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Stealing the Thunder: The Soviet Union and Graphic Propaganda on the Home Front during the Second World War

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The Gift

One of the little remarked episodes of the Second World War was the gift from Josef Stalin to Lord Beaverbrook of a collection of Soviet posters, cartoons and photographs on the occasion of the Minister of Supply's visit to Moscow in September 1941.[1] The civil servants at Senate House dubbed it 'Stalin's Gift' and Peter Smollett, the Head of the Russian Division at the Ministry of Information, was responsible, under certain politically motivated limits and restrictions, for its distribution to the public through the agencies at the ministry's disposal. As communist propaganda the 'Gift', alongside other Soviet material distributed by the ministry as well as by Beaverbrook's Ministry of Supply, raised a number of issues concerning aesthetics, radical politics and government attitudes towards the broad church of the non-aligned Left, the anti-fascist cause and organized communism. These concerns about freedom, propaganda and censorship were especially pertinent between January 1941 and September 1942 when the *Daily Worker,* the newspaper of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), was banned by Parliament.

Uppermost in the official mind was how to be seen to provide genuine support for the sovereign Soviet Union, or Russia as the ministry preferred to call it, and not offend the Soviet ideology or support communism or any other far Left organizations that might threaten the established political and social order.[2] In order to compromise the inroads of the Left Smollett insisted: 'it would be good policy to "steal the thunder" of radical Left propaganda ... by outdoing them in pro-Russian publicity while at the same time keeping this publicity on such lines as we think most desirable'.[3] The initiative was designed 'to curb exuberant pro-Soviet propaganda from the Left and to anticipate criticism inspired by Communist Party action'.[4] As a primary tactic in 'stealing the thunder' of the Left, the policy gave 'official' gestures the authority of Soviet, and by implication communist, ideological sanction that ironically enough lent it greater currency with the public. Under Smollett's guidance the ministry propagandized for the Soviets more determinedly, effectively and interestingly than the anti-fascist and peace movements did in their various guises of the Peace Pledge Union ('from being a Christian organization, it has become an underground political force'),[5] CPGB or the communist-run Russia To-day Society and British-Soviet Friendly Society,[6] which were regarded with suspicion and were proscribed by the British government. Part of the

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problem was that the public did not believe government support for the Soviets was sincere and the theory was that, if the public could be persuaded to follow the government line, civil society would resist the seductions of communism.[7] The intention was to ensure involvement across the political spectrum and to compromise independent efforts from the CPGB or the hard Left.[8]

To the benefit of both Britain and the Soviet Union, the ministry possessed distribution channels far superior to those possessed by either the CPGB or the numerous Soviet-friendly societies. The ministry had divided the country into twelve regions, each with its own Regional Intelligence Officer (RIO), whose task it was to make weekly reports on public morale and opinion and to infiltrate and control local initiatives in support of the Soviet Union: should these not exist, RIOs were instructed to organize Russian friendship committees, Russia weeks, exhibitions, film screenings and talks.

According to the ministry's intelligence the 'Gift' entered a climate of opinion during the 'phoney war' in which the Red Army was seen by the public to be taking the fight to the enemy,[9] and its struggle with the 'fascist beast' generated an epic and misty-eyed revolutionary romanticism.[10] A more objective index is found in the membership of the CPGB, peaking in 1942 at 56,000. Brendan Bracken, who took over as Minister of Information in July 1941, identified a drift to the Left among the organized working and economically displaced middle classes. He diagnosed the cause in the effects of the Depression and the expectations for social welfare and a more equal society following the First World War. For the authorities this was a matter of concern,[11] the general public were genuinely curious about the Soviets[12] and the ministry was sensitive to the fact that demand for information seemed to create nothing but praise for them. R.H. Parker, Head of the Home Division, warned against popularizing communism. He observed that high wartime taxes on capital and earnings combined with the centralized control of industry might lead to the assumption that communism was the logical progression for the British polity: 'we must remember that there is a body of Communist missionaries in this country who will seek to do their best to propagate the Communist theory in this favourable ground'.[13]

The 'Gift' was part of a publicity programme and appeared as an illustrated book, exhibition, window display, illustrated magazine and a series of posters. The book *The Spirit of the Soviet Union*[14] (Figures 1 and 2) was printed on quality paper with black-and-white and colour reproductions of posters and cartoons, and with a foreword by Lord Beaverbrook. Hardbound and in full-colour pictorial dust-wrappers, its production values ran against the restrictions imposed by paper rationing. The cover price was three shillings and royalties were donated to the Russian Red Cross. The bulk of the illustrations were reproduced from satirical posters generated by the newly created TASS poster agency,[15] supplemented by press cartoons from the 1930s and 1940s typical of the Soviet satirical magazine *Krokodil*.[16] It featured artists such as the satirical collective the Kukryniksy, Boris Efimov, Nikolai Radlov and Viktor Goryaev among others. Unlike political posters executed in conventional socialist realist idiom, TASS posters were bold in their expressive pictorial qualities, largely achieved by the sophisticated use of stencil techniques. Their

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Figure 1. *Spirit of the Soviet Union* (London: Pilot Press, 1941) with original dust-wrapper (private collection).

seductive appearance masked the violence done to the objects of satire and the gruesome and unpalatable content (Figure 3). Inevitably, the posters were striking and memorable. The cartoons were more restrained and comparable to anti-fascist material by David Low or Zec in the mainstream press, or those of James Boswell (Buchan), James Fitton, James Holland, Pearl Binder, Clifford Rowe and James Friel (Gabriel) in the Left-wing and

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Figure 2. *Spirit of the Soviet Union* (London: Pilot Press, 1941) with replacement dust-wrapper (private collection).

communist press. Humorous, mocking and sometimes grotesque, overall the Soviet material was more violent and aggressive and had a graphic edge mirrored in the vocabulary of the captions in the poster series 'Soviet War Posters' distributed by the Ministry of Supply: the slogans 'mercilessly destroyed and annihilated' and 'death to the fascist reptile' left little room for the imagination.[17]

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Figure 3. Boris Efimov, *Maneater*, poster from Stalin's Gift, exhibited in 'Comrades in Arms' and one of ten printed by the Ministry of Information for the poster series 'Comrades in Arms'. Posters of Conflict (Imperial War Museum).

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The exhibition and window display also included photographs and information about the Soviet war effort. Under the title 'Comrades in Arms: Pictures of the Soviets at War' it toured to Anglo-Soviet weeks and other events where it was seen alongside programmes of concerts, talks and film screenings supplied by the ministry. The exhibition had its highest-profile outing in Charing Cross Underground Station (Figure 4) where it was on view until April 1942.[18] Charing Cross had already provided a venue for public information exhibitions including 'Count Your Coupons',



Figure 4. Photograph of the exhibition 'Comrades in Arms', 1941, Charing Cross Underground Railway Station, London, designed by Exhibitions Department, Ministry of Information (Misha Black and Milner Gray). Imperial War Museum.

'Salvage', August 1940, 'London Pride', December 1940, and, immediately preceding 'Comrades in Arms', 'Poison Gas', August–September 1941. These precedents assured the status of the exhibition as an integral part of the official war effort and home propaganda. It was made available in fifty-two sets to all the regions, with twenty sets each to the Army Bureau of Information and the Ministry of Supply.[19] Demand for the exhibition was strong[20] and was aimed primarily at the working population.[21]

The window display appeared in 1100 sites across Britain. The scheme for 'Propaganda by Window Display' was launched in June 1940 by the National Savings Campaign, 'in retail stores, co-operative societies, and public utility companies, all of whom allot first-rate window space, and agree to install and completely maintain the shows, which run at two or three week intervals'.[22] The loan of the display of six photogravure posters of tank production in Britain and deployment in Russia was conditional on there being no mention of ministry involvement and the exclusion of merchandise of any kind.[23]

Milner Gray was given a budget of forty to fifty thousand pounds to ensure quality[24] and Misha Black, then a member of the CPGB, and his team in the Exhibition Department, designed the installation along the lines of contemporary international trade exhibitions.[25] The displays were carefully constructed for efficient and effective communication and made good use of circulation space within a distinctly modern schema.[26]

The poster advertising the exhibition published by HMSO mimicked the three-dimensional displays and featured the photographic portraits of Churchill and Stalin in unlikely combination under their respective national flags,[27] in a distant echo of the portraits of Beaverbrook and Harriman on the HMSO poster *Rush Aid to Russia!*[28] The exhibition opened with a large cut-out map of some of the nationalities of the Soviet Union.

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Large photographic prints of the Soviet war effort, industry and agriculture decorated the perimeter in montage-like arrangements designed to convey a specific message. A picture of tanks filing past the Kremlin captioned 'They Saved Moscow' was juxtaposed with British tanks loading onto ships destined for the Arctic convoys captioned 'Aid to Russia'. Parachutists, Cossacks and Siberian Red Army men were framed by images of steel and electricity. An inner circle of individual boards displayed many of the posters illustrated in the book. They had the same tenor as the much larger-scale TASS posters at the '25 Years of the USSR and the Red Army' exhibition held between 23 February and 21 March 1943.[29] This exhibition followed the same pattern as 'Comrades in Arms' with the emotional virulence of the 'plungent [*sic*] and amusing'[30] poster propaganda counterpoised against the heroic monumentality and objectivity of the photography. The disparate handmade and photomechanical images were in dynamic and dialectical relationship and visually connected the resistance of the traditional Russian 'soul' with the modernity and material achievements of Soviet communism. The overall impression was of a progressive society under attack from the forces of regression. Ten of the posters were distributed in the series 'Comrades in Arms' by the Ministry of Information,[31] some attacking Vichy were printed with French captions for use as foreign propaganda,[32] others were distributed by the Ministry of Supply in the 'Soviet War Posters' series.[33] All were conceived for exhibition purposes rather than as poster campaigns.[34]

In November 1941, the Ministry of Information published *Comrades in Arms* as a large format picture magazine. With a full-colour cover, 250,000 copies were distributed primarily through the trade unions (Figure 5).

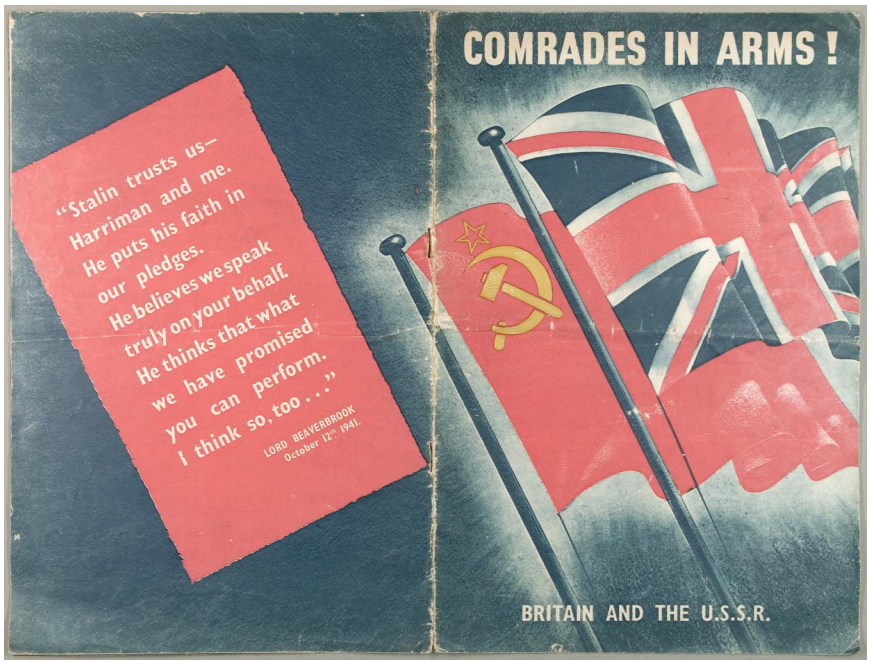

Figure 5. *Comrades in Arms! Britain and the USSR* (Ministry of Information, 1941) (private collection).

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It reproduced Soviet and British photographs of the conference in Moscow and ran double-page picture stories of Anglo-Soviet cooperation, Russian life and preparations for the Arctic convoys. One striking photomontage, 'Their Fight Is Our Fight', was dedicated to the Soviet armed forces, and its last pages used as illustrations a selection of posters and cartoons from the 'Gift'. The ministry had worked in close collaboration with the illustrated press since 1940,[35] revealing the value the former placed on visual communication, and, as a photographic magazine,[36] *Comrades in Arms* traded on the examples of, among others, *USSR in Construction*, *Russia To-Day*, *AIZ* and *Picture Post*. It provided the model for *Britansky Soyuznik*, the only foreign publication distributed in the USSR during the war.[37]

Bracken understood that Soviet resistance to the Nazi onslaught made it impossible to dismiss the communist system and he recognized the need to adopt 'oblique' propaganda to reach the fellow-travelling public in a cultural climate intolerant of direct exhortation and suspicious of commercial or political publicity.[38] In contribution to the policy, Parker maintained that publicity would succeed only if it embraced the British 'national mind' defined as that of an island nation formed in a tradition of apolitical reform.[39] The policy objectives stressed the merits of parliamentary democracy and democratic institutions in an evolutionary narrative, in contrast to the 'sudden and wasteful eruption of revolution'. The initial emphasis was on 'individual liberty, equity, justice, freedom of choice, freedom of speech, privacy, home life, freedom to criticise and oppose, which would not be satisfied by dreary collectivism'.[40] To fulfil Bracken's policies Peter Smollett worked with the Society for Cultural Relations (SCR) and an agreement was proposed to eliminate hostile and subversive propaganda on both sides and to enhance 'mutual understanding'. The agreement recognized different visions for society and attitudes to religion and accepted that neither country could pursue its ideals while Hitler remained in power. With ideological issues beyond the pale the agreed aim was to 'deepen the cultural bonds between the two nations to support the effective prosecution of the war against Germany'.[41]

In this way the 'Gift' of exclusively Soviet material became part of a wider programme of officially sponsored talks, films, radio broadcasts, books, exhibitions and pamphlets untainted by vulgar commerce or political ideology and with or without acknowledged official involvement.[42] The Russian Division's promotion of the Soviet Union was indirect, broad and insistent and, while it avoided the commercial methods of press advertisements or billposting, in the public mind it became entangled with Beaverbrook's aid to Russia campaign orchestrated through the Ministry of Supply and was distinguished only by the use of targeted posters in the workplace.

These policies were embarked upon in a public sphere where the economic and political failures of the Depression and the Spanish Civil War had heightened political awareness. The tradition-bound publishing industry had responded to these conditions while rising disposable incomes among the working and middle classes increased the market for books, booklets and pamphlets. Throughout the 1930s the CPGB systematically sold its pamphlets to its members and beyond, sometimes in the tens of thousands. The publisher Martin Lawrence, later to become

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Lawrence & Wishart, established itself as a successful Left-wing outlet for working-class and communist material. The 1930s also saw the commercial success of Allen Lane's Penguin Books and Viktor Gollancz's Left Book Club, with cheap paperback editions of contemporary serious literature and political analysis for a readership described by Jeremy Lewis as 'those earnest, high-minded, self-taught working-class and lower-middle-class readers who, more often than not, professed themselves Fabian socialists, rode bicycles, read H.G. Wells and George Bernard Shaw, wore ''rational'' clothing, and attended university extension courses and, in later years, the Workers' Educational Association'.[43] Drawn from all sectors of society the audience was composed of those who opposed fascism and held to the social democratic collective values perceived necessary for the battle against Nazi Germany.

The success of Penguin Specials and the New Left Book Club attested to the thirst for information, but competition from photography and newsreel signalled a shift in sensibility from the word to the image. Led by the book production company Adprint, publishers began to look to new technologies for the production of cheap high-quality illustrated books and the ministry chose to exploit their possibilities in the 'Gift' and other Anglo-Soviet ventures, such as the book series 'The Soviets and Ourselves' discussed below.

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Agents of influence

Accounts of leftist and Soviet propaganda in Britain resound with tales of its successful triangulation by the ministry. Both the official record in the National Archive and[44] the published record[45] ignore the ambivalent role of Peter Smollett, who in 1936, for example, while working as a foreign correspondent for *The Times* under his christened name of Hans Peter Smolka, had described the Gulag as an experiment in social reform.[46] Before 1934 he had been a member of the Communist Party of Austria in Vienna where he befriended Kim Philby, who organized his flight to London after the failed rebellion against the Austro-fascist regime. After the war George Orwell labelled him 'some kind of Russian agent. Very slimy person'[47] and in 1981 Anthony Blunt exposed him as a Soviet 'agent of influence'.[48] Smollett's superiors must have known of his background and, perhaps because of his sympathies, he was given the job of liaising with the Soviets, much as Churchill had insisted the Marxist Labour politician Sir Stafford Cripps fulfil the role of Ambassador to Russia from 1940 to 1942. Another important participant was Wolfgang Foges, Smollett's friend from his radical youth in Vienna with whom he had run a communist magazine, *Das Jugend*. Foges founded the book production company Adprint in 1937 and was spirited out of Vienna in 1938 with the help of the Charles Tennant Group, which backed him financially and had strong anti-fascist credentials and connections with the secret services.[49]

By June 1941 the Soviet authorities were pursuing an entirely pragmatic foreign policy, no longer intent on exporting revolution, their efforts in Britain were aimed at securing aid, the opening of the Second Front and garnering support for the Soviet people. The Soviets developed what Parker described as a 'cynically realist' attitude to hard Left and communist

influences. In spite of their compliance with Moscow, the exclusion of the CPGB from the process of 'mutual understanding' suited the Soviet authorities, who were keen not to be seen to interfere in the internal politics of another country. It also suited the British who, as we have seen, were as keen not to give support to the Left and were eager to exploit public sympathy for the Soviets to stimulate production in general through the Ministry of Supply's aid to Russia campaign.[50] Overt rhetorical support for the Soviets was also intended to placate Stalin's suspicions of bad faith on the part of the British while he agitated for the opening up of the Second Front.

Smollett pursued a strategy where what the Soviets were denied in one area, such as making too many direct references to the benefits of communism, would be made up for in others. Policy objectives requiring consistent favourable comparison between the two nations were smoothed by the fact that many in the ministry and its collaborators in the intellectual elite such as John Macmurray, Christopher Hill and Maurice Dobb were socialists and communist sympathizers. In conjunction with officials from the Soviet Embassy they developed a programme where socialist collectivism and central planning were treated on a par with capitalist individualism and free markets. To widespread public dismay the former climate of hostility towards Bolshevism lifted and the Soviet Union was promoted as the epitome of progress in all things economic, educational, scientific, technological and cultural. Smollett, for example, had a hand in producing Maurice Dobb's *U.S.S.R.: Her Life and Her People* in 1943. Amply illustrated with photographs from the SCR and *Soviet War News Weekly* among other sources, its cover exemplified a visual style for the Soviets in British culture. Progressive in its content and aesthetic – modern blocks of flats, happy children – the design was advanced in its photomontage construction and was firmly rooted in an aesthetic discourse of objective realism involving the organization of photographic 'facts'. This was an aesthetic paradoxically dedicated to various ideological uses in the Soviet Union, Germany and Spain during the 1920s and '30s, and put to more journalistically and democratically 'objective', less visually experimental ends in *Picture Post* in Britain and *Life* in America.[51]

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Democratic objectivity

The question of objectivity and truth in the context of propaganda may have played a part in the expensive decision to change the dust-wrapper design of *The Spirit of the Soviet Union*. The cover illustration was switched from the heroically Soviet to the generically anti-fascist (Figures 1 and 2). The ideologically inspired partisan enraged and emboldened by Nazi atrocity taken from the poster design 'We Shall Return!' by Vachaga Tevanian[52] was replaced with satirical caricatures of Axis leaders. A pictorially more restrained cartoon coloured in black, green and yellow captioned 'The New Order' replaced the dominant and striking reds and blues of the original. It showed Hitler, Goering, Goebbels, Himmler and Ribbentrop with their attributes of death's heads, gibbets and executioner's axes on a platform supported by a house of cards. Each card carried the caricature of

an Axis leader[53] and the whole was balanced atop a simmering volcano restrained only by a padlock bearing a swastika.

There are two issues here. One concerns the original picture of defiance in the face of Nazi terror, which presented a heroic image that might be interpreted as a ministry endorsement of revolutionary action. The other is related to the 'realism' of the lynched civilians as a picture of historical and 'objective' truth. The summary execution of civilians by hanging by units of the *Wehrmacht* in Belorussia and Ukraine was common knowledge and was documented in the introductory essay to the book, and from January 1942 photographs of the same appeared in *Soviet War News Weekly*[54] regularly.

Atrocity propaganda had been an issue for the British government since the end of the First World War when the Americans felt they had been duped into intervention on the basis of misinformation about German atrocities.[55] The debate re-emerged during the Spanish Civil War when Republican supporters distributed atrocity photographs in the name of the anti-fascist cause. Virginia Woolf spoke for the Left-leaning intellectual elite when she said that such photographs belittled the victims because they conveyed 'information about a group of powerless people to another group addressed as socially powerful'.[56] In fact, the ministry had carried out research into the effectiveness of such images by evaluating responses to photographs of Nazi actions in Russia. Intended to show the consequences of invasion they generated horror and anger, although a significant minority of respondents found them ineffective and indecent, [57] so confirming the ministry's view that they made people fearful without making a positive contribution to morale.[58] Ministry policy was to refrain from atrocity propaganda[59] and most Soviet material it sponsored, including the 'Gift', included photographic representations of the positive and the humane rather than the negative and inhumane. Self-regulated boundaries of propriety operated in the world of publicity[60] and bodies on a front cover could offend in ways images inside might not. Posters and cartoons by 'famous Russian artists'[61] (Figure 3) of cannibalism, lynching and the slaughter of civilians framed within strategies of ridicule went far beyond the limits of civilized good taste employed by fellow-travelling graphic satirists in Britain such as the cartoonists David Low and Donald Zec, for example.[62]

The public were resistant to overt propaganda[63] and the government was faced with a mountain to climb if it wanted to communicate any views not already widely held. Widespread knowledge of Nazi and Soviet propaganda led to the official preference for facts and 'telling the truth'[64] delivered through 'objective' media such as photographs and statistical charts. Harold Nicolson described this British quantitative approach as conceptually civilian and mercantile, more closely related to accounting than Nazi or, indeed, Soviet politics.[65] For policymakers it was important to put distance between a democratic objectivity careful of human rights and freedom of expression and totalitarian rhetoric founded in oppression and ideological conformity.[66]

Parachuted in with verbal and visual rhetoric from an alien political culture, the impact of the 'Gift' on the public at large is open to question. Soviet graphic satire in Britain emphasized atrocity, was viciously anti-fascist and attacked, through justified and cruel mockery, the Axis leaders

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and especially Hitler at the limits of 'good taste' and visual propriety. It made references to Napoleon, promoted the heritage of the French Revolution and to a lesser extent visions of a communist future. As a visual discourse it could have been misunderstood, regarded as implausible or simply have gone over the heads of most people. A ministry report on *Comrades in Arms* acknowledged a 'high level of interest . . . but it was the cartoons that were attracting most attention . . . practically all the men were gathered at that stand. They did not seem particularly amused, there were no smiles, or sudden grins . . . the cartoons were being studied with a rather puzzled air'.[67] It was as if virulent anti-Nazi material were suitable for the barbarian East abroad and a Left-leaning hinterland at home. More polite Western democratic audiences could only look on from a distance.[68] In other words the 'Gift' offered the opportunity for British propagandists, led by Smollett, to take advantage of techniques felt inappropriate or ineffective in their own hands, and which, in any case were in danger of breaching long-established self-regulatory practices in advertising designed to avoid accusations of poor taste. Ernst Gombrich and Ernst Kris, in their contemporary psychoanalytical approach to caricature, ascribed to the image the 'primitive' power of magic identification with which civilized man dallied only in moments of peril and vulnerability, rather than assured superiority. Caricature, therefore, could not safely go beyond wit and the freedom of a mischievous childlike imagination.[69] Whatever the view of the wider public, fellow-travellers, at whom the 'Gift' and similar material was aimed, might well have shared this position, granting the primitive, barbarian, foreign and communist 'other' licence to reach beyond turning the enemy into monkeys and pears and, instead, to show them as cannibals and murderers.

Francis Klingender in his Adprint designed book, *Russia: Britain's Ally 1812–1942*,[70] sponsored by the ministry and introduced by the Soviet Ambassador Ivan Maisky, set out a context in which to legitimize Soviet graphic satire. He played on the history of caricature, the eighteenth-century alliance that had defeated Napoleon, and juxtaposed British cartoons from the mainstream press by Zec, Vicky[71] and David Low with Soviet examples drawn from the TASS poster agency alongside Boris Efimov (Stalin's favourite cartoonist and acquaintance of Low) and the Kukryniksy, among others. Significantly, Klingender's essay provided a platform where liberal democratic and objective 'truth' could nestle alongside Marxist axioms of legibility, humanity and collective social experience. To support the argument he included social realist pictures of fighting men at the front by Clifford Rowe[72] and James Boswell.[73]

Anti-Nazi and anti-capitalist visual vocabularies were familiar to fellow travellers and readers of *Left Review*, the *Daily Worker* and other communist publications,[74] and during the 1930s graphic artists involved in the production of broadly leftist propaganda had worked within the conventions of cartoon and caricature in the mainstream press, David Low and James Boswell (Buchan) the most famous among them. At times, artists such as the Alpha Group deployed the formal and expressive characteristics of European avant-garde graphic languages by drawing on divergent strands in modernism to engage with Lenin, Marx and Freud through

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Figure 6. Alpha Group (James Boswell, James Fitton and James Holland) for *Left Review: It's Up To Us!* (1936) in support of the League of Nations International Labour Organisation Peace Campaign (private collection).

constructivism, expressionism, social realism and surrealism. The pamphlet, *It's Up to Us!* (Figure 6), designed by the Alpha Group, emerged out of the milieu surrounding the Artists' International Association and the political magazine *Left Review*.[75] Howard Wadham of the magazine *Typography* commented in 1937:

> Heavy Egyptian letters come in very handy for Left-wing shockers. Those biting serifs are full of accusation and foreboding. Crude photo-montage, coloured cut-outs heavily overprinted in black, and brutal charcoal drawings give to this type of propaganda terrific power of visual assault. By some curious twist, bad printing becomes a virtue, and ragged edges, faulty register, and filled half-tones are all part of the picture.[76]

Invariably, aesthetic radicalism was greeted with caution. Wadham was sceptical of its effectiveness except for the already converted, the ordinary public finding it 'foreign' and 'queer'.[77] Constructivist-inspired cover designs for explicitly Marxist tracts by Edward McKnight-Kauffer for *5 On Revolutionary Art*[78] and Alec Anderson's cover for T.A. Jackson's *Dialectics: The Logic of Marxism*[79] are formal, clean and aesthetically pure. Visually they are redolent of Raphael Samuel's description of a communist as a disciplined, puritanical and abstemious individual.[80] But we would be deluded to think this was the 'look' of the Left and as such was put to socially democratic ends in the design of Allen Lane's Penguin books, for example. What is more significant than the aesthetic radicalism of *It's Up to Us!*, and its nods to the work of the communists George Grosz and John Heartfield in Germany and Boris Efimov in the Soviet Union, is the fact that the pamphlet is an example of socialist propagandists' use of advanced printing technology with the aim of presenting a visual argument. Typography was exploited for its look and the most striking pages displayed satirical cartoons, photomontage and schematic representations of statistical information in an echo of Otto Neurath's Isotypes (International System Of TYpographical Picture Education; more of which later). Discursive rational argument was abandoned for what

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James Shand, co-editor of *Typography* magazine, wanted for an audience 'quickened in reception by new techniques of presentation in broadcast and talking film; an audience with a camera eye'.[81] As we shall see, the emphasis on the visual was to become increasingly important for British government publicists in the Ministry of Information.

There is a distinction to be made between the British example and European avant-garde adventures pioneered by champions of self-conscious radical politics and aesthetics. In Britain the imperatives were often more professional than political, revolving around questions of good design and, importantly, visual literacy and the ability to convey a message effectively. In addition, it was a significant time for the practice of graphic design. When under wartime conditions the free market was largely replaced by government commissions, graphic design established itself as a profession framed within philosophical notions of social and political progress. To decorate capitalist products, however tasteful the models in French poster design and *la moderne*, was simply no longer sufficient.

In November 1941, an RIO reported a large body of opinion in favour of the directness of Soviet propaganda methods[82] and Francis Klingender remarked, for example, how much their anti-fascist satire was admired (Figure 5). From the distribution of reproductions of Soviet posters in the trade periodical *Art and Industry*, it is tempting to suggest that their forthrightness provoked the debate instigated by J.B. Nicholas, Chairman of the Advertising Services Guild who, in the interests of stimulating business for the industry, was encouraging the government to undertake more vigorous propaganda.[83] Nicholas was a regular contributor and, in among articles reproducing TASS posters and explaining the societal role of the Soviet artist in the pursuit of 'truth', the feature 'Trafalgar Square is the Nation's Notice Board' explored how in colourful spectacles advertising agencies could promote the national cause in a manner reminiscent of Bolshevik schemes for Red Square.[84] Another article, 'Posters of the Last War', looked to Frank Brangwyn's *The Reawakening of Belgium* and Spencer Pryse's Labour Party poster, *Forward! The Day is Breaking* for suitable models for creating calls for action.[85] Nicholas condemned government domestic poster campaigns for their neo-romanticism, formalism, lyricism, individualism and experimentalism[86] as much as the triumphalism and adolescent comic-book heroics of the widely disliked 'Forward to Victory!' and 'Back Them Up!' campaigns. Nicholas commissioned the Mass Observation report, *Home Propaganda*,[87] and his views echoed that report, finding home propaganda diffident and occasionally patronizing.[88] He demanded pictures for the people and of the people in their everyday lives and commissioned popular illustrators such as Terence Cuneo for another Ministry of Information exhibition at Charing Cross. Titled 'The Unconquerable Soul' it focused on resistance in Europe and graphically pictured the violence and deprivation of the occupation. Illustrative in style it conformed to advertisers' understandings of effective communication through active provocation in a manner not so remote from Soviet propagandists.

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The debate was dubbed 'Respectability vs. Vulgarity' and emerged during the course of 1942.[89] Nicholas fused not so much art and industry as art and publicity and was criticized by Herbert Read in a letter to *The Times* for pursuing a reductive course from 'competitive commercialism' to 'the degrading values of brutal aggression'.[90] In a special issue of *Art & Industry*, 'Is British Art Fighting?', Nicholas set out his campaign to influence government to be direct and to exert control over public information. He made a plea for 'hard-sell' realism and a greater engagement from artists: 'A poster to-day is not a picture to sell pills, but to save civilisation … Pictures, whatever the connoisseurs like, must in these days move the masses. Posters, however clever, are a waste of paper unless they kill Germans.' He condemned 'easy-going, cynical-sentimental intellectual habits, our academic pedantry, our professional vanities, our nervous idolatry of individualism'.[91] Aesthetic sophistication was irrelevant, what he wanted in pictures were stories of 'hate, anger and ferocious determination'.[92] Ultimately he provided a conventional affirmation of the commercial, legible, illustrative and realist style of mass culture – a kind of 'capitalist realism' before art critic Peter Fuller coined the phrase for advertising in Western culture.

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Illustrated books

In October 1941, alongside the 'Gift', Smollett had proposed exhibitions on the themes of youth, women, industry and agriculture in addition to the one on Soviet armed forces already in circulation. Material was provided by both the Ministry of Information and the Press Department of the Russian embassy (VOKS) to bring out the differences and similarities between the two countries. The intention was to supplement the visual – mostly photographs – with physical objects brought from Russia to stimulate interest, but this proved logistically impossible.[93] The point was that the emphasis was primarily on facts: peoples, resources, statistics, maps, charts and photographs. Generally, the focus was on the historically and geographically innocuous. While popular,[94] these exhibitions necessarily had relatively restricted audiences in comparison with the 1.6 million up to spring 1942 claimed by the non-theatrical film distribution circuit known as the 'Celluloid Circus'.[95] Nevertheless, the Midland Intelligence Region reported in 1941: 'There is not the slightest doubt that these photographs have aroused more interest and enthusiasm than any photographs or publications issued this year, and are far more worthwhile than every other exhibition we have ever put together.' The Western Region concurred: 'two or three times the number of Russian photographs at present in circulation could be placed.'[96]

For Parker it was important for the countries to remain distinct; political ideology was off-limits and the line of thought fitted the hegemonic framework of the time, creating an exotic 'other' as a foil to the rational, utilitarian self: 'what is suitable for the Slav temperament, which neither needs organisation, nor cares about it, and which is fantastic and poetic upon its outlook on life, is not appropriate to the Anglo-Saxons who are, matter of fact, disinterested [*sic*] in political theories, except where they show a

patent utility'.[97] The romantic was placed against the practical: the quixotic and revolutionary Slav was contrasted with the common sense and reformist Anglo-Saxon.

These exhibitions can be compared to three illustrated books produced within Ministry of Information guidelines to promote 'mutual understanding', according to the editor, the philosopher, John Macmurray.[98] Books in the series 'The Soviets and Ourselves' were designed by Adprint[99] with the assistance of Viennese émigré printer Walter Neurath, and published by George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd. between 1945 and 1947.[100] Using documentary photographs, statistical charts and slightly ludicrous prose, the series set out to compare the 'two great commonwealths' as confederations of nations. Miraculously, and with some reported difficulty on behalf of the ministry, collective farming and state-owned industry were compared to capitalist and colonialist agriculture and industry: 'To understand is to recognize unity in difference … [and] there are at least two very different significant things which the Russian people and the British people have in common. They are a warm human sympathy for the oppressed and the unfortunate, and a passionate love of freedom.'[101] K.E. Holme (the pen-name of the CPGB member and Marxist historian Christopher Hill) praised Lenin's genius and Soviet universal suffrage and compared the non-violent Stalinist purges of the 1930s to the Chartist social reform movement in Britain. And so on. The first in the series, *Landsmen and Seafarers* by Maurice Lovell, Reuters correspondent in Moscow until 1942, compared the reach and resources of the British Empire and the Soviet Union; the second, *Two Commonwealths* by Christopher Hill, compared public life; the third, *How Do You Do Tovarish?* by Ralph Parker, looked to private everyday life.

New printing techniques developed in Vienna enabled the photographs to be embedded in the text rather than being blocked together as was more usual. The designs carefully weighed the relationship between words and pictures and the integration of text and image pushed print technologies to the limit.[102] The pattern of comparison of objective evidence through the juxtaposition of posed and carefully framed documentary photographs was augmented with the visual presentation of statistical information in the form of Isotypes (Figure 7). A photograph of a statue of Cromwell nestled against a photographic portrait of Lenin and one of writing classes for women at the 'Red Giant' factory in Moscow faced those of a summer school for women workers at Girton College, England,[103] and a Soviet housing estate from the Second Five Year plan stands opposite another of London County Council flats.[104] The dust-wrapper for the first in the series was designed by John Heartfield[105] (Figure 7). In this a formally severe photomontage of British seamen and Soviet peasants was overlaid with Isotypes of Westminster and the Kremlin designed by the social and political radical, Otto Neurath.[106] Compositionally, like the exhibitions, the books broadly paralleled in three dimensions the photomontage technique of presenting modern reality through the juxtaposition of 'facts'. In this the overall approach to conveying a message is closer to Rodchenko's manipulation of discrete photographic elements than it is to Heartfield's homogenizing treatment of the component parts of the photomontage.

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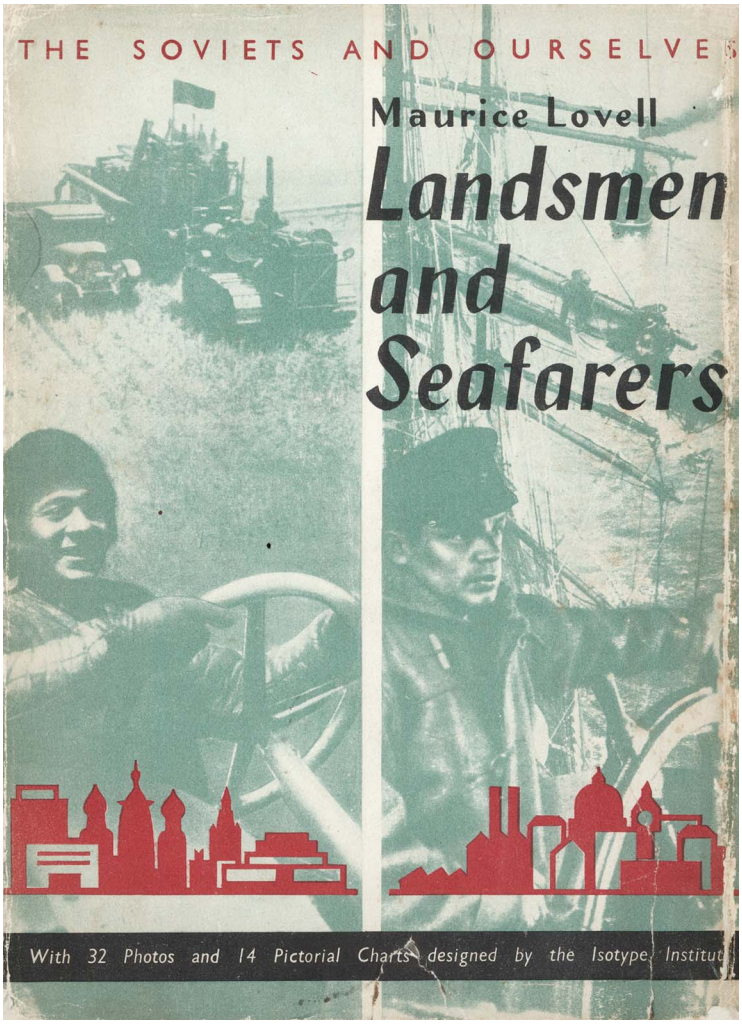

Figure 7. John Heartfield cover for Maurice Lovell, *Landsmen and Seafarers* (1945), produced by Adprint with pictorial charts designed by the Isotype Institute. The Heartfield Community of Heirs/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn and DACS, London 2012.

Isotypes played an important role in the design of the books. The system was developed as an international visual language comprising simple and consistent schematic symbols designed to aid the communication of social, economic, historical and political facts. Printed in colour and inserted in self-contained sections they provided a vivid semi-abstract and schematic complement to the black and white photography. Modernist in their aesthetic and educational ambition they presented in schematic form complex statistical information and enabled the reader to take it in at a glance.[107] The system was also used in a number of other officially sponsored publications designed by Adprint, such as the 'New Democracy' series published by Nicholson & Watson and in animated versions in Paul Rotha's politically progressive and socially critical films. Significantly, the books were designed to communicate visually and to be less read than scanned by looking at the photographs first, then the Isotypes and finally the words. John Macmurray remarked: 'the charts and photographs are

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essential to the plan and purpose of the book, and not mere decoration. They will repay study; for they say things that cannot be said, or said so well, in words.'[108] A clue to Adprint's agenda can be found in a comment from Hilda Matheson, the first BBC director of talks, who was instrumental in establishing the Adprint-designed and immensely successful 'Britain in Pictures' series as cultural propaganda, committed as she was to 'mobilising support for political intervention in a popular cultural form', as Paul Rennie has pointed out.[109] The campaign's anti-fascist and pro-Soviet stance inscribed an objective and realist vision of progressive modernizing politics in the hopes for the post-war world. In 1945 Adprint's design for Stephen Spender's *Citizens at War – and After*, also published by Harrap, was decorated with Isotypes on the inside covers. Illustrated with John Hinde's photographs it generated a full-colour and realist image of the new welfare state citizen (Figure 8). It was a technicolour vision of social democracy in action, quite possibly as far out of reach in its egalitarian and sun-drenched imagery as the communist future that neither the Soviets nor the ministry had dared risk exposing to the British public in their pro-Soviet publicity.



Figure 8. Photograph by John Hinde, Plate 4 in Stephen Spender, *Citizens in War and After* (1945). John Hinde Science and Society Picture Library.

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On the Left

It is vital to understand the importance of politically inspired printed ephemera and their function in contributing to the self-definition of those who saw themselves as belonging to a progressive community of thought and action in Britain. Pierre Bourdieu has argued that viewers are at the juncture of culture, society and material production whereas, as far as books are concerned, publishers, editors, designers and authors are linked to the print medium as a product.[110] The disparate viewers and multiple official and unofficial producers of political ephemera inhabited a cultural field bounded by political belief and ideological commitment that went some way to determine leftist modes of self-understanding and behaviour. Regis Debray[111] has asserted the structural importance of politically inspired print media. In 'the age of reason and the book, the newspaper and the political party'[112] he places the typographer and the printer, trades easily conflated with the professions of the graphic artist and designer, at the centre of a process of politicization. For him they were quintessentially the 'worker intellectual or an intellectual worker' collaborating in the dissemination of radical concepts.[113] The production of the political pamphlet at the printers and the illustrated book in the design studio and their distribution through bookshops and kiosks, on the street, in the factory and at rallies, meetings and lectures created a milieu where people from different classes and backgrounds met and exchanged ideas on progressive politics. In Britain the 'Left' even at its most radical was never revolutionary and in the 1930s and '40s it thrived on anti-fascism and social democratic values hung between hopes for a planned economy combined with social justice and equally important claims for individual freedom and emancipation.[114] As a community it never attained the organizational or political coherence of the Popular Front in Europe[115] at the time of the Spanish Civil War, for example, and was aptly described in 1941 by a contemporary commentator on the occasion of the Nazi German invasion of the Soviet Union in the *Times Literary Supplement*: as 'Pacifists, Left-Wingers who are not Communists, Communists who are not Left-Wingers and Communists who are'.[116] But it did unite under the umbrella of a particular visual discourse broadly defined as a democratic and objective aesthetic, rooted in montage construction from which the fellow travelling public could draw a democratic socialist identity, much as it might choose to adopt a particular dress code.

On a national level the most successful graphic design was neither the explicit ant-fascist propaganda of the Soviet material nor the illustrational dramatic heroics of Terence Cuneo nor the realism of James Boswell and Clifford Rowe, but the work produced in the spirit of international modernism so strongly criticized by Nicholas. Abram Games' *Your Britain: Fight For It Now* (1942), for example, was criticized by Churchill,[117] and yet it became an iconic symbol of the Welfare State. It featured Berthold Lubetkin's Finsbury Park Health Centre in a 'before and after' composition of a kind championed ironically enough by Viktor Koretsky in the Soviet Union, adopted by the Careless Talk Costs Lives campaign[118] and emulated in a poster for the CPGB by Ernest Brooks in 1943.[119] It straddles the montage construction of the Anglo-Soviet material and the pluralist late modernism of the contemporary graphic design undertaken for domestic campaigns by

Reginald Mount, Pat Keely, J.H.K. Henrion, Eric Fraser and even some executed for the Young Communist League by Davy, otherwise known as the graphic designer David Kaplan who worked under James Boswell at the Asiatic Petroleum HQ (Shell).[120] It also looks forward to Games' cover designs for Adprint's book series 'Target for Tomorrow'. With an editorial board consisting of Sir William Beveridge, Dr Julian Huxley and Sir John Boyd Orr, the series employed conventional narratives for the presentation of photographic and schematic material, but the covers combined photography and schematic elements into a late modernist and decorative rather than polemical combination.[121]

In conclusion, the involvement of the Ministry of Information in the distribution of publicity concerning the Soviet Union from 1941 to 1945 contributed to and modified the visual rhetoric of the 'Left' in Britain through the implementation of a realist aesthetic agenda. The widespread distribution of Soviet anti-fascist graphic satire demonized Nazi Germany and in illustrated books and exhibitions it was juxtaposed with photography and Isotypes. As such it presented a montage construction in an aesthetic of democratic objectivity to promote egalitarian and emancipatory socialist agendas directed at political and social reform. Between and on the covers of the Adprint-produced 'The Soviets and Ourselves' and 'New Democracy' series and other singular publications, the direct visual communication of 'objective facts' through the schematic display of statistical information and documentary photographs of ordinary people in pursuit of their everyday lives was abandoned for what Stuart Hall[122] and Paul Rennie[123] have called the 'social vision' of the Welfare State. For George Orwell, outright *laissez faire* capitalism may have been on the back foot, but the Welfare State was liberal and managerial rather than socialist.[124] There was no sign of the very British socialist, modernist and objective vision that had slipped into the material environment of the print media under the original guise of anti-fascist propaganda and the mutual understanding of the Soviet Union.

Once Hitler had been defeated, Anglo-Soviet agendas lost their purpose. What remained were visions of a modern, technologically advanced, liberal, socially just and emancipated system where the poetic, seductive and difficult late modernist and pluralist look of the Welfare State dominated left-liberal aesthetic discourse. The contention is that this left an objective socialist aesthetic behind and registered a political shift away from the socialist values promoted by elements within the government and intellectual elite during the war. Typified by the work of Abram Games, the visual discourse of public information was socially democratic, but its playful and challenging aesthetic implicitly reflected the dominant left liberal intellectual elite rather than any kind of democratic objectivity belonging to a wartime socialism described at the time as a kind of 'communism without Marx or Lenin'.

Notes

Every effort has been made to contact all copyright holders. The author will be glad to acknowledge any omissions brought to his attention.

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1 Beaverbrook was accompanied by his American counterpart, Averill Harriman, to discuss aid to the Soviet Union.

2 In the official record and in Ministry of Information-sponsored publications the Soviet Union was invariably referred to as Russia. The author uses the terms Soviet Union and the Soviets, except in quotations where ministry use of Russia and the Russians is maintained.

3 HP/874 8/10/41, Smollett in a Memorandum to Parker. The National Archive (TNA).

4 INF/676, Minute sheet Briggs to Parker copied to Smollett. TNA.

5 INF1/319, Pacifist, Communist and Fascist anti-war propaganda 1939–1941.

6 Such as the Soviet Life Exhibition, Suffolk Galleries, London, August 1941; Russian Exhibition, Granada, Maidstone, 1941; Hero Cities Exhibition, Harrod's, February 1944; and the numerous events and exhibitions promoted by Mrs Churchill's Aid to Russia Fund.

7 INF1/676, Interdivisional conference, October 1, 1941. TNA.

8 INF1/676, Memo from Briggs, October 20, 1941. (TNA).

9 Victor Gollancz, *Russia and Ourselves* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1941). The publisher and founder of Left Book Club, Victor Gollancz, noted 'the propaganda on which both parties could agree is not communist propaganda, but anti-Fascist and "anti-war" propaganda, "anti-war" being used in the sense of opposition to the war which Hitler has forced on the world . . . This is, in point of fact exactly the line of the present Soviet propaganda, which has been superb since the first day of the German attack on Russia.'

10 Reginald Bishop, *Russia's Enemies in Britain* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1942). According to John Jenks, *British Propaganda and News Media in the Cold War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 28, 'Leading the way was Lord Beaverbrook's *Daily Express* and *Sunday Express*, with the Liberal *News Chronicle*, Conservative *Times*, and Labour *Daily Herald* following close behind.' See also P.M.H. Bell, *John Bull and the Bear: British Public Opinion, Foreign Policy and the Soviet Union 1941–1945* (London: Edward Arnold, 1990), 52–3, and Sian Nicholas, *The Echo of War: Home Front Propaganda and the Wartime BBC, 1939–45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 165.

11 INF1/677, Memo, Parker to Morton, Policy towards Communism Note, January 20, 1942. TNA.

12 INF1/676, Letter from Mr Ryan of the BBC to DG MOI, September 4, 1941. TNA.

13 INF1/676, Propaganda at Home about the Soviet Union. Minute sheet to Director General from Mr Parker, July 24, 1941. TNA.

14 *The Spirit of the Soviet Union* (London: Pilot Press, 1941) jointly produced with Nicholson & Watson with a foreword by Lord Beaverbrook.

15 Founded on the day of the Nazi invasion, June 22, 1941.

16 Cartoons and prose from *Krokodil* were published in Ivor Montagu and Herbert Marshall, eds, *The Crocodile Album of Soviet Humour* (London: Pilot Press, 1943) as part of the series 'Life and Literature in the Soviet Union'.

17 IWM PST 3140. Imperial War Museum (IWM).

18 INF1/676, Handwritten note 'Exhibitions' E. Richards, February 24, 1942. All subsequent statistics for print runs and sites are taken from this note. TNA.

19 INF 1/677 HP 874, Propaganda at Home about the Soviet Union, Memo, Hare from Briggs April 10, 1942. TNA.

20 Ibid., Memorandum Francis to Symes, January 8, 1942.

21 INF 1/677 HP 874, Propaganda at Home about the Soviet Union. TNA.

22 Grace Lovatt Fraser, 'National War Publicity in War-time', *Art and Industry*, December 1940, 207.

23 INF 1/677 HP 874, Window Display Bulletin No. 21, January 31, 1942. TNA.

24 HP 874, Memo Parker to Briggs, October 23, 1941. TNA.

25 Both these men played important roles, with Herbert Read and Bernard Hollowood of the Advertising Services Guild, in the formation in 1943 of the Design Research Unit, a ground-breaking multidisciplinary design consultancy.

26 See Misha Black, 'Design for Ceremony and Exhibitions', in *Practice of Design*, ed. Herbert Read (London: Lund Humphries, 1946), 183–204.

27 IWM PST, 4021. IWM.

28 Ibid., 15055.

29 The exhibition included the Kukryniksy's *On Tour from Germany: 'Hitler and Company' Circus*, originally published in May 1942. An invaluable reference for TASS Agency posters is Peter Kork Zegers and Douglas Druick, *Windows on the War: Soviet TASS Posters at Home and Abroad 1941–1945* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2011).

30 'Richmond Aids Russia: Success of the Anglo-Soviet Friendship Week', *Richmond Herald*, November 29, 1941.

31 IWM PST, 5649, 3139, 0178, 6323. IWM.

32 Ibid., 3144, 8545.

33 Ibid., 0010, 3140, 3142.

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34 INF 676 HP874, Note from Briggs, October 20, 1942. TNA.

35 INF1/322, Report of Planning Committee on a Home Morale Campaign, June 1940. Articles for *Picture Post* and *Illustrated London News* among others were subject to ministry approval. TNA.

36 FO 371/32889. TNA.

37 See Vladimir O. Plachnatov, 'The Rise and Fall of *Britansky Soyuznik*: A Case Study in Soviet Response to British Propaganda of the mid-1940s', *Historical Journal*,41, no. 1 (1998): 293–301. The first issue appeared on 16 August 1942 as an eight-page weekly in an edition of 25,000; half were sold from kiosks, the rest by subscription to libraries, educational and industrial institutions and army units. Copies went to all national and regional newspapers and to all members of the government. It had an estimated readership of 250,000. See INF/678 MOI SR 37, British Publicity in the Soviet Union, A Note Issued by the Soviet Relations Division. TNA.

38 FO 371/32889. TNA.

39 INF1/676 MOI, Propaganda at Home about the Soviet Union, R.H. Parker further observations, August 18, 1941. TNA.

40 Ibid.

41 INF1/677, Memo, Parker to Morton, January 20, 1942. TNA.

42 For a full discussion of the role of government in publishing during the Second World War, see Valerie Holman, *Print for Victory: Book Publishing in England, 1939–1945* (London: The British Library, 2008) and Valerie Holman, 'Carefully Concealed Connections: The Ministry of Information and British Publishing, 1939–46', 2009, http://muse.web02-pub.mse.jhu.edu/journals/book_history/v008/8.1holman.pdf

43 Jeremy Lewis, *Penguin Special: The Life and Times of Allen Lane* (London: Penguin, 2006), 73.

44 For full discussions of both the Ministry of Information and British attitudes towards Russia and how they were handled by the government, see Michael Balfour, *Propaganda in War 1939–1945: Organisations, Policies and Publics in Britain and Germany* (London and Boston, MA: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), Ian McLaine, *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War II* (London, Boston, MA, and Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1979) and P.M.H. Bell, *John Bull and the Bear: British Public Opinion, Foreign Policy and the Soviet Union 1941–45* (London; Edward Arnold, 1990).

45 See Anthony Glees, *The Secrets of the Service: A Story of Soviet Subversion of Western Intelligence* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1987); William E. Duff, *A Time for Spies: Theodore Stephanovich Mally and the Era of the Great Illegals* (Nashville, TN, and London: Vanderbilt University Press, 1999).

46 Hans Peter Smolka, *Forty Thousand against the Arctic: Russia's Arctic Empire* (London: Hutchinson, 1937).

47 Timothy Garton Ash, 'Why Orwell Matters', *Hoover Digest*, October 30, 2001, http://www.hoover.org/publications/hoover-digest/article/6275, Brendan Bracken was a good friend of the film producer and Hungarian émigré Alexander Korda. Peter Wollen points out in 'Spies and Spivs: An Anglo-Soviet Entanglement', in *Paris Hollywood: Writings on Film* (London: Verso, 2002), 66–73, it was Smollett, probably as early as 1945, who suggested the idea for Graham Greene's *The Third Man*. Greene visited Vienna with Smollett to carry out research for the film script, and Greene even drew on some unpublished short stories by Smollett where he found the story line of a black-market penicillin racket operating through Vienna's sewer system. In all probability the Soviet spy Kim Philby was the model for Harry Lime, although Phillip Kerr maintains it was the 'slimy' Smollett who provided the model. See Phillip Kerr, 'The Third Man Seeing Greene', http://www.criterion.com/current/posts/1021

48 Smollett's duplicitous role is identified by Steven Merrit Miner in *Stalin's Holy War: Religion, Nationalism, and Alliance Politics* (Chapel Hill, NC, and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 245–278, a fact later confirmed by the opening up of the Soviet Mitrokhin archives where his code name was revealed as ABO and his recruitment as having taken place in 1933, although others put it much later at 1939. It was probably Kim Philby, whose wife Litzi Friedmann had known Smollett in communist circles in Vienna, who recruited Smollett. See David Pryce-Jones, 'Unlimited Nastiness. Review of Jonathan Haslam's *The Vices of Integrity: E.H. Carr 1892–1982*', *The New Criterion*, December 1999.

49 David Lambert, 'Wolfgang Foges and the New Illustrated Book in Britain: Adprint, Rathbone Books, and Aldus Books', *Typography Papers* 8 (2009): 114.

50 T162/1024, Home Intelligence Division Western Report, No. 82, April 29, 1942. TNA.

51 See Robert Lebeck and Bodo von Dewitz, *Kiosk 1839–1972: A History of Photojournalism* (Cologne: Museum Ludwig Cologne, Steidl, 2001).

52 Subsequently, the same designer used a poster in similarly heroic vein from the 'Gift', Irakle Toidze's' Motherland Calling!', to illustrate the cover for *Russia in Peace and War* by the communist Pat Sloan (London: Pilot Press, 1941), working in conjunction with the SCR which was not and the Russia To-day Society, which was on the ministry's proscribed list. Such an image could feature on the dust-wrapper as an appropriate image sanctioned by the Soviets but not when the ministry was involved.

53 Mussolini (Italy), Antonescu (Romania), Mannerheim (Finland), Horty (Hungary), Petain (Vichy France), Quisling (Norway) and Tiso (Slovakia).

54 Published by the press department of the Soviet Embassy in London.

55 See Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in War Time: Containing an Assortment of Lies Circulated throughout the Nations during the Great War* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1928).

56 Virginia Woolf, 'Why Art Follows Politics', *The Daily Worker*, December 14, 1936.

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57 T162/1024, Home Intelligence Reports, No. 90, Appendix 1, June 25, 1942. TNA.

58 INF1/322, Lord Davidson, Propaganda on the Home Front, Minute Sheet undated, probably May 1940. TNA.

59 INF1/677, A note from Brendan Bracken to Smollett, April 6, 1942. TNA.

60 See Jim Aulich and John Hewitt, *Seduction or Instruction? First World War Posters in Britain and Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

61 Front flyleaf of *The Spirit of the Soviet Union*.

62 IWM PST 14417, 15059. The poster issued by the Ministry of Labour and National Service emblazoned with the slogan 'Women of Britain! Arm Him' and depicting the 'Nazi beast', or the CPGB poster featuring a montage of a dead civilian in the ruins of a bombed out house under the slogan 'Stop This! With a Second Front Now' are exceptional.

63 Harold Nicolson, 'Propaganda', Hansard, HC Deb 07 July 1942, vol. 381, cc. 683. TNA.

64 T162/1024, Home Intelligence Reports, Differences between Commercial Advertising and Government Propaganda, 1962. TNA.

65 Nicolson, 'Propaganda', cc. 685.

66 See Brian Foss, 'Message and Medium: Government Patronage, National Identity and National Culture in Britain, 1939–45', *The Oxford Art Journal* 14, no. 2 (1991): 52–72.

67 HP/874 Part C, Extract from a Report on the USSR at War in Bristol, February 12, 1942. TNA.

68 V.M. Molotov, *The Molotov Notes on German Atrocities* (London: HMSO/Russian Embassy, 1942) did feature atrocity photographs but, according to Brendan Bracken, this was a 'special case' on 'special instructions'; see INF 1/677 HP 874, Bracken to Smollett, February 6, 1942. TNA.

69 E.H. Gombrich and E. Kris, *Caricature* (Harmondsworth: King Penguin, 1940), 26. See also E.H. Gombrich and E. Kris, 'The Principles of Caricature', *British Journal of Medical Psychology* 17 (1938): 319–42.

70 See F.D. Klingender, *Russia – Britain's Ally 1812–1942* (London, Toronto, Bombay and Sydney: Harrap, 1942).

71 For more information on 'Vicky' and some illustrations of his work, see M. Gee, 'Vicky the Britisher', *Visual Culture in Britain* 13, no. 2 (2012): 191–206.

72 Clifford Rowe, *Stretcher Party*, 1941, in Klingender, *Russia*, 46.

73 James Boswell, *The Night the Sergeant Copped It*, 1941, in Klingender, *Russia*, 47.

74 In Britain the Popular Front had gained support from such influential and public intellectuals as E.M. Forster, George Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, Leonard and Virginia Woolf, Bertrand Russell, Sir Charles Trevelyan, Lord Ponsonby, Maurice Dobb, J.D. Bernal, Anthony Blunt, George Orwell, Cecil Day Lewis, W.H. Auden, Christopher Isherwood, Stephen Spender, Louis MacNiece, Herbert Read, John Strachey, Sidney and Beatrice Webb and Roy Fuller. The Popular Front was not sanctioned by the political establishment or the Labour Party. For detailed accounts of the influence of leftist politics on art in Britain during the 1930s and 1940s, see Donald Drew Egbert, *Social Radicalism and the Arts: Western Europe: A Cultural History from the French Revolution to 1968* (New York: Knopf, 1970), 492–550, and Lynda Morris and Robert Radford, *AIA: The Story of the Artists International Association, 1933–53* (Oxford: The Museum of Modern Art, 1983).

75 We might list among their number such artists and designers as James Fitton, Misha Black, James Boswell, James Holland, Pearl Binder and Clifford Rowe.

76 Howard Wadham, 'Left Wing Layout', *Typography* 3 (Summer 1937): 27.

77 Ibid.

78 Artists' International Association, *5 On revolutionary Art* (London: Wishart, 1935).

79 London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1936.

80 Raphael Samuel, *The Lost World of British Communism* (London: Verso, 2006), 35–6.

81 James Shand, 'The Alphabet and the Printing Press', *Typography* 1 (November 1936): 16, quoted in *Modern Typography in Britain: Graphic Design, Politics, and Society*, Typography Papers 8, (London: Hyphen Press, 2009).

82 T162/1024, Home Intelligence Reports. No. 58, November 10, 1941. TNA.

83 Joe Brumwell, *Bright Ties Bold Ideas* (Truro: The Tie Press, 2010), 43–56.

84 *Art and Industry*, May 1942, 130–4.

85 'Posters of the Last War', *Art and Industry*, May 1942, 125–6.

86 An attitude shared by both the right and the left of the political spectrum as characterized by T.S. Eliot, the Leavises, J.B. Priestley and George Orwell. See Brian Foss, *War Paint: Art, War, State and Identity in Britain 1939–1945* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 173.

87 INF1/341, Note from Francis Meynell: 'More seriously still we are embarrassed by the Guild's relations with Tom Harrisson and Mass Observation. He has been making an unhelpful running commentary in the Board's surveys as a means of glorifying his own, and I should not feel able to trust his associates with the consumer survey data which as Agents they must have to inform their work for the Board [of Trade].' TNA.

88 Mass Observation, *Home Propaganda, Advertising Service Guild Bulletin: Change*, no 2 (1941), 58, 60.

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89 J.B. Nicholas, 'Is British Art Fighting?', *Art and Industry*, May 1942. The May issue was given over to the Advertising Services Guild and the debate played itself out in the pages of subsequent issues. The March 1943 issue was partly dedicated to articles on Soviet art and propaganda.

90 Herbert Read quoted in *Art and Industry*, September 1942, 105.

91 Nicholas, 'Is British Art Fighting?', 116.

92 Ibid., 123.

93 *Home Propaganda*, 45, 52, 55. It perhaps should be noted that in 1941 Mass Observation reported that attendances at photographic and poster exhibitions were extremely poor, largely owing to poor design, lack of content and poorly chosen sites. Exhibitions containing objects, demonstrations and physical examples generated more enthusiasm and interest, if not actual numbers of visitors.

94 INF1/677, Propaganda at Home about the Soviet Union. TNA.

95 Noted for their interesting venues from factory canteens to village halls.

96 INF1/677, Propaganda at Home about the Soviet Union. Photographs Soviet Collections. TNA.

97 INF1/677, Memo, Parker to Morton, January 20, 1942. TNA.

98 John Macmurray, 'Preface', in Maurice Lovell, *Landsmen and Seafarers* (London, Toronto, Bombay and Sidney: Harrap, 1945), 5.

99 Lambert, 'Wolfgang Foges and the New Illustrated Book in Britain', 113.

100 George Harrap & Co had been negotiating with the ministry and the Russian embassy over producing English editions of Soviet material since early 1942. See INF 1/677 HP 874, Memo to Lozovsky, Soviet Information Bureau, Kuibyshev, February 27, 1942.

101 Ibid.

102 Tom Rosenthal, 'Walter and Eva Neurath: Their Books Married Words with Pictures', in *Emigrant Publishers: The Impact of Expatriate Publishers in Britain and America in the 20th Century*, ed. Richard Abel and Gordon Graham (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 116.

103 Ralph Parker, *How Do You Do Tovarish?* (London, Toronto, Bombay and Sidney: Harrap, 1947), 26–7.

104 Ibid., 12–13.

105 Heartfield had provided the uncredited front cover for *Picture Post*, 9 September 1939, then edited by the émigré Hungarian Stefan Lorant. The image was titled 'Kaiser Adolf: The Man against Europe'. A version had first appeared in the magazine *Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung* on 21 August 1932 under the title 'His Majesty Adolf – I Lead You toward Splendid Bankruptcies!'.

106 Otto Neurath established the Isotype Institute in Oxford in 1942.

107 See Otto Neurath, *From Hieroglyphics to Isotype: A Visual Autobiography* (London: Hyphen Press, 2010) and Nancy Cartwright, Jordi Cat, Lola Fleck and Thomas E. Uebel, *Otto Neurath: Philosophy between Science and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

108 Macmurray, 'Preface', 5.

109 Paul Rennie,'British Picture Books for Grown-Ups from the 1940s', 2005, http://www.rennart.co.uk/web%20site%20pdfs/books.pdf

110 See Pierre Bourdieu, 'Field of Power, Literary Field and Habitus', in *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed.R. Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 27–73.

111 Regis Debray, 'Socialism and Print', *New Left Review*, July–August 2007, 8. He found support for this view in Eric Hobsbawm's claim that he could measure the depth of penetration of socialist ideas in Europe by counting the number of publications in any one year.

112 Ibid.

113 Ibid., 6.

114 Ibid., 18, 27.

115 See Richard Overy, *The Morbid Age: Britain and the Crisis of Civilisation, 1919–1939: Britain between the Wars* (London: Allen Lane, 2009) and David Caute, *The Fellow Travellers: Intellectual Friends of the Soviet Union* (London and New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).

116 'News and Notes', *The Times Literary Supplement*, June 28, 1941, 305.

117 T162/1024, Home Intelligence Reports, No. 90, Appendix 1, June 25, 1942. TNA.

118 See IWM PST 19665. IWM.

119 IWM PST 8207. IWM.

120 IWM PST 14392, 14978, 14392. IWM.

121 Sir Ronald Davison's, *Demobilisation for Peace*, Target for Tomorrow No. 1 (London: Pilot Press,1944) was typical.

122 Stuart Hall, 'The Social Eye of Picture Post', *Working Papers in Cultural Studies* no. 2 (1972).

123 Paul Rennie, 'Socialvision: Visual Culture and Social Democracy in Britain during World War II', *Journal of War and Culture Studies* 1, no. 3 (2008): 243–59.

124 George Orwell, 'Second Thoughts on James Burnham', *Polemic* no. 3 (1946) 13.

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