.

last moment because it contained “forbidden DTUO recordings”.¹¹⁷ Their replacements were the classically-trained Hungarian bandleader Barnabás von Géczy and the pianist Willi Stech, and von Géczy’s existing orchestra was integrated into the DTUO but remained “a separate body”.¹¹⁸ However, Kater notes that von Géczy had also been behind catastrophic official attempts in 1935-36 to cultivate an acceptably German alternative to jazz, and his “schmaltzy” approach dance music had won plaudits from the Nazi cultural elite.¹¹⁹ The employment of two comparatively reactionary bandleaders with close links to the regime was a marked volte-face from the progressive RRG reforms undertaken by Hinkel in 1941-42, which had seen the ascension of Grothe and Haentzschel. Moreover, while the orchestra was soon playing within the prescribed boundaries under the new directors, the disciplinary problems persisted to the extent that an RKK memo on 20th April 1944 threatened unruly musicians with “the harshest consequences” should they reoffend.¹²⁰ As the war effort deteriorated and increasing numbers of musicians were drafted, the RKK criticised the dismay expressed by those orchestra members who had received their call-up papers. Such behaviour contradicted the RKK’s claim that “one should actually expect that any sane German man who cannot get to immediately participate in the war effort regrets this fact to the highest degree”.¹²¹

It is interesting to compare these recordings to those of the post-war *Radio Berlin Tanzorchester* (RBTO), formed in the Eastern Occupied Zone in 1946, which was led by the DTUO stalwarts Haentzschel and Horst Kudritzki and contained many of the same musicians as the band put together by Goebbels.¹²² Their lively recording of Walter Jenson’s composition ‘Amiga Swing’ indicates that the personnel were capable of competently derivative American-style swing music,¹²³ although the GDR jazz aficionado Wolfgang Muth rightly observed in 1963 that, although the recordings were “enlivened by a few great soloists”, they were largely stencilled

¹¹⁷ BA R55/20.011 (Microfiche 2). Leiter Rundfunk an Staatssekretär, betr. Sendung, Sonnabend d. 8.1. – 20.15 bis 22.00 Uhr, 9th January 1944.

¹¹⁸ BA R55/20.011 Büro Staatssekretär an Hinkel, betr. Barnabás von Géczy, 7th January 1944.

¹¹⁹ Kater, *Different Drummers*, pp.52-56.

¹²⁰ BA R56I/34 RKK an DTUO, 20th April 1944.

¹²¹ BA R56I/34 Präsident der RKK [Goebbels] an DTUO, 9th November 1944.

¹²² See the section on ‘recordings made after 1945’ in JZD Wolfgang Muth, *Jazz – Made in Germany, 1919-1949*, unpublished MS, 1962 (pages unnumbered), which also includes RBTO personnel information.

¹²³ *Jazz auf Amiga 1947-1962 Vol. 1*. Amiga (Cat. No. 8 55 852). Vinyl recording.

from the American arrangements and suffered from inferior recording conditions.¹²⁴ Nonetheless, the results offer audible proof that Goebbels' musicians were broadly capable of playing jazz, and indicate that the DTUO may have proven more successful in preventing Forces and civilians from tuning into foreign stations had it not been hampered by guidelines and restrictions. Ironically, the RBTO would itself fall victim to reactionary Soviet cultural policy in 1950, as American jazz once again became musica non grata in East Berlin with the onset of the Cold War.

USA

Elmer Davis and OWI

As has been noted above in Chapter One, the RMVP had no direct American counterpart. Intelligence and information were originally both under the office of the Coordinator of Information (COI) headed by William Donovan, but upon British advice, on 14th June 1942 COI's duties (excluding its Foreign Intelligence Service) were assigned to the new Office for Strategic Services (OSS), also directed by Donovan.¹²⁵ Directed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, its deliberately bland name nonetheless reflected the American philosophy that propaganda was an auxiliary to military operations. A White House statement announced that it would continue COI's work of "collecting secret and strategic information in foreign countries and performing general and miscellaneous and [sic.] strategic services abroad except the dissemination of information by radio, leaflets etc." Information was to be handled and disseminated by the Office of War Information (OWI), which was split into two divisions, responsible for the USA and all other countries (except Latin America) respectively.¹²⁶ OWI consolidated the functions of a number of predecessor agencies,¹²⁷ and while the Secretaries of State for War and the Navy devised basic policies and plans for war information, the director of OWI retained the final decision on all matters. *The Times* of London described OWI on 15th June as "the American 'Ministry of Information'".¹²⁸

¹²⁴ JZD Muth, *Jazz – Made in Germany*.

¹²⁵ A precursor to the post-war Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

¹²⁶ NA FO 898/104 Political Warfare Executive: American Reorganisation, 14th June 1942, p.4.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* The agencies integrated into OWI were: the Foreign Intelligence Service of the Office of the Coordinator of Information, the Office of Facts and Figures, the Office of Government Reports and the Information Division of the Office of Emergency Management.

¹²⁸ NA FO 898/104 Press clipping, *The Times*, 15th June 1942.

OWI's first director was Elmer Davis, a well-known author, journalist and broadcaster who had spent the first two and a half years of the war reporting from Europe for CBS.¹²⁹ "Obviously his powers are sweeping," reported *The Times*, "but the general consensus of opinion is that Mr. Davis is the man for the job."¹³⁰ Nonetheless, as in Britain, the USA proved resistant to the idea of such public control of information by the state. Davis had to convince the public of the value of OWI, and described Benjamin Franklin's propaganda work from Paris during the American War of Independence as the finest example of the art form. "You can't turn up a Franklin every time you need one, but we are trying to do the same job he did," he told a journalist in September 1942,¹³¹ in an apparent attempt to destigmatise propaganda in the minds of both the public and the budget allocators in Congress by connecting it to America's self-liberation from colonial rule. It is also noteworthy that the RVMP explicitly attempted to invoke the spirit of liberation from British rule in the 'Paul Revere' broadcasts of Douglas Chandler. However, both Davis' personal history of partisan war reportage from Europe, and his public and his private utterances as Director of OWI, suggest that he was an idealist who sincerely believed in the practical value of its work, much in the manner of Sefton Delmer at PWE.¹³²

In private, Davis' favourite toast was "confusion to the enemy",¹³³ but he could also be surprisingly candid about OWI's remit in public. On 28th October 1942, for example, he told an audience in New York:

We are in a sense an auxiliary to the armed forces, so far as our overseas operations are concerned—an organization whose work can help clear the way for them, and make their success easier.

(...) [E]verybody knows that the victories of Hitler's armies were made far easier, particularly in France, by the psychological preparation which softened up not only a good part of the French people, but a still larger part of their government. Hitler has been using those same techniques on us, though

¹²⁹ Haworth Jones, 'The Making of an Interventionist', p.75.

¹³⁰ NA FO 898/104 Press clipping, *The Times*, 15th June 1942.

¹³¹ NARA RG 306 OWI, Comment and Criticism (Press) 1942. *The New York Times*, 'Offers an Analysis of Axis Outpourings: OWI will Make a Daily Service Available to Newspapers'. 25th September 1942.

¹³² See for example NARA RG 306 Box 235 OWI, Elmer Davis 1942. Remarks of Elmer Davis, The New York Times Hall, 28th October 1942.

¹³³ NARA RG 208 Box 7 Records of the Director and Predecessor Agencies. Elmer Davis Radio Broadcasts 1942-3. Bill Gahagan to Elmer Davis, 1st December 1943.

happily without much effect, and we would be fools if we did not use them on him and his allies as well.¹³⁴

This acknowledgement of the USA's employment of the "same techniques" as Germany was phrased in more palatable language to the American media. On 16th August 1942, *The New York Times Magazine* published an interview in which Davis asserted:

Democracies have a good story to tell and they ought to tell it. OWI is telling it, and they will tell it in increasing volume as our foreign service expands.

[...] To enemy countries we broadcast news of the war, American production etc. - again the truth, with only such omissions as actual military security may demand: but that news, in direction and emphasis, is adjusted to the particular interests of enemy peoples so as to produce the psychological effect most conducive to our victory.¹³⁵

Initially, OWI was responsible for providing both news and entertainment to the troops stationed overseas. However, it soon became clear, as Davis put it, that "[the] real objective [of music and entertainment for the army] was morale building. This, in [OWI's] judgement, was not the prerogative of O.W.I., but rather that of the army."¹³⁶ Broadcast entertainment was thus delegated to the Special Services Division (SSD), the army's own entertainment service, founded in 1940. In October 1942, SSD's Director, Brigadier-General Frederick Osborn, announced that it had been agreed that OWI would control all short- and medium wave news programmes to the Forces, while SSD should take over short- and medium wave entertainment broadcasts, albeit under the condition of an OWI veto when the programmes came to broadcast.¹³⁷ SSD also had permission to "originate, write and produce information

¹³⁴ NARA RG 306 Box 235 OWI, Elmer Davis 1942. Remarks of Elmer Davis, The New York Times Hall, 28th October 1942.

¹³⁵ NARA RG 306 Box 235 OWI, Elmer Davis 1942. Elmer Davis interview, *The New York Times Magazine*, 16th August 1942.

¹³⁶ NARA RG 208 Box 6 Records of the Director and Predecessor Agencies: Records of the Director 1942-45. OWI Programs 10-3 Entertainment and News to the Armed Forces. Davis to Senator Allen J. Ellender, letter dated 27th November 1943.

¹³⁷ NARA RG 208 Box 6 Records of the Director and Predecessor Agencies: Records of the Director 1942-45. OWI Programs 10-3 Entertainment and News to the Armed Forces. Osborn to General Surles, letter dated 26th October 1942.

shows (...) for the Army (...) in the realm of indoctrination,” so long as these “tie in with what they are doing with movies, maps, lectures etc.”¹³⁸

The matter of the news content of these programmes was complicated by the fact that, due to limited shortwave broadcasting capabilities to the rest of the world, programmes targeted at US troops stationed overseas “must also be deployed to the maximum of usefulness for psychological warfare purposes”.¹³⁹ The logic of this was that the enemy would take seriously any information contained in any broadcasts in English to American troops, and as such the content could not only be used to lift the spirits of American GIs, but also simultaneously serve covert operational aims in foreign countries. This dual functionality brought with it the problem, as pointed out by Osborn, that “there must be many cases where the information Mr [Robert] Sherwood wishes to impart to foreign countries would be in content or in the manner of presentation undesirable from the point of view of [the] morale of our troops.”¹⁴⁰

SSD’s entertainment programming was also adversely affected by the Petrillo Ban, which halted the production of new commercial music for radio stations and juke boxes from August 1942 until November 1944.¹⁴¹ James P. Petrillo, President of the American Federation of Musicians, claimed that the increasing use of recorded music was limiting job opportunities for American musicians, and for the next two years and three months, the only records produced were for the Forces, government transcriptions and non-commercial patriotic programmes. On 17th September 1942, Elmer Davis testified as first witness in front of a Senate Interstate Commerce Subcommittee, arguing that the ban “has had the practical effect of stopping all record making”. He stated that OWI

has a direct and vital concern with the maintenance of the radio coverage in the country. (...) It is one of the most important media for the conveyance of war information in general to the people, and may

¹³⁸ NARA RG 208 Box 6 Records of the Director and Predecessor Agencies: Records of the Director 1942-45. OWI Programs 10-3 Entertainment and News to the Armed Forces. Lou Cowan to Sherwood, memo of joint OWI/SSD meeting dated 15th December 1942.

¹³⁹ NARA RG 208 Box 6 Records of the Director and Predecessor Agencies: Records of the Director 1942-45. OWI Programs 10-3 Entertainment and News to the Armed Forces. Sherwood to Joseph Barnes, Lois Burke and Lou Cowan, memo dated 18th November 1942.

¹⁴⁰ NARA RG 208 Box 6 Records of the Director and Predecessor Agencies: Records of the Director 1942-45. OWI Programs 10-3 Entertainment and News to the Armed Forces. Osborn to General Surles, letter dated 26th October 1942.

¹⁴¹ Anders S. Lunde, ‘The American Federation of Musicians and the Recording Ban.’ *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 12.1 (Spring 1948), pp.45-56. Here p.48.

become of still greater importance when there is occasion for an emergency message from the national leadership.

A policy which threatens the continued existence of many of these [commercial radio] stations is injurious to the national system of communication.

(...) The director of this office is not personally an addict of the juke box, but he notes that it seems to be highly popular among soldiers, sailors and marines in army posts at home, and among factory workers as well. While at our outposts overseas recorded music is a vital necessity for the entertainment of our troops.¹⁴²

Numerous contemporary political cartoons depicted Petrillo as “the Boss of Music” who forced the nation to “play his tune”,¹⁴³ although the reality was more complicated. Petrillo had widespread support from other unions, including an explicit endorsement from the American Federation of Labour (AFL), and could also plausibly claim that the British Musicians’ Union was following the situation with great interest.¹⁴⁴ Nonetheless, since contemporary music was one of the USA’s most powerful cultural weapons, it is remarkable that an industrial dispute could cease its production for over two years during a World War. The complexities of the ban are beyond the remit of the thesis and have been explored extensively elsewhere,¹⁴⁵ but it is noteworthy that the remarkable situation in the USA broadly paralleled the problems of the RMVP in Germany and the BBC in Britain vis-à-vis popular music. In each country, the difficulties were to a degree self-inflicted by the nature of the respective cultural and political conditions and subject to some degree to the whims of individual personalities such as Goebbels, Bliss and Petrillo. “The crippling of the popular music industry at the onset of a long and arduous war seemed to many to be a cruel blow to public morale,” notes the historian Scott DeVeaux, “particularly after an earlier Petrillo pledge (...) not to call strikes ‘for the duration [of the war]’.”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² NARA RG 306 Box 235 OWI Comment and Criticism, 1942-45. ‘Davis Says Petrillo Harms War Program’, United Press newspaper cutting, 17th September 1942.

¹⁴³ Tim Anderson, “‘Buried under the Fecundity of His Own Creations’”: Reconsidering the Recording Bans of the American Federation of Musicians, 1942-1944 and 1948.’ *American Music*, 22.2 (Summer 2004), pp.231-269. Here p.240.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Including, but not limited to, Lunde, ‘The American Federation of Musicians’, pp.45-56, Scott DeVeaux, ‘Bebop and the Recording Industry: The 1942 AFM Recording Ban Reconsidered.’ *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 41.1 (Spring 1988), pp.126-165 and Anderson, ‘Reconsidering the Recording Bans of the American Federation of Musicians’.

¹⁴⁶ DeVeaux, ‘Bebop and the Recording Industry’, p.128-129.

One of SSD's most popular features was the variety show *Command Performance*, a programme with a similar format to *Wunschkonzert für die Wehrmacht*.¹⁴⁷ Produced specifically for overseas Forces, it featured an array of stars, including jazz vocal acts such as Frank Sinatra and the Andrews Sisters, performing requests sent in by soldiers. As with the success of the BBC Forces Programme in Britain, the fact that the lively broadcast was tailored to the needs of America's Forces meant that, when it was finally also broadcast on all four major domestic networks on Christmas Eve 1942, it was a great success.¹⁴⁸ Moreover, in January 1943, Davis suggested that the utilisation of such a show on American civilian airwaves was valuable because it formed "a direct bond between the fighting front and the home front",¹⁴⁹ which mirrored similar assertions by Joe Loss in Britain and Hans Hinkel in Germany. Additional jazz-oriented musical shows targeted at the army included *G.I. Jive*, *Yank Swing Session* and *Downbeat*.¹⁵⁰

However, just three months before he had advocated broadcasting *Command Performance* domestically, Davis had intimated at another New York public appearance that music would be of minimal value in OWI's work. "To the troops overseas," he stated, "we send entertainment programs as well, but the bulk of our service to them is news; and our other audiences have no appetite for entertainment. About four-fifths of our foreign broadcast programs are straight news, hard factual news[.]"¹⁵¹ Although elsewhere he acknowledged the importance of music for GIs,¹⁵² it is no less remarkable that Davis underestimated its significance to "other audiences", given his wartime experience in Europe. Indeed, although Anglo-American cooperation on propaganda and information issues preceded the bombing of Pearl Harbor, it also suggests a lack of communication between OWI and its British colleagues on this significant issue, since the evidence from both British and

¹⁴⁷ See Koch, *Wunschkonzert*.

¹⁴⁸ NARA RG 208 Box 6 Records of the Director and Predecessor Agencies: Records of the Director 1942-45. OWI Programs 10-3 Entertainment and News to the Armed Forces. Davis to Henry Lewis Stimson, Secretary of War, 19th January 1943.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ NARA RG 208 Box 6 Records of the Director and Predecessor Agencies: Records of the Director 1942-45. OWI Programs 10-3 Entertainment and News to the Armed Forces. Elmer Davis to Senator Harold H. Burton, letter (with OWI shortwave programmes enclosure) dated 18th June 1943.

¹⁵¹ NARA RG 306 Box 235 OWI, Elmer Davis 1942. Remarks of Elmer Davis, The New York Times Hall, 28th October 1942.

¹⁵² NARA RG 306 Box 235 OWI Comment and Criticism, 1942-45. 'Davis Says Petrillo Harms War Program', United Press newspaper cutting, 17th September 1942.

German sources conclusively demonstrates that musical entertainment was a priority not only for the Forces but also for home front listeners.

By the time the USA entered the war, a number of connections had already been forged between British and American intelligence agencies. British Special Operations Executive (SOE) was in consultation with William Donovan's foreign broadcasting service (FIS), which was integrated into OWI in the reorganisation of 14th June 1942,¹⁵³ and PWE's David Garnett later referred to Donovan's organisation as SOE's opposite number "insofar as [British] S[pecial] O[perations] were compatible with US neutrality."¹⁵⁴ Moreover, the renowned dramatist and Roosevelt speechwriter Robert Sherwood arrived in Britain in early September 1941, together with a representative of the FCC's Broadcast Division, to meet with PWE representatives, including Robert Lockhart, and to "report to Donovan on all British Radio Broadcasting, overt and covert [sic.] as far as [the British] may wish to inform him[.]"¹⁵⁵ Here ideas were exchanged on the development of propaganda in areas such as broadcasting, 'black' stations, postal systems and fabricated news items. Garnett notes that "[t]he most important field for cooperation was that of intelligence. Colonel Donovan could mobilise technical skill in 'Market Research' for PWE purposes, by training trade representatives and tourists going to Europe in methods of information gathering and could collect and tabulate information collected from persons arriving from Europe and could station intelligence officers at important points in Europe under suitable cover."¹⁵⁶

When OWI's Deputy Director Archibald MacLeish travelled to England in the summer of 1942, his liaison partners were PWE as opposed to MoI. On 31st July 1942 it was agreed that PWE and OWI officials would meet in London on a weekly basis to discuss policy,¹⁵⁷ which effectively formalised the cooperation between the two organisations. In October 1942, Dick Crossman, the Head of PWE's German Section,¹⁵⁸ requested a thousand-word maximum weekly report on US propaganda to

¹⁵³ NA FO 898/104 Political Warfare Executive: American Reorganisation, 14th June 1942, p.1.

¹⁵⁴ Garnett, *The Secret History of PWE*, pp.118-119.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ NA FO 898/104 Political Warfare Mission – 'Minutes of a Meeting held at the P.W.E. 7th floor Conference Room with Representatives of O.W.I.', 31st July 1942.

¹⁵⁸ In 1943 Crossman was promoted to 'Director of Political Warfare against the Enemy and Satellites (white)'. Sefton Delmer was promoted at the same time to 'Director of Political Warfare against the Enemy and Satellites (black)'. See Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, pp.102-103.

Japan. He also suggested that OWI station somebody with PWE in London, with OWI's analysis group in San Francisco taking in a PWE employee in return,¹⁵⁹ and from November 1943 an eighteen-strong British 'Political Warfare Mission' was stationed on American soil.¹⁶⁰

A line was drawn, however, at the sharing of 'black' information. The minutes of the initial meeting between OWI and PWE recorded Brigadier Brooks as saying that "in general we had no secrets from the American Services and the same must apply to plans imparted to O.W.I. by P.W.E. So far as 'black' activities were concerned, the British Services Department took the view that knowledge of these activities should be restricted to such people as required to know about them for operational reasons, and he thought this rule might reasonably apply to the American Services."¹⁶¹ Therefore, while British 'black' operations in all languages and both radio and print formats were carefully coordinated,¹⁶² British and American 'black' propaganda remained largely independent of one another due to this policy of restricting the sharing of information on subversive operations. This explains the fact that the FCC monitors in the United States had no knowledge of the origins of the popular British 'black' station *Gustav Siegfried Eins (GSI)*, and analysed its broadcasts on a regular basis on the assumption that it was a rogue German station.¹⁶³

Britain

Sefton Delmer and *Gustav Siegfried Eins*

Early British 'black' stations were heavily criticised by Sefton Delmer. A prime example was the authentic communist agitprop produced by the *Sender der Europäischen Revolution* ('Station of the European Revolution), which the misled FCC described as "a transmitter of unknown sponsorship and location [...] believed

¹⁵⁹ NARA RG 208 Box 6 Box 235 Records of the Director and Predecessor Agencies: Records of the Director 1942-45. Programs – 10 Radio 1942. Milton S. Eisenhower to Sherwood, 8th October 1942.

¹⁶⁰ NARA RG 208 Box 7 Elmer Davis Radio Broadcasts 1942-3. OWI Memorandum, undated (ca. 1st December 1943), Bill Gahagan to Lattimore, Fry, Siepmann, Daly, Downing, Parran. Public Relations: News & Features Report, 16th – 30th November [1943].

¹⁶¹ NA FO 898/104 Political Warfare Mission – Minutes of a Meeting held at the P.W.E. 7th floor Conference Room with Representatives of O.W.I. on Friday 31st July 1942.

¹⁶² NA FO 898/51 Research Units 1943. '*Deutsche Kurzwellensender Atlantik*', 1st October 1943, p.2.

¹⁶³ NARA RG 262 Box 2 FCC Suggestions for Overseas Propaganda, 19th September 1942.

to have begun operations in the summer of 1940.”¹⁶⁴ The station’s apparent independence was reinforced by its criticism of “reactionary” British colonial policy in the Far East.¹⁶⁵ It is unclear whether the anti-British sentiment was a deliberate camouflage (in the same way that the Nazi ‘black’ station *Workers’ Challenge* attempted to disguise its German origin by railing against “the menace of Nazism” and “the horrors of the Gestapo”),¹⁶⁶ or simply the opinion of the German communist exiles who ran the station largely unfettered by British control. However, Delmer claimed that it was ineffective as a means of psychological warfare:

[It was a] straightforward opposition [radio station], appealing to the German people to rise against Hitler, denouncing the war, vaunting the strength of the allies, and generally behaving like an enemy propaganda broadcast, except that where the B.B.C. said ‘you Germans’ they said ‘we Germans’. (...) I decided that a new approach was needed (...)

“I think we should try out a new type of ‘Black Radio’ on the Germans,” I suggested to Leonard [Ingrams] (...), “one that undermines Hitler, not by opposing him, but by pretending to be all for him and his war (...) We must appeal to the ‘inner pigdog’ inside every German in the name of his highest patriotic ideals[.]”¹⁶⁷

Although the European Revolution appears to have failed to produce tangible results within Germany, its ruse at least succeeded in misleading the FCC’s analysts in their reading of the international situation. On 13th June 1942, over six months since the USA had entered the war, it was suggested that “European Revolution, continuing (...) its appeals for German revolt, hopefully points to political schisms inside Germany.”¹⁶⁸ The FCC was similarly misled by Delmer’s early stations, noting on 19th September 1942:

Clandestine transmitters, like Gustav-Siegfried-Eins and Army Transmitter North [Wehrmachtssender Nord], have used the theme “hardships of U-boat crews” (as well as their insufficient training) in order to undermine the morale of U-boat crews and their relatives. Apparently the men operating these clandestine stations (or the groups behind them) are of the opinion that stories and rumors of this kind utilize an opening which Nazi morale offers to anti-Nazi propaganda. The effectiveness of this propaganda may perhaps be inferred from the fact that Radio Berlin, in official broadcasts, denies

¹⁶⁴ NARA RG 262 Box 1 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 13th – 19th February 1942 (dated 21st February 1942), p.11.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, p.12.

¹⁶⁶ Orwell/Angus (eds.), *My Country Right or Left*, p.212.

¹⁶⁷ Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, p.40.

¹⁶⁸ NARA RG 262 Box 2 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 5th – 11th June 1942 (dated 13th June 1942), p.2.

“rumors” regarding the insufficient training of U-boat crews. (This is an unprecedented propaganda technique. In previous cases, Nazi propagandists avoided answering clandestine stations, preferring to wait until the anti-Nazi rumor appeared on an official enemy radio, and then denying it.).¹⁶⁹

The short-lived *Nord* was significant because it represented Delmer’s first attempt at creating an authentic-sounding *Soldatensender*. A British Foreign Office monitor described it as “[c]leverly veiled anti-Nazi propaganda” which offered a “[m]ixed programme of home and foreign news; musical items; greetings to soldiers, etc.”¹⁷⁰ Although no evidence is available of the exact nature of *Nord*’s musical content, Rex Leeper noted that it included German music in order to replicate the content of an authentic German *Soldatensender*. Its successor stations, *Deutsche Kurzwellensender Atlantik* and *Soldatensender Calais*, also copied the lively format of genuine stations such as *Soldatensender Belgrad*,¹⁷¹ and the fact that jazz and dance music formed a central component of these latter PWE projects indicates that it was also a significant feature of *Nord*. However, due to the fact that, at this point, British ‘black’ operations were only able to issue pre-recorded broadcasts, Delmer concluded that *Nord* lacked authenticity, noting that “[for radio news] to be news, and sound like news, (...) [it] must be broadcast live. It must be up to the minute, changing from bulletin to bulletin.”¹⁷² The fledgling venture was subsequently abandoned after several weeks of experimentation.

GSI was successful as a pre-recorded broadcast until, due to an accidental repeat play by a non-German-speaking transmitter engineer, its protagonist was ‘murdered’ on-air twice by Nazis during his final, dramatic broadcast.¹⁷³ The protagonist in question was *Der Chef* (‘The Chief’), played by a German political émigré named Peter Seckelmann,¹⁷⁴ who broadcast polemics against the *Parteikommune*,¹⁷⁵ a hybrid of ‘Party’ and ‘Commune’ designed to imply Bolshevik infiltration of the NSDAP, but never Hitler himself. The FCC monitors were kept guessing as to the station’s sponsors, noting that

¹⁶⁹ NARA RG 262 Box 2 FCC Suggestions for Overseas Propaganda, 19th September 1942. The underscores are in the original document.

¹⁷⁰ NA FO 898/52 ‘Wehrmachtssender Nord’ G.5. (handwritten note ‘101’), undated.

¹⁷¹ Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, p.78, pp.108-109.

¹⁷² Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, p.78.

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, p.73.

¹⁷⁴ Delmer refers to Seckelmann by one of his pseudonyms, ‘Paul Sanders’ (*ibid*, p.49).

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p.63.

[a]lthough this station is represented as a genuine ‘underground’ transmitter, internal evidence from content analysis suggests that it might operate with the approval of the Nazi government if not under its actual control. The station’s consistent line – pro-Army and anti-Nazi bureaucracy – presumably expresses the feelings of a considerable German group, and the station may be officially used both as a safety valve for hostility and as a manipulator of the group’s attitudes. (...) At any rate, the suspicion of the station’s legitimacy is strong enough to warrant a tongue-in-cheek reading of its broadcasts.¹⁷⁶

Far from being a safety valve for anti-Nazi tendencies, however, the station caused great concern in Germany, with a British informant reporting in December 1942 that it was being discussed in “very high army circles”.¹⁷⁷ *GSI* combined truths and half-truths in a manner designed to cause maximum damage to the German war effort, appealing to soldiers’ instincts for self-preservation and attempting to turn them against the NSDAP. The FCC, for example, recorded *Der Chef*’s defence of his decision to “[notify] London propagandists of the alleged Typhus epidemic on the Russian front.”¹⁷⁸ It went unnoticed by the monitor that this Typhus epidemic, like *Der Chef* himself, was in fact the product of those same British propagandists to whom he was supposed to have betrayed this secret. Nonetheless, on 1st August 1942, the FCC did comment upon the apparent co-ordination of the themes treated by *Nord* and *GSI*, with the monitor admitting that “it is difficult to determine whether this merely means that A.T.N [*Wehrmachtssender Nord*] listens to the Chief or rather that the two clandestine stations are operated by the same group.”¹⁷⁹ The experience gained by Delmer and his staff in the trial-and-error development of *GSI* and *Nord* would subsequently be put to use in the counterfeit jazz-oriented *Soldatensender*, which were to become some of the most successful ‘black’ operations of World War II.

The BBC Ban on Slush and ‘Jazzing the Classics’

With his *Soldatensender*, Delmer was able to exploit dissatisfaction among German Forces with the musical broadcasts of the RRG. However, Germany was not alone in

¹⁷⁶ NARA RG 262 Box 1 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 12th – 18th December 1941 (dated 20th December 1941), pp.J-2 – J-3.

¹⁷⁷ NA FO 898/67 PWE Black Propaganda to Germany – Notes on Propaganda to Germany, 25th – 31st December 1942.

¹⁷⁸ NARA RG 262 Box 1 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 16th – 22nd January 1942 (dated 24th January 1942), p.17.

¹⁷⁹ NARA RG 262 Box 2 Weekly Analysis of Official Foreign Broadcasts, 24th – 30th July 1942 (dated 1st August 1942), p.8.

imposing counterproductive guidelines on its musical output; in Britain, the question of suitably virile music for the Forces led to the BBC controversially banning ‘slush’ and the practice of ‘jazzing the classics’ from the airwaves. Frederick Ogilvie had resigned as Director-General in January 1942, to be replaced by the co-Directors General Sir Cecil Graves and Robert Foot. While Foot concentrated on the Corporation’s finances, Graves focussed on reorganising programming in the wake of listener research feedback, which showed a slump in public approval for the BBC’s output.¹⁸⁰ The genesis of the ban was, as stated to band leaders, a desire on the part of the public, Forces listeners and factory workers for “a more virile and robust music in our programmes generally, with special reference to dance music.”¹⁸¹ In fact, as Christina Baade has demonstrated, it was the result of a BBC-driven initiative to offer a more robust output for Forces listeners, in particular in the wake of a series of British surrenders in Asia which were interpreted as showing a lack of fighting spirit.¹⁸²

Accordingly, on 21st July 1942, the Corporation sent a letter to music publishers, dance band leaders and vocalists which detailed the new guidelines for dance music in Britain.¹⁸³ The guidelines, which were printed in the British press the following day and detailed in an article in the *Radio Times* one week later, were summarised by the BBC’s Assistant Controller of Programmes, Richard J. F. Howgill, as follows:¹⁸⁴

- (a) to exclude any form of anaemic or debilitated vocal performance by male singers.
- (b) to control performance by women singing to the extent that an insincere or over-sentimental style will not be allowed,
- (c) to exclude numbers which are slushy in sentiment, or contain innuendo or other matter considered to be offensive from the point of view of good taste or religious or allied susceptibilities, e.g. [racist terms such as] “Yogi”, “Chink” etc.

¹⁸⁰ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, p.134.

¹⁸¹ BBC WAC R27/73/1 Ref: P/ADL To Music Publishers, 21st July 1942.

¹⁸² See Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, pp.131-152.

¹⁸³ BBC WAC R27/73/1 Ref: P/ADL To Music Publishers, 21st July 1942.

¹⁸⁴ This was also the form, almost word-for-word (albeit minus the racist terminology illustrating point [c]), in which they were reprinted in the press, as evidenced by Wolf Mittler’s near-identical recital of the *Daily Mail*’s statement (see below in this section) and confirmed in Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, p.139.

(d) to exclude numbers based on tunes borrowed from standard classical works usually found in concert hall or opera house programmes, either with or without lyrics.¹⁸⁵

A key problem of the slush ban was the fact that the criteria were inevitably abstract and highly subjective. Howgill himself noted in his 21st July memorandum that, because “sincerely sentimental songs” will still be permitted, “interpretation becomes of the utmost importance”.¹⁸⁶ The task of interpretation, Howgill wrote, would go to the programme producers, who were to make on-the-spot decisions at the rehearsal stage whether or not a proposed vocal performance violated the guidelines.¹⁸⁷ Godfrey Adams, the Director of Programme Planning, coined an informal maxim to “err on the side of Marches!” in case of doubt, and this advice was passed on to continuity announcers to assist with the selection of appropriate “fill up records”.¹⁸⁸ It is therefore unsurprising that, within four weeks of the ban, the number of letters opposing it outnumbered those in support of it by four to one.¹⁸⁹

In an interview in early August 1942 with *Melody Maker*'s ‘Detector’ (Edgar Jackson), the BBC explained that censorship decisions would be made by a committee of seven.¹⁹⁰ Jackson’s own account records the following conversation:

“But,” I retorted, “that is all too vague. What exactly, as far as this matter is concerned, is one to assume is meant by ‘anaemic’, ‘debilitated’, ‘insincere’, ‘over-sentimental’ or ‘slushy’? Surely it must to a great extent depend on the outlook of the individual, how he or she reacts to a song and/or performance?”

“Oh, yes,” answered the B.B.C. “We agree it is greatly a matter of personal taste.”

“In that case,” said I, “I want to know a lot more about the Committe [sic.] and its tastes.

“I want to be assured that it hasn’t crank tastes. I want to know that it will fairly reflect the public taste; that it will not use its powers, against which there is, apparently, no appeal, to foist its own tastes on the public; that it will be sufficiently tolerant and broad-minded.”¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁵ BBC WAC R27/73/1 Assistant Controller (Programmes) [Howgill] to Director of Music [Bliss] et al re: Dance Music Policy, 21st July 1942.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ BBC WAC R27/73/1 Frank Phillips to Continuity Announcers, Announcers Board, 22nd July 1942.

¹⁸⁹ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, p.142. Here Baade suggests that younger and poorer listeners were most likely to oppose the ban, and yet least likely to write to the BBC. The increase in dissenting letters was partly a result of a *Melody Maker* campaign.

¹⁹⁰ BBC WAC R44/342 “‘Detector’ Interviews the B.B.C. on its “Anti-Slush” Campaign”, August 1942. The document is a typed manuscript with minor handwritten alterations and additions. This quotation is from the amended version, and the underlining is in the original document.

In spite of the interviewee's alleged refusal to name all of the panel members, Jackson proceeds to publish them, which indicates actual or eventual BBC permission. The Dance Music Policy Committee consisted of Arthur Bliss (Director of Music), John Watt (Director of Variety), Richard J. F. Howgill (Assistant Controller of Programmes), Robert Macdermot (Programme Organiser), Cecil Madden (Director of Entertainments in the Empire and North American Service), Kenneth Wright (Director of Overseas Programming) and Douglas Lawrence (responsible for dance music at the Variety Department).¹⁹² Jackson's concern that these senior BBC figures might "try to foist their tastes on the public" appears to be justified, given the Corporation's didactic and paternalistic approach to the nation's musical tastes. This had been expressed in the Music Policy document that was circulated internally at the BBC just four months earlier, which showed that the BBC indeed saw itself as "[the] guardian of [British] cultural values, [and] must accept the duty of educating the public."¹⁹³

At a "very arduous" meeting on 21st July 1942, around one fifth of the approximately one hundred pieces of music examined were rejected.¹⁹⁴ A meeting took place between the Music Publishers Association (MPA) and the BBC on 27th August, which resulted in the Corporation agreeing to an appeals process,¹⁹⁵ although Gordon Crier of the Variety Department was to be the "final voice" on the matter of 'slush'.¹⁹⁶ Crier was given a four-week special assignment by John Watt to focus on Variety programmes, "with a special slant on the presentation of 'anti-slush' numbers in whatever programme they occur in accordance with the stated Dance Band Policy".¹⁹⁷ It is significant that this attempt to provide practical illustrations of the BBC's idea of suitably virile music mirrored Goebbels' intentions with the DTUO. The orchestra was to serve a didactic and exemplary function for all German musicians, delivering first-rate musicianship within the RMVP guidelines,¹⁹⁸ and

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ BBC WAC R27/73/1 File I (of 2), General Dance Music Policy 1941-42. Draft document dated 6th March 1942.

¹⁹⁴ BBC WAC R27/73/1 Madden to D.E.P., 31st July 1942.

¹⁹⁵ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, p.142.

¹⁹⁶ BBC WAC R27/73/1 Internal Circulating Memo: Watt, 11th September 1942.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

Crier's remit was similarly to set a musical benchmark within the confines of the BBC's new criteria. A weekly 'hit' period was also conceived of in May 1942, in which new music would be presented on alternate weeks by the bands of Jack Payne and Geraldo. Dance Music Policy was to be enforced more stringently for this programme than it was possible to do consistently elsewhere, with the intention that publishers would be forced to produce music that complied with the dictates of the Corporation in order to have their compositions featured on the prime time event.¹⁹⁹

The ban on "numbers based on tunes borrowed from standard classical works",²⁰⁰ commonly known as 'jazzing the classics', was theoretically easier to enforce. This was less subject to the whims of individual censors, although Graves described the policy as "a matter for arbitrary decisions, and as such, it bristles with difficulties".²⁰¹ Accordingly, borderline cases were to be ruled upon by the Corporation's Director of Music, the composer and conductor Arthur Bliss. "It is impossible to define exactly what a 'classical composition' is," stated a memorandum to the leaders of light music bands dated 27th November 1942, "but the phrase is well enough understood to form the basis of a working agreement."²⁰² Indeed, this was to include other material such as folk melodies, which were generally not considered part of the 'classical' repertoire. The given justification for the restriction was that the Corporation "wants to avoid bringing established compositions into disrepute by allowing them to be parodied, arranged unsuitably, or given extravagant or inadequate performance. (...) A classical work must not be arranged in a way that is incongruous to its essential nature."²⁰³

However, unlike the 'slush' ban, it was not a policy with concrete goals in the realm of morale. Moreover, it was so poorly enforced that, as late as 13th April 1945, Howgill could complain of a broadcast which included Geraldo's dance version of Debussy's 'Claire du Lune', and ask the Directors of Variety and Music to "consider [the] question of dance bands playing music which is outside their sphere and try and

¹⁹⁹ BBC WAC R27/73/1 Director of Variety [Watt] to Director of Programme Planning [Adams], re: Programme Suggestion: Dance Bands, 16th May 1942.

²⁰⁰ BBC WAC R27/73/1 Assistant Controller (Programmes) [Howgill] to Director of Music [Bliss] et al, re: Dance Music Policy, 21st July 1942.

²⁰¹ BBC WAC R27/73/1 Controller (Programmes) [Graves] to Assistant Controller (Programmes) [Howgill] et al, re: Dance Music Policy, 17th April 1942.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ BBC WAC R27/73/1 Assistant Controller (Programmes) [Howgill] to Director of Music [Bliss] et al, re: Dance Music Policy, 21st July 1942.

evolve some machinery for preventing it.”²⁰⁴ This is a remarkable request given that point (d) in Howgill’s 21st July memorandum almost two years earlier had been intended to create precisely such machinery.²⁰⁵ Indeed, this request for further action from a senior BBC figure, less than one month from the end of the war, provides conclusive evidence that morale was not a factor in the ban. Rather, it was a means of musical segregation which was informed by the BBC’s self-perception as the guardian of the nation’s cultural values. Here again Bliss’ personality as Director of Music was an important factor, and the decree was strictly implemented until he left the position in 1944, even as increasing concessions were made elsewhere with regard to the ‘slush’ ban.²⁰⁶

The insistence that dance bands stay inside their musical ‘sphere’ supports Charles Chilton’s later assertion that the jazz-classical divide was “almost a racial thing” in Britain during the war,²⁰⁷ and the ban effectively enshrined this anti-jazz cultural prejudice in BBC regulation. The Corporation’s perspective was set out in a draft Music Policy document dated 6th March 1942, which stated that the BBC’s wartime aims included “[t]he best possible broadcast performance of all worthy music”, and “[s]ecuring by all worthy means the maximum appreciation of such broadcasts by winning the largest possible audience, thereby continually raising public taste.”²⁰⁸ It is noteworthy that the BBC’s stated ‘Creative Principle’, “Music is an ennobling spiritual force, which should influence the life of every listener”,²⁰⁹ is used as a constant point of reference and the guiding idea behind BBC wartime policy. This vague and abstract concept is reminiscent of the esoteric terminology of the RMK in its attempts to cultivate a New German Dance Music, and was clearly at odds with the utilitarian priorities of broadcasting during the war. The document states:

If the Creative Principle is to be accepted, there follows the responsibility for broadcasting the maximum amount of fine music to all who need it. This maximum must in practice be determined by the competing claims of other types of programme; but the Creative Principle carries its own justification of programme time and expenditure.

²⁰⁴ BBC WAC R34/281 Howgill to Director of Variety [Watt] and Director of Music [Bliss], 13th April 1945.

²⁰⁵ BBC WAC R27/73/1 Assistant Controller (Programmes) [Howgill] to Director of Music [Bliss] et al re: Dance Music Policy, 21st July 1942.

²⁰⁶ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, p.152.

²⁰⁷ Chilton interview 2012.

²⁰⁸ BBC WAC R27/73/1 Draft document dated 6th March 1942.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

There follows from it also the responsibility for spreading the appreciation of music as widely as possible. The B.B.C., in addition to its obligation as guardian of cultural values, must accept the duty of educating the public. It must therefore plan continually by worthy means to add to the number of those capable of enjoying fine music.²¹⁰

The passage asserts the theoretical primacy of didactic obligations over practical considerations of morale and entertainment, and, while popular taste is apparently acknowledged in the reference to “competing claims of other types of programme”,²¹¹ these are clearly seen as being in opposition to the BBC’s Creative Principle.

This attitude can be traced back to Bliss. Baade’s assertion that Bliss viewed dance music as “at best diverting and at worst morally suspect”²¹² is supported by his description of a jazz rendition of a work by Tchaikovsky as “vandalism”. “In this particular case,” wrote Bliss, “it is not only a question of offending a large body of music lovers. Surely it is insulting to the Russian people?”²¹³ This is far from “the BBC’s [wartime] embrace of morale-building popular music”²¹⁴ as described by Baade, who argues that the pre-war BBC “regarded popular music as ancillary to classical music, the promotion of which was central to its mission of cultural uplift. During the war, however, it recognised the value of popular music.”²¹⁵ The Dance Music Policy document clearly shows that Bliss had not shifted from this pre-war understanding of the BBC’s mission, and it appears to only refer to ‘serious’ music as opposed to dance music. When it issues a call for political expediency, it argues that it would be in the long-term British interest to broadcast quality operas from Milan or performances of Wagner, rather than to indulge in a form of musical isolationism that excluded the cultural achievements of enemy countries. Neither dance music nor the war is mentioned in the document. The ban on ‘jazzing the classics’ demonstrates that, while popular taste was catered to by the Corporation, it was to be subverted wherever possible in the name of promoting and spreading appreciation of the so-called ‘serious’ music.

²¹⁰ BBC WAC R27/73/1 Draft document dated 6th March 1942.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, p.134.

²¹³ BBC WAC R27/73/1 Bliss to Controller of Programmes [Graves], 1st April 1942.

²¹⁴ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, p.5.

²¹⁵ Ibid, pp.3-4.

It is important to recognise that the BBC was not a homogenous entity, and more pragmatic opinions were expressed internally, for example by Howgill²¹⁶ and Crier.²¹⁷ However, a strong culturally conservative influence is apparent, for example in Director of Overseas Programming Kenneth Wright's insistence that, with regard to "quoting" passages from classical music in dance numbers, "[the BBC takes] as serious a view of this as of the basing of a dance tune itself on an accepted classic."²¹⁸ And yet a great deal of time and effort were expended on the prevention of this alleged "bringing [of] established compositions into disrepute",²¹⁹ which was merely a matter of enforcing personal prejudice. The potential significance of such numbers to the war effort appears not to have been considered.

The situation was further complicated by inter-departmental rivalry and territorialism, and indeed the ban can be understood as part of Arthur Bliss' attempt to assert control over Variety Department matters, which had previously been beyond his remit.²²⁰ Moreover, while Bliss' Music Department attempted to prevent dance bands affiliated with the Light Music Department from straying into their 'serious' repertoire, the evidence suggests that transgressions were committed by both sides.²²¹ Crier reported at the end of his four-week special assignment that "[t]he situation is very difficult where we [Variety Department] are restraining Payne, Geraldo etc. from playing legitimately Light Music Department material, while Music Department are apparently not restraining their lighter combinations from playing Payne and Geraldo's material, i.e., the current 'pops' of the day."²²² This led to territorial disputes between musicians, with Howgill reporting on another occasion that Payne, who was also Director of Dance Music, "stated that if he is not allowed to play 'Music Department' music their bands should not be allowed to play his kind of stuff, and made the appropriate comment about geese and ganders. (...) [I] do feel there is a certain amount of justification for Payne's complaint, though

²¹⁶ BBC WAC R27/73/1 Howgill to McCullough, 21st September 1942.

²¹⁷ BBC WAC R27/73/1 Crier to Director of Variety [Watt], 23rd September 1942.

²¹⁸ BBC WAC R27/73/1 K.A. Wright [Director of Overseas Programming], re: Dance Music Policy, 15th September 1942.

²¹⁹ BBC WAC R27/73/1 Assistant Controller (Programmes) [Howgill] to Director of Music [Bliss] et al, re: Dance Music Policy, 21st July 1942.

²²⁰ Baade, *Victory through Harmony*, p.134.

²²¹ BBC WAC R27/73/1 Crier to Director of Variety [Watt], 23rd September 1942.

²²² BBC WAC R27/73/1 Director of Variety [Watt] to Assistant Controller (Programmes) [Howgill], re: Dance Bands 12th October 1942. Here Watt cites the findings of Crier's assignment.

obviously it is partly retaliation.”²²³ This distracting inter-departmental rivalry was a product of the cultural snobbery that dominated the issue of ‘jazzing the classics’. Banning the practice served no obvious purpose in terms of morale, and spending BBC time and resources policing the guidelines was detrimental to the effective wartime functioning of the Corporation.

A German Commentary on BBC Dance Music Policy

The BBC’s battle with ‘slush’ and ‘jazzing the classics’ was also being followed with interest in Germany. This is evidenced by a transcription of an English-language broadcast from Zeesen to South and East Asia on 6th August 1942, which was presented in the form of an opinion-piece by Wolf Mittler, the Anglophile German journalist who may have been the broadcaster who inspired the name ‘Lord Haw-Haw’.²²⁴ This source has been overlooked by previous scholarship, and yet is extremely valuable to our understanding of the BBC’s use of music to maintain domestic morale, because it provides a contemporary German expert’s view on British light entertainment policy. Mittler had impeccable light entertainment credentials, being himself a jazz fanatic who worked as head of KWS (shortwave) broadcasts to the enemy in the Mediterranean and North Africa. This document is worth quoting at length, because it offers an excellent example of the advantages of the comparative nature of the thesis, considering the German and British problems with musical entertainment not as mutually exclusive issues, but as part of a broader wartime discourse. Having summarised the new BBC guidelines, Mittler states that

there is no doubt that some of these points are very reasonable indeed. But the important thing is that this ban practically marks a very fundamental change in the policy of the BBC with regard to popular music. It means that the majority of BBC listeners, especially the Forces listeners, will from now on have to get along without the kind of music they like the most. I think it is safe to say that this change has not come about because people complained about music being slushy or anaemic. Certainly there is a fraction of listeners who will welcome the change in policy, but as a whole, the ban probably does not represent the will of the – if I may say so – “listener on the street”: in contrast with an equally far-reaching change which the German home radio underwent a couple of months ago when after a long pause dance music was again introduced into the programme.

²²³ BBC WAC R27/73/1 Crier to Director of Variety [Watt], 23rd September 1942.

²²⁴ This is suggested by James Clark, who also broadcast news in English for the RVMP early in the war, in an interview broadcast in Denys Blakeway (presenter), *Germany Calling: The Voice of the Nazi*. BBC Radio 4 (online), 16th May 1991. Norman Baillie-Stewart (to whom the name may also initially have been applied) also asserts this in his autobiography, as cited by Blakeway.

I remember quite well a trip to the Channel coast which I made with one of the highest German radio officials in September 1940. (...) [All] the soldiers recognised him and they said: "Look here, we want more dance music." (...) And everywhere we heard the same comment. But for a long time, the German radio did not change its attitude. Significantly enough the concession to listeners was made at a time when the fighting was more bitter than ever before. And most of the people like it, certainly all the soldiers.

I have mentioned this because there is in my view a parallel to the recent BBC change of policy. In both cases we have an absolutely fundamental change of programme policy. And obviously such a change allows interesting deductions. In the case of the BBC, I'm convinced that the new attitude is not popular with the average listener. (...) Most likely the BBC and the Government realise that the British people still fail to be fully awake to the seriousness of their position. Certainly the British have made some progress, and I don't want you to think that I am minimizing the fighting qualities and spirit of the British soldier. But doubtless, the English songs and the English character have something in common. (...) [T]he BBC has now banned many of these, doubtless because responsible quarters wanted to (...) make it clear to each and every one that this is not the time to think about kissing in the black-out, or that happy week-end, that there is no sense in dreaming about those bluebirds over the Dover cliffs.

(...) Well, after all, this is an internal affair of the British wireless and of the British listener, and as long as they like the sort of stuff that comes out of their loudspeakers, it's O.K. with me. But I'm afraid they won't. I'm afraid they'll agree with me and say: "Not much fun listening to the BBC these days".²²⁵

This critique of BBC policy is unusual for Nazi English-language propaganda, firstly because it is genuinely witty in places, and secondly because it contains informed constructive criticism which mirrors contemporary internal debates at the BBC. Moreover, Mittler's opinion on British light entertainment has added authority because his own light entertainment programme for New Zealand and Australian Forces, *Anzac Tattoo*, was a great success with its target audience.²²⁶ It was presented by Mildred Gillars, and its emphasis on music over propaganda, perhaps also reflecting Mittler's distaste for political work,²²⁷ appears to have been the key to the programme's popularity. This is consistent with *Stars and Stripes* editor Henry Mitgang's assertion that the troops enjoyed the Millars' broadcasts for the familiar

²²⁵ BBC WAC R27/73/1 J.A. Keyser to Overseas Music Director, 'German Radio on "Slushy Music"', 19th August 1942.

²²⁶ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, pp.124-125.

²²⁷ See *ibid*, pp.90-91.

jazz music, whilst simultaneously laughing at her contrived innuendo.²²⁸ Mittler later asserted that Karl Schwedler, vocalist of Charlie and his Orchestra, was in charge of dictating *Anzac Tattoo*'s musical content.²²⁹

Propagandistic elements are present here, most notably the reference to U-boats "doing the BBC a turn" by sinking American ships bound for Britain containing the newly-banned records,²³⁰ thus eliminating the supply end of the chain. The talk also alludes to Britain's alleged military predicament, although this is somewhat mitigated by admissions of Germany's own need for uplifting music, as well as the fact that the outlook for Britain was markedly less bleak in mid-1942 than it had been at any point since the start of the war.²³¹ To what degree it constitutes deliberate propaganda and to what degree it represents a genuine commentary is a matter of conjecture, but the tone and the content of Mittler's talk suggest that it is predominantly the latter. Mittler's subsequent transgressions, escape and arrest by the Gestapo further strengthen the argument that this eccentric and individualistic broadcaster was broadly acting upon his own initiative.²³² The German-Jewish guitar player Heinz 'Coco' Schumann remembers that "[Mittler] was (...) doing propaganda broadcasts for abroad, though he wasn't even a Nazi. He was into music and his job was getting it across to the other side."²³³ This professionally-interested critique of British policy supports Schumann's conclusion, and is therefore of even greater value for the comparative purposes of the thesis.

Conclusion

The entry of the USA into the war not only exposed the limitations of Goebbels' propaganda apparatus, but also revealed a striking naivety and ignorance in the RMVP's treatment of the new belligerent. Nazi 'black' propaganda's utilisation of jazz music, as represented by the shifting target audiences of *Station Debunk*, or the

²²⁸ Mitgang, 'In this Air War, the Nazis Fired Words and Music'. Mitgang does not state which of Gillars' programmes he is referring to, and for geographical reasons (because Mitgang was stationed in North Africa) it is unlikely to have been *Anzac Tattoo*.

²²⁹ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, pp.124-125.

²³⁰ BBC WAC R27/73/1 J.A. Keyser to Overseas Music Director, 'German Radio on "Slushy Music"', 19th August 1942.

²³¹ The broadcast's target area, South and East Asia, may have provided a different perspective for British listeners stationed there, particularly given the Fall of Singapore on 5th February 1942. However, references to psychological hardship are all with regard to the British home front, and no mention is made of the situation in South-East Asia.

²³² Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, pp.124-125.

²³³ Ibid.

rebranded German dance orchestras broadcast by 'Bill and Mary', lacked both resources and cultural understanding. The apparent perception of the United States as a culturally homogenous entity, consistent with the Nazi worldview, led to jazz records being broadcast to Midwestern listeners in an attempt to stoke isolationist sentiment, and the abandonment of this musical policy after only several months is an indication of its failure. As will be shown below in Chapter Five, the British counterfeit *Soldatensender* which would appear on the airwaves over the course of 1943 were far more psychologically effective and possessed greater awareness of the tastes and demands of their German audience, whose predilection for upbeat jazz music remained unsated by the comparatively tame offerings of Goebbels' DTUO.

However, both OWI's own initial ignorance of the value of musical entertainment for the Forces and SSD's insufficient attempts to cater to these demands left US soldiers vulnerable to enemy propaganda offerings, such as the broadcasts of Mildred Gillars from Berlin or Tokyo's *Zero Hour*. The latter programme, prophesied OWI's Director of Pacific Operations Owen Lattimore, would "plague us [the USA] until the end of the war".²³⁴ The BBC, too, in its campaign against 'slush' and 'jazzing the classics', revealed considerable institutional prejudice against British popular taste, as well as a continued dedication to the Corporation's pre-war goal of encouraging national cultural uplift. This jeopardised the wartime priority of maintaining morale and keeping British Forces and civilians alike tuned in to the BBC's offerings, as was noted in Wolf Mittler's lucid commentary for the RMVP. Indeed, this chapter has highlighted the difficulties that each nation had in coming to terms with music as a weapon of psychological warfare. Chapter Five will explore the period from Goebbels' proclamation of 'total war' at the Berlin *Sportpalast* on 18th February 1943 until the German surrender on 8th May 1945. As will be demonstrated below, Sefton Delmer's pre-emptively coined phrase 'Total Radio War' would become an appropriate epithet for the final phase of World War II propaganda.

²³⁴ NARA RG 208 Box 6 Records of the Director and Predecessor Agencies: Records of the Director 1942-45. Programs – 10 Radio 1943. Lattimore to Milton S. Eisenhower, 14th October 1943.

Chapter Five

‘Total Radio Warfare’: February 1943 – May 1945

“The simplest and most effective of all ‘black’ operations is to spit in a man’s soup and cry ‘Heil Hitler!’”

(Sefton Delmer, PWE)¹

¹ Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, p.107.

Introduction

On the night of 3rd February 1943, Goebbels met with Hinkel and Fritzsche to discuss how to break the “due” news of Stalingrad to the populace. The special announcement was to be “very realistic, very sober and quite lacking in pathos” in order to reflect what the Propaganda Minister felt to be the current mood of the German people.² Nonetheless, the SD reported that the information caused “a fairly extensive shock to [German] public opinion”.³ Goebbels had already planned to cancel radio entertainment for an unspecified period of time, claiming that “the populace doesn’t want light entertainment today, it wants gravity and practicality”,⁴ and at his press conference the same morning he had decreed that “immediately after the announcement of the termination of the fighting in Stalingrad, a national remembrance lasting three times 24 hours will be performed. During this time, all places of entertainment, including theatres and cinemas will be closed.”⁵

The decision of Field Marshall von Paulus to be taken alive as a prisoner of war created a serious problem for Goebbels in his attempts to forge a sense of post-Stalingrad national unity. By ignoring Hitler’s orders to commit suicide, von Paulus had defied the regime’s increasingly nihilistic demands for the “harshest personal sacrifice” in the service of the Nazi war effort,⁶ and Goebbels reflected in his diary that it represented “a serious moral defeat for the army. One cannot overlook the potential psychological complications that will result [from this].”⁷ This was exacerbated by Soviet propaganda, which the Propaganda Minister noted on the night of the meeting with Hinkel and Fritzsche was “making every effort to make it clear to the German soldiers and also the German people that the generals are being taken prisoner while the soldiers must die. This is of course a very unpleasant and not very gratifying slogan which we must urgently counter. But right now I have no handle on this, since I do not know whether or not this message corresponds to the facts. The Bolsheviks certainly will not help us to check their veracity. Together with

² Elke Fröhlich (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*. Teil 2 Band 7 (January-March 1943). München: K. G. Saur, 1993, p.253.

³ Ibid, p.258.

⁴ Ibid, p.254.

⁵ Boelcke, *Wollt Ihr den totalen Krieg?*, p.333.

⁶ The phrase is from Goebbels’ *Sportpalast* speech of 18th February 1943. Cited in Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema*, p.187.

⁷ Fröhlich (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels* 2.7, p.254. The diary entry is dated 4th February 1943.

the British, they are announcing that the fall of Stalingrad was the largest defeat in German military history. Numerically speaking, this may be true.’⁸

This chapter will focus on the period from February 1943 until May 1945, and will elucidate important aspects of propaganda in the final phase of the war in a number of ways. By exploring the RMVP’s attempts to manipulate the public mood and maintain Forces’ morale during ‘total war’, it will demonstrate that Goebbels was insufficiently pragmatic with regard to music for the German forces and civilians; his continued problems with jazz and popular music exposed his limitations as a propagandist. This will include an analysis of the German *Soldatensender Belgrad*⁹ as a model of decentralised, successful Nazi entertainment broadcasting; the problems these caused for the RMVP will support my argument that Goebbels’ desire for control over cultural output was detrimental to the German war effort.

With regard to the USA, I will discuss media treatment of the 1943 ‘Zoot Suit Riots’, which involved a jazz-oriented youth subculture and exposed broader political and race-related unrest in the USA. This will be combined with the first study of OWI’s attempts to disseminate information nationally and internationally that reflected favourably on minority participation in the war. Furthermore, it will focus in depth on the highly unusual, self-reflexive entertainment propaganda of Japan’s *Zero Hour*, which broadcast to Allied Forces in the South Pacific and became hugely popular with GIs, thus revealing shortcomings in the USA’s own Forces’ programming through SSD. Anglo-American collaboration under the auspices of PWD/SHAEF, and the coordination of military intelligence and psychological warfare, will be considered in the context of Sefton Delmer’s work.

Delmer’s pre-emptive declaration of ‘Total Radio War’ on Germany will be considered with particular reference to his counterfeit *Soldatensender*. Using both British and German archive material, I will measure the significance, reception and impact of these ‘black’ (or ‘grey’) projects.¹⁰ By tracing the cessation of PWD/SHAEF’s ‘black’ operations in Europe and discussing the Anglo-American

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ I am using the German plural *Soldatensender* to refer to such stations in general. Individual stations will be referred to by their geographical calling signals: *Belgrad*, *Atlantik*, *Calais* etc.

¹⁰ For consistency I will refer to such stations as ‘black’ in general statements, which also reflects the interchangeability of the terms ‘grey’ and ‘black’ in contemporary PWE usage.

institutional transition from psychological warfare to peacetime propaganda, I will both reflect on the successes of Allied ‘black’ propaganda and set the context for jazz’s role in the nascent Cold War. It will contrast the culturally nuanced and subversive British ‘black’ propaganda towards Germany, as well as the fruitful Anglo-American PWD/SHAEF propaganda collaboration, with the RMVP’s increasing retreat into mythology. In doing so, I will prove that Goebbels’ ‘total war’ was limited in a propagandistic sense by his continued adherence to increasingly counterproductive censorship of Forces’ musical tastes, as well as the desire to assert centralised RMVP control over the *Soldatensender*. The chapter’s conclusion will summarise the main findings of the thesis, and argue that they demonstrate that Goebbels was insufficiently empathetic and pragmatic regarding popular music. Indeed, he ceded an important propagandistic advantage to the Allies by failing to deal adequately with jazz for German and enemy consumption.

Germany

Radio Entertainment in ‘Total War’

In spite of the temporary post-Stalingrad closure of domestic entertainment venues, *Truppenbetreuung* remained a priority for the RMVP. In January 1943, the tenth anniversary of the Nazi seizure of power was used by Hans Hinkel as occasion to reflect on the NSDAP’s ‘cultural achievements’ in the preceding decade in a series of talks and essays. That month, Hinkel directly addressed German artists regarding their role in the Nazi war effort:

As acting director of *Truppenbetreuung* office of the RMVP and the Reich Chamber of Culture, on the 10th anniversary of the National Socialist seizure of power I refer all members of the Reich Chamber of Culture as the community of German cultural workers to the call which Dr. Goebbels, the custodian of German cultural workers, directed to you at the beginning of today’s struggle for Germany’s existence:

“I expect that every German artist to whom the call has been made for help will make himself available joyfully and willingly for this great work. Whosoever tries to shirk his duties is not worthy of living in this historical period and partaking of its blessings.”

With satisfaction we ascertain that the vast majority of German artists have followed this call of the President of the Reich Chamber of Culture and placed all of their skills in the service of

Truppenbetreuung and the Home Front. For the difficult and decisive year ahead the slogan is: Artists, take your positions! [*Künstler, seid zur Stelle!*]¹¹

In his role as director of *Truppenbetreuung*, Hinkel was an outspoken defender of artists' role in the war effort. However, Goebbels also expressed evident frustration with the SD's reports of a dissatisfied populace, which contradicted his own view of his work, and the Propaganda Minister complained in his diary on 4th February 1943 that "[t]he SD report states that the radio schedule is considered somewhat out-of-date. But I have already adapted entertainment programming to the new situation via my new guidelines."¹² An additional complication in musical broadcasts for the home front was highlighted in a memorandum signed by Tießler on 25th March 1943, who warned against the use thematically inappropriate musical material for areas targeted by Allied bombing. The previous day's RMVP meeting had highlighted "the difference between the atmosphere in the radio programming and that in areas affected by bombing raids (...) [For example] that songs such as *Ich tanze mit Dir in den Himmel hinein* ['I Dance into Heaven with You'] or *Und wieder geht ein schöner Tag zu Ende* ['And another lovely day comes to an end'] are inappropriate."¹³ Indeed, although the RMVP was attempting to forge a unified national front through broadcasting, intensified Allied air attacks created the need to show consideration to those living in the areas targeted, although this risked disenfranchising listeners in unaffected areas. Hans Hinkel, accordingly, had banned 'I Dance into Heaven with You' so as not to offend audiences in towns which had suffered air raids, only to receive "countless" letters expressing amazement "that we [the RMVP] are taking the song off the air and becoming affected by the general depression".¹⁴

Notwithstanding the temporary removal of light entertainment from the air in the wake of Stalingrad,¹⁵ the question of jazz music continued to preoccupy the RMVP. A note written to Karl Cerff of the NSDAP's *Reichspropagandaleitung* relayed damning criticism of the perceived jazz emphasis on German radio from the

¹¹ BA R56I/110 (Microfiche 3). Hinkel, 'Künstler, seid zur Stelle!' Transcript of speech on tenth anniversary of the Nazi *Machtergreifung* (January 1943).

¹² Fröhlich, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels* 2.7, p.259.

¹³ BA R18/328 Tießler, betr. Rundfunksendungen nach Fliegerangriffen, 25th March 1943.

¹⁴ Ibid. See also Welch, *The Third Reich*, pp.145-146.

¹⁵ As discussed in the introduction to this chapter.

Gauleitung of Württemberg-Hohenzollern dated 24th February 1943, and asserted that this was supported by reports from the other districts:¹⁶

Jazz music is in the foreground of public criticism of the broadcasting programme. (...) the demand for light music is unusually great, but this cannot lead to one particular musical taste being granted excessive concessions. (...) In general, jazz music is considered a remnant of American barbarism. It is incomprehensible [to the public] that Americanism has been eradicated in all areas of culture, while still concessions are made to the field of music. Especial objection was taken to the fact that, in the main, only jazz music is offered on Saturday evenings when the broad mass of the population listens to the radio. Since the loss of Stalingrad, a change has taken place in the broadcasting programme in this respect. Since then, citizens uniformly describe musical transmissions as good, and it is widely expected that the programme will continue along this line.¹⁷

Nonetheless, although Kater asserts that the banishment of dance music from German airwaves lasted roughly “from January to early summer 1943, when, significantly, [Sefton Delmer’s] Kurzwellensender Atlantik had begun to broadcast”,¹⁸ it appears that the ban was not as substantive as this. Moreover, Kater claims that the traumatic memory of Stalingrad was fading by October 1943, but as early as 5th February 1943 Goebbels optimistically referred in his diary to SD reports suggesting that “the shock of Stalingrad” had already partially been overcome, and that German morale had been strengthened and consolidated as a result of the capitulation.¹⁹ On 18th February 1943, the day that the Propaganda Minister announced ‘total war’ in front of a carefully rehearsed audience at the Berlin *Sportpalast*, he cited an SD report in his diary which indicated that the German people were “essentially reassured” with regard to the military situation in the East.²⁰ Accordingly, there is evidence that the moratorium on light music was beginning to lift in early spring, and on 19th April 1943 the Niederdonau *Gauleitung* could complain of the recent proliferation of tunes which resembled “Jewish hits from the Weimar Republic” on Greater German radio.²¹

¹⁶ BA R18/334 [Signature illegible] an Pg. Cerff. (cc: Tießler). Betrifft: Jazzmusik im Rundfunk: Bericht der Gauleitung Württemberg-Hohenzollern, 3rd March 1943.

¹⁷ BA R18/334 Abschrift: Bericht der Gauleitung Württemberg-Hohenzollern, 24th February 1943.

¹⁸ Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.174.

¹⁹ Fröhlich (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels* 2.7, p.266.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p.579.

²¹ BA R18/334 Bühler an Tießler, Betrifft: Leichte Unterhaltungsmusik im Rundfunk, 16th April 1943.

The Soldatensender

Hinkel's pragmatic reforms of the RRG were followed by an attempt to separate the necessarily upbeat broadcasting to the Forces from more conservative domestic programming. It was decreed that the *Deutschlandsender* become the *Deutschland-Soldaten-Sender*, and on 1st October 1943 he justified the move by arguing that:

There is an urgent need for a transmission group which in the general tendency of its programming is directed predominantly at our soldiers. A more militant attitude is expected of them, as well as of all workers (particularly in the areas affected by air raids and those which could be). Tens of thousands of such workers are quartered on a daily basis as they must remain in their workplaces in the destroyed areas. Ninety out of one hundred of these listeners, whose "desires" must be highly respected, demand a relaxed programme, usually of an entertaining sort. They require fresh, happy, life-affirming, battle-affirming announcements, and even the occasional coarse – though of course not smutty – joke. Now and then they also want more rhythmic music, from dance music to modern marches.

(...) The entire current *Deutschlandsender* schedule could then be sent over all Reich – i.e. local - transmitters. So [it would be] a partially highest-quality, serious entertainment programme. These Reich - and local transmitters could then drop the livelier, more modern, more rhythmic popular music, and the humourless 'behaviour police' (*Haltungspastoren*) [such as] Mutschmann, Raabe and associates could then be satisfied with regard to the alleged playing of jazz [on the *Deutschlandsender*]. The *Deutschland-Soldaten-Sender* transmitter would then take care of the digestible desires of the soldiers or the similar desires of the martial workers. The Reich- or local transmitter could then – more than before – play reflective organ music (*Besinnung orgeln*), shape the [German Home Front's] hours of relaxation, meet the well-known wishes of fellow countrymen [*die bekannten landmannschaftlichen Wünsche erfüllen*] etc.²²

The move paved the way for the production of more boisterous programming for soldiers and war workers over the rechristened *Deutschland-Soldaten-Sender*. Meanwhile, domestic programming could occupy Reich- and regional transmitters and be toned down to meet the more mediocre tastes of the home front, thus satisfying critics such as Saxony's *Gauleiter* Martin Mutschmann, who issued the Saxony jazz ban in July 1943,²³ and the equally conservative RMK President Peter Raabe. Hinkel's reference here to the two men as "humourless 'behaviour police'" lends weight to the assertion of the thesis that he possessed pragmatic qualities

²² BA R56I/41 Neuordnung der Sendegruppen zum 1. Oktober [1943].

²³ BA R56I/141 Typed excerpt from the *Zschopauer Tagblatt*, 'Verbot der Jazz und ähnlich entarteter Musik', 5th July 1943.

which have been overlooked by previous scholarship. The evident frustration at Mutschmann and Raabe's cultural conservatism supports the claims of Haentzschel and Brocksieper that Hinkel was a benevolent figure for German jazz musicians, and it becomes easier to understand why the man generally depicted by historians as either a philistine or an opportunist was elevated to such heights by Goebbels.

It is also probable that move was intended to bring the *Soldatensender* within the jurisdiction of the RMVP and RRG, and on 26th January 1944 Hinkel was again insisting that the *Soldatensender* obey the entertainment guidelines which applied to greater German Radio.²⁴ Indeed, it is one of the ironies of Goebbels' extensive struggles with popular music that one of the most successful music-based ventures of the war, *Soldatensender Belgrad*, was geographically and politically largely beyond the RMVP's control. Bergmeier has extensively documented the "farcical" propaganda rivalry between Goebbels and Ribbentrop of the Foreign Ministry,²⁵ and *Belgrad* represented a remarkable coup for Ribbentrop in terms of control over information and entertainment. Ribbentrop engineered the purchasing of Radio Belgrade and its medium wave transmitter under the auspices of the Foreign Ministry's *Interradio* agency²⁶ on 24th May 1941, thus effectively seizing control of the station.²⁷ The surprise move placed the newly-acquired *Soldatensender* and its propaganda output within the Foreign Ministry's jurisdiction, thus effectively denying the RMVP any influence over the station's contents. This is significant given its subsequent popularity with both Axis and Allied listeners, which considerably surpassed Goebbels' expensive showcase entertainment projects such as the DTUO and Charlie and his Orchestra.

Broadcasting via a mediocre-strength transmitter situated at Makis in the Belgrade suburbs, *Belgrad* nonetheless profited from favourable ground conditions in the marshland between the Danube and the Sava, and could therefore be heard across Europe and North Africa.²⁸ The jazz arranger Friedrich Meyer, who worked as a musical director at Belgrade from 1942 onward, asserts in retrospect that it was a favourite with Luftwaffe pilots, which was undoubtedly true given the ubiquity of its

²⁴ BA R56I/141 Hinkel an Goebbels (cc. 'Staatssekretar' [Gutterer]), 26th January 1944.

²⁵ See Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, pp.178-194.

²⁶ *Interradio* was only registered on 21st February 1941. See *ibid*, pp.187-190.

²⁷ *Ibid*.

²⁸ *Ibid*.

reception and the Luftwaffe's well-documented predilection for jazz. The station had a distinctive calling signal played on two trumpets, and the actress and swing singer Margot Hielscher, active in film and *Truppenbetreuung* during the war, recalls that "[Belgrad's music was] really a relief in this difficult time. One was always thrilled to hear [its] calling signal."²⁹

However, *Belgrad's* beginnings were inauspicious, and the reason for its initial popularity was fortuitous. The station originally had only approximately sixty gramophone records in its library, and in the search for more musical material led to the acquisition of banned records. Heinz Rudolf Fritsche, the programme planner, recalled:

Our job was to entertain the troops (*Truppenbetreuung*) but we were lacking (...) records. We couldn't keep playing the same records over again so we sent a comrade to Vienna, to the *Reichssender*. A crate lay in the cellar and in this crate was music that couldn't be played on the *Reichsrundfunk*. That was music by Jewish composers, Emmerich Kálmán or something like that, and other things that nobody wanted to have. We took the crate back to Belgrade and we broadcast the material in its entirety, i.e. we didn't stick to the bans, and we stumbled upon a record with the title '*Lied eines jungen Wachpostens*' ('Song of a Young Sentry'). (...) [W]e thought we'll give it a play, and we liked it and we played it a lot, almost too much, so we told ourselves we should give it a bit of a rest and put it away for a while. Then something happened that couldn't have been expected: there was a sort of mass protest from the Front; there were masses of letters from soldiers, also from home, [asking] 'why don't you play this song anymore? (...) We want to hear the song and the voice.' We said to ourselves: 'if it's like that then we'll make a programme feature out of it.'³⁰

Due to its regular broadcasts on *Belgrad*, 'Song of a Young Sentry', popularly known as 'Lili Marleen',³¹ became an international hit. Written by Norbert Schultze, a prolific composer of propaganda songs such as '*Bomben auf England*' [sic.], it was subsequently broadcast at three minutes before 10 p.m. every evening as the station's signing-off tune, and followed the reading out of letters to the Front from their families in Germany. However, Andersen was banned from public appearances in mid-1942 following a series of intrigues apparently engineered by Hinkel,³² and

²⁹ Hielscher/Meyer interview 1988.

³⁰ Fritsche interview.

³¹ Henceforth referred to as 'Lili Marleen'.

³² Kater cites evidence that Hinkel "single-handedly planned every step of the campaign against [Andersen]", and suggests that this may have been personally motivated because Hinkel's mistress, the singer Anita Spada, was jealous of Andersen's success. The official pretext for her blacklisting was a letter from Andersen to the Jewish theatre director and dramaturge Kurt Hirschfeld in Switzerland, which was intercepted by the Gestapo (Kater, *Different Drummers*, pp.186-187).

Fritsche notes Goebbels' vociferous dislike of the song's "defeatist chirping" and "cadaverous smell".³³ Accordingly, although jurisdiction of the station had been usurped by the Foreign Ministry, the RMVP attempted to intervene. Fritsche recalls:

I think it was at the end of 1943 that a wire arrived in Belgrade from the Propaganda Ministry with the lapidary message: "Lili Marleen sung by Lale Andersen forbidden with immediate effect". Of course that was a difficult situation for us. In itself the Propaganda Ministry had no say in the *Soldatensender* but still we tried to find a sort of way out. We quickly recorded [an orchestral version] and broadcast it that evening without Lale Andersen. Then there were a few other records where other female singers sang the song and we played them as well. Then came the second big reaction from the soldiers, masses of letters again [saying]: "we want to hear this song, and only with Lale Andersen". So we said, if that's how it is then we'll put it back in the programme. And nobody from Berlin got in touch again.³⁴

The song was a hit with both Axis and Allied listeners, and therefore was also of value as bait to attract enemy soldiers to German broadcasts. *Belgrad* took a damaged and unused shortwave transmitter based at Zemlin and used it to broadcast 'Lili Marleen' in English to the British 8th Army in North Africa, and by the end of the war the song existed in at least seventy different languages.³⁵ A German-language parody featuring the exiled Jewish singer Lucie Mannheim was produced in Britain and broadcast over the BBC's German Service, with lyrics that sought to drive home the senselessness of Hitler's war, and ended with an appeal to listeners to hang the Führer from Lili Marleen's lamppost. Andersen also recorded an English version, without propaganda lyrics, together with Lutz Templin's orchestra (aka Charlie and his Orchestra) for the RMVP's own *Klarinette & Mandoline* label, which had been established specifically to issue musical propaganda, on 2nd June 1942.³⁶ 'Lili Marleen' was an international success, and was used as *Belgrad's* sign-off song on nightly basis until its final broadcast.³⁷

The station signed in each day in another problematically popular song entitled 'Es geht alles vorüber' ('This too will pass'), composed by Fred Raymonds with lyrics by Kurt Feltz and Max Wallner. In his recent study of the song's impact, the

³³ Also drawn attention to in Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, p.188. I have used their translation here.

³⁴ Fritsche interview.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, p.268.

³⁷ Ibid, pp.187-190.

historian Eckhardt John classifies it as a *Durchhalteschlager* ('perseverance hit'), designed to keep up listeners' spirits with a promise of an end to the war and a reunion with their loved ones. Also significant, however, was its undertone of wartime fidelity, which was a popular target for propaganda broadcasts targeted at enemy morale. *Belgrad*, the song's original distributor, invented and publicised the myth that the song was written by a soldier on the Eastern Front. While the song itself, with its tale of a young sentry dreaming of his faithful girlfriend waiting back home, was designed by Feltz and Wallner to forge a psychological and emotional bond between the Forces and the home front, the myth of its genesis was intended to authenticate it. As has been shown above, Lord Haw-Haw's attempt to discredit the 'Siegfried Line' song to British listeners had been based on his assertion that, due to its bragging nature, it must have been written not by soldiers but by the "Jewish scribes of the BBC".³⁸ In spite of the ruse, a number of letters from the Eastern Front demonstrate that the song achieved its desired effect. Describing the bitter wintery conditions in Russia in late 1942, a young soldier named Private Weber wrote to his family that "*this too will pass, this too will be over. Every December is followed by a May. That is my only consolation.*"³⁹

The BBC sought to mitigate such morale-boosting potential by creating its own version of the song in June 1944, again featuring Lucie Mannheim, which was intended to produce the opposite effect. In the British parody, the young sentry writes home to his girlfriend that he's "already had enough of the war/no one believes in victory anymore", while the refrain promises that "every December is followed by a May/Then it'll be over for Hitler and his big-shots/Germany will be free of all that rabble".⁴⁰ In spite of the fact that they lacked subtlety as propaganda, the deterioration of the Nazi war effort lent the Mannheim parodies a credibility which the RMVP increasingly lacked. As had been noted by *Mass Observation* in Britain and *DownBeat* in the USA, war songs could rapidly become outdated due to changing military fortunes, and, set against the backdrop of mounting casualties and defeats, the optimistic message of '*Es geht alles vorüber*' began to appear

³⁸ *Mass Observation Online*. File Report 11 A – Jazz and Dancing, November 1939, pp.27-28.

³⁹ Eckhardt John, "‘Es geht alles vorüber, es geht alles vorbei’: Geschichte eines ‘Durchhalteschlagers’." *Lied und populäre Kultur/Song and Popular Culture* 50/51 (2005/2006), pp.163-222. Here p.189. My italics. See this source for further evidence of the song's impact on German Forces' morale.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p.197.

grotesquely inappropriate. The song's chorus became a vehicle for numerous popular parodies, from vulgar jokes ("my husband is in Russia, there's one bed still free") to overtly political statements ("first the Führer will go, then the Party").⁴¹ By the end of 1944, the song had become corrupted to the extent that the journalist Rudolf Walter Leonardt has plausibly described it as "an anti-national anthem",⁴² with public performances of parody versions in some cases resulting in the death penalty, as in the case of the popular actress Hanne Mertens.⁴³ However, while the RMVP attempted to ban the song from domestic airwaves in January 1943, and measures were taken over the course of the following two years to remove it from the various *Soldatensender*, a blanket ban on the song was never effectively implemented. It remained popular with the Forces, and thus could not be eradicated from the decentralised military transmitters.⁴⁴ As Kater has observed, "[t]he worst possibility feared by the soldiers was a switchover to regular Reich programming, which Goebbels wished to see more of (...), in the interest of centralization and conformity. Such a measure was agreed upon in theory by the Wehrmacht, but chronically ignored in practice, for the generals knew full well that anything but what the soldiers really wanted to hear would be an imposition for the fighting man and bad for the morale."⁴⁵

Indeed, geographically and politically removed from Berlin's control, the *Soldatensender* were perennially problematic for the RMVP. Hans Hinkel's proposal at a broadcasting conference on 1st November 1944 that the content of radio schedules be relaxed without "falling into the extremes of the *Soldatensender*" illustrates the lack of influence that the Ministry had over the stations' output.⁴⁶ Soldiers' requirements shaped the content of the programmes, and when this clashed with orders from Berlin, the utilitarian demands of the stations' listeners were prioritised. Nonetheless, even from Berlin the RMVP was able to ensure that some transgressions had consequences, such as when Friedrich Meyer, who regularly played American compositions rechristened with German titles, was caught playing material from 'Shall We Dance/Broadway Melody' on a programme called *Bunte*

⁴¹ John, 'Es geht alles vorüber', p.200.

⁴² Cited in *ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp.202-203.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.208-212.

⁴⁵ Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.175.

⁴⁶ Koch, *Wunschkonzert*, p.91.

Träume ('Colourful Dreams') in May 1944. Following a "massive exchange of letters" between Hans Hinkel and Major Passavent, Meyer's superior in Berlin, Meyer was banned from the microphone for German civilian broadcasts, although it is notable that this ban did not apply to military programmes.⁴⁷ More serious consequences could also be suffered, such as when the popular bandleader Heinz Wehner was sent into a punitive battalion on the Eastern Front for overstepping the jazz boundaries in the comparatively safe environs of *Soldatensender Oslo*, and did not return from the war.⁴⁸ An additional problem associated with the comparative freedom of the *Soldatensender* to play foreign and banned records was the jealousy this caused in other entertainment departments; Georg Haentzschel of the DTUO recalls protesting in vain to Goebbels that if the *Soldatensender* were able to play foreign numbers, the orchestra wanted to be allowed to do the same.⁴⁹

Nor did the Nazi racial laws apply when it came to the station's choice of employees. When Meyer arrived in Belgrade in July 1942, he was commissioned to put together "an orchestra of my choice", the *Tanzorchester des Soldatensender Belgrads*, which was originally a large string orchestra. Meyer claims that he used this to save the lives of three 'Gypsy' concertmasters, two violinists and a cellist, and the orchestra featured not only local Serbian but also 'Gypsy' musicians. The band had a gifted 'Gypsy' guitarist named Gospodin Petkovic with a playing style that was allegedly reminiscent of the famous Django Reinhardt.⁵⁰

The *Belgrad* orchestra featured a string section, four saxophones and two trombones. Unlike the DTUO, it could draw on an international repertoire⁵¹ and played in local public spaces to an enthusiastic youthful audience. Meyer recalls:

The brass section wasn't great, the saxophones were good. But the Serbian youth were thrilled.

(...) [When they played their sign-off song, Harry James's 'Backbeat Boogie'] it brought the house down. Of course, the Reich Chamber of Culture wasn't allowed to find out. And they didn't know. Our Nazis [in Belgrade] wanted to keep [local] youths off the street and I exploited that. It was a beautiful time. Because the only thing that still mattered was the music.⁵²

⁴⁷ Hielscher/Meyer interview 1988.

⁴⁸ Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.176.

⁴⁹ Haentzschel interview 1988.

⁵⁰ Hielscher/Meyer interview 1988.

⁵¹ Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.176.

⁵² Hielscher/Meyer interview 1988.

It is ironic and highly significant that the main reason for *Belgrad*'s success was its relative independence from the RMVP and the RRG. On numerous occasions Hans Hinkel sought in vain to remind the Berlin representatives of the Wehrmacht Supreme Command (*Oberkommando Wehrmacht/OKW*), Major von Passavant and Major von Wehlen, that the stations were subject to the same regulations as domestic broadcasts within the Reich, and that music which was banned on German airwaves was also out of bounds for the *Soldatensender*.⁵³ However, in early 1944 the situation was still out of the RMVP's control, and a revealing letter from Hinkel to Goebbels (via Gutterer) demonstrates the futility of the Ministry's position:

While for several months I have had to eradicate or prevent what I felt was too maudlin, corny and unmanly on German domestic radio schedule, in most cases the *Soldatensender* are blithely broadcasting such records and tape recordings. In addition, the majority of these, without inhibition or restraint, send so-called *Wunschkonzerte* [command performances] and especially cabaret shows with humorous announcements etc. into the ether at all sorts of hours. (...) With the tougher development of the whole war situation, negative remarks about those *Soldatensender* are intensifying.

(...) Although I clearly informed the High Command of the Armed Forces months ago that the tendencies that I issue on behalf of the Minister for the domestic German radio schedule must also be most precisely followed by the Wehrmacht stations, only in very few cases do the responsible soldiers and special managers [*Sonderführer*] keep to them. Completely unconcerned and with countless extended announcements, they make the most colourful programmes of the sort which could no longer be used in our domestic programming [even] before Stalingrad, which is also one of the key causes of the so-called popularity of Belgrade station, which employs both "the hottest dance music" and colourful cabaret-style public broadcasts or - like the other *Soldatensender* - lots of material from our stocks or [music] industry records which are no longer desirable for intra-German broadcasts.⁵⁴

This acknowledgement that *Belgrad* was popular because it ignored RMVP guidelines is indicative of the way in which Goebbels was willing to ignore Forces' tastes for the sake of ideology and consistency with domestic broadcasting. That such stations' fare resembled the discontinued *Wunschkonzert für die Wehrmacht*, which the SD had noted in 1941 was popular for its "freshness and variety"⁵⁵ is significant; in the absence of programming that met Forces' needs, they were using the relative freedom of the *Soldatensender* create it themselves. Hinkel noted that the "negative remarks" about the stations came especially from commanders and the

⁵³ See BA R56I/41 (Microfiche 1).

⁵⁴ BA R56I/41 (Microfiche 1). Hinkel an Goebbels (cc: 'Staatssekretar' [Gutterer]), 10th January 1944.

⁵⁵ BA R58/158 Meldungen aus dem Reich Nr. 169, 10th March 1941.

Waffen-SS, but this very fact renders them of little practical use to the RMVP, except as rhetorical ammunition in the quest to bring the military stations in line with domestic programming. In the same letter, Hinkel recommended that *Soldatensender* also be used periodically on domestic wavelengths to pool artistic and technical resources. The idea was not implemented, but would have had the effect of bringing the cultural output of the military stations closer to the RMVP's jurisdiction.

There is a marked parallel between the RMVP's problems with the *Soldatensender* and the BBC's 'slush' ban. In Britain, too, the authorities struggled to suppress popular music that was considered psychologically inappropriate, and Hinkel's battle to ban "maudlin, corny and unmanly"⁵⁶ recordings was mirrored by the BBC's attempt to weed out male and female vocalists whose delivery it considered "anaemic and debilitating" or "insincere and over-sentimental".⁵⁷ Nonetheless, the 'slush' debate notwithstanding, the BBC Forces Programme (rechristened the General Forces Programme on 27th February 1944 to reflect its new simultaneous status as the second 'Home Service')⁵⁸ was free to broadcast the lively jazz and dance music demanded by the Forces, and could draw on American musical and technical resources. The RMVP, on the other hand, was hampered by ideological prejudice, banning Anglo-American compositions and artists who had fallen from political favour such as Lale Andersen. Hinkel's attempts to set "tendencies"⁵⁹ for German broadcasting in order to reflect the increasingly bleak military situation also directly contradicted Forces' cultural demands.

Wolf Mittler's broadcast to British Forces in East Asia on 19th August 1942 rightly drew a comparison between the British and German difficulties with Forces' entertainment.⁶⁰ However, Mittler's contention that Hinkel's restructuring of the RRG in February 1942⁶¹ had successfully aligned German radio with Forces' tastes,

⁵⁶ BA R561/41 (Microfiche 1). Hinkel an Goebbels (cc: 'Staatssekretar' [Gutterer]), 10th January 1944.

⁵⁷ BBC WAC R27/73/1 Assistant Controller (Programmes) [Howgill] to D.M. [Bliss, Director of Music] et al, 'Dance Music Policy', 21st July 1942.

⁵⁸ *NJA Melody Maker* 'B.B.C. "General Forces" Programme Starts Feb. 27', 29th January 1944, p.1.

⁵⁹ BA R561/41 (Microfiche 1). Hinkel an Goebbels (cc: 'Staatssekretar' [Gutterer]), 10th January 1944. The original German word is "*Tendenzen*", which was the title used for Goebbels' daily media directives for the handling of current events (as described by the RMVP's Dr. Richard Kupsch in Blakeway, *Germany Calling*).

⁶⁰ BBC WAC R27/73/1 J.A. Keyser to Overseas Music Director, 'German Radio on "Slushy Music"', 19th August 1942.

⁶¹ See Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, pp.142-144.

and that this met with universal approval from its target audience, was incorrect. It is belied by the fact that the reforms were not substantive enough and remained obstructed by guidelines and regulations, and the large numbers of Germans who preferred the music of Allied ‘white’ and ‘black’ broadcasts was further testament to the RRG’s failure. The increasing concessions to the sensibilities of the civilian population, for example in areas affected by air raids, and the continuing ideological constrictions regarding jazz meant that the Forces’ musical demands remained unsated by German radio. The *Soldatensender* were broadly representative of German Forces’ tastes, and persistent RMVP attempts to bring them into line with domestic programming indicate that, even in ‘total war’, Goebbels prioritised ideological concerns over utilitarian pragmatism.

USA

‘Zoot Suit Riots’, OWI and Domestic Political Problems

While Goebbels worked to cultivate an atmosphere of national mourning in the wake of Stalingrad, his American counterparts at OWI were faced with very different domestic difficulties. Wartime demographic upheavals exacerbated existing racial tensions, which culminated in the so-called ‘Zoot Suit Riots’ of July 1943. The riots were a series of public disturbances between members of the US Navy and ‘zoot suiters’, jazz-oriented groups of predominantly, though not exclusively, African- or Mexican-American youths whose extravagant dress sense rendered them highly visible and provocative features on America’s wartime urban landscape. The zoot suiters’ over-sized clothing was an overt rejection of the government’s message of wartime thrift, and by frequenting dances and music halls, this leisure-oriented subculture became inextricably associated with swing and jazz music scenes. When Navy personnel were stationed in areas of Los Angeles which had a high proportion of Mexican-American residents, the close proximity created resentments between the groups, which spilled over into large-scale public disorder in July 1943.

While the riots largely involved gangs of sailors attacking Mexican-American zoot suiters,⁶² the local media largely portrayed the events as white Americans’ self-

⁶² However, African-American, Asian-American and white zoot suiters were also victimised. See NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 Grand Jury Findings 1943. See also Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot*, p.156.

defence against a criminal youth element. Carey McWilliams of the Los Angeles Chapter of the National Lawyers' Guild wrote to the Attorney General, Francis Biddle, to warn that

[e]vidence indicates that week-end violence represents logical culmination of provocative and discriminatory policies pursued by local police officials toward the Mexican section of the community during the last eighteen months. Characterization of riots in [the US] press as "indignation of American service men [sic.] against Mexican gangsters" is fundamentally at variance with background factual situation. Continued repetition of such incidents constitutes direct interference with war effort, disrupts national unity, and jeopardizes [the] President's Good Neighbor Policy.⁶³

Indeed, the biased and racist reportage describing the riots as the defensive reaction of servicemen to "Mexican gangsters" exacerbated the conflict and attracted new participants. A Grand Jury statement regarding "recent disturbances between members of the uniformed services and juvenile zoot suit wearers, which have resulted in much unfavorable publicity for this country" concluded that "the so-called Zoot Suit problem is merely one manifestation of a disturbed time in our national life. The Jury is of the opinion that it is but a passing fad that will disappear within a comparatively short time, and that there is no inherent connection between wearing a zoot suit and juvenile delinquency or crime. Unfortunately however, zoot suits have become temporarily emblematic of crime in the eyes of the public."⁶⁴ The report failed to take into account the social and political context as elucidated by Carey McWilliams, finding "no evidence that these [zoot] activities were in any sense due to or incited by race prejudice or anti-Mexican feeling".⁶⁵ In fact, as the historian Luis Alvarez has recently demonstrated at length, the zoot suiters represented not a passing fad but a complex social phenomenon rooted in American racial politics.⁶⁶ This was acknowledged at the time by Walter White of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), who noted that "[m]any zoot suiters wear such clothing to compensate a sense of being rejected by society. The wearers are almost invariably the victims of poverty, proscription, and

⁶³ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities: Los Angeles Riot Situation 1943. McWilliams to Biddle, 8th June 1943.

⁶⁴ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities: Los Angeles Riot Situation 1943. Findings and Recommendations of the Grand Jury of Los Angeles County for 1943, Based Upon its Inquiry into Juvenile Crime and Delinquency in that County.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ For detailed treatment see Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot*, pp.77-152.

segregation.”⁶⁷ As Alvarez argues, “zoot suiters carved social space for themselves and (...), even at a time when their opinions were often excluded from more formal channels of public discourse, they articulated their own ethnic, gender, sexual, and class identities. With their wide-brimmed hats, flowing coats, and draped pants, they literally and figuratively claimed space by flaunting and celebrating the cultural difference and privileging of leisure that prevailing [wartime] social norms so often condemned.”⁶⁸

Zoot suiters could be found in towns and cities across the United States, but they were most numerous and prominent in the respective centres of East Coast and West Coast jazz, Harlem in New York and the Central Avenue district of Los Angeles, which both had sizeable African-American communities. They congregated in jazz music or dance venues, and jazz stars such as Cab Calloway also adopted a zoot aesthetic, thus publically cementing the links between jazz and zoot fashion.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, in their attention-seeking clothing and emphasis on leisure and dancing, they were comparable to another jazz-oriented subaltern culture in Nazi Germany, the Swing Youth, who used jazz and fashion to assert their own suppressed social and cultural identities in a hugely different context.⁷⁰

Like the Grand Jury, the Los Angeles Police Department dismissed the idea that the riots were racially motivated. A letter from the Los Angeles Chief of Police, C. B. Horrall, to the city’s Mayor, Fletcher Bowron, dated 21st July 1943, concluded that “it must be said that those who insist that the ‘zoot suit’ problem is a racial affair and that it has international implications, do so either through ignorance or because of some ulterior motive.”⁷¹ Horrall’s own ulterior motive here may have been to discredit liberal critics of police racism such as Carey McWilliams, and Elmer Davis was “keenly interested”⁷² in the implications of the riots for good reason. On 3rd July 1943 he responded to Bowron’s protest at OWI intervention in the city’s affairs by explaining that for the previous five days, OWI in Washington and elsewhere “was

⁶⁷ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities 1942-43. White to Roosevelt (et al), 11th June 1943.

⁶⁸ Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot*, p.114.

⁶⁹ For the relationship between zoot suiters and jazz, see *ibid*, pp.113-152.

⁷⁰ See Kater, *Different Drummers*, pp.153-162.

⁷¹ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities: Los Angeles Riot Situation 1943. Horrrell to Bowron, 21st July 1943.

⁷² NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities: Los Angeles Riot Situation 1943. Eisenhower to Bowron, 7th August 1943.

bombarded with petitions, protests, suggestions and requests apropos the disturbances in Los Angeles. It was urged that I go on the air, or advise the President to go on the air, or advise the Attorney General to act, or ask the Federal Bureau of Investigation to investigate.”⁷³ OWI had sent Allen Cranston, a former Los Angeles journalist, to the city to facilitate “a more sober and responsible flow of information”,⁷⁴ which drew criticism from the city authorities due to the perceived federal interference in local matters.⁷⁵ However, as noted by McWilliams, the rioting was exacerbated by the attitude in the local and national press, and vigilantes had been drawn to participate often in the view that they were intervening defensively against gang violence. The unbalanced reporting, described by Bowron himself as “garbled, highly colored, wholly misleading and detrimental news accounts”,⁷⁶ had not only further spread to “sensational treatment”⁷⁷ in areas of the national press, but also escalated the question from one of local importance to a looming international diplomatic crisis. Racially biased media reports were relayed to neighbouring American republics, and Bowron concluded that the ‘Zoot Suit Riots’ had caused “irreparable damage to the City of Los Angeles”.⁷⁸

Axis exploitation of the rioting was inevitable, as had already been proven in California with regard to the controversial aftermath of the Sleepy Lagoon murder in November 1942. The twenty-four Mexican-American defendants were forced to stand trial in their zoot suits, thus associating them in the eyes of the jury with prevalent negative media reports, and the trial was conducted in a hostile, prejudicial and racially-charged atmosphere.⁷⁹ Cranston noted at the time of the trial that “Axis propaganda was giving Los Angeles a black eye the world over by exploitation of the local Mexican situation”,⁸⁰ with Rome, Berlin and Tokyo suggesting, particularly in broadcasts to Latin America, that the Mexican-American zoot suiters’ plight

⁷³ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities: Los Angeles Riot Situation 1943. Davis to Bowron, 3rd July 1943.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities: Los Angeles Riot Situation 1943. Bowron to Davis, 28th June 1943.

⁷⁶ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities: Los Angeles Riot Situation 1943. Bowron to Davis, 28th June 1943.

⁷⁷ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities: Los Angeles Riot Situation 1943. Davis to Bowron, 3rd July 1943.

⁷⁸ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities: Los Angeles Riot Situation 1943. Bowron to Davis, 28th June 1943.

⁷⁹ Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot*, pp.45-46.

⁸⁰ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities 1942-43. Cranston to Davis, 28th November 1942.

represented “open rebellion against violent Anglo-Saxon persecution.”⁸¹ This was consistent with general Axis radio policy, which was quick to make use of racial incidents in the USA in order to emphasise and exacerbate signs of internal disunity.⁸² Indeed, while RMVP projects targeted at the USA in 1942 had appealed to isolationist sentiment in the American heartlands, Axis propaganda could now attack the US war effort’s very *raison d’être*. As the NAACP pointed out in 1943, if the war was about defending universal human rights, why were large numbers of American citizens denied these on their own soil?⁸³

However, the rioting can also be attributed in part to white resentment towards the rising status of other ethnic groups, which was a direct repercussion of the war effort. A memorandum sent to Roosevelt’s Administrative Assistant Jonathon Daniels, dated 7th August 1943 and signed by Philleo Nash, OWI’s Assistant to the Deputy Director, indicates not only the progressive tendencies of OWI’s leadership, but also highlights the impact of the war on the integration of minorities into American working life:

Segregation is a pattern of inter-racial accommodation which presupposes limited minority participation in community life by minority members. As the war progresses this demand for manpower means that this limited participation is extended. As employment and wage levels begin to approach prevailing levels for whites, Negro participation in community life increases to the point where segregation as a pattern is threatened.

(...) Whatever action programs are undertaken should be publicized in such a way as to encourage a more favorable attitude to minority participation in the war; and to bring home the war issues more clearly to minority members.⁸⁴

Nash advocated the controlled use of information “to reduce hostility on the part of whites and lower militancy on the part of negroes.”⁸⁵ OWI’s task was to encourage the American media to present the USA’s ethnic minorities in a favourable light and thus integrate them more successfully into the war effort. As has been discussed

⁸¹ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities 1942-43. Petition to OWI (etc.), 24th November 1942.

⁸² NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities 1942-43. Nash to Daniels, 7th August 1943.

⁸³ The subject has received a book-length treatment (Barbara Dianne Savage, *Broadcasting Freedom: Radio, War, and the Politics of Race, 1938-1948*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1999).

⁸⁴ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities 1942-43. Nash to Daniels, 7th August 1943.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

above in Chapter Two with relation to the irreversible nature of the advances of popular culture on the BBC in World War II, this enfranchisement of minority groups implied by definition a greater and lasting integration into mainstream American society as a whole. This was in keeping with the progressive leanings of leading figures at OWI, but there was a broader recognition of the necessity to utilise the media constructively in this respect. Los Angeles County Grand Jury, indeed, found in the wake of the zoot suit riots that “[r]aising the social and economic levels and promoting the full community integration of this [Mexican-American] minority is no longer a reformist or humanitarian movement, but a war-imposed necessity.”⁸⁶

The truth of this assertion was demonstrated in June 1943, when ‘race riots’ occurred in Detroit, an important industrial centre. The majority of the thirty-six people killed in the incident were African-American, and approximately six hundred citizens were injured. The National Federation for Constitutional Liberties (NFCL) noting that, alongside the loss of life, “Detroit’s vital war production program has lost one million and a quarter manhours”. The NFCL pointed out that similar incidents were occurring in other industrial hubs across the country, and that the victims in some cases were Jews and Mexican-Americans.⁸⁷ The NAACP circulated a petition urging that “there shall be no more Detroits. In this hour when our young men are fighting throughout the world in defense of their human rights, we cannot tolerate their denial to any section of our population at home”,⁸⁸ and a radio talk given by Elmer Davis following the Detroit tragedy made clear that he shared this sentiment.⁸⁹ The fact that other government agencies feared that African-Americans may be susceptible to pro-Japanese sentiments “on the basis of color identification” also ensured a broad basis of top-level support for OWI’s programme to propagandise in the name of wartime racial tolerance.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities: Los Angeles Riot Situation 1943. Findings and Recommendations of the Grand Jury of Los Angeles County for 1943, Based Upon its Inquiry into Juvenile Crime and Delinquency in that County.

⁸⁷ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities 1942-43. NFCL to Davis, 23rd July 1943.

⁸⁸ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities 1942-43. Neilson to Davis, 29th July 1943.

⁸⁹ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities 1942-43. Eisenhower to Neilson, 5th August 1943. See also the transcript of the talk on this file.

⁹⁰ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities 1942-43. Nash to Daniels, 7th August 1943.

The increase in racial tensions was attributed by some senior figures to complacency regarding the progress of the war. Ulysses S. Grant III of the Office of Civilian Defense (OCD) suggested on 31st June 1943 that “recent allied successes have been instrumental in lulling our citizens in a false sense of security,”⁹¹ although, as OWI’s Philleo Nash had observed, the wartime economic and social empowerment of minority groups and the closer proximity of various groups due to war industry were also important factors. Moreover, social injustices against minorities could lead to violent retaliations from sections of the afflicted community. The problem extended to the Forces, and injustices experienced by African-American soldiers led to an allegedly premeditated street riot near Camp Stoneman involving two hundred African-American soldiers on 15th August 1943.⁹² Nash pointed out that racial discrimination, particularly at the hands of white Military Policemen, was a “major sore-point” among African-American soldiers, and recommended that future stricter enforcement of their rights should be well-publicised.⁹³

Roosevelt publicly addressed the issue on 20th July 1943, stating that outbreaks of race-related violence “endanger our national unity and give comfort to our enemies”.⁹⁴ It was OWI’s task to mitigate such dangers, and Nash proposed “some scattered individual action and publicity proposals which might improve the situation”.⁹⁵ Suggestions included a weekly fifteen-minute radio programme entitled *Uncle Sam’s Family*, which was to disseminate War Department material relating to members of minority groups performing feats of military heroism and excelling in wartime industrial production.⁹⁶ This was to be accompanied by the planting of reports in the media of “members of foreign language associations and groups” performing public displays of support for the war effort, such as donations to the Red Cross blood banks. The latter recommendation originated in the aftermath of the Los Angeles ‘Zoot Suit Riots’ in Los Angeles, when OWI’s Allen Cranston proposed

⁹¹ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities 1942-43. Grant to Davis, 31st June 1943.

⁹² NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities 1942-43. International News Service Wire, 16th August 1943.

⁹³ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities 1942-43. Nash to Daniels, 7th August 1943.

⁹⁴ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities 1942-43. NAACP petition, enclosed with Neilson to Davis, 29th July 1943.

⁹⁵ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities 1942-43. Nash to Daniels, 7th August 1943.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

that a group of Mexican-American zoot suiters be photographed en route to donate blood.⁹⁷

The emphasis on linguistic minorities is also important, as through the multitude of domestic foreign-language stations there was the very real danger of expatriate communities issuing propaganda against the United States war effort on American soil. In June 1942, whilst proposing that OWI introduce a vetting system for all foreign-language radio broadcasters, Lee Falk of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), an entity within the Executive Office of the President (EOP), wrote to OWI's Assistant Director Archibald MacLeish:

Before Pearl Harbor, Nazi and Fascist Propagandists [sic.] were outspoken on many domestic foreign language radio stations. In fact, *the domestic Italian programs were virtually a fascist monopoly*. On December 8th [1941], the most obvious Nazi and Fascist propagandists were interned, but many of the more clever and less obvious sympathizers remained on the stations.

Their tactics are subtle. By intonation and insinuation, by selection of news and program material, and by use of nationalist music, they preach negativism, defeatism, and in general, hamper the war effort. These tactics further confuse and alienate the foreign language groups.⁹⁸

Falk proposed rectifying the situation with the help of a 'black list' to help foreign-language radio stations identify which broadcasters were considered unacceptable by the government and might jeopardise their license. Nonetheless, the problem of domestic Axis propagandists was not restricted to immigrant communities. The Office for Emergency Management noted the "extreme" situation in Boston, in which isolationists and pressure groups were attempting to "foster anti-British and anti-Russian feelings".⁹⁹

The government's difficulties with domestic extreme right-wing groups were exacerbated by the fact that the FBI was unable to act unless it felt a statute had been definitely violated. Moreover, the Office of Censorship could only block material that might be construed as giving "aid or comfort to the enemy", and the FCC had no

⁹⁷ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities: Los Angeles Riot Situation 1943. Bowron to Davis, 28th June 1943.

⁹⁸ My italics. NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities. Falk to MacLeish, 23rd June 1942.

⁹⁹ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities. Falk to MacLeish, 23rd June 1942.

control over media personnel or censorship.¹⁰⁰ Such constitutional restrictions made it impossible to censure extreme right-wing groups such as Joseph Kamp's Constitutional Educational League, dismissed by OWI as "a one-man organization",¹⁰¹ and the American Defense Society, which both attacked OWI using Kamp's claim that five hundred "reds" were on the office's payroll. These groups represented an outspoken but nonetheless dangerous undercurrent of extremist opinion in the United States, and could not be prevented from attempting to undermine the war effort by slandering government agencies and spreading divisive rhetoric. As Elmer Davis wrote to Senator Claude Pepper, from whom he had received a warning of Kamp's activity:

(...) In Mr. Kamp's efforts to smear this agency and members of its staff, I find no cause for real concern. In a somewhat broader perspective, however, they are a cause of considerable concern in that they indicate very clearly that the fascist fifth column in this country, with its technique of fomenting dissension and racial and religious hatreds, is still an active menace to democracy.¹⁰²

It is ironic that the existence of a broadly 'free press' in the USA threatened to undermine the American war effort, which was ostensibly being prosecuted in the name of freedom and democracy. Kamp's writings were submitted to the FBI's Criminal Division of Justice which confirmed that they violated no laws; thus he was permitted to continue publishing slanderous material that risked damaging public trust in government agencies such as OWI, which was responsible for the maintenance of national coherence and morale. OWI could only petition the Special Defence Unit of the Department of Justice to take action against the worst transgressors, as Allen Cranston did in vain regarding two pro-Fascist Italian-American newspapers,¹⁰³ although the prejudicial coverage of the 'Zoot Suit Riots' had proven that mainstream media could be equally problematic. Elmer Davis summed up the problem in a response to a request from the American Croatian Council to intervene in a dispute involving the right-wing author Ruth Comfort Mitchell, whom he pointed had also "frequently and vigourously" attacked OWI.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities. Thumbnail sketch of Joseph Kamp. Kamp's 'organisation' also used the name National Education League.

¹⁰² NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities. Davis to Pepper, 20th October 1943.

¹⁰³ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities 1942-43. Sereno to Kane, 26th February 1943.

“However,” he concluded, “this is a free country and so long as she refrains from libel she has the right to speak her mind.”¹⁰⁴

Self-Reflexive Propaganda: Japan’s *Zero Hour*

A different kind of threat to American morale was posed by the popularity of Japanese musical propaganda to Allied Forces in the South Pacific. The lack of entertainment programming picked up by Forces stationed outside the USA was highlighted by Lieutenant Sherwood M. Snyder in a letter to the FCC dated 29th May 1943, which was subsequently forwarded to Owen Lattimore, OWI’s Director of Pacific Operations:

I feel that I have a complaint to file with respect to the type of programs emanating [sic.] from the United States.

(...) It is necessary to listen to [stations] other than [sic.] American stations in order to find the entertainment sought when listening to the radio during free hours. We listen to news being broadcast over and over and then directly following the English version is a harangue in three or so different languages. Of course, we then move the dial elsewhere in the search of [sic.] something we can understand and something that will satisfy us during the short time we can be off duty. If London is on the air, we may find music, but most of the time we hear talk about the war and more war talk. (...) So (...) we keep turning the dial until we hear something that makes us stop. The funny part of it is that it is usually the enemy that has such [musical] programs. However if we listen to nice music from the Axis we have to be subjected to propaganda in between the pieces similar to this: from Berlin – The world is divided into two camps, civilization and bulshevism [sic.], why is America still in the wrong camp? – or from Rome - Churchill is a bastard.

(...) We like to tune in on light programs as we see enough war without having to hear about it every time we turn on the radio. The [US] short waves are being used mainly as a propaganda tool instead of at least equally or mainly as a means of entertainment for those desirous of hearing American things presented in an American way.¹⁰⁵

Snyder’s letter is an excellent example of the nature of the threat posed by Axis entertainment propaganda such as the music-oriented *Zero Hour* on Radio Tokyo, which was beamed daily to American forces in the South Pacific.¹⁰⁶ Instigated by

¹⁰⁴ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46 OWI Subversive Activities 1942-43. Davis to Kazlar, 1st November 1943.

¹⁰⁵ NARA RG 208 Box 6 Records of the Director and Predecessor Agencies: Records of the Director 1942-45. Programs – 10 Radio 1943. Snyder to FCC (c/o AACCS Radio Station, New York), 29th May 1943.

¹⁰⁶ Toguri FBI file 01, p.15.

Major Tshigetsugu Tsumeishi,¹⁰⁷ the man in charge of all foreign-language propaganda to neutral and enemy countries, *Zero Hour* was operated by a team of Allied POWs which consisted of the Australian Major Charles H. Cousens, a Filipino officer named Norman Reyes and Captain Wallace E. Ince of the US Army. A committee including members of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, the Information Board, the Navy and the Army decided that the new programme would broadcast to enemy forces in the South Pacific.¹⁰⁸ This was consistent with the “complete integration” of psychological warfare and military intelligence in the Political Warfare Division of the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (PWD/SHAEF),¹⁰⁹ and although ostensibly part of Radio Tokyo, *Zero Hour* was actually controlled by the Army.¹¹⁰

Zero Hour appeared in March 1943 at the time of the Guadalcanal Campaign.¹¹¹ Charles H. Cousens, although he refused to speak at the microphone, was considered “the moving spirit” of the programme, coaching announcers and writing scripts.¹¹² Appropriate music was initially selected by Norman Reyes, and American citizen Iva Toguri D’Aquino (using the name ‘Orphan Ann’) would provide entertainment between the records, with male newsreaders interspersed within the programmes. Collectively, the English-speaking women working for Japanese English-language programmes were dubbed ‘Tokyo Rose’ by their GI listenership, but in her post-war trial the name was ascribed solely to Toguri.¹¹³ Wallace E. Ince told the FBI after the war that other American POWs in Japan had told him that an announcer nicknamed Tokyo Rose “repeatedly taunted the American forces in the Pacific area with threats of specific bombing missions by Japanese planes, and other items of military import such as naming specific units or mentions of the movements of specific Allied

¹⁰⁷ In a post-war testimony to the FBI, Tshigetsugu stated that the programme arose as a result of the Head of the Second Bureau (responsible for propaganda), Major General Okamoto, expressing dissatisfaction at the quality of Japanese foreign-language propaganda and requesting that suitable POWs to be found to improve the situation. See *ibid*, p.8.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p.9.

¹⁰⁹ Richards (pub.), *The Psychological Warfare Division*, p.12.

¹¹⁰ Toguri FBI file 01, p.13.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, p.13.

¹¹² *Ibid*, p.14.

¹¹³ However, *Zero Hour*’s peak timeslot (6 p.m.-7.15 p.m., six nights per week) on Radio Tokyo does indicate that Toguri would have been known to the station’s American listeners.

units”, but that no such commentary was featured in Toguri’s *Zero Hour* broadcasts during his time on the programme.¹¹⁴

Toguri’s FBI file contains a number of such statements from former colleagues and acquaintances regarding her job and the nature of the broadcasts, which, taken together, provide an insight into *Zero Hour*’s contents and desired effects:

[T]he program’s objective was to arouse nostalgia and homesickness, and to do anything to make American soldiers in the tropics feel like going home. Her part was languid music and chit-chat to accentuate the sentimental side of the program. [Cousens] told her that this sort of music was banned among U.S. fighting men, Mitsushio having been told so by the Imperial Japanese Army. (...) In view of this report, [Toguri was told] that Radio Tokyo would, therefore, draw listeners and that she should keep in mind that her job was to show how foolish it was to be fighting a war.

(...) The point of the program was to entertain and to make the listeners homesick. [Charles H.] Cousens did not believe in touching war subjects as this would be bad propaganda, would not keep the program pleasant, and would not drive the point home.

(...) Toguri’s job was introducing records in a friendly and entertaining manner.¹¹⁵

Toguri’s task was therefore to inspire sentimentality in her listeners, using precisely the kind of ‘slush’ which the BBC was struggling to ban from British airwaves. She was initially coached and had her programmes scripted by Cousens, who had recommended her for the role, but she began scripting the programmes and selecting the music herself after Cousens retired for health reasons in 1944.¹¹⁶ The FBI’s programme transcriptions offer evidence that Toguri’s talks were defined by wit and sarcasm, as well as the usage of American slang such as “dope music” and “shucks”.¹¹⁷ “[W]asn’t that a lousy musical program we had last night?” she asked on 9th March 1944. “It was almost bad enough to be on the B.B.C.”.¹¹⁸

The most interesting feature of Toguri’s broadcasts, however, was their remarkable degree of self-reflexivity. She deliberately and repeatedly drew attention to the programme’s propagandistic nature and function, warning in one programme that “right now I’m lulling their [the listeners’] senses [with music] before I creep up and

¹¹⁴ Toguri FBI file 01, p.47. The frivolous nature of the scripts cited in Toguri’s FBI file supports Ince’s assertion.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, pp.15-16.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, pp.13-18.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, p.22.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p.21.

annihilate them with my nail file”.¹¹⁹ This unorthodox methodology has received no prior scholarly attention, and yet it appears to be without parallel in World War II Axis entertainment propaganda. One characteristic broadcast, for example, opened with the address:

Hello there enemies, how's tricks? This is Ann of Radio Tokyo and we're just going to begin our regular program of music, news, and the zero hour for our friends... I mean, our enemies!... in Australia and the South Pacific... so be on your guard, and mind that the children don't hear!... all set? .. O.K. here's the first blow at your morale.. The Boston Pops... playing 'Strike up the Band'...

(...) How's that for a start? Well now listen to me make a subtle attack on the Orphans of the South Pacific.¹²⁰

Another began even more conspicuously:

Greetings everybody, how are my victims this evening? All ready for a vicious assault on your morale? Well relax now, this isn't going to hurt. That-at's right... quick, sister!. The big forceps!... Good!... now turn on the music... that's right! Splendid!¹²¹

The humorous references to the programme's propagandistic nature, as well as Toguri's frequent habit of alternating the term of address from "enemies" to "friends", a point raised by her defence in the post-war treason trial,¹²² are further exemplified by another introduction in which she refers to herself as "your little playmate, I mean your bitter enemy, Ann, with a program of dangerous and wicked propaganda for my victims in Australia and the South Pacific. Stand by! You unlucky creatures."¹²³ Subtle allusions to the programme's origins are made in occasional lines of pidgin-English such as "You are liking please?",¹²⁴ and Toguri's assertion at her trial that she was joking with her Allied listeners in ways which the Japanese censors would not understand is plausible in the light of the available

¹¹⁹ Ibid, p.37.

¹²⁰ Ibid, p.20. Some punctuation errors in the original FBI transcriptions have been corrected here for the sake of readability.

¹²¹ Ibid, p.25.

¹²² Toguri was released after serving over six years of a ten-year sentence handed down in 1949 (see FBI website's 'Tokyo Rose' case summary), and received a full presidential pardon in 1977.

¹²³ Toguri FBI file 01, p.34.

¹²⁴ Ibid, p.27 and p.30.

transcripts.¹²⁵ This explanation would also be consistent with the biographical and political details available relating to her time in Japan.¹²⁶

According to both Ince and Cousens, the *Zero Hour* personnel, including Toguri, were consciously trying to sabotage the programme. Cousens' testimony suggests that almost every aspect of the programme was constructed to bore and repel listeners:

We ascertained that she [Toguri] knew nothing about broadcasting and had never been on the air. This, combined with her masculine style and deep aggressive voice, we felt would definitely preclude any possibility of her creating the homesick feeling which the Japanese Army were trying to foster.

(...) To make quite sure that the program failed in its intended effect I selected the music and wrote the continuity for Miss Toguri to announce. Over a period we built up a small library of records, nearly all by English composers, which we felt would have a minimum appeal to American forces in the Pacific.¹²⁷

This is borne out to some degree by the musical selections noted in the FBI transcripts. Although regular airplay was given to George Gershwin and the self-styled 'King of Jazz' Paul Whiteman, the programme featured not only a number of English dance bands but also Germanic popular music by the likes of Marek Weber and Dajos Béla, who had previously played with Georg Haentzschel and Franz Grothe of the DTUO respectively. The band of Barnabas von Géczy, who was in charge of the pre-war attempts to cultivate New German Entertainment Music, was also featured.¹²⁸ The question as to whether this suggests a previously unknown cooperation between the RRG and Radio Tokyo in the procurement of dance music is beyond the scope of the thesis, but it certainly supports Cousens' testimony that the music was selected to have the opposite effect, not least because European salon orchestras were unlikely to induce homesickness in GIs. Nonetheless, in spite of the apparent efforts to sabotage the programme, *Zero Hour* was popular with its target audience, and featured comedy sketches and 'news' from the American home front, intermittently presented by 'Ted' (Ince). Airing at a peak listening time of 6 p.m.-7.15 p.m. six days per week, *Zero Hour*'s blend of news, music, messages and

¹²⁵ Toguri obituary, *The Guardian*.

¹²⁶ Toguri FBI file 01, p.47.

¹²⁷ Toguri FBI file 01, pp.43-44.

¹²⁸ For the musical content see *ibid*, pp.18-40. For Barnabás von Géczy and New German Entertainment Music, see Kater, *Different Drummers*, pp.52-56.

commentary was regularly cited by American troops as an example of the sort of programming they wished from their own side.

It is unclear what implications the programme's apparently inadvertent popularity had for American morale, which, as Toguri regularly reminded listeners, was Radio Tokyo's real target. Major Tshigetsugu told the FBI that, as an Army officer, he had seen the effect that Toguri's work, which was much-praised in Japan, had on the American side and on several occasions had offered her appreciation and encouragement.¹²⁹ This impact is impossible to gauge with any certainty. Toguri's 2006 obituary in *The New York Times* asserted that *Zero Hour* "did nothing to dim American morale. The servicemen enjoyed the recordings of American popular music, and the United States Navy bestowed a satirical citation on Tokyo Rose at war's end for her entertainment value".¹³⁰ However, as noted with regard to Lord Haw-Haw in Chapter Two, laughter could lead to repeated listening and increased susceptibility to the message of propaganda broadcasts. This, too, was openly stated on-air by Toguri after playing a recording of Peter Dawson's 'Old Man River'. "See what I mean?" she announced. "Dangerous stuff that... and it's habit forming, before you know where you are you'll be singing too... and then where are you? Doggone it! There's a war on isn't there?"¹³¹

Toguri was convicted on the basis of one relatively innocuous comment in the absence of any evidence of treason,¹³² and the transcripts support the subsequent argument made by Cousens, Ince and Toguri that they were actively trying to limit the programme's effectiveness as propaganda. According to Ince's FBI testimony,¹³³ it was the malicious broadcasts of other 'Tokyo Roses' which made specific references to troop movements and bombing targets, which would have been enabled by the close cooperation between Japanese propaganda and military personnel.¹³⁴ This strategy was designed to convey an unsettling feeling of the omnipresence of the announcer and the sense that the listeners were being watched, and the

¹²⁹ Toguri FBI file 01, p.12.

¹³⁰ Toguri obituary, *The New York Times*.

¹³¹ Toguri FBI file 01, p.34.

¹³² Toguri obituary, *The New York Times*. The obituary notes that the alleged phrase on which the conviction rested was: "Orphans of the Pacific, you really are orphans now. How will you get home now that all your ships are lost?"

¹³³ Toguri FBI file 01, p.47.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, p.9.

methodology was also employed to great psychological effect by Delmer's *Soldatensender*. Thus it would be erroneous to dismiss the potential threat of such programming based on post-war demonstrations of bravado such as the bestowal of satirical citations. As Asa Briggs noted with relation to German 'black' propaganda to Britain:

The varied German propaganda assault failed, although the interesting question must be asked whether the assault might have appeared in a quite different light if the Germans had actually invaded Britain and had attached 'the radio piston to a complete war machine' as they had done in France. The Ministry of Information was concerned about the 'mischievous' NBBS broadcasts[.]¹³⁵

Indeed, the available American primary sources indicate considerable official concern at the popularity of Toguri's *Zero Hour*. On 30th August 1943, Elmer Davis forwarded a letter from an exasperated Naval Officer and swing fan serving in the South Pacific to Owen Lattimore:¹³⁶

What [the SSD's radio programmes] offer is good but the timing is poor. We don't get a chance to listen until about 7:30 in the evening. By then the programs from San Francisco are about over or else all you can listen to is a re-broadcast of a baseball game, the National Barn-Dance or some other clap-trap. What we need out here is more straight news, more swing music and some intelligent propaganda. (...) As matters stand now, Radio Tokyo offers better American swing and more of it at the hours when we can listen than any U.S. Station. Their "Zero Hour" on Radio Tokyo has a large audience. The propaganda theme they hammer away at every night is "Don't you wish you were home now. Just listen to what you're missing. Your wives and girls have lost interest in you and are going out with others. Etc. etc."¹³⁷

In Lattimore's reply to Davis, he suggests that the letter is "probably five or six months old":

For that many months now we have had news on the hour, every hour, throughout our transmission periods.

(...) The Naval officer must have been listening to the wrong station because when one of the stations goes into French, there are two others carrying on in English with swing, news, etc. The Tokyo "Zero Hour" is less than forty minutes of old swing recordings. We carry swing at the same hour (Broadway

¹³⁵ Briggs, *War of the Words*, p.233.

¹³⁶ The top part of the letter has been removed and it is therefore undated, but Lattimore's suggestion that it is "probably five or six months old" would date it back to spring 1943.

¹³⁷ NARA RG 208 Box 6 Records of the Director and Predecessor Agencies: Records of the Director 1942-45. Programs – 10 Radio 1943. Undated letter to "Ed" (an OWI employee) signed "Sel", forwarded from Davis to Lattimore, Director of the Pacific Bureau, August 23rd 1943.

Band Box, G.I. Jive) for fifty-five minutes. KROJ carries only troop news and entertainment throughout the twenty-four hours of the day.¹³⁸

Nonetheless, two months later, Lattimore conceded in a letter to Milton S. Eisenhower:

That Japanese Zero Hour is undoubtedly going to plague us until the end of the war.

(...) Gradually accumulating evidence tends to show that Zero Hour is sometimes quoted back to us mainly to rouse our competitive spirit. It would seem that sometimes the impression is given that Zero Hour is listened to continuously, when in fact it is only listened to intermittently.

If I were on service in the Solomons, I should not be particularly thrilled by some of the material that is sent out by SSD; but this opinion is just between you and me and the gatepost.¹³⁹

The assertion here that *Zero Hour* “hammered away every night” at the theme of fidelity in an attempt to demoralise servicemen is not supported by the available FBI transcripts, and it possible that here the content of other Japanese programmes or broadcasts featuring different ‘Tokyo Roses’ is mistakenly being attributed to *Zero Hour*. Moreover, the claim that *Zero Hour* is cited “mainly to rouse our competitive spirit” fails to take into account that, if this was the case, it remained a clear indication of Forces’ dissatisfaction with current SSD output. The fact that SSD and not OWI was responsible for troop news and entertainment parallels the German situation, in which the RMVP vainly attempted to assert its control over the various *Soldatensender*. However, Lattimore complained to Eisenhower that the Forces were unable to distinguish between SSD and OWI output, with “no amount of explanation” succeeding in establishing the difference between SSD and OWI broadcasts in the mind of the average GI.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, as Snyder’s letter demonstrates, because SSD used its shortwave frequencies for the dual purpose of entertaining the troops and broadcasting foreign-language propaganda, some

¹³⁸ NARA RG 208 Box 6 Records of the Director and Predecessor Agencies: Records of the Director 1942-45. Programs – 10 Radio 1943. Lattimore to Davis, 30th August 1943. KROJ was an Armed Forces’ station broadcasting from Los Angeles (Jerome S. Berg, *On the Short Waves, 1923-45: Broadcast Listening in the Pioneer Days of Radio*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2007, p.212).

¹³⁹ NARA RG 208 Box 6 Records of the Director and Predecessor Agencies: Records of the Director 1942-45. Programs – 10 Radio 1943. Lattimore to M. Eisenhower, 14th October 1943. The inconsistency in the transcription of the programme’s name (both “Zero Hour” and Zero Hour) is retained from the original documents.

¹⁴⁰ NARA RG 306 Box 110 General Records of the US Information Agency, Historical Collection. VOA History 1941-57. Public Opinion Quarterly, Spring 1943, p.56.

American listeners were compelled to tune in to Axis propaganda in search of entertainment. Lattimore's assertion that *Zero Hour* is "frequently" cited to SSD and OWI as an example of superior programming is evidence that Snyder's letter was representative of a widespread problem and not an isolated complaint. Significantly, Elmer Davis concluded that "we might perhaps consider the relative value of broadcasting to Indo-China at the best hours and of information to our armed forces. Both are necessary but the latter might be more necessary."¹⁴¹ The matter, however, was beyond OWI's jurisdiction.

Britain

Anglo-American 'Total Radio Warfare'

The formal propaganda cooperation between the USA and Britain was consolidated in November 1943 with the founding of the Political Warfare Division of the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force (PWD/SHAEF). PWD/SHAEF involved delegations from Anglo-American propaganda agencies such as OWI, OSS and PWE working together under the leadership of Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in Europe, and was the successor to the unprecedented Anglo-American Psychological Warfare Branch of the Allied Force Headquarters (PWB/AFHQ). This predecessor agency was created in November 1942 at Eisenhower's behest to assist the Allied landings in French North Africa. PWB/AFHQ was the result of a meeting between the US State Department and the British Foreign Office that set out long-term political policies, which were then translated into long-term propaganda policies. These in turn were approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, reflecting the "military exigencies" of the organisation.¹⁴²

American and British propaganda philosophies differed noticeably, and David Garnett of PWE's observation that Americans believed in psychological warfare "if only as a variety of advertising"¹⁴³ is supported by an official US governmental retrospective on the work of PWD/SHAEF. Published in Naples in the American

¹⁴¹ NARA RG 208 Box 6 Records of the Director and Predecessor Agencies: Records of the Director 1942-45. Programs – 10 Radio 1943. Davis to Lattimore, 23rd August 1943.

¹⁴² All information in this paragraph is from Richards (pub.), *The Psychological Warfare Division*, pp.13-15.

¹⁴³ Garnett, *The Secret History of PWE*, p.xxii.

Zone of Occupation in 1945, the document asserted that “psychological warfare is in essence a vast task of publicity, similar in many ways to modern advertising, [and] its basic sales argument is the force of military might. And this, of course, requires hard evidence.”¹⁴⁴ Accordingly, PWD/SHAEF initially restricted itself to broadcasting news to the German Forces which had been prepared in close liaison with the military. The aim was to gain the trust of its listeners, who would witness at first-hand the credibility gap between the increasingly fantastic RMVP claims and the assertions of the Allies. Just as Elmer Davis had iterated that OWI told the truth in a way that was “adjusted to the particular interests of enemy peoples so as to produce the psychological effect most conducive to our victory”,¹⁴⁵ PWD/SHAEF made selective use of the facts but avoided the outright distortions on the principle that “overt propaganda of falsehoods which can be proved false by the enemy is the same as killing the goose that might eventually lay golden eggs.”¹⁴⁶

Significantly, the only British agency mentioned in the PWD/SHAEF document is Rex Leeper’s Political Intelligence Department (PID), a division of the Foreign Office. There is not a single reference to Sefton Delmer and PWE, although the covert nature of PWE’s work made it a valuable auxiliary to PWD/SHAEF. Because official channels such as the BBC European Service and Voice of America needed to retain listeners’ trust and goodwill, PWD/SHAEF could implement malicious or controversial directives through ‘black’ without risking compromising the integrity of ‘white’ stations.¹⁴⁷ Delmer’s work was officially disowned by the British government, and thus he was free to operate according to Goebbels’ dictum that “in propaganda, as in love, all is permitted that is successful”.¹⁴⁸ This was carefully coordinated with the work of PWD/SHAEF, and it is thus surprising that this post-war document credits neither Delmer nor PWE, even when discussing projects originating from Delmer such as the daily newsletter *Nachrichten für die Truppe*.¹⁴⁹ Whatever the reasons for this, it set a precedent that has broadly persisted in historiography of World War II propaganda, namely the overlooking of PWE’s pivotal role in innovative ‘black’ operations.

¹⁴⁴ Richards (pub.), *The Psychological Warfare Division*, p.11.

¹⁴⁵ NARA RG 306 Box 235 OWI, Elmer Davis 1942. Elmer Davis interview, *The New York Times Magazine*, 16th August 1942.

¹⁴⁶ Richards (pub.), *The Psychological Warfare Division*, pp.11-12.

¹⁴⁷ See the example given in Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, p.200.

¹⁴⁸ Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, p.428.

¹⁴⁹ ‘Der Chef vom Chef’, *Der Spiegel* 44/1962.

Indeed, PWE is also neglected by Christof Mauch, whose assertion in 1993 that “the [wartime] policy of sabotage and subversion was developed to perfection in Washington and not London”¹⁵⁰ reflects his focus only on American sources. Mauch himself notes that in March 1941, William Donovan visited Hugh Dalton, the British Minister of Economic Warfare and the founder of SOE, who “initiated him into the secrets of Britain’s radio war and explained his [Dalton’s] policy of subversion, guerrilla warfare and propaganda.”¹⁵¹ However, while the socialist Dalton hoped to use propaganda and the deployment of agents to achieve a proletarian uprising against Nazism on the European mainland, it was in fact Delmer and PWE who pioneered Machiavellian subversion which was purely utilitarian in nature, and detached from any ideological aims besides the defeat of the Axis by any means necessary.

Pre-empting Goebbels’ pronouncement of ‘total war’ in 1943, Delmer had attempted to declare ‘total radio warfare’ on Germany as early as 20th September 1941. In a memorandum to his “chief antagonist”,¹⁵² Ivone Kirkpatrick of the BBC’s European Service, he stated that Britain “cannot appease them [the Germans] on the air any more than we can on other fronts, and with the butting-in from Moscow and Berlin, total radio war has begun. Therefore we might as well show them what total radio war can really be. I am sure we can do it better than they.”¹⁵³ At the National Archives at Kew, there are ten documents relating to ‘total radio war’ which are unavailable to view until 2021, perhaps indicating the sensitive nature of Delmer’s proposals. The available files, however, show that both Ivone Kirkpatrick and Bruce Lockhart, to whom Kirkpatrick forwarded Delmer’s proposal, agreed that total radio war was a “most ingenious” idea.¹⁵⁴ Nonetheless, when put to an Executive Committee it was vetoed for the time being on the grounds that “we are not entitled to indulge in total radio warfare until we have more radio guns”, indicating that PWE lacked the appropriate transmission capabilities. This would change following the

¹⁵⁰ Jürgen Heideking and Christof Mauch (eds.), *Geheimdienstkrieg gegen Deutschland*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993, p.52. In the two quotes from Mauch in this paragraph, I have translated *Konzept* as ‘policy’. It can also be translated as ‘concept’ or ‘idea’.

¹⁵¹ Heideking/Mauch (eds.), *Geheimdienstkrieg gegen Deutschland*, p.51. Mauch mistakenly refers to Dalton as Leader of the Labour Party.

¹⁵² Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, p.110.

¹⁵³ NA FO 898/61 Delmer to Kirkpatrick, 20th September 1941.

¹⁵⁴ NA FO 898/61 Kirkpatrick to Lockhart, 22nd October 1941 and Lockhart to Kirkpatrick, 29th October 1941.

USA's entry to the war. The Radio Company of America (RCA) specially designed a six hundred kilowatt medium wave transmitter named Aspidistra, remembered by Delmer as "the biggest and loudest radio in Europe at the time, [and] it was also the nippiest."¹⁵⁵ Aspidistra's agility allowed it to switch frequencies in less than half a minute, as opposed the hours-long changeover time required by standard transmitters, which allowed Allied broadcasts to evade "the German jammers which were now devoting more and more of their strength to howling down the *Soldatensender*".¹⁵⁶ However, towards the end of the war it also came to serve "a far more sinister and ambitious design", which was to hijack German stations for minutes at a time in order to broadcast misinformation and subversive instructions to listeners.¹⁵⁷

Even before the arrival of Aspidistra, Delmer's no-holds-barred approach to propaganda can be described as a form of total radio warfare in terms of content. While Hans Hinkel had been careful to assert that programming for the Forces include jokes which were "coarse – though of course not smutty", Delmer was free to cater to his audience's basest instincts. Significantly, he later claimed that the crude language used in *GSI*, his first PWE project, was inspired by the Nazi 'black' station *Worker's Challenge*, which "used the foulest language ever" to attract listeners.¹⁵⁸ Added authenticity was gained from the bugging of POW quarters and recreation areas, which provided a constant supply of up-to-date Forces' slang, as well as general gossip and complaints.¹⁵⁹ Delmer's controversial methodology made *GSI* the most popular station in Germany according to some neutral sources,¹⁶⁰ but also won him enemies in Britain. Sir Stafford Cripps of the War Office wrote to Anthony Eden, the Foreign Secretary, on 12th June 1942 to complain that "the most foul and filthy pornography" was being broadcast on *GSI*, and worried that the tone of the broadcasts "could only play up to the most foul and filthy Nazis who we shall never catch – I hope. The decent-minded liberals, Socialists, Catholics, Protestants

¹⁵⁵ Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, p.194.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, p.194. For an example of the hijacking of German frequencies, see the translated excerpts from the German Forces Service and the German Home Service in NA FO 898/52 Hagedorn, Germany U. I. April 1945.

¹⁵⁸ Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, p.38.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p.68.

¹⁶⁰ NA FO 898/61 Eden to Cripps, 20th June 1942.

and other resistant sections will be disgusted.”¹⁶¹ Robert Bruce Lockhart, the Director-General of PWE, pointed out in a letter to Eden dated 20th June 1942 that, although Cripps claimed to have asked somebody to listen to the station for him, the material he was referring to, a graphic report of a fabricated German Admiral’s orgy, had been broadcast six months earlier in December 1941. Therefore, he concluded, “there is obviously a cabal working in London against the country [Woburn Abbey, the main headquarters of PWE]” which had been “getting at” Cripps in order to discredit the work of PWE.¹⁶²

It is noteworthy that the apparently organised campaign against PWE paralleled the right-wing attacks on the integrity of Elmer Davis and OWI discussed above in this chapter. In both instances the public slander of government agencies threatened to compromise the war effort, and yet neither of the agencies in question was able to take direct action to prevent them. The chief antagonists in this case included a former PWE employee named Frederick Voigt, who had worked as Berlin correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*,¹⁶³ and Walter Loeb of the expatriate German socialist publishing house, think tank and pressure group ‘Fight for Freedom’.¹⁶⁴ Dick Crossman wrote to the PWE Executive on 9th February 1942 that for some months Voigt and Loeb had been agitating against PWE, and especially its German Section, “in the Press and, even more, in the clubs and lobbies”,¹⁶⁵ and Lockhart suggested in his letter to Eden that Voigt was “edged out” of Woburn Abbey and may be pursuing a vendetta against PWE from London.¹⁶⁶ Voigt, claimed Crossman, had publicly circulated secret information gathered during his time at PWE, and published “a libellous memorandum disclosing all its secrets”.¹⁶⁷ Like OWI, PWE was unable to respond or take action to silence its critics, and Crossman complained that it was “forbidden even to ensure that the Press carries reasonably

¹⁶¹ NA FO 898/61 Cripps to Eden, 12th June 1942.

¹⁶² NA FO 898/61 Lockhart to Eden, 20th June 1942.

¹⁶³ Nigel West, *The A to Z of British Intelligence*. Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow, 2005, pp.561-562. West incorrectly lists him as “Voight”.

¹⁶⁴ Voigt and Loeb are named in NA FO 898/61 Crossman to P.W.E. Executive, 9th February 1942. For Loeb see Martin Conway and José Gotovitch, *Europe in Exile: European Exile Communities in Britain, 1940-1945*. New York: Berghahn, 2001, p.250. For ‘Fight for Freedom’ see Isabelle Tombes, ‘The Fight for Freedom Publishing Company: A Case Study of Conflicting Ideas in Wartime.’ In Ritchie, J. M. (ed.). *Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies 3* (2001), pp.59-72.

¹⁶⁵ NA FO 898/61 Crossman to P.W.E. Executive, 9th February 1942.

¹⁶⁶ NA FO 898/61 Lockhart to Eden, 20th June 1942.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

well-informed accounts of our propaganda policy. Thus the field is left open for vilification and fantastic rumours”.¹⁶⁸

Moreover, the leaking of sensitive details to the Press risked undermining the effectiveness of ‘black’ propaganda. This was evident in March 1942, when the conservative *National Review* publicly revealed *GSI*’s British source and denounced the pornographic content of one broadcast as “horrible and most damaging to our [country’s] good name.”¹⁶⁹ These efforts were supported by Baron Vansittart, whose publicly-stated Germanophobia extended to a distrust of the Germans working for PWE.¹⁷⁰ Indeed, when the public attacks on *GSI* came to the attention of the Nazis, *Das Reich* accordingly broke the story of the station’s British origins and quoted Vansittart as describing it as “intolerable that German émigrés working for the British propaganda service should try to turn the German people not only against Hitler, but also against England – even if only as camouflage.”¹⁷¹ Both Crossman and Delmer concluded that such breaches of security threatened the very existence of PWE, and when Eden travelled to Woburn Abbey to discuss the matter raised by Cripps,¹⁷² it was initially unclear what repercussions the protest might have for PWE. Leeper wrote to Lockhart on 16th June 1942:

If in the Secret Service we were to be too squeamish, the Secret Service could not operate. (...) This is war with the gloves off. (...) [and] if you want to fight you must fight all out. (...) Delmer is a rare artist and a good fellow, I want to back him in the good work he was doing. (...) I hope very much that his [Cripps’] protest means we shall not lose Delmer.¹⁷³

However, the story of the German Admiral’s orgy was Delmer’s response to a specific request from the Admiralty in December 1941 to spread disaffection among U-boat crews. This strategic cooperation between the Admiralty and PWE would become formalised with the establishment of *Kurzwellensender Atlantik*, which saw Delmer working in close coordination with Naval Intelligence to achieve set military goals via broadcasts targeted specifically at U-boats. Accordingly, Eden responded

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ NA FO 898/60 PWE Research Units Germany (G3) Reports 1942 – *National Review*, March 1942. Typed excerpt enclosed with Leeper to Lockhart, memo dated 6th May 1942.

¹⁷⁰ For Vansittart’s statements in the House of Lords regarding Germans in Britain, see for example *Hansard Online*. Enemy Aliens and Propaganda, 18th March 1942. Vol. 122 §301-344.

¹⁷¹ NA FO 898/60 PWE Research Units Germany (G3) Reports 1942 – Typed copy in German of ‘Gustav Schweigt’, *Das Reich*, 26th April 1942.

¹⁷² NA FO 898/61 Leeper to Lockhart, 16th June 1942 and Lockhart to Eden, 20th June 1942.

¹⁷³ NA FO 898/61 Leeper to Lockhart, 16th June 1942.

to Cripps that *GSI*'s "special purpose is not to win Germans to our side but to turn Germans against Germans and thereby weaken the German war machine",¹⁷⁴ and refused to impose restrictions on Delmer. This top-level acknowledgement of the value of the work of Delmer and PWE, as well as the evidence in both the British and the German archives of his various stations' impact and influence, make it especially surprising that the most extensive work on the subject remains Delmer's 1962 autobiography.

It was probably Delmer's work that a German soldier named Sergeant Dolinsky was referring to in a document dated 27th October 1943, in which he complained of underhand enemy propaganda tactics. Compiled as a report for the *Nachrichten-Aufklärungs-Auswertestelle 2* ('News Enlightenment and Analysis Unit 2'), the paper is entitled 'Broadcasting as a Weapon' and argues:

In the present war radio has a threefold use: 1.) as a medium for news, 2.) as a medium for enlightenment and 3.) as a weapon to weaken the resistance of the troops and above all the Home Front of the enemy. While both sides in the war have used broadcasting as a medium for news and enlightenment, it has been almost exclusively used as a weapon by our opponent. It is also conceivable that the use of such a weapon goes against the German character and the German view of war ethics. But in the struggle for existence in which we are now engaged, every measure is justified which can promise success. The unlimited use of this weapon by the enemy also gives us the moral right to use it against these opponents.¹⁷⁵

The document was also forwarded to Dr. Erich Hetzler of *Redaktion II*, responsible for secret stations broadcasting in English. Dolinsky's remarkable assertion that the Allies alone had been engaged in psychological warfare until October 1943, to which an unspecified recipient has added incredulous handwritten markings in the margin, was obviously false. As Bergmeier points out, the RRG-financed Radio Stuttgart had broadcast 'black' to France with great success early in the war. Moreover, from 16th December 1939, the *geheime Sonderdienststelle* ('secret special agency') Bureau Concordia was responsible for Nazi 'black' propaganda abroad,¹⁷⁶ and the RMVP had in fact been active in this field as early as July 1934, when it backed a failed Austrian SS uprising in Vienna.¹⁷⁷ The reasons for Dolinsky's ignorance (or feigned

¹⁷⁴ NA FO 898/61 Eden to Cripps, 20th June 1942.

¹⁷⁵ BA R55/20.011 Dolinsky an die Nachrichten-Aufklärungs-Auswertestelle 2, 27th October 1943, p.2.

¹⁷⁶ For Bureau Concordia, see Bergmeier/Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, pp.194-235.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p.196.

ignorance) of German propaganda usage are unclear, but it is nonetheless remarkable that a report apparently commissioned by an official government information agency should claim to be unaware of the RMVP's own uses of 'black' as late as the autumn of 1943.

It is possible that the increasing success and popularity of PWE broadcasts to Germany caused Dolinsky to assume that no such projects had been undertaken by the RMVP, which simply had no Anglophone employee who was comparable to Delmer in terms of ability and awareness of his target audience. Indeed, in addition to his "rare artistry",¹⁷⁸ Delmer's great strength as a propagandist was his intimate knowledge of the German language and culture. Having grown up in Berlin as a native German speaker before his family was expelled to Britain during World War I, he travelled as a *Daily Express* reporter with Hitler's entourage before the Nazi *Machtergreifung*. Personally acquainted with Hitler, Goebbels, Hess, Himmler and numerous other leading Nazis, he later claimed that "I knew the way their minds worked."¹⁷⁹ Delmer's background led to him being placed under MI5 suspicion early in the war,¹⁸⁰ until in July 1940 he was invited to work for the BBC German Service, with his first task being a colourful rejection of Hitler's 'peace offer'.¹⁸¹ This appears to have caused enough offence in Germany for him to be placed on the *Sonderfahndungsliste G.B.*, a list of those to be arrested immediately upon the successful invasion of Britain.¹⁸² He joined PWE in September of the same year, bringing a subversive creativity to PWE that had been lacking in British 'black' propaganda in the early period of the war, and the nucleus of his talent was evident in the successful *GSI*.

Goebbels did not underestimate the potential threat posed by Allied misinformation directed towards German Forces. On 21st September 1939 he sent a telegram to the top Reich authorities (*Obersten Reichsbehörden*) which decreed that foreign broadcasts were to be out of bounds for all but a selected few, noting:

¹⁷⁸ NA FO 898/61 Leeper to Lockhart, 16th June 1942.

¹⁷⁹ Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, p.14.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p.15.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, pp.16-17.

¹⁸² *Ibid*, p.19. The *Sonderfahndungsliste G.B.* is reproduced in Walter Schellenberg, *Invasion 1940: The Nazi Invasion Plan for Britain by SS General Walter Schellenberg*. London: St Ermin's, 2000, p.177.

The soldier, the mayor, the District Administrator, the president of a *Reichspost* agency etc. don't have the opportunity [to check the veracity of reports from foreign media]. None of them can call the *Wehrmacht Oberkommando* and ask if, for example, the report from French or English radio about alleged French victories on the Western Front reflects the facts or not. He is without a means of defence against the effects of foreign broadcasts.¹⁸³

However, a PWE document on German listeners, authored by the historian John A. Hawgood, argued that the Nazi officials who themselves theoretically had “means of defence” against Allied propaganda were an extremely important target audience due to their potential influence. Some of them “may be covertly out of tune with the regime,” wrote Hawgood, “and all (...) would be accident prone from a point of view of morale should this [war] begin to go badly for Germany.”¹⁸⁴

Transgressions of the ban on listening to foreign broadcasts could result in draconian punishments or death sentences,¹⁸⁵ which were defended by Roland Freisler, the State Secretary of the Reich Ministry of Justice and President of the People's Court (*Volksgerichtshof*), as a form of national “bodily hygiene”.¹⁸⁶ Freisler's metaphor of cleanliness was apt in relation to the work of Delmer, who referred to his PWE stations as vehicles for “carry[ing] the filth”.¹⁸⁷ The medical analogy is also well-suited to interpreting Delmer's subtle methodology of “inject[ing] some item of news into his [the listener's] mind which will make him think, and if possible act, in a way that is contrary to the efficient conduct of Hitler's war”,¹⁸⁸ as well as the Nazi attempts to forcibly immunise Germans against these subversive messages. ‘The Penal Protection of the Home Front’ reflected the attempt to strengthen the German political immune system through fear of reprisals. Nonetheless, *GSI* was considered so successful that Delmer recalls its methodology became the “prescription” for all subsequent PWE ‘black’ stations.¹⁸⁹

On 26th June 1941 the SD in Klagenfurt, whilst observing that numerous citizens were complaining about the recent broadcasts of ‘jazz’ on the radio, also noted that

¹⁸³ BA R18/321 Goebbels an Obersten Reichsbehörden, betr. Abhören ausländischer Sender, 21st September 1939.

¹⁸⁴ NA FO 898/51 RU Policy and Procedure, General Correspondence 1941-44 – German Listeners to British Broadcasts by John A. Hawgood (undated).

¹⁸⁵ Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, p.149.

¹⁸⁶ BA R58/626 (Microfiche 2) ‘Der strafrechtliche Schutz der inneren Front’ by Roland Freisler. Published in *Rundfunkarchiv* (August 1941), p.1.

¹⁸⁷ Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, p.38.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.41.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.42.

listening to foreign broadcasts could be deeply ingrained in a community and therefore difficult to eradicate. “Despite all dissuasive criminal penalties,” it concluded, “the population is still not clear about the danger of listening to foreign broadcasts. It is established that foreign broadcasts are still listened to on a large scale. They've even coined two watchwords for this: One goes ‘dreaming’ or ‘to consult the farmer’s almanac’.”¹⁹⁰ Indeed, a Gestapo report in late 1941 estimated that the BBC had a German audience of one million, and Balfour notes that this number certainly continued to rise as the credibility of German news sources deteriorated.¹⁹¹ The more insidious ‘black’ stations of Delmer, moreover, were extremely popular due to their vulgarity and entertainment value. A source in Stockholm who was ignorant of *GSI*’s origins wrote that reports from Germany indicated that the station was the most listened-to in the Third Reich. “Altogether one may say that the effect of this sender is simply enormous. (...) it destroys faith in the present regime, awakes the critical sense and affords it the necessary material (...) [I]t has a large army of listeners behind it who will follow it.”¹⁹²

Created in conjunction with the Admiralty’s Naval Intelligence Department (NID), Delmer’s *Kurzwellensender Atlantik* was instigated to wage shortwave psychological warfare on U-boats from 5th February 1943. All of the PWE *Soldatensender* consciously replicated the format of real German *Soldatensender*, to the extent that “the music consists of actual [German] recordings”,¹⁹³ but the fact that *Atlantik*, unlike the pre-recorded *Nord*, was broadcast live gave it a greater air of authenticity. The counterfeit *Soldatensender* represented a genuine threat to the German war effort due to their careful coordination with military intelligence and objectives. Besides the strategic military goals of the station, NID also passed on ostensibly trivial information such as the results of football matches between U-boat crews and decorations or promotions. Further material such as graphic air surveillance reports and detailed intelligence dispatches was passed on by OSS via the US Marine Corps, thus helping PWE’s *Soldatensender* “to put convincing colour and detail into their

¹⁹⁰ BA R58/626 SD report excerpt. Klagenfurt, 26th June 1941.

¹⁹¹ Cited in Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, p.96.

¹⁹² NA FO 898/60 Research Units Italy and Germany – The Sender Gustav Siegfried I: Report from Stockholm, 18th June 1942. The underlining is in the original document.

¹⁹³ NA FO 898/61 ‘Black Propaganda’ by Rex Leeper. 17th December 1942, p.2. Leeper refers here to both *Nord* and the planned *Atlantik* station.

news stories.”¹⁹⁴ A reputation for omniscience was, indeed, a main feature of the stations,¹⁹⁵ not only because it led listeners to believe that they were constantly under observation by the enemy, but also because it rendered German POWs readier to talk to interrogators on the grounds that the British “know it all anyhow”.¹⁹⁶ *Atlantik* was joined on the air by *Soldatensender Calais* on 14th November 1943, with both stations now using the powerful medium wave Aspidistra transmitter and broadcasting from 6.30 p.m. and 8 p.m. respectively. Although the stations were coordinated to the extent that they were often introduced together by the announcer, a German monitor’s claim on 30th November 1943 that they therefore “may be identical” was incorrect.¹⁹⁷ Both served different strategic purposes, but it is nonetheless of value to examine *Atlantik* and *Calais* as a single project,¹⁹⁸ since not only the German monitors but also PWE treated them as such.¹⁹⁹

Atlantik was established with the intention of being “a programme of music, news and subversive features of a kind we hope the U-boat crews will begin to like and their superiors will begin to increasingly dislike”,²⁰⁰ and this philosophy was maintained with *Calais*. A PWE report on ‘Research Units’ (the cover name for British ‘black’ stations) states that its purpose was to

undermine the morale of the German armed forces in Western Europe – particularly of the U-boat crews operating in the Atlantic – by creating alarm in their minds regarding conditions at home, by unsettling their faith in their arms and equipment and in their leaders, by rationalising bad discipline and performance of military duty, and wherever possibly by encouraging actual desertion.

The general line is to win the confidence and interest of the German Services listener by presenting him with informative news of current events and with pleasant entertainment in the form of good dance music - such as he is no longer given by the Reich Radio.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁴ NA FO 898/61 Undated draft letter to Donovan of OSS, enclosed with Delmer (via Robson) to [PWE] Deputy Director-General [Bishop], 23rd April 1945. Delmer appears to have authored the draft for Bishop.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, pp.99-100. See also Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, p.99.

¹⁹⁷ BA R55/1253 (Microfiche 4) Abteilung Rundfunk Erkundungsdienst an Petrich, 30th November 1943.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ BA R55/1253 (Microfiche 4) Leiter der Erfassung an Rehm, 29th November 1943.

²⁰⁰ NA FO 898/67 PWE Black Propaganda to Germany – The Contribution of ‘Black’ Radio and Leaflets to the Anti- U-boat Campaign, 16th June 1943.

²⁰¹ NA FO 898/51 Research Units – List of Unit Code Names and Operational Reports 1943 – Report on the operation of Research Units, 11th October 1943.

The observation that the RRG was leaving German Forces vulnerable to enemy broadcasts by failing to sufficiently cater to their musical needs supports the argument of the thesis that greater cultural pragmatism on Goebbels' part may have decreased the German audiences for Allied broadcasts, although Balfour rightly states that "[i]t was not bad morale which led to defeat. Though the [German] propaganda could certainly have been bettered, [the result of the war] hardly could have been."²⁰² The station, indeed, had formidable musical resources at its disposal. Delmer recalls that an entire German forces' entertainment band, led by the accomplished musician Henry Zeisel, was captured by the British Eighth Army in Africa and sent to Britain, where, under the direction of an American radio producer named John Kebbe, they "[carried] on their good work of entertaining Hitler's Wehrmacht on the Atlantiksender."²⁰³ William Donovan's OSS, moreover, brought from the USA "the latest and best dance music", whilst arranging for exiled German celebrities such as Marlene Dietrich to record songs (unwittingly, in Dietrich's case) for *Atlantik* broadcasts.²⁰⁴ A great deal of other original recorded music was provided by the Royal Marines band, recorded at the Albert Hall and featuring the émigré artist René Halkett, the son of a former Wehrmacht Chief of Staff, General von Fritsch, on vocals. This formation recorded *Atlantik*'s 'signing-in' song, a crude version of the popular German dance number '*Es war in Schöneberg im Monat Mai*' ('It was in Schöneberg in the Month of May'), which U-boat men were known to be fond of singing with bawdy alterations to the lyrics. Accordingly, the Halkett version played each night on *Atlantik* began "It was in a brothel in Saint Nazaire..."²⁰⁵

As part of *Atlantik*'s ruse, the station pretended to link up with the authentic German *Soldatensender Mittelmeer* ('Mediterranean Battle Station'), located in the Balkans, between 4 a.m. and 7 a.m.²⁰⁶ It also received a regular supply of official German news through the *Hellschreiber*, a facsimile-based teleprinter on which the *Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro* (DNB) transmitted news to the German press, which had been left by the DNB's London Correspondent on the outbreak of war and was

²⁰² Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, p.130.

²⁰³ Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, p.84.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, p.85.

²⁰⁶ NA FO 898/51 Research Units – List of Unit Code Names and Operational Reports 1943 – Report on the operation of Research Units, 11th October 1943, p.22.

passed on to PWE by Reuters.²⁰⁷ Less inhibited than the Nazi-controlled media, the fact that *Atlantik* broadcast ‘live’ through the night enabled it to ‘scoop’ the RRG on a number of key military events, such as the bombing of Ploesti and the evacuation of Smolensk.²⁰⁸ PID’s Rex Leeper noted that the *Hellschreiber* allowed Delmer’s *Soldatensender* to deliver the actual news with a “gloss on it every now and then and with the insertion of a little fiction. It is thus very useful for [spreading] the occasional rumour.”²⁰⁹ This also gave the station a veneer of authenticity, and Delmer asserts in retrospect that the *Hellschreiber* was an invaluable asset, without which PWE “would never have been able to follow the formula which enabled us to put over the poison in our news bulletins without it sounding like enemy propaganda.”²¹⁰

The American 1945 PWD/SHAEF retrospective described “the extreme importance of the complete integration of psychological warfare activities into the planning and operations of a military campaign. Without any knowledge of military plans and lacking a thorough appreciation of the day by day [sic.] changes in the pressures at the front, psychological warfare would have been a haphazard and almost useless addition to the intricacies of modern large scale [sic.] warfare”.²¹¹ This assertion overlooks the potential value of Delmer’s general and consistent attempts to “undermine the morale of the German armed forces (...) by creating alarm in their minds regarding conditions at home, by unsettling their faith in their arms and equipment and in their leaders, by rationalising bad discipline and performance of military duty, and wherever possible by encouraging actual desertion.”²¹² Nonetheless, coordination with naval intelligence was central to *Atlantik*’s methodology. The Admiralty’s NID provided *Atlantik* with a daily feed of news and intelligence, and NID officers oversaw the handling of the material and advised PWE as to the Admiralty’s operational requirements, with the Navy’s Lieutenant Commander McLachlan being seconded to PWE for the war’s duration to play the leading role in the marshalling of information. News was reported either ‘straight’ as

²⁰⁷ Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, pp.90-91.

²⁰⁸ NA FO 898/51 Research Units – List of Unit Code Names and Operational Reports 1943 – Report on the operation of Research Units, 11th October 1943, p.22.

²⁰⁹ NA FO 898/61 ‘Black Propaganda’ by Rex Leeper. 17th December 1942, p.2.

²¹⁰ Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, p.91.

²¹¹ Richards (pub.), *The Psychological Warfare Division*, p.12.

²¹² NA FO 898/51 Research Units – List of Unit Code Names and Operational Reports 1943 – Report on the operation of Research Units, 11th October 1943, p.22.

camouflage, or with gloss and “a little fiction” inserted,²¹³ with Karl Robson of the War Office sub-editing the news items for maximum subversive effect.²¹⁴

Authenticity, an element which so much of Goebbels’ English-language ‘black’ propaganda lacked, was vital to *Atlantik*’s ruse. The station had a team of ten different announcers and six compères, usually presenting in the North German dialect to reflect its (fictional) geographical location, but with Bavarian and Austrian voices used in relevant special features. The German announcers were mainly POWs from U-boats, the Luftwaffe and the Wehrmacht, and the constant flow of POWs also provided, through interrogations or secret recordings, intelligence that could be fed into the broadcasts. All POW correspondence was also checked for intimate personal details such as birthdays, births and marriages, which could be included in broadcasts. These were read over the air by ‘Vicky’, a German-Jewish refugee artiste named Agnes Bernelle,²¹⁵ who performed a similar function to Iva Toguri D’Aquino on Japan’s *Zero Hour* and Mildred Gillars for the RMVP. Indeed, the malevolent ‘Forces’ sweetheart’ sending her greetings and commiserations to the enemy was a ubiquitous archetype used by both sides during the war.

The PWE report observed that “the most noteworthy feature of its technique of presentation is that it plays recorded dance music continually, with short interruptions for ‘features’ and news flashes, and longer ones lasting 15-20 minutes for full news bulletins”,²¹⁶ and a British Chief Interrogating Officer interviewing two hundred German POWs in Africa found that, “[c]onsidering the short time that *Atlantik* has been operating [by 1943], it seems to have acquired a surprisingly large audience in the German Army and to already be exerting considerable influence.”²¹⁷ Its reception was strong across Europe and it could even be picked up five thousand miles away in El Salvador, and evidence of its success could be gleaned from the official refutations of its rumours in Germany. The DNB issued a long statement denying *Atlantik*’s claims that the rapidly rising death rates were causing financial difficulties for German insurance companies, and the new SA leader Wilhelm

²¹³ NA FO 898/61 Minutes of PWE ‘Black’ Meetings, 1941-44 – Rex Leeper, ‘Black Propaganda’, 17th December 1942.

²¹⁴ Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, p.83.

²¹⁵ Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, pp.89-90.

²¹⁶ NA FO 898/51 Research Units – List of Unit Code Names and Operational Reports 1943 – Report on the operation of Research Units, 11th October 1943, p.22.

²¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.23.

Schepmann was forced to publicly deny *Atlantik*'s allegations that he was planning a *Waffen-SA* to rival the *Waffen-SS*.²¹⁸ Significantly, POWs frequently paid tribute to the quality and popularity of *Atlantik*'s musical programmes.²¹⁹

The success of *Atlantik* led to the establishment of *Soldatensender Calais* in order to “soften up” German Forces in preparation for the Allied invasion of German-occupied France.²²⁰ Appearing for the first time at 6 p.m. on 24th October 1943, the new station arrived with “a crash of drums and a blare of trumpets”, declaring itself to be a sister venture of *Atlantik* and announcing: “We bring music and news for comrades in the command areas West and Norway. We shall now play dance music.”²²¹ In his autobiography, Delmer claims that the many German soldiers who heard this first broadcast “accepted the new station at its face value as a German station, and they listened to it with wonder and with pleasure.”²²² However, there is evidence that the station was received sceptically by at least some sections of its listenership from the beginning. *Atlantik* had already aroused the suspicions of many listeners,²²³ and this pre-existing station was mentioned in the *Calais* calling signal. Moreover, within a short time, the RMVP received a number of letters from soldiers asking whether it was permitted to listen to *Calais*.²²⁴ One such letter, received by the RMVP on 6th December 1943 from a German Lieutenant named Heinz Mende, offers a detailed critical account of the station's reception which provides an insight into the effectiveness of its ruse and methodology:

During my time in the frontline troops I had heard several times about a *Soldatensender Calais* which broadcasts pronouncedly non-German (jazz-) music, interspersed with German news in foreign languages. Overall, it was claimed that the kind of music that this station plays, which significantly only a few soldiers liked, serve to lure foreign listeners who should be thus induced to listen to the German broadcasts. (...)

On 23.11.43 at around 8 p.m., and therefore at the time when Berlin was about to or already experiencing the second major terrorist attack [i.e. British air raid], by chance I tuned into the station with my *Volksempfänger* in Mittweida, Saxony. First came the aforementioned jazz, so that my wife

²¹⁸ NA FO 898/51 Research Units – List of Unit Code Names and Operational Reports 1943 – Report on the operation of Research Units, 11th October 1943.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, p.110.

²²¹ Ibid, pp.108-109.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ BA R55/1253 (Microfiche 4) Kienast (in Vertretung) an Fritzsche, 19th July 1943.

²²⁴ BA R55/20.011 (Microfiche 1) Merte an RMVP, 2nd January 1944. See also BA R55/1253 (Microfiche 4). Mende an RMVP, betr. ‘Soldatensender Calais’, received 6th December 1943.

became fearful because she thought I had tuned into a foreign station, but shortly thereafter, the station reported as “*Soldatensender Calais*, connected to the German shortwave transmitter on waveband...”. The transmitter first announced that enemy aircraft were again situated “over the German *Heimat*”, and the spokesman from Berlin proceeded to report (...) what had been hit in the first raid the previous day, how it looked in the city, how many people were homeless and various other details. This news seemed strange to me, because our own news reports generally do not specify such things. Then it occurred to my wife, a born Berliner who (...) worked at Siemens, that her comrades at the firm had talked repeatedly of a station that could be heard clearly during air raids, and reported news of this kind.

(...) One could recognise the poison of enemy propaganda in almost all of the messages and announcements. (...) In addition to these messages, which are designed to bring unrest and discontent in the German people, finer points were present in which the poison was not so obvious. (...) These messages I regard as attempts to drive a wedge between the leadership and the people, or between officers or the SS and the people. In this manner there were other various messages in which the poison tip was even more difficult to see, but was visible to the sharp eye.

(...) If *Soldatensender Calais* should actually be a German transmitter then I don’t understand the German propaganda herein. --- Should it be an enemy station, then the populace and the troops must be urgently informed, because without doubt this station is (...) widely listened to, above all because it doesn’t close down during the air raids.²²⁵

It can be assumed that not all listeners were as critical as Mende, although Kater’s assertion that many soldiers may have mistaken it for an authentic but controversial Wehrmacht station along the lines of the lively *Belgrad* is likely to be an overstatement on the basis of the available evidence. However, the lack of centralised control over the authentic *Soldatensender*, which resulted in musical output which violated RMVP guidelines, as well as the use of unpredictable announcers (as criticised by Hinkel),²²⁶ undoubtedly lent Delmer’s entertaining stations an element of credibility and enabled Mende to believe that it was theoretically possible that *Calais* was a German station.

Under PWE’s own guidelines, *Atlantik* and *Calais* in fact constituted ‘grey’ propaganda. Their camouflage as authentic German stations was not expected to fool many listeners, but provided a useful excuse should they be caught listening to foreign broadcasts, and several POWs “expressed admiration for the cleverness of its

²²⁵ BA R55/1253 (Microfiche 4) Mende an RMVP, betr. ‘*Soldatensender Calais*’, received 6th December 1943.

²²⁶ BA R56I/41 (Microfiche 1) Hinkel an Goebbels (cc: ‘Staatssekretar’ [Gutterer]), 10th January 1944.

[*Atlantik*'s] use of cover, some saying that if an officer entered the room during an *Atlantik* news bulletin listeners were able to prove that they sincerely believed it to be an ordinary German station.²²⁷ PWE's definition of that the difference between 'black' and grey' was that 'black' stations "depend as much on cover as upon content and technique to achieve their object. Their disguise, as to both location and control, must be sufficiently plausible to deceive their audience. (...) ['Grey' stations'] disguise need only extend to convincing their audience that they are not under British control. They depend entirely upon content and technique to achieve their object."²²⁸ Mende's letter indicates that the unorthodox presentation of the news was enough to arouse suspicions, due to its inconsistencies with authentic German broadcasts and its unusual sources of information. The jazz fan Werner Daniels, editor of the *Musikalische Feldpost*, recalls that "we did wonder who was behind Sefton Delmer's stations. We viewed it as a sort of war cabaret."²²⁹ The evidence in both the British and the German archives tends to support Michael Balfour's assertion that, while the ruse of being German stations was probably not convincing for very long, it served as an important defence against accusations of tuning in deliberately to enemy broadcasts,²³⁰ thus helping listeners to avoid Freisler's punitive 'national hygiene' measures.

Nonetheless, an unsigned PWE report noted that a surprising number of listeners were fooled:

[*Atlantik* was] somewhat grey in its conception as we felt (...) we could not expect even a German listener to believe that [*Atlantik*] was actually operating as a clandestine transmitter. 15 transmissions of music and news, each slightly different to the other, and lasting half an hour, are not exactly clandestine. (...)

So we preferred to adopt the convention that it was of German origin on the lines of Wehrmachtssender (Forces Programmes) operating from places like Belgrade and Smolensk for the entertainment of the front-line troops, [*Atlantik*] having the special function of entertaining the U-boat comrades in the Atlantic during the night period when they came up to re-charge their batteries.

²²⁷ NA FO 898/51 Research Units – List of Unit Code Names and Operational Reports 1943 – Report on the operation of Research Units, 11th October 1943.

²²⁸ NA FO 898/51 Research Units – List of Unit Code Names and Operational Reports 1943 – Definitions, 22nd October 1943.

²²⁹ Daniels interview 1988.

²³⁰ Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, p.98.

To our surprise and gratification a recent batch of U-boat prisoners confirmed that they had heard of [Atlantik] and that they understood it had the blessing of the commander of U-boats in Paris. Which is very surprising. For although [Atlantik] gives plenty of German news and has a good deal of German music in its programme, it does not pull its punches and broadcasts the latest American jazz (known to be attractive to U-boat listeners) and carries news items written from a German point of view but carrying the kind of message which would never be permitted by German censorship. It further broadcasts talks by U-boat comrades voicing complaints and attacking personalities such as the C[ommander]-in-C[hief] of U-boats would never dream of sponsoring.²³¹

Rumours of the sort broadcast perpetually by Delmer's stations were spreading in Germany,²³² and the Gestapo was well aware that "in many cases the source of rumours [in Germany] is foreign radio".²³³ Himmler, too, had warned that he did not expect leniency for anyone caught listening to foreign broadcasts or spreading rumours gleaned from them,²³⁴ the reasoning for which was explained in a letter from the Düsseldorf Gestapo to other Gestapo offices in the region:

The number of arrests due to the forbidden listening to foreign radio has risen considerably in the first half of 1943 compared to 1942, but we must reckon with the fact that only a section of these listeners have been caught. The bringing about of exemplary convictions is urgently necessary. Therefore all signs of forbidden listening must be quickly and thoroughly pursued in order to catch the culprits and thereby to close a source of rumours.

(...) The judicial authorities are ordered to pass judgement quickly and severely. It is important that some severe cases are published as soon as possible in the press.

(...) Above all it is also important that listeners are caught from precisely the so-called educated classes, which in their degrading intellectualism and cowardly weakness contribute considerably to the spreading of rumours and cheap propaganda [*Stimmungsmache*].²³⁵

The 'national hygiene' measures appear to have been largely ineffective or even counter-productive. In December 1942, the British informant in the Wehrmacht claimed that the "very high army circles" felt that it was a mistake to ban Germans

²³¹ NA FO 898/67 PWE Black Propaganda to Germany – Unsigned, undated document on Research Units.

²³² See for example NA FO 898/51 Research Units List of Unit Code Names and Operational Reports 1943 – Report on the operation of Research Units, 11th October 1943.

²³³ BA R58/268 (Microfiche 2) Geheime Staatspolizei – Staatspolizeileitstelle Düsseldorf an die Geheime Staatspolizei Aussendienststellen Duisburg (et al), 27th September 1943.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

from listening to foreign broadcasts.²³⁶ While they concluded that Anglo-American propaganda was successful, they held that an outright ban merely exposed the poverty of Goebbels' own efforts.²³⁷ Kater points out that in spite of the bans, increasing numbers of Germans were tuning into foreign broadcasts in order to find out information which the RMVP was withholding from them, and the concomitant rise in war-related nightshift work resulted in workers having less supervision and hence less chance of being caught. The British acquisition of the powerful Aspidistra transmitter also meant that, as Himmler noted, even Germans with "the best of intentions" could end up stumbling upon one of Delmer's creations.²³⁸ Kater observes that radio listening was essential because air raid alarms were issued by regional stations.²³⁹ However, it is also highly significant that, unlike the RRG's transmitters, British 'black' stations also operated during air raids, and it was therefore easy to tune into *Atlantik* or *Calais* with little risk of being caught.²⁴⁰

On 1st September 1944, nearly three months after the successful Allied landings at Normandy, *Calais* changed its name and calling signal to *Soldatensender West* to reflect the new military situation.²⁴¹ The station had now built up a large following and notoriety in Germany, which magnified its potential for subversive impact. Indeed, the great deal of attention it received in high-ranking military circles opened new opportunities. A PWE document noted:

Deception and confusion in the German General Staff can be created because of the unique status of SOLDATENSENDER WEST, which is known by the enemy to be exceptionally well-informed and at the same time misleading. Moreover, as an unofficial station, disowned by His Majesty's Government, it can make military and political statements the authenticity of which can be judged by the Germans only with great difficulty. For example, if our wireless programmes suggest that the Super-Fortress B.29 is to be used against Germany, German Intelligence has the choice of two interpretations: either there is no intention to use these aircraft against Germany and our propaganda

²³⁶ NA FO 898/67 PWE Black Propaganda to Germany – Notes on Propaganda to Germany, 25th - 31st December 1942.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.173.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ BA R55/1253 (Microfiche 4). Mende an RMVP, betr. 'Soldatensender Calais', received 6th December 1943.

²⁴¹ NA FO 898/52 'Soldatensender Calais' G.9. (handwritten note '91'), undated. A PWE 'black' meeting had, in fact, agreed to change the name of *Atlantik* to *West* over one year earlier, but this decision was never implemented. See NA FO 898/61 P.W.E. Black Propaganda Policy – Policy Meetings Correspondence 1941-45 – Minutes of P.W.E. Enemy and Satellite "Black" Meeting, 12th August 1943.

is bluffing; or it is intended to use them and our propaganda has been instructed to create preliminary anxiety in the German public.

(...) SOLDATENSENDER WEST (...) broadcasts nightly for 12 hours a continuous programme of news from the war fronts and from inside Germany, with talks and special news for the Services and records of jazz and light music. The programme goes out on the medium-wave transmitter ASPIDISTRA of exceptional power, and also on short-wave transmitters. It has a widespread and established audience among the German fighting services and among German civilians. Accurate and exclusive news, inside information based on intelligence, half truths [sic.] and fictions are used in combination to achieve subversive effect.²⁴²

Moreover, Donovan's OSS brought its formidable musical and technical resources to *West*, as it had done with *Atlantik* during 1943. In a letter to Donovan dated 23rd April 1945, PWE's Deputy Director-General William Henry Alexander ('Alec') Bishop acknowledged the role of OSS in the success of Delmer's *Soldatensender*:

[E]veryone engaged on P.W.E. "Black" has been full of praise for all that O.S.S. did to improve the musical entertainment side of *Soldatensender West*. Evidence from prisoners of war and other listeners has shown the effectiveness of the Musak [sic.] discs with their attractive dance music and subversive lyrics, as well as of the special productions of your musical unit working in this country (...). The ingenuity this team developed in dubbing German lyrics into records previously barred from use because they had only English vocals reached standards of perfection which no-one had anticipated when O.S.S. first diffidently asked whether anything so difficult as this could be contemplated.²⁴³

As well as the production of German-language propaganda dance music, OSS contributed to *West* by providing graphic intelligence reports from the US Marine Corps which added invaluable colour and intimate detail. As noted above in this section, the seeming omniscience of Delmer's stations was a major factor in impressing and psychologically intimidating listeners, whilst the accuracy of many of the reports lent the doctored or fabricated news items greater credibility.²⁴⁴ This impact was augmented by a large-scale PWD/SHAEF leaflet campaign entitled *Nachrichten für die Truppe* ('News for the Troops'),²⁴⁵ a major goal of which was to convince German soldiers in the West to surrender prematurely and thus avoid

²⁴² NA FO 898/67 PWE Black Propaganda to Germany – "Black" Propaganda in the Battle for Germany, 6th November 1944.

²⁴³ NA FO 898/61 Closing down of 'Black' – Bishop to Donovan, 23rd April 1945.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ The name was chosen due to its similarity to the authentic German pamphlet *Mitteilungen* [messages] *für die Truppe*.

higher Allied casualties. The *Nachrichten* were produced nightly between midnight and six a.m. and had a daily print run of approximately two million, which represented 80% of Britain's total offset printing capacity.²⁴⁶ All material was adapted from talks and commentaries from Delmer's *West*, ensuring complete thematic coordination between the two media,²⁴⁷ and the leaflets were dropped over Germany using an extremely accurate American-developed 'leaflet bomb',²⁴⁸ with the specific targets having been strategically chosen in conjunction with SHAEF. This overt indication that both the *Nachrichten* and *West* shared the same source further betrayed the Allied origins of Delmer's *Soldatensender*, but the increasing deterioration of the German war effort and the loss of faith in Nazi news sources rendered this largely irrelevant. Jazz musician Emil Mangelsdorff, a member of the wartime Frankfurt Harlem Club, recalls an incident that occurred while he was working as a radio operator at a gun emplacement in April 1945. A young Lieutenant walked into the bunker and caught the operators listening to *Soldatensender West*, which they abruptly turned off. "Then he said, 'leave it on!'" remembers Mangelsdorff. "He listened and just laughed and then said, 'now it's got this far, the only thing that matters is: save yourself if you can'."²⁴⁹

The End of 'Black'

During the last months of the war, Allied 'white' propaganda balanced a dual task of emphasising to Germans the inevitability of unconditional surrender on the one hand, and catering to the ever-growing number of occupied areas of Germany on the other.²⁵⁰ On 10th September 1944, American forces captured Radio Luxembourg and found that the Germans had left an extensive music library and largely intact transmitting equipment. The journalist and American intelligence operative William Harlan Hale was placed in charge of the station, which was staffed by SHAEF personnel and began broadcasting both relays from New York and London. Moreover, PWD's Radio Program Production Unit, 12th Army Group, was brought in to produce four daily fifteen-minute "tactical" programmes addressed to German

²⁴⁶ Richards (pub.), *The Psychological Warfare Division*, p.31.

²⁴⁷ NA FO 898/67 PWE Black Propaganda to Germany – "Black" Propaganda in the Battle for Germany, 4th November 1944.

²⁴⁸ Richards (pub.), *The Psychological Warfare Division*, p.33.

²⁴⁹ Mangelsdorff interview 1987. The station is mistakenly referred to as 'Calais' in the transcript.

²⁵⁰ NARA RG 208 Box 9 Records of the Historian 1941-46, OWI Subversive Activities: San Francisco Conference, Progress Report: Office of Control, April 1945.

troops and civilians in the immediate combat areas. These programmes were *Story of the Day* (based on frontline intelligence), *Letter Bag* (readings of captured German mail), *Frontpost* (featuring material taken from an eponymous American newsletter for German forces) and a programme which consisted of appeals to German Forces to surrender.²⁵¹

Luxembourg's 'white' offensive was augmented by a 'black' campaign overseen by Delmer, which was intended to cause havoc within Nazi-held areas of western Germany, thus hastening their fall to the Allies. With the goal of driving people from the towns and cities, *West* carried the fabricated story that Eisenhower had declared seven 'bomb-free zones' in central and southern Germany, and the Allied Forces' Supreme Commander himself issued factual statements of each night's bombing targets via 'white' broadcasts which were carefully coordinated to give credence to the misinformation provided by 'black' reports. In this case, the task was given to Delmer because Eisenhower had originally announced on air that Germans should stay at home, but reversed this to accord with Churchill's insistence that civilians be induced to crowd the roads and thus hamper German strategic communications, as the Germans had achieved with French civilians in 1940.²⁵² Because 'white' sources such as the BBC, VOA and Radio Luxembourg had already issued the original instructions and could not renege on these without losing credibility as a news source, Delmer recalls that the task was given to "the ruffians of the 'black', the disavowable scallywags who did the dirty work."²⁵³ He conceived of 'Operation Siegfried', which entailed the use of Aspidistra to hijack German regional wavelengths and displace the official broadcasts, continuing with counterfeit version using PWE announcers, who would issue subversive instructions and information to the populace in the name of the respective *Gauleiter*.²⁵⁴ This supports Balfour's conclusion that 'black' played an important part in preserving the integrity of the BBC, who otherwise by necessity would have been "compelled by the Services to lend themselves, unwittingly if not willingly, to such deception even more than they were (...), with more direct damage to their reputation."²⁵⁵

²⁵¹ Richards (pub.), *The Psychological Warfare Division*, pp.27-29.

²⁵² Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, p.200.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, p.204.

²⁵⁵ Ibid, p.99.

In late March 1945, the RRG warned listeners of Anglo-American broadcasts taking over well-known German wavelengths and, purporting to be German regional stations, issuing evacuation orders and misinformation. On 28th March, for example, the German Home Service warned that “[a]n enemy wireless transmitter on the Frankfurt wavelength is spreading misleading news items. It is plain what the enemy’s intentions are with these reports. He wants to create unrest and confusion among the German civilian population and in the areas near the front.”²⁵⁶ These warnings proved counterproductive because they allowed the British counterfeit stations issuing identical warnings about faked broadcasts on regional wavelengths, and the conflicting claims by broadcasters added to the general chaos. Ultimately the RRG abandoned this method of issuing instructions, and only gave orders to the populace via the *Drahtfunk*, a wired diffusion network which the British could not hijack but which had a greatly limited range.²⁵⁷

Nonetheless, with Allied victory inevitable, in mid-April 1945 the decision had already been made by PWE to shift its focus to the challenges posed by the post-war occupation of Germany by closing down ‘black’ operations and concentrating on ‘white’.²⁵⁸ Accordingly, *West* and *Nachrichten* both “ceased fire” on 30th April, the day that Hitler committed suicide in Berlin.²⁵⁹ The cessation of ‘black’ prompted its protagonists to acknowledge the centrality of Delmer to PWE’s success, whilst also reflecting on the difficulties in assessing the precise impact of its work. Alec Bishop wrote to Delmer on the same day that, while the nature of his work made its precise impact impossible to measure, “there is ample evidence from many sources that your labours have been of immense assistance to the Armed Forces of the Allies, and have made a great contribution towards the triumph of the principles for which we stand.”²⁶⁰ On 23rd May 1945, Bishop received a letter from Edmund Rushbrooke, Director of the Admiralty’s NID, who emphasised that “such success as we [NID/PWE] may have had must be ascribed primarily to Mr. Sefton Delmer”,²⁶¹ and Rushbrooke also wrote to Sir Robert Lockhart praising Delmer’s “outstanding contribution” to the war effort, noting that “evidence is reaching me from various

²⁵⁶ NA FO 898/52 ‘Anglo-American Broadcasts’ (cutting), 28th March 1945.

²⁵⁷ Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, p.205.

²⁵⁸ NA FO 898/61 Closing down of ‘Black’ – Bishop to Delmer, 17th April 1945.

²⁵⁹ NA FO 898/61 Closing down of ‘Black’ – Bishop to Donovan, 23rd April 1945.

²⁶⁰ NA FO 898/61 Closing down of ‘Black’ – Bishop memorandum (cc: Delmer, Director-General [Lockhart]), 23rd April 1945.

²⁶¹ NA FO 898/61 Closing down of ‘Black’ – Rushbrooke to Bishop, 23rd May 1945.

quarters that his Black Stations were greatly feared and respected by the German authorities”.²⁶² Bishop wrote of the “informal and personal relationship” forged between NID and PWE, especially with regard to the successful cooperation on *Atlantik*, which “opened the way to the intimate collaboration which we have enjoyed in the last two years with other Service Ministries and particularly with S.H.A.E.F.”²⁶³

The institutional cooperation between British and American organisations was adjudged by its protagonists to have been a similar success, with Bishop writing to Donovan on 23rd April that there “can have been few better examples of wholehearted Anglo-American collaboration than the production of (...) ‘Nachrichten für die Truppe’”.²⁶⁴ It is interesting, therefore, that PWE was entirely left out of the 1945 American-authored PWD/SHAEF history and continues to be neglected by scholarship of the area. Bishop also praised the important role of the OSS in improving the musical content of *West* and *Atlantik*,²⁶⁵ a contribution that was also recognised by Sefton Delmer.²⁶⁶ Meanwhile, new Anglo-American collaborations were emerging. SHAEF officers seconded to Radio Luxembourg by the Psychological Warfare Division (PWD) had already reported to their commanders in Paris and to the BBC German Service on the need to send well-qualified individuals to work in the musical field in post-war Germany. Accordingly, during the last months of the war, representatives of the BBC German Service, the Foreign Office, PWD and Radio Luxembourg established the nucleus of what would become Allied Music Control in post-war Germany, with the task of rebuilding German musical life within a framework of high musical standards and democratic principles.²⁶⁷

As the British SOE closed down in April 1945 according to an agreement with PWD/SHAEF, the majority of its ‘black’ staff was assigned to new duties relating to

²⁶² NA FO 898/61 Closing down of ‘Black’ – Rushbrooke to Lockhart, 20th May 1945.

²⁶³ NA FO 898/61 Closing down of ‘Black’ – Bishop to Director of Naval Intelligence [Rushbrooke], 8th May 1945.

²⁶⁴ NA FO 898/61 Closing down of ‘Black’ – Bishop to Donovan, 23rd April 1945.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁶ Delmer, *Black Boomerang*, p.84.

²⁶⁷ Toby Thacker, ‘Liberating German Musical Life: The BBC German Service and Planning for Music Control in Occupied Germany 1944-1949.’ In Brinson, Charmian and Richard Dove (eds.). ‘Stimme der Wahrheit: German-Language Broadcasting by the BBC.’ *Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies* 5 (2003), pp.77-92. Here p.86.

occupied Germany and Austria.²⁶⁸ However, the Allies had been making concrete plans for the reorganisation of German musical life since at least 1944, when the English actor Marius Goring (the husband of Lucie Mannheim, who had recorded the BBC's Lale Andersen parodies) was appointed music specialist of the BBC German Service. Together with exiled German-Jewish composer Berthold Goldschmidt, Goring began drafting blueprints for post-war music broadcasting in Germany, stating that "there is a purpose behind all of [the planned programmes], but this purpose is of an indirect, rather than, [sic.] a direct propaganda value. I have also tried hard to assure that they should be of a high artistic standard – this is in itself of indirect propaganda value."²⁶⁹

Conclusion

Goebbels died on 1st May 1945 having failed to create a convincing 'German' form of quality light music that would constitute effective cultural propaganda for the Nazi worldview. The DTUO, which represented the apex of the Propaganda Minister's efforts in this area, ended the war in Prague, its approximately three-year existence characterised by "compromise and failure".²⁷⁰ As DTUO members returned to Berlin from Czechoslovakia after the war, many found employment in Haentzschel and Kudritzki's new RBTO in the Soviet Occupied Zone, where for a brief five-year period they were permitted to create lively swing recordings that indicate the DTUO's unfulfilled jazz potential.²⁷¹ The remaining members of Charlie and his Orchestra were evacuated to Stuttgart in 1943, where they "muddled along",²⁷² making radio broadcasts twice daily, but with no further recordings and without vocalist Schwedler. Brocksieper ended the war in a farmhouse in nearby Sickenhausen, listening to jazz broadcasts on the BBC and Delmer's *Atlantik*.²⁷³ In May 1945 he and other members of the orchestra found immediate and lucrative

²⁶⁸ NA FO 898/61 'Closing down of Black' – Bishop to Donovan, 23rd April 1945.

²⁶⁹ Thacker, 'Liberating German Musical Life', p.85.

²⁷⁰ The phrase belongs to Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.170.

²⁷¹ For audio recordings of the RBTO, see *Jazz auf Amiga 1947-1962 Vol. 1*. Amiga (Cat. No. 8 55 852). Vinyl recording.

²⁷² Brocksieper interview 1988.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

employment entertaining GIs in US Army barracks.²⁷⁴ The headline on the US military newspaper Stars and Stripes read: “*We Got Goebbels’ Band!*”²⁷⁵

Jazz came to be used by the US and Britain for a new, didactic purpose in post-war Germany. Under the auspices of the new Anglo-American Music Control, created by BBC, VOA, SHAEF and Radio Luxembourg officials, it was envisaged as an ambassador for the democratic values which were to be instilled in the younger generations of Germans socialised in the Third Reich.²⁷⁶ For those German jazz aficionados who survived war, however, this socialisation process had in many cases already occurred. After an ironic ‘*Nazifarewellblues*’ [sic.] party in Leipzig in April 1945, the remaining members of the Leipzig Hot Club welcomed the advancing American forces as both political and cultural kindred spirits. Herbert Becke recalls GIs being “more than astonished” at his considerable record collection, and the “intellectuals and anti-Nazis” who had been commissioned to put together a makeshift radio schedule amidst the debris of the regional radio station were quick to accept Becke’s suggestion that he put together a jazz programme.²⁷⁷ Meanwhile Jutta Hipp, also of the Leipzig Hot Club, discovered that jazz fans, too, could be guilty of presuming a non-existent American cultural homogeneity. “We were very happy at their coming and brought out all our jazz records to play for them,” she remembered. “No response. We were terribly hurt until we discovered what was wrong, which was that these G.I.’s didn’t like jazz; they liked hillbilly music.”²⁷⁸ Nonetheless, five days after the Americans entered Leipzig, both Hipp and Becke were comfortably installed in a jazz band at the local US Army barracks.²⁷⁹

While the novelty value of Charlie and his Orchestra has led to the project’s notoriety being exaggerated in historiography of the area, this chapter has demonstrated that the combination of jazz music and propaganda was utilised with a great deal more skill and effectiveness by Sefton Delmer and PWE. As noted by the post-war Radio Free Europe journalist George Urban, an important facet of

²⁷⁴ Brocksieper interview in Steinbiss/Eisermann, *Propaganda Swing*.

²⁷⁵ Florian Steinbiss and David Eisermann, ‘Wir haben damals die beste Musik gemacht.’ *Der Spiegel* 16/1988.

²⁷⁶ See Michael H. Kater, ‘New Democracy and Alternative Culture: Jazz in West Germany after the Second World War.’ *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 52.2 (June 2006), pp.173-186.

²⁷⁷ Becke to Kater, 11th September 1989.

²⁷⁸ Hipp obituary, *The New York Times*.

²⁷⁹ Becke to Kater, 11th September 1989.

psychological warfare is being able to think outside one's own political model and realms of experience, as well as the ability to imaginatively access the inner states of one's opponents.²⁸⁰ Goebbels, too, had claimed that "the propagandist must be the man with the greatest knowledge of souls",²⁸¹ and it is therefore ironic that it was the Berlin-born Delmer who achieved such success with his German audience. It is also possible that the popularity of Radio Tokyo's *Zero Hour*, in spite of the apparent best efforts of its protagonists to sabotage the programme, was at least partially due to Toguri's witty and authentically 'American' banter. The unsuccessful and convoluted German 'black' projects such as NBBS to Britain and *Station Debunk* to the USA lacked such appeal to their listeners. Insight and empathy, like jazz music, were invaluable assets in wartime propaganda broadcasting which Goebbels, to the detriment of the Nazi war effort, was never able to adequately master.

²⁸⁰ George Urban, *Radio Free Europe and the Pursuit of Democracy*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1997, p.31.

²⁸¹ Welch, *The Third Reich*, p.26.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

The comparative methodology and international scope of the thesis have contributed a number of original innovations to the historiography of this important area of World War II propaganda. It has illustrated at length that, in spite of Goebbels' pragmatic rhetoric, the RMVP was never completely willing or able to escape the ideological straitjacket of pre-war Nazi cultural politics in its attempts to cater to wartime musical demand, thus creating a greater potential audience for Allied 'white' and 'black' propaganda. In failing to come to terms with jazz, the Propaganda Minister ceded a powerful weapon to his enemies, which, as the thesis has demonstrated, was exploited adroitly by Allied propaganda agencies.

By utilising and cross-referencing British, German and US sources it has been possible to compensate for the wartime and post-war destruction of many RMVP and PWE documents. Drawing on a wide range of archive material, the thesis has analysed the methodologies of Delmer's *Soldatensender* and corroborated important aspects of his 1962 autobiography, which remains the main text on this hugely neglected aspect of British wartime propaganda. The international scope has made it possible to gauge the stations' great success and popularity through the comparative analysis of intelligence reports, POW feedback and German-language RMVP documents, thus refuting Mauch's erroneous assertion that 'black' propaganda against Hitler was primarily waged by OSS.¹

Similarly, the international research has been valuable in reconstructing Goebbels' use of entertainment as propaganda to Britain and the USA. In Chapter Two, I have shown that the BBC's weak early wartime output and the 'cultural blackout' presented the RMVP with an excellent opportunity to fill the void with its own entertainment broadcasting to a British audience which was still interested in hearing German perspectives on the war.² By utilising previously unpublished BBC internal memoranda and Listener Research data, I have also refuted the erroneous notion, which continues to appear in historiography of the period,³ that William Joyce was listened to for comedy value alone and presented little danger to the British war effort. Indeed, as has been emphasised above, the use of entertainment to encourage

¹ Mauch, *Schattenkrieg gegen Hitler*, p.16.

² NA HO 186/313 Anti-British Propaganda Broadcasts. 'Hamburg Broadcast Propaganda: Summary of the Results of an Enquiry into the Extent and Effect of its Impact on the British Public during the Winter 1939-40', 21st March 1940, p.1.

³ For example Martland, *Lord Haw-Haw* and Kater, *Different Drummers*.

repeat listening was central to Goebbels' propaganda methodology, and yet the main 'black' propaganda programme to Britain, NBBS, did not have a dedicated entertainment segment until 1942, by which point the BBC Forces Programme was already well-established. Moreover, by utilising FCC monitors' reports of *Station Debunk*, an ambitious Nazi 'black' programme to the USA which has been broadly neglected by prior historiography, I have scrutinised the considerable cultural naivety of the RMVP with regard to American audiences. The 'trial-and-error' approach which is evident through the programme's shifting themes, musical content and geographical target audience stands in stark contrast to Delmer's hugely popular and culturally nuanced *Soldatensender* for German Forces, which were produced in close consultation with military and naval intelligence to cause maximum damage to the German war effort.

The cross-referencing of previously unused international sources has facilitated the reappraisal of Hinkel, which not only sheds important new light on this influential and yet generally neglected Nazi cultural figure, but also opens the way for future scholarship to reassess Hinkel's character and work, which is clearly necessary based on the findings of the thesis. Indeed, the thesis has highlighted a number of areas which are ripe for further study. With regard to Britain, I have demonstrated that a great deal of work remains to be done to correct the continued omission of the work of Delmer and PWE from the majority of historiographies of wartime propaganda. As has been noted above in this section, the post-war destruction of numerous PWE documents can be compensated for by international research, especially in the archives of the target countries. Moreover, by contrasting the quality and effectiveness of PWE's German-language 'black' projects with the RMVP's own greatly inferior English-language stations to Britain and the USA (such as NBBS and *Debunk*), I have emphasised the need for further research and re-evaluations of Goebbels' abilities as a propagandist based on his continued prioritisation of ideology at the expense of wartime pragmatism, as well as the general poor quality of RMVP English-language entertainment propaganda.

Anglo-American collaboration, too, remains an important and potentially fruitful area which requires considerable academic attention, as indicated by the close cooperation between institutions such as PWE, OWI and OSS, as well as the joint psychological warfare activities under the auspices of PWD/SHAEF. Furthermore,

the work of OWI and Elmer Davis in attempting to mediate the flow of information within the USA during the zoot suit riots and nationwide racial disturbances remains a significant and yet underexplored aspect of America's wartime home front. Similarly, the original research into 'Harlem London' has shown that the 'bottle party' culture remains a fascinating aspect of overlooked British social history which, due to the wartime circumstances, became of enhanced political and cultural relevance. Together with the use of the previously unseen *Melody Maker* file at the BBC Written Archives and my 2012 interview with Chilton, I have traced the connections between the subcultural development of jazz and the ways in which war-imposed necessities brought it to a wider audience, thus accelerating the acceptance and appreciation of jazz as 'serious' music in Britain. As noted above, the conventional 'people's war' discourse of the British home front overlooks a more complex reality, and further analysis of the problematic 'bottle party' phenomenon would contribute to a more nuanced understanding of wartime Britain.

The new ground covered by the thesis has also helped to contextualise projects that have already received scholarly attention. For example, by providing the first scholarly appraisal of the 1941 radio variety programme *Frohe Stunde am Nachmittag*, which was intended to foster the development of New German Entertainment Music, the thesis has shown that the problems experienced with this short-lived programme were to be repeated on a far larger scale with the DTUO, the foundation of which coincided broadly with the cessation of *Frohe Stunde*. As I have argued, this indicates that *Frohe Stunde*'s failure and lack of quality directly contributed to the more ambitious establishment of a first-rate 'light' counterpart to the Berlin Philharmonic. The DTUO was therefore was not an isolated project but the culmination of pre-existing attempts to nurture New German Entertainment Music, and this places the DTUO within a broader pattern of German broadcasting policy that challenges the more colourful narrative, repeated by Kater,⁴ that a chance meeting between Franz Grothe and the Luftwaffe ace Werner Mölders led to the two men convincing Goebbels to initiate the orchestra.

⁴ Kater, *Different Drummers*, pp.126-127. Zwerin also repeats a version of the story in which, even less plausibly, Mölders' request led to the formation of Charlie and his Orchestra (Zwerin, *Swing under the Nazis*, pp.31-32).

Moreover, in Chapter Three I have demonstrated that the first musical parody broadcast on the Lord Haw-Haw programme, which is missing from Rainer Lotz's otherwise exhaustive discography of Nazi propaganda jazz recordings, was a direct result of the offence caused by the "incorrigible flippancy" of 'The Siegfried Line'.⁵ The parody established the format which would be used by Charlie and his Orchestra, and, by tracing the instigation of the RMVP's propaganda parodies to a specific incident, I have provided for the first time concrete evidence to support Kater's assertion that the 'Charlie' recordings were designed to "pay the British back in kind".⁶ This has been accompanied by a detailed reappraisal of the nature of the orchestra's genesis, which indicates that the popular Lutz Templin was elected by the musicians themselves to lead an existing orchestra consisting of members of Berlin's tightly-knit jazz clique, and not incomprehensibly commissioned 'from above' to form a new group, as Kater suggests.⁷

The discoveries regarding both *Frohe Stunde* and the 'Siegfried Line' parody have therefore helped to 'demythologise' the genesis of the RMVP's two most ambitious jazz projects, the DTUO and Charlie and his Orchestra and place them within a pattern of the organic development of policies and projects. Indeed, the wide range of sources and perspectives provided by the thesis have helped to contextualise the various uses of jazz as propaganda by Britain, Germany and the USA, building upon and challenging prior historiography of the area and highlighting areas which will require much further research. The thesis has emphasised the unprecedented importance which broadcasting and radio entertainment assumed in World War II, and the analysis of the malevolent and benevolent uses of jazz music has made numerous original contributions to the discourse. It is to be hoped that these will be built upon by future scholarship of this highly significant aspect of wartime propaganda.

⁵ *Mass Observation Online*. File Report 11 A – Jazz and Dancing, November 1939, pp.27-28.

⁶ Kater, *Different Drummers*, p.130.

⁷ *Ibid.*

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