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*Britain To-day, Bulletins from Britain, and Britain: Some Semi-official British Periodicals in the United States During the Second World War*

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By the end of the Second World War, British Information Services (BIS) employed over 300 people and possessed a well-oiled machinery for distributing news and background information about the United Kingdom across the United States.<sup>1</sup> Based in New York, BIS had been formed in the spring of 1941 in order to coordinate British publicity in the United States under the authority of the British Embassy in Washington but employing staff from the MoI. BIS greatly expanded the British propaganda effort which had grown out of the modest prewar British Library of Information (BLI), controlled by the Foreign Office (FO). One of the channels for BIS's information campaign was the magazine *Britain* produced in conjunction with the MoI based in London. *Britain* had originally appeared under the title *Bulletins from Britain*, but it had been renamed as part of a major revision in 1942. BIS was not, however, the only agency to produce a British propaganda magazine: the British Council, although not physically present in the United States, continued to circulate its magazine *Britain To-day* to a number of American readers.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the British propaganda effort in the United States was marked by interdepartmental rivalry and conflicting views of what information should be given to the American public and through which channels. This parallel history was largely absent from the "official" history by John Wheeler-Bennett deposited in the National Archives, which tended to focus on the gradual construction of an effective propaganda organization. This chapter seeks to flesh out our understanding of how British information to the United States evolved during

the war by focusing on the actual material produced and, specifically, on two periodicals initially distributed by the BLI in New York: *Britain To-day* and *Bulletins from Britain/Britain*.

### Competing Periodicals?

*Britain To-day* first appeared in March 1939 as a simple newsletter with no cover or illustrations. It declared its objective as follows:

The purpose of *Britain To-day* is to bring the friends, and, for that matter, the critics of Great Britain into closer touch with current happenings in our country, by recording and commenting upon important features and developments in our national life, whether they be experiments in the reorganisation of industry, inquiries into social or economic problems, new methods of co-operation in the sphere of the central or local government or in the relations between Great Britain and the Dominions, new movements in art or literature, anything indeed which may be of interest to the citizens of other countries occupied with problems like our own.<sup>3</sup>

It sought, therefore, to paint an image of the UK with a broad brush, defining British culture in terms of the “life and thought” of the country and not merely in the restricted sense of the arts. However, since *Britain To-day* was conceived of as a response to German propagandists, concern with refuting anti-British propaganda led it to adopt a defensive tone.<sup>4</sup>

The outbreak of war gave *Britain To-day* a clearer purpose but also brought administrative uncertainty. It seemed at first that the British Council and its publications would be absorbed by the newly formed MoI. However, after having been transferred to the MoI at the start of the war, within a few months *Britain To-day* was moved back to the British Council, which was assigned the task of dealing with cultural and educational topics, leaving war “publicity” and political propaganda to the ministry.<sup>5</sup> In practice, the line of demarcation between the two bodies was difficult to establish; despite this, or perhaps because of it, the

council's chairman, Lord Lloyd, was determined to prevent the then Minister of Information, Sir John Reith, from curtailing the actions of the council.

Although the MoI had ceded control of *Britain To-day* to the British Council (operating under the aegis of the FO), Lloyd was conscious of the fact that “*Britain To-day* was in fact, though not in name, ‘Britain at War’ in that it attempted to paint a picture of the life of this country in war-time.” As such he feared that Reith would insist that *Britain To-day* be restricted entirely to cultural subjects, thus limiting its appeal. Indeed, without articles of “topical war interest” the magazine risked becoming unsuitable for its task in the eyes of embassy officials who assured its distribution.<sup>6</sup> While the MoI continued to press the council to relinquish its activities in the field of press and broadcasting, *Britain To-day* was specifically excluded from the negotiations.<sup>7</sup> Subsequently, the MoI appeared content to leave the running of *Britain To-day* to the British Council, though it did make occasional suggestions of suitable topics.<sup>8</sup>

The German invasion of France and the Low Countries in spring 1940 brought an end to both the phoney war and the Chamberlain government. Churchill's invitation to Lord Lloyd to join his new cabinet as Secretary of State for the Colonies strengthened the British Council's position. At the same time, the editor of *Britain To-day*, Maurice Ashley, left to join the army and was replaced in June 1940 with the journalist and literary critic Rolfe Arnold Scott-James. Scott-James had previously edited the *London Mercury* which, like many cultural periodicals, had ceased publication shortly after the outbreak of war. Scott-James would play a major role in determining the voice of *Britain To-day* until it finally ceased publication in December 1954.

The occupation of much of Europe by Germany led to a dramatic drop in circulation for *Britain To-day* which, however, was soon offset by its expansion in the United States. Americans had had their first taste of *Britain To-day* at the New York World Fair in 1939 and the magazine was subsequently distributed by the BLI in the same city. As the war intensified, so did British attempts to win over American public opinion, while ostensibly adhering to the

official policy of “no propaganda” in the United States. Although active American support had become more vital than ever, this need was matched by a rise in American fears of being manipulated by foreign propaganda.<sup>9</sup> Hence the FO and MoI’s extreme caution when addressing US public opinion. Various methods were employed, including encouraging British writers to undertake lecture tours in the United States, tailoring BBC programs to US tastes, and increasing the production of British books and articles published in the United States.<sup>10</sup> Official involvement in such projects was kept to a minimum so that writers could plausibly claim to be simply meeting American demands for their written and spoken material.

In the summer of the 1940, as Britain began to experience its first air raids, British propagandists expanded their efforts to direct factual information to the United States which would elicit both sympathy and respect for the British war effort. A more direct approach was adopted, notably with the launch of the BBC’s North American Service in July 1940.<sup>11</sup> The launch of *Bulletins from Britain* in August 1940 similarly sought to open a new channel for information of a more official nature. This newsletter carried short texts on the British war effort, taken from the cables and mail sent to British officials in the United States. It was distributed from the BLI and was, as Wheeler-Bennett later recalled, intended to “convey factual information to an unselected mailing list.”<sup>12</sup>

Shortly after the launch of *Bulletins from Britain*, the BLI also increased its monthly order of *Britain To-day* to 8,000 issues which it distributed across the United States. *Britain To-day* also compiled its own list of a further 6,000 addresses of individuals and institutions to which it sent the magazine. Such was the success of *Britain To-day* that by the end of the year the United States was its biggest market with a circulation of 22,000, a figure which the director of the BLI expected to rise.<sup>13</sup> Both publications were distributed free of charge, bearing the stamp of the BLI. Although the official origin of *Bulletins from Britain* was made explicit, *Britain To-day* only carried the address of the BLI with no mention of the British Council.

Given the success of *Britain To-day* and the BLI's involvement in increasing its circulation, it may be wondered why *Bulletins from Britain* was deemed necessary. By 1940, *Britain To-day* had developed into a more sophisticated fortnightly production, with a cover by Paul Nash, sixteen pages of text and eight pages of illustration. All the articles, except for the editorial, were signed, frequently by men and occasionally by women with established reputations, whether as journalists and critics (Dilys Powell, Ivor Brown), academics (Prof. Ernest Barker), writers (Laurence Binyon) or experts in other specialized fields (Sir William Bragg, Patrick Abercrombie). With an average of four articles, each four pages long, including the editorial, *Britain To-day* sought to cover a limited number of topics in some depth. *Bulletins from Britain* was an entirely different proposition. Published weekly, it consisted of only five pages: most of the texts were anonymous and were only a few paragraphs long; longer two-page articles occasionally carried a byline but none were by famous authors.

In terms of content, almost half of *Britain To-day* was dedicated to cultural topics with the remainder split evenly between articles dealing with the war and the armed forces, and those dealing with the home front. *Bulletins from Britain* barely concerned itself at all with cultural matters and was focused purely on the war. However, like *Britain To-day*, it offered roughly equal space to the armed forces and the home front. To a large extent the two publications reflected the separation of political from cultural propaganda. In practice, though, there was much overlap. The earliest issues of *Bulletins from Britain* were dominated by the air war, covering such topics as the role of Empire and Polish pilots, the use of US aircraft, and German losses. This is hardly surprising given that its launch came at the height of the Battle of Britain. *Britain To-day* also devoted its mid-September editorial to the subject of air raids, both against and by Britain. Its August editorials may also fairly be described as war propaganda dealing with the blockade of Germany, in particular the interests of the neutral nations, and British

morale. The latter text ended with a declaration aimed at convincing sympathetic readers in neutral countries, predominantly the United States, of the importance of their support:

The British people are sure of the rightness of their cause and fortified by it. Millions of people in the conquered countries are no less sure of it, and the power of public opinion among neutrals is a spiritual asset of incalculable worth. To the British people immense material force is not lacking. Animated by moral force it will be irresistible.<sup>14</sup>

Concerning the home front, *Britain To-day* tended to present somewhat technical explanations, detailing, for example, the organization of the Local Defence Volunteers or the treatment of civilian casualties from air raids; while *Bulletins from Britain* placed more emphasis on the theme of Britain “carrying on” despite the Blitz.<sup>15</sup> All of these articles highlighted British unity and the emergence of a “new spirit.” *Britain To-day*’s cultural articles went further, for example by criticizing the class tradition of English education and anticipating how the breaking down of class divisions during the war would lead to the emergence of a “more unified, extended and deeper purpose in the whole education system” after the war. This article can be seen as a precursor of the material produced by both the MoI and the British Council from 1942 onwards which placed increasing emphasis on the postwar reform in the fields of welfare, housing, and education.<sup>16</sup> Finally, both *Britain To-day* and *Bulletins from Britain* carried articles on wartime theater featuring the presence of American drama in Britain, thereby drawing attention to a shared Anglo-American culture.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the fact that *Britain To-day* had to address a wider international audience, it purveyed broadly the same messages as *Bulletins from Britain*, which were clearly tailored to counter US doubts about the UK’s ability to resist Nazi aggression and its suitability as a potential ally. More significant were the differences in form and style between the two publications, indicative of the readers each sought to address. *Britain To-day* had from the outset been aimed at “those who count” and, without being fully highbrow, tended to be more

intellectual.<sup>18</sup> As such it suited the purpose of the BLI, which had traditionally served the “academic and literary field.” However, this approach was criticized by more recently appointed propagandists who convinced Lord Lothian, the UK ambassador to the United States, that the BLI was struggling to adapt to its new role as the nerve center of British propaganda in the United States. The launch of *Bulletins from Britain*, and the expansion of *Britain To-day* in the United States, coincided with a shift in British policy marked by the launch of a new British Press Service in the autumn of 1940. However, the library remained under the aegis of the FO and continued to facilitate the “supply of information to academic and cultural institutions and to the general public,” which included the distribution of these periodicals.<sup>19</sup>

*Bulletins from Britain* failed to impress FO officials back in London who, by 1941, were already discussing whether Angus Fletcher, the director of the BLI, should take steps to improve it. The problem was partly one of staff, since Fletcher was thought to lack “the right people to produce a readable publication of the kind required.”<sup>20</sup> *Britain To-day* also came in for criticism, with the head of the FO’s North American Division concluding “it is common ground that the two publications now issued in the USA under HMG’s auspices are dreary in the extreme and do our cause little good.”<sup>21</sup> Their doubts appeared to be confirmed by a memorandum produced by the press committee of the interventionist American Defense, Harvard Group, which criticized *Britain To-day* for being “wordy” (this was also a common criticism of many of the MOI’s earlier publications) and “filled with an all-out optimism.” The fundamental problem was that it was not written with an American reader in mind: “The editorials might be interesting to an Englishman or a colonial, but they have no interest for an American reader. If *Britain To-day* is specifically intended for the Empire and not for the United States, then a similar bulletin, tailored for American consumption, should be worked out.”<sup>22</sup>

The FO had already reached the same conclusion earlier in the year and had thrown its weight behind a proposal for a new magazine by a South African publisher serving in the



Canada Corps, Norman Kark, who also had experience of the United States. Kark provided further evidence of the unsuitability of *Bulletins from Britain* and *Britain To-day*, claiming that members of the Canadian Corps with working experience of US newspapers to whom he had shown the publications agreed they could “serve no useful purpose.” Kark argued that American readers were “nauseated by the present uplift type of article” which should be replaced by more “indirect propaganda” based on “reader interest and entertainment value.” Kark’s projected magazine was to be designed for American readers and marketed as “a sincere effort to cement the friendship of the two English Speaking Nations.”<sup>23</sup> An outline of the magazine comprised digests and reprinted articles as well as specially commissioned texts and included cartoons, jokes, and sketches which all contributed to a livelier tone.

Kark’s credentials were drawn from his experience publishing a magazine entitled *Courier*, described by the FO as being produced in a “bright” and “semi-American” style. *Courier* differed from *Britain To-day* and *Bulletins from Britain* in the emphasis it placed on high-quality photographs and illustrations and its inclusion of sections dedicated to humor, cinema, and fashion. This, combined with its lack of faith in the BLI’s ability to produce an appropriate magazine, led the FO to invite the MoI to consider scrapping the existing publications in favor of Kark’s new project provisionally entitled *Britain Calling*. The MoI did not show the same level of enthusiasm, fearing that the new publication would be too much like *Courier*, but promising to seek Kark’s advice if *Britain To-day* and *Bulletins from Britain* were to be amalgamated. There is no evidence that the MoI ever contacted Kark but his ideas would later resurface.

### A New Approach

By the end of 1941, *Britain To-day*’s circulation in the United States had reached 40,000. At the request of the BLI, it was decided that *Britain To-day* should be placed on sale. This offered a means not only to reduce costs but also to remove the taint of propaganda associated with free

distribution. In January 1942 *Britain To-day* was launched at the price of 10 cents and with a new look intended to make the magazine more attractive. Henceforth, *Britain To-day* would be a 28-page monthly with more illustrations, extra articles, and book reviews. The editorial accompanying the first such issue suggested a shift away from a straightforward “projection of Britain” approach in favor of a more reciprocal exchange:

Robert Louis Stevenson used to say that he liked to think of his books as circular letters written to his friends. That is how we like to think of *Britain To-day*. . . . Friendship implies intellectual intercourse. Each side wants to know what the other has to tell, and to give back his story in return.<sup>24</sup>

This was not, however, the kind of bright and breezy publication *Britain To-day*’s critics had had in mind, but aimed to resemble a worthy, upper middlebrow cultural review along the lines of the *London Mercury*, the defunct magazine formerly edited by Scott-James.<sup>25</sup> Indeed the war news of the earlier format gave way to articles relating to social issues, education (the subject of a series which ran throughout 1942), and reconstruction. Following the US entry into the war in December 1941, the conflict itself was henceforth described as a war for democracy, defined by *Britain To-day* as “not a national, but an international conception,” citing Abraham Lincoln to justify this claim.<sup>26</sup> Increasing emphasis was placed on the international dimension of reconstruction and on the importance of “winning the peace.”<sup>27</sup>

*Britain To-day*’s attempts to develop its subscription base were disrupted by a major reorganization of British publicity in the United States which effectively placed responsibility in the hands of the MoI. In May 1942 the BLI was amalgamated with the British Press Service and its functions assumed by British Information Services (BIS), which took over the BLI’s mailing lists.<sup>28</sup> It thus fell to BIS to send out the first promotion letters, which brought in about 3000 paying subscribers. However, when Scott-James asked BIS to carry on promotion of *Britain To-day* by sending free copies to suitable people, BIS agreed to do so but only on a

limited scale due to lack of staff. The British Council suspected that the real reason for BIS's lack of commitment to *Britain To-day* was because it preferred to invest its energy in its own publications. Given the unwillingness of BIS to promote *Britain To-day*, Scott-James received permission to engage a commercial firm to take charge of its distribution in the United States. An agreement was reached with the Toronto office of the publisher Dent's, which had already taken over responsibility for the printing of the North American edition using molds sent from the UK. This did not however fully resolve the issue as BIS only sent Dent's the list of paying subscribers but not of those who had failed to renew.<sup>29</sup>

Lack of access to the BIS's mailing list proved a major obstacle to the development of sales in the United States. This was made particularly acute given the political sensitivity about the distribution of unsolicited material. Suggestions that complimentary copies of *Britain To-day* might be sent to American officials or that British Consuls might identify potential subscribers were discouraged by both the FO and BIS.<sup>30</sup> The ambiguous status of *Britain To-day* complicated matters: BIS refused to share its mailing lists with a commercial house while drawing attention to the need to respect US regulation of foreign propaganda.<sup>31</sup> Despite its attempt to remarket itself as a commercial periodical, the development of sales of *Britain To-day* remained constrained by the fact that ultimately it was a semi-official publication produced using public funds with the aim of influencing public opinion. Indeed, Dent's was obliged to submit details of all its publications produced for foreign principals, including *Britain To-day*, under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (1938). These records testify to the fact that *Britain To-day* failed to convert its circulation of free issues into a significant subscription base as documents filed for 1943 and 1944 give its average monthly circulation as only 2,200 (although this figure does not appear to include copies distributed by BIS).<sup>32</sup> BIS finally agreed to re-circularize its entire mailing list to promote *Britain To-day* in the summer of 1944, but there is no evidence that this had a significant impact on sales.<sup>33</sup>

The MoI was not in fact certain that BIS possessed a separate mailing list for *Britain To-day* and it is possible that the same list was used to distribute *Bulletins from Britain*. If this was indeed the case, those readers of *Britain To-day* who had decided not to subscribe when the magazine ceased free distribution would have continued to receive *Bulletins from Britain*. This would offer a further explanation as to why BIS did not wish to share this mailing list with Dent's. Moreover, as was noted by the British Council, at the same time that BIS was pleading lack of staff to justify its failure to promote *Britain To-day*, it was also planning to launch a new publication. BIS commissioned a poll of *Bulletins from Britain*'s readers by a commercial subsidiary of Gallup to determine what improvements needed to be made.<sup>34</sup> As a result, *Bulletins from Britain* was scrapped and replaced with a new publication, entitled simply *Britain*. Launched in November 1942, *Britain* was modelled on the hugely successful *Reader's Digest*.<sup>35</sup> It carried condensed versions of previously published texts, poetry, and fiction, and transcripts of speeches as well as specially commissioned texts. It also included jokes, cartoons and quizzes, and overall bore a close resemblance to the sort of publication suggested by Normal Kark in 1941. Indeed, like the projected *Britain Calling*, it was specifically marketed as seeking to strengthen Anglo-American relations, with a subtitle announcing, "Toward a greater knowledge and better understanding of America's allies, the people of Britain". As the United States had moved from the status of neutral nation to ally, the need was less for war news than for cultural propaganda aimed at fostering mutual comprehension. This was also the consequence of a new propaganda policy agreed by the FO and the MoI, which anticipated the need for Anglo-American cooperation in the postwar world.<sup>36</sup>

Both *Britain To-day* and *Britain* were concerned with educating their readers about Britain. However, *Britain* targeted a different audience from *Britain To-day* and the selection of articles in the UK was entrusted to the popular middlebrow author Phyllis Bentley.<sup>37</sup> John Wheeler-Bennett described it thus:

'Britain' was designed for popular consumption so that a non-specialised audience would have an opportunity to read stories about Britain which by their emotional or dramatic appeal would imprint on their minds a picture of the British war effort.<sup>38</sup>

Like *Britain To-day*, *Britain* was put on sale for 10 cents but was far more successful, building up a list of 84,000 subscribers by the following year.<sup>39</sup> This suggests that the new format adopted by *Britain* was generally more appealing to American readers than that of *Britain To-day*. Nevertheless, *Britain* also benefitted from more effective promotion and distribution by BIS. Indeed, John Wheeler-Bennett would later claim that by 1943, BIS possessed "the only efficient machine in America for distributing information concerning Britain."<sup>40</sup>

At sixty-eight pages, *Britain* was longer and more varied in its style and content than *Britain To-day*. The first number relied heavily on extracts from a book published by Harper entitled *London Calling*, edited by the novelist Storm Jameson.<sup>41</sup> *London Calling* had itself been discreetly solicited by the MoI and was intended to foster Anglo-American friendship.<sup>42</sup> Extracts included poems by John Masefield, Walter de la Mare, and Dorothy L. Sayers, a short story by Rose Macaulay, and reflections on the interwar period by Harold Butler, the head of BIS, who had also published in *Britain To-day*. The latter article, which anticipated the emergence of "a new kind of society" which would "safeguard rights" and "exact obligations" resembled those published by *Britain To-day*.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, *Britain To-day*'s editorial of the same month, November 1942, struck a similar note to Butler arguing that the expansion of education was essential to equip every individual to "fulfil his duties as a public-spirited citizen."<sup>44</sup> Although *Britain* carried weighty and informative articles, the overall tone was leavened by the inclusion of humor and fiction. Moreover, semi-fictional accounts dramatized the experiences of those serving on Atlantic convoys, refurbishing ships or in munitions factories. The content was much closer to what the Harvard Group had called for back in 1941. *Britain To-day*, however, continued to publish articles such as "Shopkeepers or Humanists" by Gilbert Murray,

celebrating the “old aristocratic tradition” of humanism, which was exactly the type of rather smug article that the Harvard Group had criticized.<sup>45</sup>

The war remained the primary focus of *Britain* particularly through first-hand accounts, whether of a family returning to their blast-damaged house or that of a secret agent parachuted into France.<sup>46</sup> Every issue contained an article written by a member of the armed forces while the accompanying photographs often included action shots of combat at sea or, later, soldiers liberating France. This continued until the final issue in April 1945. In the months following D-Day, *Britain To-day*, however, preferred to focus on questions such as the humanitarian aid delivered in liberated Europe.<sup>47</sup> In the final year of war, the magazine was particularly preoccupied with the postwar order and published a number of articles arguing for the need for international cooperation in order to ensure a lasting peace.<sup>48</sup> To a certain extent, *Britain To-day* was already carving out a new post-conflict role for itself as an advocate of cultural internationalism.

Magazines were considered an important vector for British propaganda in the United States, which is unsurprising given the dominance of this form of media in mid-twentieth century America.<sup>49</sup> Although British policy stipulated that British information in the United States had to be honest and factual, the different bodies involved in producing British magazines disagreed as to their form and content. In the early years of the war, when the United States was still neutral, *Britain To-day* and *Bulletins from Britain* both provided free news about the British war effort distributed through the BLI, with the former laying greater emphasis on cultural matters. However, both magazines were criticized for being ill-adapted to an American readership. The FO failed in its attempt to merge the publications into a new magazine targeting the American public and it was left to the British Council and the MoI to make their own changes. *Britain To-day* developed into a cultural periodical aimed at a small elite readership with a greater interest in promoting postwar reconstruction projects than in carrying news of

the war. *Britain*, launched in November 1942, was modelled on popular mass-circulation American magazines and informed its readers about the British war effort through a combination of factual and fictionalized accounts. *Britain* was by far and away the most successful British propaganda magazine in terms of circulation, though it is unclear to what extent this was due to its innate virtues given the fact that it was the only such magazine to benefit from the effective organization of the BIS.

Despite their differences, *Britain To-day* and *Britain* were both placed on sale in 1942 in an attempt to pass for commercial publications. Both magazines increasingly described themselves as seeking to inform their American readers about Britain in the interests of mutual comprehension. Although at the beginning of the war, the cultural propaganda produced by the British Council seemed destined to disappear, in reality the war created a need for this type of approach to convince potential allies that Britain was deserving of support. Once the United States had joined the war as the United Kingdom's ally, the need for greater understanding only grew. It would therefore be inaccurate to distinguish the magazines along the lines of cultural propaganda (British Council) versus political propaganda (MoI) since both were concerned with presenting a positive image of British culture and way of life. However, *Britain's* emphasis on the war, meant that it was ultimately ill-suited to continue publication in the postwar period, unlike *Britain To-day*. Nevertheless, the reason *Britain To-day* outlived *Britain* was primarily an administrative one: while the MoI was converted into the Central Office of Information after the war, the British Council continued to function under its royal charter as a semi-independent organization and as such it was able to maintain its publications. Yet arguably *Britain To-day*, with its limited circulation and problems of distribution, as well as its rather 1930s feel, was badly placed to survive in the competitive world of American postwar magazines. It ceased publication in 1954 without ever reaching the circulation figures enjoyed by *Britain*.

## Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> FARA Report to Congress 1945–1949, [https://www.fara.gov/reports/Archive/1945-1949\\_FARA.pdf](https://www.fara.gov/reports/Archive/1945-1949_FARA.pdf), p. 323 (accessed September 13, 2017).
  - <sup>2</sup> For more on the British Council’s wartime role in the United States, see Alice Byrne, “The British Council and Cultural Propaganda in the United States, 1938–1945,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 11:3 (2013), 249–63. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14794012.2013.814386>
  - <sup>3</sup> “Foreword,” *Britain To-day* 1, March 17, 1939, p. 1.
  - <sup>4</sup> M. C. H. and R. H. J., “Britain To-day: A Council Periodical in War and Peace,” *British Council Monthly Review*, November 1947, p. 171, The National Archives (hereafter TNA), BW 119/2.
  - <sup>5</sup> A. J. S. White, *The British Council: The First Twenty-five Years, 1934–1959* (London: British Council, 1965), pp. 30–31.
  - <sup>6</sup> Lord Lloyd, March 7, 1940, TNA, BW 82/7.
  - <sup>7</sup> Frances Donaldson, *The British Council: The First Fifty Years* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1984), p. 72.
  - <sup>8</sup> Anonymous document relating negotiations with the MoI, March 1940, TNA, BW 82/7.
  - <sup>9</sup> For further details see Nicholas Cull, *Selling War: The British Propaganda Campaign against American “Neutrality” in World War II* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) and Susan A. Brewer, *To Win the Peace: British Propaganda in the United States during World War II* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).
  - <sup>10</sup> Robert L. Calder, *Beware the British Serpent: The Role of writers in British Propaganda in the United States 1939–1945* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004), pp. 151–53 and 207; Brewer, *To Win the Peace*, p. 49.
  - <sup>11</sup> Calder, *Beware the British Serpent*, p. 207; Brewer, *To Win the Peace*, p. 49.
  - <sup>12</sup> John Wheeler-Bennett, “History of British Information in the USA,” p. 63, TNA, F0 953/7.
  - <sup>13</sup> British Council Quarterly Reports, TNA, BW 82/9.
  - <sup>14</sup> Editorial, “The Will to Victory,” *Britain To-day* 33, August 1940, p. 3.
  - <sup>15</sup> Colonel Lord Gorell, “Local Defence Volunteers,” *Britain To-day* 33, August 1940, G. B. Shirlaw, “Air Rad Precautions: The Treatment of Casualties,” *Britain To-day* 36, September 1940; “London Carrying on Between the Raids,” *Bulletins from Britain* 3, “British Courage” and “The Fortress of England,” *Bulletins from Britain* 4.
  - <sup>16</sup> Kenneth Lindsay, “British Education – Past and Future,” *Britain To-day* 33, August 1940, pp. 4–7.
  - <sup>17</sup> Ashely Dukes, “Repertory and Little Theatres in War-time,” *Britain To-day* 34, August 1940, pp. 9–12; “Shakespeare and Sheridan,” *Bulletins from Britain* 1, p. 4.
  - <sup>18</sup> M. C. H. and R. H. J., “Britain To-day.”
  - <sup>19</sup> Wheeler-Bennett, “History of British Information in the USA,” pp. 14–15, TNA, F0 953/7.
  - <sup>20</sup> Minute by J. Balfour, May 27, 1941, TNA, FO 371/26185.
  - <sup>21</sup> Minute by T. North Whitehead, May 27, 1941, TNA, FO 371/26185.
  - <sup>22</sup> Memorandum by the press committee, American Defence, Harvard Group, October 30, 1941. This document was produced overnight at the demand of T. North Whitehead and the writers later expressed regret at what they had written. Nonetheless, North Whitehead considered the memorandum expressed a genuine and widespread feeling of irritation with England. T. North Whitehead, November 15, 1941, TNA, FO 371/26188.
  - <sup>23</sup> Kark to Darvall, MoI, May 15, 1941, TNA, FO 371/26185.
  - <sup>24</sup> Editorial, “A Circular Letter,” *Britain To-day* 69, January 1942, pp. 1–2.
  - <sup>25</sup> According to J. M. Huculak, the *London Mercury*’s specificity was its ability to serve as a meeting place for the highbrow and middlebrow. J. Matthew Huculak, “The London Mercury (1919–1939) and Other Moderns,” in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines: Vol. I, Britain and Ireland 1880–1955*, eds. P. Brooker and A. Thacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 257.
  - <sup>26</sup> Editorial, “Everyman,” *Britain To-day* 70, February 1942, p. 2.



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- 27 For example, Harold Butler, "British Reconstruction," *Britain To-day* 71, March 1942; Editorial, "Collaboration," *Britain To-day* 75, July 1942.
- 28 Wheeler-Bennett, "History of British Information in the USA," pp. 50–55, TNA, FO 953/7.
- 29 Kennedy-Cooke, British Council to Gurney, FO, May 7, 1944, TNA, FO 370/890.
- 30 Darvall MoI to Gurney FO, June 21, 1944; Gurney to Kennedy-Cooke BC, July 6, 1944, TNA, FO 370/890.
- 31 Darvall MoI to Scott-James, May 15, 1944, TNA, FO 370/890.
- 32 FARA Report to Congress 1942–1944, [https://www.fara.gov/reports/Archive/1942-1944\\_FARA.pdf](https://www.fara.gov/reports/Archive/1942-1944_FARA.pdf), pp. 312–13.
- 33 Exchange between MoI, BIS, and Scott-James, May–June 1944, TNA, FO 370/890.
- 34 Wheeler-Bennett, "History of British Information in the USA," p. 63. TNA, FO 953/7.
- 35 Phyllis Bentley, "*O Dreams, O Destinations*" *An Autobiography* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1962), p. 231.
- 36 Brewer, *To Win the Peace*, pp. 88–91.
- 37 *Ibid.*, pp. 69.
- 38 Wheeler-Bennett, "History of British Information in the USA," p. 63. TNA, FO 953/7.
- 39 TNA, INF 1/102.
- 40 Wheeler-Bennett, "History of British Information in the USA," p. 64. TNA, FO 953/7.
- 41 *Britain* 1, November 1942.
- 42 Calder, *Beware the British Serpent*, p. 158.
- 43 Harold Butler, "The Issue," *Britain* 1, November 1942, p. 22.
- 44 Editorial, "Citizens in the Making," *Britain To-day* 79, November 1942, p. 3.
- 45 Gilbert Murray, "Shopkeepers or Humanists," *Britain To-day* 79, November 1942, p. 5.
- 46 Phyllis Lovell, "It's Good to Come Home," pp. 15–19 and anonymous, "I was a Secret Agent in France," pp. 26–18, *Britain* V:6, April 1945.
- 47 For example, Denys Val Baker, "Post-war Relief," *Britain To-day* 103, November 1944; Editorial, "The Renaissance of Europe," *Britain To-day* 105, January 1945.
- 48 For example: A. L. Goodhart, "International Law and English Law," *Britain To-day* 98, June 1944; Editorial, "At the Cross-Roads," *Britain To-day* 99, July 1944; Editorial, "The Third Act," *Britain To-day* 108, April 1945; Editorial, "Before War, and After," *Britain To-day* 111, July 1945.
- 49 David E. Sumner qualified the twentieth century as "a magazine century and an American magazine century without a doubt." *The Magazine Century: American Magazines Since 1900* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), p. 2.