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# Radio, the Home Front, and Official/Unofficial Cultures in Britain during the Second World War<sup>1)</sup>

Yu Nagashima

## 0. Introduction

This article discusses major and minor BBC radio features and dramas and a radiogenic novel relating to the British home front during the Second World War. It analyses these wartime products through the framework of *the official culture* and *the unofficial culture* in Britain at the time and argues that these works uniquely bridged these two war cultures and acted as an important medium between authorities and civilians. The article first analyses the propagandist roles in the British war effort played by BBC radio features and dramas, in line with studies such as Siân Nicholas's *The Echo of War: Home Front Propaganda and the Wartime BBC, 1939–45* (1996), Julian Potter's *Stephen Potter at the BBC: "Features" in War and Peace* (2004), and Ian Whittington's *Writing the Radio War: Literature, Politics and the BBC, 1939–1945* (2018), and then contrasts them with unofficial elements in BBC radio features and dramas and a radiogenic novel.

During the Second World War, as Patrick Deer influentially formulates it in his *Culture in Camouflage: War, Empire, and Modern British Literature* (2009), “the official war culture” forced war writers and their culture into “the shadow” (3); in Adam Piette’s words, “the public stories” overshadowed, invaded, and wished to transform “the private stories [and] imagination” of war writers (5). The official culture, represented by propaganda, speeches, cinema, war poetry, reportage, etc., proclaimed the heroism and stoicism among soldiers and civilians; the solidarity of people, the nation, the Empire, the Allies, and Anglo-American relations; justice against the evil enemy; and connections to tradition, history, and so on (Deer 2–4; Piette 4–5). Despite the commanding perspective, the official culture “overlook[ed] as much as [it] over[saw]” when it dealt with the chaotic essence of the war, with officials providing “unofficial” subjects for war writers in the shadows (Deer 4). In Mark Rawlinson’s words, “a top-down perspective underplays the importance of values and symbols disseminated in civil culture to the prosecution of war” (2–3), and in Max Hastings’ words, “only a tiny number of national leaders and commanders knew much about anything beyond their immediate line of sight” (xviii).

The unofficial culture, comprised of novels, short stories, ephemeral or personal writing like letters and diaries, etc. expressed shattered minds, profound depression, loss of any sense of values of the people, fear and satire about the society, chaos and fissures in the society, and so on, with writers involving themselves in what Elizabeth Bowen called “resistance writing” (Deer 3, 10; Piette 5; Bowen 220). As Rawlinson argues, war writers are “both critical of the content and vehicles of [the] legitimization [of violence as the means to some desirable or necessary end in the official culture], and fully implicated in the reproduction and invention of alternative justifications of violence” (3). The writers in the shadow occasionally

experienced blackouts (temporary loss of consciousness, sight, or memory) against the official war culture, confronting “the disturbing consequences of futuristic technologies of violence for memory, collective and individual” (Deer 3). Unlike the soaring viewpoints of the official culture, the views of the unofficial culture were fragmented, dislocated, disoriented, earth-bound, and haunted by the dead, ghosts, dreams, daydreams, and nightmares (Deer 10, 54, 151–91; Bowen 219, 221). The hearing of the writers of the unofficial culture such as Virginia Woolf were disturbed by the noise of battles, bombs, and hollow propaganda (Deer 2; Piette 10, 177–78).

Yet the official and unofficial war cultures/narratives are not poles apart but rather permeable to each other to different degrees. This article therefore employs the two terms, the *official* and the *unofficial*, as convenient labels to denote types of material: while the *official* represents elements such as the commanding views of war scenes; the heroism, stoicism, and calmness of civilians and combatants; and the solidarity of Britain, the British Empire, and the Allied Nations; the *unofficial* admits the elements which are normally excluded from the *official*, such as people’s downcast feelings, abnormal psychological states, damage and losses, the dead and ghosts, and oppressive noise. The two war cultures occasionally moved closer to each other by letting one take in some elements of the other, such as by camouflaging one with some elements of the other.

There were various cases of the collision and cooperation of the official and unofficial cultures during the Second World War. Technical innovations like photography and radio enabled the authorities to recapture every aspect of the war, including those aspects included in the unofficial war culture (Deer 25). Mass-Observation, the organisation which was sending reports to the Ministry of Information but never had any “official security protecting [its] offices from enemy infiltration” during the war, represented the two

cultures, investigating “topics like hygiene, dreams, and facial hair trends as well as more official concerns about propaganda and rationing” (Miller 21–22; Mellor 90). The war machine occasionally produced as a medium between the state and citizens a culture which not only represented the war from a controlling perspective but also tried to cure the broken minds of the civilians and soldiers with an eye to remobilising them. The official culture also attempted to heal the haunted home front by appeasing or winning over the dead and ghosts. Masking its brutal nature, the official culture struggled to bridge the traumatic gap between the civilians on the home front and the combatants in the battlefields and the rift between the overseeing perspective of the commanders and the dislocated perspective of the combatants (Deer 5).

Radio, a medium possessing contradictory natures, had the potential for mediating between the two war cultures. Radio is “both public and private” (Dinsman 19); it honours requests from officials while reflecting the feelings of the listeners, the civilians, and aims to reach a broad public and speak to the consciousness of each listener privately at the same time; accordingly, the subjects for radio programmes vary from grand to banal ones. Radio is “a tool and an obstacle for communication” (Dinsman 19–20); even though it instantly delivers programmes to a mass audience, its one-sided communication establishes a consociation of isolated listeners, not a congregation of them (Cantril and Allport 21). Radio invokes “both presence and absence” (Dinsman 20); it was a ubiquitous communication tool for uniting people, but the broadcasters behind it were always invisible and intangible for listeners, which makes them feel like it is an occult tool or a spiritual medium. Required to represent public and private subjects to large and small audiences who were both united and dispersed, wartime radio broadcasts contributed to arbitrating between the two war cultures.

BBC radio broadcasts combined official and unofficial narratives to

different degrees along a spectrum of possibilities. As to BBC features and dramas concerning the wartime home front in Britain, it is noticeable that they came to reflect the unofficial culture more markedly as the Blitz escalated. They also occasionally rejected elements considered too unofficial, which were scratched out in broadcast scripts, and, as in the case of James Hanley's programmes, explored in other art forms like novels. This article therefore shifts its discussion from the speeches, films, and radio programmes produced before the Blitz, which clearly represent the official culture, to the radio programmes and a radiogenic novel produced during and after the Blitz, which represent not only the official culture but also the unofficial culture, aiming to observe the contrast between the two war cultures.

In doing so, this article presents some valuable material of the BBC Written Archives Centre (abbreviated as BBC WAC hereafter) related to the British home front during the Second World War (references to BBC WAC material are given in the endnotes). The primary sources the article deals with, namely *The Home Front* series (1939–40), *The Land We Defend* series (1940), *The Stone Cry Out* series (1941), Hanley's "Return to Danger" (1942) and *No Directions* (1943) with his radio adaptation of it retitled "A Dream Journey" (1974), have not been fully discussed in scholarship; many instalments of the three feature series have never or rarely been mentioned. This article thus also aims to contribute to the study of these BBC programmes and Hanley's radiogenic novel.

### **1. Panorama and Close-Up of the United Nation and People before the Blitz**

National solidarity was a vital matter for Britain facing the imminent danger in the early stage of the Second World War. In his "The Choice"

speech at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, on 9 May 1938, Winston Churchill promoted all political parties, all religions, and all people at any posts to come together. Also, in his “The War of the Unknown Warriors”, a world broadcast on 14 July 1940, Churchill from a panoramic viewpoint called on “the British race in every part of the world” and “all [their] associated peoples” to strive in faith or in duty, strengthening the domestic and imperial solidarity against Germany (1: 233). Similar messages are found in his other wartime speeches and broadcasts, especially during the early years, when he had to encourage the British to fight on alone until great allies arrived.

While Churchill lifted national spirits with his rhetorical loftiness, J. B. Priestley’s evening broadcasts *Postscripts* in 1940 yielded plainer populist messages of collective effort in the People’s War, linking everyday life to the broader context of the war. In the instalment for *Postscript* on 16 June 1940, he shared with the listener “a powerful and rewarding sense of community” and “a feeling of deep continuity” he felt towards his locals while watching his village below on a hilltop while on duty with others at night on a post as a Local Defence Volunteer (9, 12). In his preface to *Postscripts* published as a book later in the same year, Priestley notes that this broadcasting seemed like “the method of a secret society”, apparently regarding radio broadcasts as an intensifier of people’s sense of community (v–vi).

The same subject matter was highlighted from the perspective of citizens by films at the beginning of the war. *The First Days* (1939), the first wartime documentary film to employ the theme of “the people’s war”, directed by Humphrey Jennings, Harry Watt, and Pat Jackson of the GPO Unit, illustrates the unity of Londoners in the first days of the war. The opening scene of the Sunday morning of 3 September 1939 shows people listening to Neville Chamberlain’s radio announcement of the outbreak of

the war with equanimity, and the film segues into shots of people at various posts working diligently for a single purpose. The radio here seemingly acts as an intensifier of the people's morale, sense of justice, sense of companionship, and their determination to carry on with their lives. The film propaganda also stresses that there was governmental intervention behind such preparatory scenes. *Spring Offensive* (1940), directed by Jennings and sponsored by the Ministry of Information, opens with the news on the wireless in September 1939 that the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries has appointed a War Agricultural Committee for each county in England and Wales and authorised these committees to be given a free hand to increase the production of food stuffs in their management areas. It is reported here that the Minister has also encouraged farmers "to trust the committees as friends and as men who know their job, and to have patience and understanding", adding that "[t]heir task is just as vital to national defence as that of the Armed Forces" (*Complete Jennings*).

BBC features were quick to follow this trend of the official culture. As Laurence Gilliam, the head of features, puts it in his article "Features in War", the BBC struggled during the early war years to accentuate people's "sense of union and companionship" in radio features.<sup>2)</sup> This objective was soon taken up by *The Home Front* series (broadcast from 30 September 1939), which reflected the voices of various ordinary people collected by BBC staff with mobile recording machines.<sup>3)</sup> Setting a high value on topicality, each programme of the series contains recordings which were taken several days or a week earlier;<sup>4)</sup> as explained in the opening of the first instalment, the instalments employ the "means of verbatim reports and records taken on the spot", which did not annoy the censor "if [they altered] one or two names of places".<sup>5)</sup> The series presented "a picture of millions of people with millions of different jobs but with only one purpose", turning a



spotlight on the people resolutely carrying on, from children evacuated from the cities, women engaged in various kinds of work, and a suburban family, to industrial workers like fishermen, farmers, steel-workers, and ship-builders.<sup>6</sup> The tone of each programme was carefully arranged to be uplifting overall by the writers and producers; for instance, Gilliam strongly advised Olive Shapley, who arranged and produced “Women in War” in the series, to lay more stress upon “the more courageous, as opposed to the more self-pitying, point of view” without distorting any facts.<sup>7</sup>

*The Home Front* series follows the official narrative by presenting the people who get accustomed to and live/work strenuously in their new environments while feeling some minor repercussions of the war. “Children in Billets” (No. 1) presents the evacuated children in billets in the countryside, who were at first frightened and timid but gradually came to get along with the other children, hosts, and visiting nurses, “breaking down the shyness” in the last scene with games and songs.<sup>8</sup> “Home Fires Burning” (No. 3), set “somewhere in Wales”, introduces various town people getting used to their new situations, like a father telling his son “you’ll serve your country quite as well feeding that conveyor down the pit as you will in any trench” and a woman of a knitting group who comically shares a story of her having been frightened by a dog and a man in the blackout, and positively wraps up with voices of the pitmen’s male choir in a chapel, resolutely “practising to give as many concerts this year as in previous years [. . .] to sing our way through this war”.<sup>9</sup> Two of *The Home Front* instalments focus on “the fictional Leversuch family”, supposedly based on the Mass Observation reports brought by Tom Harrison to Stephen Potter, the writer of the two programmes (Potter 33–36).<sup>10</sup> In “The Leversuch Family at War” (No. 2) and “The Leversuch Family in Billets” (No. 6) in the series, Fladd, the observer, watches his neighbours, the Leversuch Family, and takes note

of their conversations, occasionally having a chat with them. His observations sketch the family growing accustomed to new situations in wartime like the blackout, boredom during the Phoney War, and evacuation to the countryside, etc., while feeling slight inconvenience but little haunting fear.

*The Home Front* received a certain amount of cooperation from the King, the Government, and Ministries. Every programme in the series was sent to and approved by the concerned Ministries, often through the Ministry of Information.<sup>11)</sup> In “Harvest of the Sea” (No. 4), King George VI’s message to the President of the Board of Trade is quoted as saying that the task of the British Merchant Navy and the British fishing fleets are “no less essential to my people’s existence than that allotted to the Navy, Army, and Air Force”.<sup>12)</sup> In “Farming September 1939” (No. 5), a farmer who is a liaison with the Ministry of Agriculture mentions the Ministry’s food production campaign to get 1.5 million acres ploughed and crops grown for next year and stresses how every farmer contributes to it through a war agricultural executive committee in each county.<sup>13)</sup>

The subject of people’s unity and companionship was subsequently pursued from local perspectives in *The Land We Defend* series (broadcast from 11 July 1940) which presented what Gilliam calls “the values and beauties and loyalties that [were] for them the heart of the matter”.<sup>14)</sup> In the series, the voices of the North, Middle and South of England, the Highlands, the Lowlands, the Islands of Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and London reported their readiness to fight against the Germans, their victorious local history, and how they are now working for Britain. The producers selected actors and actresses “with genuine local colour in their voices” for this series.<sup>15)</sup> Like *The Home Front*, *The Land We Defend* was produced with a close connection with authorities. The whole series was strongly approved

by the Ministry of Information.<sup>16)</sup> In “Scotland” (No. 3), a quotation from the Declaration of Arbroath suggests the Scots in the past and at present were/are “delivered by [their] most mighty Prince, King and Lord” and to Him “bound for the defence of [their] liberty”.<sup>17)</sup> “Wales” (No. 4) presents a recording of David Lloyd George, who encourages the Welshmen by calling them songsters better than nightingales who sing under any circumstances.<sup>18)</sup>

However, it is notable that the series’ last programme “London” (No. 8, broadcast on 17 September 1940) changes its tone by mentioning blackouts, air raids, and the existence of ghosts haunting the city. The programme sweepingly depicts the beautiful nature and cultures of various districts in London in peacetime just like the other instalments and additionally presents people’s perseverance during the first weeks of the Blitz. Slightly unlike the official narrative discussed so far, one of the speakers H.G (Home Guard) has a feeling of disquiet in the silent dark city in an emergency:

H.G: Well, it was a very bright moon, wasn’t it? And I didn’t realise the streets were so empty, and that there would be no lights at all. It reminded me of cliffs in the moonlight — cliffs, and forests. And one or two buses going a tremendous lick, but scarcely a spark of light in them, so that they were almost invisible and seemed like ghosts.

PROF: It is possible they were ghosts . . . .

H.G: What’s that? The town seemed actually wild — almost uninhabited.<sup>19)</sup>

Yet later H.G not so much rejects as welcomes the ghosts haunting the historical crowded city. As suggested by this programme, and as will be suggested in the following two sections, radio features and dramas concerning the British home front started to reflect the unofficial culture more markedly as the Blitz escalated.

## **2. Resilience of Humans and Non-Humans under Fire**

The Blitz, which started on 7 September 1940, provided the official narrative with a new perspective to the people on the home front: a focus on their perseverance and intrepidity under fire. Churchill regarded “a million and a half men of the Home Guard”, “who [were] determined to fight for every inch of the ground in every village and in every street”, as just as important as the British forces in “The Crux of the Whole War”, a speech broadcast on 11 September 1940 (1: 255). He also reported the indomitable we-can-take-it spirit of the people he had seen during the first month of the Blitz in “The Air Raids on London”, a speech broadcast on 8 October 1940 (1: 268). In his speeches and broadcasts, however, Churchill did not focus on individuals but just on “people”, nor did he touch on their individual divergent feelings and thoughts, positive or negative, only collectively stressing the unyielding spirit of the people. He very occasionally explained the casualties and destruction suffered by Britain in numbers in a controlled manner, indicating that the deadliness of the attacks in the war were much less severe than for those of the First World War (1: 266–67).

The perseverance and the resilience of the people under fire are instead explored in Priestley’s personal perspective in his *Postscripts* programmes. In the 16 June 1940 instalment, for example, Priestley reported that while he had been on a post as a Local Defence Volunteer, “the preliminary talk” he had engaged in with locals, who had had the “habit of relating everything intimately to their own familiar background”, had given the “whole horrible business of air raids and threatened invasion a rustic, homely, almost comfortable atmosphere” (9–13). In the 26 September 1940 instalment, he shared his unforgettable experience of having found a small eating-house in his native city of Bradford, which had for forty-five years displayed in the

window a steaming “giant, almost superhuman, meat and potato pie with a magnificently brown, crisp, artfully wrinkled, succulent looking crust”, doing business as usual after a recent air-raid, as if to “successfully [defy] an air-raid to steam again” (81–85). Priestley actually mentions his despondent feelings in places in the programmes. He saw “an exquisite sky that might be loaded with death” when he came back to the reality outside of a cinema (14). He contrasts the “insecure and lunatic world of to-day” with “the safe and shining world of [his] childhood” he had in mind while seeing raided buildings in his hometown (82). Yet he did not stay with such unofficial, downcast feelings and thoughts of his or the people in the Blitz but eventually moved to and wrapped up with positive stories and comments, naturally lifting morale.

Official films on the Blitz follow this trend, similarly foregrounding people’s perseverance and resilience under fire with a special stress on their bravery. *London Can Take It!* (1940), directed by Watt and Jennings of the GPO Film Unit, produced for the Ministry of Information, for instance, represents the resilient heroism of the Londoners during the early days of the Blitz. Once an air-raid starts, the film cross-cuts between an army of volunteers, firemen, air-raid wardens, ambulance drivers, all fighting bravely in darkness, and people sleeping peacefully and fearlessly in shelters. The narrator reassures the viewer towards the end that there is “no panic, no fear, no despair” “nothing but determination, confidence and high courage” among Londoners and that therefore “London can take it!” (*Complete Jennings*). People’s endurance and resilience on the home front are also featured in *Christmas Under Fire* (1941), directed by Watt of the Crown Film Unit within the Ministry of Information, a film on the people celebrating Christmas in the Blitz conditions as cheerfully as possible. Its closing scene stresses the bravery and long tradition of England through a

Christmas carol sung by the choir of King's College, Cambridge, and a tracking shot of the shelterers on the underground platform: "today England stands unbeaten, unconquered, unafraid. On Christmas Eve, England does what England has done for a thousand years. She worships the Prince of Peace" (*GPO Film*). A greater heroism of the civilians on the home front is displayed in *Fires Were Started* (1943), a film directed by Jennings of the Crown Film Unit which dramatises the works of the Auxiliary Fire Service. The film eulogises the fine teamwork and the heroic achievement of a fire brigade, who controls the fire in Trinidad Street in the London docks. It also spotlights the personal heroism of a member, Jacko, who holds a lifeline while the injured man is lowered to the ground and chooses to fight a fire alone on the rooftop.

In response to this vogue, the BBC initiated a feature series *The Stones Cry Out* (broadcast from 5 May 1941), which carries the slogan, "The people stand firm. But the stones cry out". Dedicated to historical buildings in London and other parts of Britain which suffered damage or destruction from the Blitz, the series relates to domestic and overseas listeners the resilient socio-cultural history of the architecture and of the people related to them in the past and in 1941. It may have been Louis MacNeice who suggested the title, for the combination of stone and voice would be one of his natural expressions in wartime (Stallworthy 295–96). Actually, he exercised a leading function among the writers and producers, contributing nine programmes to the series.

*The Stones Cry Out* programmes follow the official culture in focalising on the civilians resolutely carrying on under the great difficulties. "Dr. Johnson Takes It" (No. 1) by MacNeice, which features the house of Samuel Johnson in Gough Square in London, allies the spirit of "taking it" in the civilians with the self-reliance and "colossal perseverance" of Johnson, who

wrote the English Dictionary “amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow”.<sup>20</sup>) In “Clydeside Tenement” (No. 3), an air raid destroys the houses of shipbuilders near the Clydeside shipyards but never demoralises a mother living there, who aims to build “better homes [...] while the men build ships.”<sup>21</sup>) The staff in “Guy’s Hospital” (No. 9) and “St Thomas Hospital” (No. 14) manage to treat casualties in air raids and eventually complete the evacuation of patients to the country. A working-class couple in “Their New Home” (No. 17) holds a wedding ceremony although the bride’s clothes and their new home are bombed.

*The Stones Cry Out* series also reflects the official narrative by uniquely encouraging the listener to have the imagination necessary to listen to the echoes of history, perseverance, and freedom emitted from the historical architecture against the noise of brutality and fascism of the Nazis. In “Westminster Abbey” (No. 4) by MacNeice, the main two speakers promote the listener to give ear to the echoes of “English history”, “Coronations”, “great men’s funerals”, “Matins and Vespers”, “everyday people praying and singing”, and “preachers preaching and reading the Lesson for the Day”, all reverberating in the abbey.<sup>22</sup>) In “St. Paul’s” (No. 8) also by MacNeice, Echo appears as a character and repeats after the main three speakers—Light Voice, Dark Voice and Cockney Voice—that “St. Paul’s cathedral [. . .] is still standing [. . .] The walls have mouths”.<sup>23</sup>) In its ending scene, as Emily C. Bloom explains (80–81), the voices of the speakers morph into the voices of the walls of the Whispering Gallery in the Cathedral and recite an assertion that the German bombings cannot quiet down the echoes of “Freedom”:

L.V: We are the walls of the Whispering Gallery.

D.V: We are the walls of Europe.

The words we repeat are the words of Freedom.

C.V: And anyone who puts his ear to the wall can hear them.

[. . .]

C.V: A whisper that grows and grows—

D.V:               and grows and grows to a roar,

C.V: That echoes from wall to wall and house to house,

L.V: From city to city and country to country,

D.V: From continent to continent. . . .<sup>24)</sup>

As a speaker calls the place a “telephone”, or as we might call it a radio station, the Whispering Gallery transmits the echoes of Freedom from “the heart of London” to houses, cities and countries around the world, which also seemingly propagate to the listeners all over the world the imagination to listen to non-human echoes and voices supporting the Allies.<sup>25)</sup>

*The Stones Cry Out* transmits not only the echoes and voices of historical buildings which help redeem their damage and losses but also the voices of the dead and ghosts, intriguing the listener’s spiritual senses, although the official narrative seemingly could not include such haunting and imaginative objects. The British state during the Second World War, unlike during the First World War (when paranormal beliefs also surged), provoked a battle against the ghosts on the home front (Deer 151–52). In 1942, a number of spiritualists and mediums were prosecuted in a new police campaign to “exorcise” the mediums, ghosts, and spirits that attempted to deceive people under the Witchcraft Act of 1735; the wave of prosecutions climaxed with the public scandal of Helen Duncan, a spiritual medium, who had disclosed the sinking of a British battleship HMS Barham in a public séance in 1941 while its loss remained a carefully-guarded secret and was sentenced to nine months’ imprisonment in 1944 (Nelson 165–66; cited in Deer 151–54).

However, the police’s efforts did little to blunt people’s interest in



spiritualism. According to Mass Observation, “a quarter of the population was gripped by paranormal beliefs,” their engrossment with horoscopes and the supernatural “encouraged by uncertainty and an enhanced sensitivity due to the blackout” (Gaskill 175; Deer 151). Air-raid forecasting by some mediums had considerable popularity; people of all creeds and classes started to attend Spiritualist churches’ services, despite the jeers from Catholics and others; a number of soldiers and sailors, and even certain generals from the War Office staff, joined the services and séances, showing their inherent open-mindedness about spiritualism (Gaskill 175). The authorities did not hesitate to take advantage of people’s preoccupation with spiritualism for propaganda purposes; a newspaper’s director instructed the paper’s astrologer “to take the line that Britain must expect heavy knocks now, but was sure of ultimate victory” (Calder 502; Deer 151). The official culture thus accepted the mediums, ghosts, and spirits who would help or would not disturb the British and expelled those who would deceive or disturb the people. *The Stones Cry Out* series was very sensitive to this point.

In line with the police campaign, “Westminster Abbey” of *The Stones Cry Out* tries not to awaken the ghosts and spirits that happen to deceive people. The programme’s two speakers are at first worried that the noise made by the Germans would “waken the dead [. . .] in the Abbey”;<sup>26)</sup> listening to the Preacher’s sermon, however, they come to pay more attention to the echoes of the dead Kings, Queens, political leaders, writers, etc. buried there and the ceremonies and funerals held there, not to their haunting voices. The preacher’s asking “the astrologers, the star-gazers, the monthly prognosticators” to stand up for the people sounds like getting them on the official culture’s side and precluding them from summoning the ghosts of the dead.<sup>27)</sup> Although the noise of bombing around the abbey gets

louder against the echoes, the speakers softly deny the appearance of ghosts and instead turn the listener's attention to the "dead[ness]" of the British civilians:

2nd SPEAKER: They [those buried in the abbey] can sleep through all this.

1st SPEAKER: Their jobs are done.

2nd SPEAKER: For they are dead.

1st SPEAKER: And we are alive,

2nd SPEAKER: Yet they in a sense are alive too,

1st SPEAKER: and we, in a sense, are dead—

PREACHER: For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.

1st SPEAKER: Dwelling in darkness in broken houses,

2nd SPEAKER: With empty windows like the sockets of skulls,

1st SPEAKER: In streets of rubble and charred beams,

2nd SPEAKER: Where the buildings are like dry bones[.]<sup>(28)</sup>

Hearing the Preacher's quotation from Psalm 143, they associate the blitzed buildings and the people living there in darkness with the dead. Yet, at the end of the sermon towards the end of the programme, the preacher implies the broken buildings can be restored and that the despondent people can be revived again, like the dry bones in the valley in *Ezekiel* in the Bible: "the breath came into them [bones] and they lived, and stood up upon their feet an exceeding great army."<sup>(29)</sup> "Westminster Abbey", therefore, rather seeks to heal the low-spirited living people to remobilise them as "an exceeding great army" without raising the haunting spirits of the dead.

Nevertheless, the ghosts wielded a stronger presence in the haunted home front, which made *The Stones Cry Out* programmes present the dead

and ghosts as the supporters of the British in parallel with the authorities who took advantage of the ingrained prevalence of spiritualism among the people. In “The Temple” (No. 18) by MacNeice, a British lawyer living in the Temple declares to Hitler that “the dead men still can strike” the Nazis, implying the ghosts who have some connection with the Temple—Shakespeare, Francis Drake, Knight Templars, etc.—stand behind the British.<sup>30)</sup> In “The Old Bailey” (No. 16), the dead as well as the living appear for the imaginary prosecution of Adolf Hitler before the ghost of the notorious “hanging judge” George Jeffreys at the central criminal court.<sup>31)</sup> In “Royal College of Surgeons” (No. 22) by MacNeice, an official of the institution writes a letter to the ghost of John Hunter to report that his collection of specimens in the college was destroyed by the Nazis; in answer to this letter, the ghosts of scientists and surgeons, including John Hunter, denounce Hitler at the microphone, but at the same time they try to “heal and rebuild” the Reich, suffering “gangrene”, “bacilli”, and “a malignant tumour”, with “antitoxins”, “preventive treatment”, and a “scalpel”.<sup>32)</sup> These descriptions would have assured the British listeners that the ghosts on the home front were on the British side and that they criticised no one but the enemy.

If the dead and ghosts do not haunt but rather help people, what matters more is to cure people’s dying spirit to remobilise them as “an exceeding great army”, as suggested in “Westminster Abbey”. “A Home in Belfast” (No. 26) by MacNeice suggests a solution to it, which is again related to listening to the echoes and voices of non-human objects. The protagonist of the programme, Eddie, a young man who returned to his ruined house on compassionate leave, feels hopeless with “the queer mad look in his eye”, living in “the age of destruction”; locals in Belfast, his home city, therefore, encourage him to listen to the resilient Voice of Belfast, comprised of sounds

of power looms, steam, and electricity, who speaks to him:

VOICE OF BELFAST: Line upon line, life goes on,  
Hour upon hour and day upon day,  
Hand over hand our life goes on.  
Bad upon good and good upon bad,  
Good to better and bad to worse,  
Fall as it may, our life goes on.  
Hitch upon hitch and blow upon blow,  
Week upon week or year upon year  
Or death upon death, our life goes on.<sup>33)</sup>

After arguing with the locals, Eddie falls asleep and conceivably sees a light of hope in his dream, possibly listening to the Voice of Belfast, as implied in the closing song “Blue Hills of Antrim”: “Down there in the city they dream in the night | Of a wonderful future, a vision of light, | And the hills up above with a murmur of streams—| The blue hills of Antrim approve of their dreams.”<sup>34)</sup> As Clair Wills points out, Eddie functions as one of the fictional listeners who may “interrupt, comment on or express scepticism about the propagandist intent of the features, allowing some of the weariness with morale-boosting war talk to be addressed openly” (199); yet, considering the resilient closing song, Eddie must have also encouraged the listener, being a good model for lifting one’s drooping spirit by listening to the resilient echoes and voices.

*The Stones Cry Out* series, thus, technically co-opts the dead and ghosts into the official narrative by turning the listener’s attention from them to the dying spirit of living people to remobilise them and encouraging the listener to listen to the voices of the dead and ghosts who support the British and of the resilient echoes of the architecture.

### 3. Dreams and Daydreams of Solitary Civilians under Fire

While dreams alleviate the people of Belfast's anxiety and raise their hopes in "A Home in Belfast" of *The Stones Cry Out* series, people in wartime emergencies also had escapist or frightening dreams, daydreams, and nightmares. Such gloomy subjects were found not so much in the official narrative, represented by speeches and films, as in the unofficial narrative, represented primarily by wartime novels. John Lehmann pointed out in his article "The Armoured Writer IV" in the winter 1943–44 issue of *New Writing and Daylight* that the novelists who were already active during the 1930s were now apparently experimenting with new approaches to treat the wartime situation; they "supplement[ed] their basic realism with other techniques" such as dreams, symbolism, poetic asides, and internal monologues (163–64; cited in Stewart 17). For example, in Graham Greene's *The Ministry of Fear* (1943), Arthur Rowe, the protagonist, "exhausted and frightened" after making "tracks half across London" in a night raid, falls asleep underground and holds a conversation with his dead mother in his dream, trying to explain to her his current plight and the war's effect on London (63–68). Likewise, BBC radio features and dramas had the potential for portraying such an unconscious world of people having dreams and daydreams. MacNeice contends in his General Introduction to *The Dark Tower and Other Radio Scripts* (1947) that "A character in a radio play, as in a stage play, may say things that actually he never would or could say—the author may be making him utter what is only known to his unconscious", comparing subjective elements of a radio play with that of Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* (1931) (10). It is noticeable that subjective memory was powerfully conveyed in post-war radio plays like Dylan Thomas' *Under Milk Wood* (1954) and Samuel Beckett's *All That Fall* (1956) (Fordham

203), but I would argue similar descriptions were also found in limited but notable scenes in some BBC radio features and dramas during the Second World War.

A radio programme's narration, whether subjective or objective, together with sound effects and music also induces the listener to have a similar sensation of dreaming and daydreaming. Although wartime radio broadcasts representing the official culture performed as an intensifier of people's solidarity, radio broadcasts had also functioned as promoters of people's isolation and imagination since before the Second World War. An article on the 19 September 1924 in *Radio Times* states that the broadcast of Kay Robinson's narration about natural history with Beatrice Harrison's cello music and the song of the nightingale must rouse "longings of the human soul for something inexpressibly beautiful and high" in many listeners, comparing radio broadcasts to literature, with a conclusion that radio broadcasting brings to people "a new life", "the life of the imagination", and "the life of the eternal spirit" (Begbie 551). Similarly, according to Hadley Cantril and Gordon W. Allport's *The Psychology of Radio* (1935), radio drama presents listeners "essentially the same imaginative mental processes that are active when people lie awake at night weaving stories about the strange sounds that come to ears sensitized by the darkness and by the emotions of solitude"; comparing radio drama and theatre, they argue "Given the slightest encouragement the listener can build his own imaginative scene" and "jump through time and space with an alacrity that defies even the advanced techniques of the stage or screen" (232).

People's (day)dreaming is one of the subjects frequently treated in the radio programmes and radiogenic novels of James Hanley, a Liverpool-Irish proletariat novelist, who had an abortive career at the BBC in wartime.

Among the scripts he submitted for the BBC during the war, more than ten were rejected by BBC staff because they were wrong in length, structure, subject and radio technique. While some of them wrongly resembled his melancholic, psychological short stories and novels in length, structure, and style, others reflected too well the depressive mood of a nation worn out by the war. Only eight programmes of his were actually broadcast. Some of them—like the two programmes on the wartime sailing of a merchant ship across the Atlantic, “Atlantic Convoy” (broadcast on 14 May 1941) and “S. S. Elizabethan” (broadcast on 3 June 1941)—were heroic, patriotic, well-organised, and combined with effective sound effects and consequently favoured by BBC staff. On the other hand, others managed to be sent on the air after receiving a considerable intervention from BBC staff; as a result, the scripts have many amendments and cancellations, some of which cover the parts describing people’s dreams and daydreams.<sup>35)</sup>

One of these problematic but somehow broadcast programmes from Hanley is “Return to Danger” (broadcast on 15 January 1942), a radio playlet “designed to keep people from bringing children back to the cities” during a lull in the Blitz.<sup>36)</sup> The playlet focalises the bitter marital conflict on a train to London between Mrs. Molly Johnson, a housewife who wants to get out of the lonesome countryside and return to their home in London with her children, and Mr. Fred Johnson, a navy man who wants his wife and his children to stay safe in the countryside. When their quarrel reaches a climax, the family arrives at a station in London which is being attacked from the air, thus implying the possible danger of going back to cities at that time. A similar warning is implicitly given in a dream Mrs. Johnson has before she meets her husband on a train by coincidence. Mrs. Johnson gets drowsy from the rhythm of the train and has a dream of people circulating a rumour that the family is going back to the blitzed London and of an eerie voice that

warns her of a coming danger:

1st VOICE: To sleep—to sleep—to slee-eeep—

(Background of train rhythm rises and through it the  
Sonovox speaks)

SONOVOX: They're going back—they're going back—they're going  
back—etc.

(This merges into rhythm of breathing on two pure notes,  
which accelerates into second similar constant rhythm.  
Hold this as background to the following)

COUNTRY MAN: Well, where are they?

[. . .]

1st VOICE: They've all gone—

COUNTRY MAN: Gone? Which way?

COUNTRY WOMAN: Back, of course.

[. . .]

SONOVOX: Danger, danger, danger—

MRS J: (groans in her sleep)

(Come out of dream background to train)

GENT: Ssh—ssh! Your mother's just dreaming[.]<sup>37)</sup>

The criticising voice was to be recorded with sonovox, a voice effect technology which alters the speaker's voice into a mechanical gravelly voice—for instance, Lucille Ball demonstrated sonovox in the 1939 footage titled *Machine-Made Voices!* On the broadcast script, the first sonovox line and the lines from Country Man's "Well, where are they?" to Mrs. Johnson's "(groans in her sleep)" are scratched out, supposedly by Hanley himself, or Malcolm Baker-Smith, the producer of the programme, who had to do necessary "remodelling and reinforcing" to the "too haphazard" original script,<sup>38)</sup> yet, considering Hanley's dreamy and imaginative writings, it is



natural to think the scene was originally written by Hanley and deleted by Baker-Smith. This deletion may have been just for omitting the unnecessary part before the more important part of the couple's quarrel in order to simplify the narrative or because the scene unusually foregrounds the unconscious anxiety of a dreaming woman too clearly with the special voice effect, which may frighten the listener; the latter is quite possible since the subject "Panic or breakdown of civil morale" is listed in BBC's censorship guide, "Censorship of Stories Relating to Air Raids on the British Isles" (1 June 1942).<sup>39</sup> Likewise, in "Open Boat" (broadcast on 10 September 1941), a radio feature by Hanley on the crew on an open boat whose ship was torpedoed down, the scene where a man saw an illusionary ship is scratched out.<sup>40</sup> These cancelled scenes suggest that even though BBC wartime features and dramas sometimes co-opt unofficial elements such as the dead and ghosts into the official narrative, as in *The Stones Cry Out* programmes, people's escapist or frightening dreams and daydreams were exceptions.

Facing failure in radio scripts, Hanley returned to writing novels once again and published three novels during wartime—*The Ocean* (1941), *Sailor's Song* (1943), and *No Directions* (1943)—which were influenced by wartime radio programmes not in a way the BBC required but in a way Hanley himself explored. Hanley's abortive collaboration with the BBC would have left him with scepticism towards wartime radio broadcasting. This feeling later contributed to shaping his *No Directions* (1943), a modernist novel following the stream of consciousness of eight residents living in and two unexpected visitors to a tenement in Chelsea on a single Blitz night. The novel itself functions, as Deer argues, as "a blind medium, like radio" (145) since the residents rely on their auditory sense rather than visual sense in wartime blackout, arguably bearing similarities to the sound/radio listener who kindles his/her imagination in a solitary environment. Its

radiogenic nature is confirmed by his later radio adaptation of the novel retitled “A Dream Journey” (broadcast on 8 December 1974) which dramatises the radiogenic novel with various “FX”s of household/war sounds and frequently inserted silence indicated “COUNT OF TEN” or “COUNT 5” on the script.<sup>41</sup> The novel and the radio play became the base of the middle part of his novel *A Dream Journey* (1976), which had been originally planned to be a trilogy containing *No Directions* as the second volume but ended up a long novel of three parts since the project’s energies had been diverted into his radio adaptation (Fordham 230).

Departing from the official narrative, Hanley’s *No Directions* arguably indicates that the solidarity of the ten people is hindered by a number of causes although they are seemingly united in evacuating to the basement under the guidance of an air-raid warden. For one thing, the people’s cohesion is harmed by darkness and frightening sounds. Two of the characters, Mr. and Mrs. Frazer, are frightened by the rings of a telephone, creaks of a door, and coughing of a woman, suddenly ringing out in the dark tenement (13–14). Also, Celia is unable to see Mr. Johns’ face but instead thinks of the faint distant sound of bombing when she has a talk with him in darkness (43); although Fordham indicates that Celia and Mr. Johns are united by sharing a feeling of being controlled by non-human power, their trauma-driven unity lasts only for a while and they spend time separately thereafter (167). Deer states that Mr. Jones, an air-raid warden, “functions as the ineffectual, but well-meaning representative of social control” of the tenement (143); nevertheless, the Blitz warden seems quite insignificant since the other residents and visitors follow his order to hide in the cellar fairly reluctantly; as Stokes puts it, they are rather preoccupied with unimportant matters such as fixing a door which does not close properly (145).

The insecure relationships among the characters is also implied by the Philco wireless Mr. Robinson owns and the listeners around it. At first sight, Mr. Robinson and Mr. Johns seem to be united over loud Bolivian music from the radio, but actually they are not because they keep talking without understanding each other (88). Mrs. Robinson appears to be banded together with her husband and Mr. Johns, but in reality, she does not like the music all the time and is rather thinking of going down to the basement (91–92). Besides, Mr. Jones, who came to urge them to take refuge, looks very serious when he visits the flat and happens to listen to the music (92).

Like his wireless, a war-report-like comment Mr. Robinson gives in a later scene does not help at all to strengthen the people's solidarity. Mr. Robinson, the airman on leave who sometimes fancies flying and fighting against the *Luftwaffe*, reports "very dramatically" as if a war commentator of the BBC, putting his head out of the basement, that the aircraft are "high to-night" and "flying westwards now" (117); the rest of the refugees in the shadowy cellar, however, regards his report as "the bits and ends of some crazy geography" (117), suggesting Mr. Robinson cannot share his official aerial viewpoint with his audience, let alone bring together the residents and visitors with his war commentary. Although Deer takes this scene merely as "a parody of the reassuring tones of BBC radio propaganda" (147), it also suggests that during the Second World War there were quite a few citizens who showed little or no interest in detailed war news such as where British troops were stationed or towards which direction they were advancing. These descriptions attest to Cantril and Allport's opinion that radio listeners are *consociated* whereas performers and audience in an auditorium are *congregated* (21); radio establishes a one-way communication between a radio broadcaster or a radio actor/actress and an isolated listener or a small group of listeners, and it never forms an intricately intertwined assembly

like the one at an auditorium. Similarly, Mr Robinson's radio fails to unify the residents and visitors and only detaches them from each other. So does Hanley's radio adaptation "A Dream Journey", as exemplified by the scene of the meeting between the Robinsons and the air-raid warden renamed Hughes:

FX                      RADIO MUSIC CRYING CHILD BEHIND

HUGHES:        I said everyone out.

ROBINSON:    (INCENSED) I — — — say. What the hell — — —

HUGHES:        Everybody down. Weave, and you all know the answers.

ROBINSON:    (ANGRILY) Ducksie! Hurry, bloody up. Oo OO, come  
along, dear.

HUGHES:        (ON TOP, FLAT) That child never stops crying. Try  
turning off your bloody radio, mate.

ROBINSON:    Mate?

HUGHES:        Oh, for Christ's sake.

FX                      DESCENDING BOMB

HUGHES:        Down.

FX                      EXPLOSION

[...]

HUGHES:        Switch it off. You're not taking that thing down to the  
cellar again? D'you have to? Nobody likes it.

ROBINSON:    I like it, and who the merry hell d' you think you're  
talking, Taffy?

FX                      (WHIMPERING CHILD)

ROBINSON:    (ON TOP) Come on, Ducksie, let's join the mouses,  
quick.

FX                      TEARING DOWNSTAIRS. MUSIC IN THE AIR<sup>42)</sup>

Music from Robinson's radio and his child's cry not so much unite the

listeners as rather irritate Hughes, whose anger and a bomb's explosions are uniquely synchronised. As Fordham argues, there is also "aural evidence in the radio recording of an explicit class antagonism between discrete floors and areas of the house" like "Robinson's upper-class trilled disdain for the other tenants" as shown in the scene (230).

It is noteworthy that Hanley's radiogenic *No Directions* not only detaches the residents and visitors from each other but also kindles their imaginations and daydreams, thereby pursuing the unofficial culture. Although light music was broadcast from the wartime BBC in programmes such as *Music While You Work* (broadcast from 23 June 1940) in the scope of raising morale and productivity in collective situations (Crisell 63), Bolivian music from Mr. Robinson's wireless does not function in that way but rather promotes his solitary imagination. Just as the radio drama listener who gives their imagination free play discussed in Cantril and Allport's *The Psychology of Radio* (232), Mr. Robinson regards his Philco as a magical tool which enables him to go beyond time and space easily: "he couldn't do that, like letting go of a miracle, Bolivia was a miracle" (90). Turning up the volume to maximum and listening in to Bolivian music, he has a sort of daydream, feeling that the people around his radio "were all in Bolivia now" as if he escaped from the harsh reality of the wartime blackout into his own imagination (91). Even after he switched it off to take it down with him, he still keeps his imagination fired, thinking to "get Bolivia again" in the cellar (95). After all, Mr. Robinson's radio cannot unify the residents and visitors but only works as an inducement to let the listeners escape into their imaginations.

In *No Directions* and "A Dream Journey", Hanley gives similar sensations to other characters. Mr. Johns in the novel and the sailor in the radio adaptation remember their traumatic sailing in Arctic sea ice in the

past when he hears the cracks of broken panes in darkness (9, 55–56).<sup>43)</sup> When Mr. Robinson starts drumming his radio in the cellar, the sound of it compels Mrs. Frazer to have a vision of South America, where the married couple visited and heard natives drumming at night three years before (121–22). In the radio version, the listeners hear the sound of drumming she remembers hearing in the jungle “DIM to FF AND OUT”.<sup>44)</sup> Clem, a mentally ill would-be artist who persistently paints a picture alone in his gloomy room, finds an asylum in his imagination and occasionally distances himself from others, for instance, by carrying his bulky canvas into the cellar just as Mr. Robinson does by listening in to Bolivian music and making a war report (32, 72). In the ending scene where Clem dashes outside from the tenement and hears and watches the bombing of the blacked-out city from the top of a building, he plays his instinctive expressionist imagination to the fullest, mingling the reality with his illusion:

[A]lways the light sweeping past, as though blown by the great wind, a life lived to see this, a grey city rocking. Not what you felt, you couldn't even think, mind's doors closed up. It was what you saw. He stared entranced at the blazing sky. All that light, a sea, an ocean of light, from what vast reservoir had it flooded up, this drenching light, blazing red, and suddenly to his left a falling green, cataracts of light, red, and yellow and green, this riot of colour shouted at you.

[. . .]

[. . .] Far below in the street a grinding of brakes, hissing noises, but always the light overhead, reeling, bright colours, like an overflow from revelries. He reached the top, breathing heavily, he was on the roof. Wood and stone and steel alive with wrecking power. Roads opened, streets collapsed, hollow sounds where once old giants had

stood, great gaps, fissures, rivers in tumult, showering glass, old giants flat. [. . .] An orgy of movement, in one direction, moving under the light. An ocean of floating trash. (135–36)

In the radio adaptation, his chaotic but “beautiful” and “[m]agnificent” vision is presented not only verbally but also with various sound effects such as “FIRE ENGINE AND BELLS”, “DISTANT SHOUTS”, and “CRACKLING SOUNDS”.<sup>45</sup> As the novel’s title *No Directions* suggests, the characters in radiophonic situations are thus essentially left without directions and can allow imagination full play in solitary environments without purpose, reflecting the unofficial narrative plainly.

Critics point out that in these scenes “the intense visuality of Blitz” associated with “apocalyptic late modernism” is emphasised, judging that Clem positively romanticises the war, and that his final gesture, his catching and setting free of a white horse in the raid, has “a certain redemptive, even heroic quality” and a “constructed aesthetic” (Plain 63; Fordham 168–69). In terms of the novel’s radiogenic nature, it can be also argued that here Clem is given a tentative escape from the isolation and imagination in which the novel’s characters are trapped because he, someone who has been numb and like “a robot”, unable to find the “right” colours for his paintings, and eager to “know [Lena is] there” beside him, now uses his visionary and tactile senses besides his auditory sense and recognises the colours of the bombings and the existence of the stallion by stroking it and building “a giant trust” between them, feeling calm and safe (32, 66). Camouflaged as the works which depict, following the official war narrative, the unity of the civilians under fire, their spirit of taking it, etc., however, Hanley’s *No Directions* and “A Dream Journey”, after all, are expressing a scepticism towards such narratives by describing the isolation and imagination of the characters in situations similar to those of the sound/radio listeners. Clem’s

liberation lasts only for a while as he shortly “go[es] up” from the cellar to his room with his canvas and possibly kindles his imagination again in painting what was inspired by the sights he had seen and the sounds he had heard on the rooftop and his meeting with the horse in the raid. As Deer points out (150), Clem conceivably sees before going up to his flat the ghost of Mr. Johns at the front door (142), which suggests the continuation of his illusion after the story. In the radio version, Clem listens to the “beautiful” silence of “COUNT of 10” after the raid from a window of his flat as if to help him in diving into his imagination, saying to his wife “The whole damned thing’s a dream [. . .] If everything was real, Lena, it would be horrible”.<sup>46)</sup>

#### **4. Conclusion**

As discussed so far, BBC radio features and dramas concerning the British home front during the Second World War mostly followed the official narrative presented by speeches and films, but they sometimes, especially during and after the Blitz, co-opted seemingly unofficial elements like the dead and ghosts and dreams and daydreams into the official narrative; some of the scratched-out parts in the broadcast scripts reflected the unofficial culture, which were explored in literature—in radiogenic modernist novels in the case of James Hanley’s works. Thus radio works relating to the British home front during the war mediate between the official and unofficial war cultures. As Bowen analyses in her postscript to *The Demon Lover*, the Blitz pushed contemporary literature to reflect on the unofficial culture markedly; I argue radio during the war was in line with the literature to some extent. Bowen writes about civilians and writings during the war

People whose homes had been blown up went to infinite lengths to assemble bits of themselves—broken ornaments, odd shoes, torn scraps



of the curtains that had hung in a room—from the wreckage. In the same way, they assembled and checked themselves from stories and poems, from their memories, from one another’s talk. Outwardly, we accepted that at this time individual destiny had to count for nothing: inwardly, individual destiny became an obsession in every heart. You cannot depersonalize persons. Every writer during this time was aware of the personal cry of the individual. And he was aware of the passionate attachment of men and women to every object or image or place or love or fragment of memory with which his or her destiny seemed to be identified, and by which the destiny seemed to be assured. (220)

Likewise, radio during the war in Britain was aware of the cries of the people, the architecture, the ghosts, the memories, dreams, and daydreams of the people under fire, but it could broadcast these subjects only selectively so as not to discourage the listeners. Yet, the scratched-out parts on broadcast scripts, now open to researchers at the BBC Written Archives Centre, and Hanley’s radiogenic novels allow us a fuller sense of the unofficial culture that the broadcasts could never completely articulate.

**Appendix: List of the programmes of the above-mentioned BBC radio feature series (based on BBC WAC broadcast scripts, *London Calling*, *Programme Index*, and *Radio Times*)**

*The Home Front* series (1939–40)

| No. | Title                       | Writer  | Producer/Director                  | First broadcast date |
|-----|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1   | Children in Billets         | Stephen Potter and A. L. Lloyd  | Stephen Potter and A. L. Lloyd (?) | 30 September 1939    |
| 2   | The Leversuch Family at War | Stephen Potter (with dialogue reported by Mass Observation through its organisers Tom Harrison and Charles Madge) | Stephen Potter (?)                 | 10 October 1939      |

|         |                                 |   |                    |                  |
|---------|---------------------------------|---|--------------------|------------------|
| 3       | Home Fires Burning              | (Devised by) Jack Jones and T. Rowland Hughes   | T. Rowland Hughes  | 18 October 1939  |
| 4       | Harvest of the Sea              | (Devised by) Alan Melville  | Alan Melville      | 23 October 1939  |
| 5       | Farming, September 1939         | Francis Dillon  | Francis Dillon     | 31 October 1939  |
| 6       | The Leversuch Family in Billets | Stephen Potter (including dialogue collected by Mass Observation through its organisers Tom Harrison and Charles Madge) | Stephen Potter (?) | 7 November 1939  |
| – (8?)  | Women in War                    | (Arranged by) Olive Shapley   | Olive Shapley      | 19 November 1939 |
| 7 (9?)  | Steel-Song                      | Jack Jones and T. Rowland Hughes  | T. Rowland Hughes  | 27 November 1939 |
| 8 (–?)  | Rural Background                | Jack Jones and T. Rowland Hughes  | T. Rowland Hughes  | 20 January 1940  |
| 9 (–?)  | Clyde Built                     | (Devised by) Alan Melville  | Alan Melville      | 29 January 1940  |
| –       | East Lothian Farm               | (Compiled by) John Gough (with the help of many famers and farm workers)  | John Gough (?)     | 6 March 1940     |
| 10 (–?) | Through the Night               | P. H. Burton and T. Rowland Hughes  | Nan Davies         | 30 April 1940    |
| –       | Farming, Spring 1940            | Francis Dillon  | Francis Dillon     | 2 May 1940       |

*The Land We Defend* series (1940)

| No. | Title                | Writer                             | Producer/Director                      | First broadcast date |
|-----|----------------------|------------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| 1   | The North Country    | D. G. Bridson                      | D. G. Bridson (?)                      | 11 July 1940         |
| 2   | The Heart of England | (Devised by) Robin Whitworth       | Robin Whitworth                        | 20 July 1940         |
| 3   | Scotland             | Robert Kemp                        | Robert Kemp                            | 23 July 1940         |
| 4   | Wales                | Gwyn Jones                         | T. Rowland Hughes                      | 2 August 1940        |
| –   | The West Country     | Douglas Cleverdon and Felix Felton | Douglas Cleverdon and Felix Felton (?) | 5 August 1940        |
| 5   | The South Country    | S. P. B. Mais                      | Stephen Potter                         | 14 August 1940       |
| 6   | Northern Ireland     | Joseph Tomelty                     | James Mageean                          | 28 August 1940       |

|   |  |                              |                     |                   |
|---|--|------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 7 | The Western Highlands and Island of Scotland | (Devised by) Neil Gunn       | Moultrie R. Kelsall | 30 August 1940    |
| 8 | London                                       | (Arranged by) Stephen Potter | Stephen Potter      | 17 September 1940 |

*The Stones Cry Out* series (1941)

| No. | Title  | Writer                      | Producer/Director    | First broadcast date |
|-----|--|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1   | Dr. Johnson Takes It                                     | Louis MacNeice              | E. A. Harding        | 5 May 1941           |
| 2   | Guildhall  | Desmond Hawkins             | Malcolm Baker-Smith  | 12 May 1941          |
| 3   | Clydeside Tenement                                       | Robert Barr                 | W. Farquharson Small | 19 May 1941          |
| 4   | Westminster Abbey  | Louis MacNeice              | Malcolm Baker-Smith  | 26 May 1941          |
| 5   | Madame Tussaud's   | Louis MacNeice              | John Chestle         | 2 June 1941          |
| 6   | Llandaff Cathedral                                       | A. G. Prys Jones            | T. Rowland Hughes    | 9 June 1941          |
| 7   | Chelsea Royal Hospital                                   | Desmond Hawkins             | Malcolm Baker-Smith  | 16 June 1941         |
| 8   | St. Paul's   | Louis MacNeice              | John Glyn-Jones      | 23 June 1941         |
| 9   | Guy's Hospital   | James Imlay                 | Robert Kemp          | 30 June 1941         |
| 10  | The House of Commons                                     | Louis MacNeice              | John Glyn-Jones      | 7 July 1941          |
| 11  | St. Annes, Soho  | Desmond Hawkins             | John Glyn-Jones      | 14 July 1941         |
| 12  | Westminster Hall   | Peter Watts                 | (?)                  | 21 July 1941         |
| 13  | Charterhouse   | Peter Watts                 | (?)                  | 28 July 1941         |
| 14  | St. Thomas's Hospital                                    | James Imlay (George Harper) | Robert Kemp          | 4 August 1941        |
| 15  | Austin Friars  | Desmond Hawkins             | Malcolm Baker-Smith  | 11 August 1941       |
| 16  | The Old Bailey   | John Baines                 | John Glyn-Jones      | 18 August 1941       |
| 17  | Their New Home   | Robert Barr                 | John Glyn-Jones      | 25 August 1941       |
| 18  | The Temple   | Louis MacNeice              | John Glyn-Jones      | 1 September 1941     |
| 19  | St. James's Palace                                       | Thomas Browne               | Peter Watts          | 8 September 1941     |
| 20  | The Hall of the Society of Merchant Adventurers, Bristol | Walter Allen                | Francis Dillon       | 15 September 1941    |
| 21  | Drury Lane Theatre                                       | John Baines                 | (?)                  | 22 September 1941    |
| 22  | The Royal College of Surgeons                            | Louis MacNeice              | Louis MacNeice       | 29 September 1941    |

|    |  |  |                             |                  |
|----|--|--|-----------------------------|------------------|
| 23 | Paternoster Row:<br>The Burning of the<br>Books    | Desmond Hawkins                          | (?)                         | 6 October 1941   |
| 24 | Free Trade Hall,<br>Manchester                     | Gordon Phillips                          | Robert Kemp                 | 13 October 1941  |
| 25 | The Tower of<br>London                             | Elsa Palmer                              | Peter Watts                 | 20 October 1941  |
| 26 | A Home in Belfast<br>(A Belfast Spinning<br>Mill)  | Louis MacNeice                           | Louis MacNeice              | 27 October 1941  |
| 27 | St. Bartholomew's<br>Hospital                      | Robert Gittings                          | Robert Gittings<br>(?)      | 3 November 1941  |
| 28 | The Shambles,<br>Manchester                        | Erik Denrose                             | Robert Kemp                 | 10 November 1941 |
| 29 | Coventry Cathedral                                 | John Hampson                             | Peter Watts                 | 17 November 1941 |
| 30 | The Barbican,<br>Plymouth                          | Louis MacNeice                           | Louis MacNeice              | 24 November 1941 |
| 31 | The Old Vic  | Malcolm Baker-<br>Smith                  | Malcolm Baker-<br>Smith (?) | 1 December 1941  |
| 32 | Swansea Market                                     | P. H. Burton                             | T. Rowland<br>Hughes        | 8 December 1941  |
| 33 | No. 10 Nevill's<br>Court, London's<br>Oldest House | Cyril Ray and Erik<br>Denrose            | Robert Kemp                 | 15 December 1941 |
| 34 | Redcliffe Hill,<br>Bristol                         | (Devised by)<br>Douglas Cleverdon        | Douglas<br>Cleverdon        | 22 December 1941 |
| 35 | Drury Lane Theatre                                 | E. Arnot Robertson<br>and<br>John Baines | John Burrell                | 29 December 1941 |

### Notes

- 1) The article is based on the introduction and the first chapter of my PhD thesis submitted to King's College London in 2020. This revision was carried out with the assistance of Keio University Academic Development Funds.
- 2) BBC WAC R19/352/3, Laurence Gilliam's article titled "Features in War", undated but supposedly written around 1 August 1940 (considering the programmes mentioned in it and dated documents vetted around this article in the same file), p. 2.
- 3) BBC WAC broadcast script of "Children in Billets", p. 1.
- 4) "Children in Billets", p. 2; BBC WAC R19/508/1, from Stephen Potter to

Controller (Programmes), 3 November 1939.

- 5) "Children in Billets", p. 1.
- 6) "Features in War", p. 2.
- 7) BBC WAC R19/508/1, from Gilliam to Shapley, 28 November 1939.
- 8) "Children in Billets", pp. 6–7.
- 9) BBC WAC broadcast script of "Home Fires Burning", p. 16.
- 10) BBC WAC R19/508/1, from Harrison to Evelyn Gibbs, 2 October 1939.
- 11) E.g. "Harvest of the Sea" was sent to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries:  
BBC WAC R19/508/1, from P. I. Keith Murray to Director (Features and Drama),  
18 October 1939.
- 12) BBC WAC broadcast script of "Harvest of the Sea", p. 1.
- 13) BBC WAC broadcast script of "Farming, September 1939", pp. 3–4.
- 14) "Features in War", p. 4.
- 15) BBC WAC R19/619/1, from Kemp to A/P. D., 12 July 1940.
- 16) BBC WAC R19/619/1, from Gilliam to its writers and producers, 22 June 1940.
- 17) BBC WAC broadcast script of "Scotland", p. 24.
- 18) BBC WAC broadcast script of "Wales", p. 9.
- 19) BBC WAC broadcast script of "London", p. 2.
- 20) BBC WAC broadcast script of "Dr. Johnson Takes it", pp. 5, 10.
- 21) BBC WAC broadcast script of "Clydeside Tenement", p. 7.
- 22) BBC WAC broadcast script of "Westminster Abbey", p. 3.
- 23) BBC WAC broadcast script of "St. Paul's", p. 7.
- 24) "St. Paul's", p. 9.
- 25) "St. Paul's", pp. 2, 6.
- 26) "Westminster Abbey", p. 2.
- 27) "Westminster Abbey", p. 6.
- 28) "Westminster Abbey", p. 10.
- 29) "Westminster Abbey", p. 11.
- 30) BBC WAC broadcast script of "The Temple", p. 12.
- 31) BBC WAC broadcast script of "The Old Bailey", pp. 9–10.
- 32) "The Royal College of Surgeons", pp. 12–13.
- 33) BBC WAC broadcast script of "A Home in Belfast", p. 7.

- 34) "A Home in Belfast", p. 12.
- 35) BBC WAC Scriptwriter James Hanley File 1A and 1B and broadcast scripts of Hanley's programmes.
- 36) BBC WAC R19/1032, from Gilliam to Hanley, 19 November 1941; See also R19/1032, from Fife Clark to Gilliam.
- 37) BBC WAC broadcast script of "Return to Danger", pp. 6–8.
- 38) BBC WAC Scriptwriter James Hanley File 1B, from Baker-Smith to Hanley, 1 January 1942.
- 39) BBC WAC R61/18/2, "Censorship of Stories Relating to Air Raids on the British Isles", 1 June 1942, p. 7.
- 40) BBC WAC broadcast script of "Open Boat", p. 6.
- 41) BBC WAC Scriptwriter James Hanley File 6 1973–82; broadcast script of "A Dream Journey", title page and p. 1.
- 42) "A Dream Journey", pp. 30–31.
- 43) "A Dream Journey", pp. 7, 10, 15.
- 44) "A Dream Journey", p. 48.
- 45) "A Dream Journey", pp. 89–90.
- 46) "A Dream Journey", p. 97.

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**(Archival sources are presented in the appendix and endnotes.)**

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