

Chapter Title: 'The first bastion of the Resistance': the beginnings of the Free French in London, 1940—1

Chapter Author(s): Martyn Cornick

Book Title: A history of the French in London

Book Subtitle: Liberty, equality, opportunity

Book Editor(s): Debra Kelly, Martyn Cornick

Published by: University of London Press, Institute of Historical Research. (2013)

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv512xmz.22>

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13. 'The first bastion of the Resistance': the beginnings of the Free French in London, 1940–1

Martyn Cornick

O France, your misfortune outrages my heart:
I have said it before, and will never get tired
Of repeating this cry that springs forth from my soul,
Whoever does harm to my mother is vile.¹

This chapter² begins by exploring the role of Denis Saurat at the French Institute in London on behalf of the Free French in the early months of the Second World War. Saurat, director of the Institute since 1924, and, since 1926, chair of French language and literature at King's College London, is a neglected and rather misunderstood figure. It will then examine how some of the French already in the capital, especially journalists, and those who arrived there after the defeat became engaged on behalf of Free France. The chapter also reviews some of the ways in which French culture was mobilized to advance the same cause, including the composition of a little-known but important special issue of the literary review *Aguedal*.

Saurat is one of the more important among the 'Forgotten French', to borrow the term used by Nicholas Atkin.³ If he later became neglected, in the 1930s and 1940s he occupied an important place in Franco-British

¹ 'O France, ton malheur m'indigne et m'est sacré. / Je l'ai dit, et jamais je ne me lasserai / De le redire, et c'est le grand cri de mon âme, / Quiconque fait du mal à ma mère est infâme' (Victor Hugo, quoted by Denis Saurat, 19 June 1940).

² This study has drawn on the following unpublished sources: Institut Français du Royaume-Uni (IFRU), Denis Saurat Archive (hereafter DSA) (my thanks to Philippe Lane and the staff at IFRU for their help); interview with Stéphane and Christiane Hessel, Paris, 27 June 2012 (my sincere thanks to Clara Mure-Petitjean for her help in arranging the interview, to Stéphane and Christiane Hessel for their welcome, and to the research committee of the University of Birmingham for their financial support); I am grateful too to Patrick and Philippe Saurat for permission to read their grandfather's unpublished correspondence with Jean Paulhan, conserved at Abbaye d'Ardenne, Institut Mémoires de l'Édition Contemporaine (IMEC) Archive Centre.

³ N. Atkin, *The Forgotten French: Exiles in the British Isles, 1940–4* (Manchester and New York, 2003).

cultural relations, as attested by Margaret Storm Jameson: 'Saurat was one of that handful of Frenchmen who have loved England. Loved it not blindly, as many Englishmen love France, but with a clear-sighted understanding of our faults and virtues. His passionate friendship with England did him lasting harm with his countrymen'. Saurat certainly was a multi-faceted creature: a capable administrator, a scholar, a 'mystical poet, a dreamer', a 'philosopher fascinated and a little repelled by the unconscious myth-making energies of the mind'. Jameson continues her portrait: 'He was not only bilingual, writing English as he wrote French, with ease, lucidity, wit, not only a scholarly critic of our literature, not only a poet in the tradition of English mystical poetry; he had an English heart living in what seemed complete amity with his mercurial French mind'.⁴

In addition to his official roles, after the outbreak of war in September and in the lead up to the Fall of France in June 1940, Saurat's Institute functioned as a rallying point for those French either already in the capital, or for those who succeeded in escaping Occupied France. Using his archives, as well as other, published, sources, this first section will sketch out Saurat's background, how the Institute came to be seen as a 'First Bastion of the Resistance', and how Saurat came to the aid of Charles de Gaulle on the latter's arrival in London.

Denis Saurat – from Toulouse to London

The initial focus of attention, then, is Denis Saurat, director of the French Institute in London. It is, of course, idle to speculate on how de Gaulle would have fared under different circumstances following his arrival in London in June 1940, but it is clear that Saurat, with access to a network of contacts among the established French 'colony' in London, as well as his contacts with figures in the British establishment, provided much ready support for de Gaulle.⁵ Indeed, Paul Dupays, in one of the first volumes of his *Historical Chronicles* of the Second World War dating from 1951, opens his account on the 'Unassailable Island' (that is, Britain) with a reference to the:

members of the London French 'colony', representing all classes and situations, [who] met on 9 July 1940, following the suggestion of Mr. Guéritte, former president of the French Chamber of Commerce in London, and pledged the active collaboration of French people residing in Britain to work hard for the British government. After a detailed examination of the situation, it

⁴ M. S. Jameson, *Journey from the North: Autobiography of Storm Jameson* (2 vols., 1970), ii. 74.

⁵ See especially Atkin, *Forgotten French*, ch. 5.

was decided to create a liaison committee between the French 'colony' and the government. The committee recognized the importance of the declaration made by Churchill whereby an English victory would lead to the liberation of France. The members of the provisional committee decided to renew their pledge to the British government to do their utmost to work together, as had been expressed by the permanent committee in its telegram of 20 June 1940.⁶

Denis Saurat was a member of this committee and had already been instrumental in enabling meetings and committee work to take place at the French Institute, in Queensberry Place, South Kensington, and at his residence at 33 Cromwell Road, opposite the Natural History Museum. During his many years in London prior to 1940, Saurat had constructed an extensive and rich cultural network, which included personal links with the prestigious monthly review, *La Nouvelle Revue française*, under the direction of Jean Paulhan. Indeed, it is significant that Paulhan, having fled south in the exodus from northern France in June 1940, and having already placed his faith in the British to stand up to Hitler, wrote to signal his appreciation of the presence of Frenchmen such as Saurat in London. Somehow, his letter got through to the British capital:

If this letter reaches you, please, I implore you, let me have news of you and yours. The war has forced us all the way down to Carcassonne. We were trying to publish another issue of the *Nouvelle Revue française*, while still free, but our printers, one after the other, have been occupied ... our sons are safe and sound. What has happened? Maybe one day we will be able to talk about it openly, without feeling too much sadness and shame. It will be explained by many reasons, and especially by those reasons which make us think about you, at this moment, with even more hope and friendship than usual.⁷

⁶ See P. Dupays, *L'Île imprenable. Chronique historique, la Grande Bretagne juillet-août 1940* (Paris, n.d. [1950-1?]), p. 1. All translations are mine unless indicated otherwise: 'Les membres de la colonie française de Londres, représentant toutes les classes et situations, se réunissent le 9 juillet 1940, sur la proposition de M. Guéritte, ancien président de la Chambre de commerce pour apporter au gouvernement britannique la collaboration active des Français résidant en Grande-Bretagne. Après un examen minutieux de la situation, on décide de créer un comité de liaison entre la Colonie française et le gouvernement britannique. Le comité prend acte de la déclaration faite par Churchill signifiant que la victoire anglaise favorisera la libération de la France. Les membres du comité provisoire décident de renouveler au gouvernement britannique "l'assurance de collaboration totale" exprimée par le Comité permanent dans son télégramme du 20 juin 1940. Ils font aussitôt appel à tous les résidents français de la Grande Bretagne pour obtenir leur adhésion'.

⁷ IFRU, DSA, unpublished letter from Jean Paulhan to Denis Saurat dated 14 Aug. 1940: 'Si ce mot vous parvient, donnez-moi, je vous prie, de vos nouvelles, et des nouvelles des vôtres. La guerre nous a repoussés jusque vers Carcassonne. Il s'agissait de publier encore une *NRF* libre, mais nos imprimeries, l'une après l'autre occupées ... nos fils sont sains et

Because of the strong possibility that his letter might be opened or censored by the authorities, Paulhan is guarded in his comments, but it provides a clear enough early indication that the French were thinking of friends or acquaintances in London, and that they might ultimately work for a cause different from that prevailing in Occupied France.

We shall begin by outlining Denis Saurat's career as a scholar of English literature, teacher and cultural organizer.⁸ He was born on 21 March 1890, in Toulouse. In 1894 the family moved to Trélon, in the Nord, where, between 1908 and 1911, Saurat enrolled as a student, first at the Ecole Normale d'Instituteurs (a teacher training school) in Douai, and then, specializing in English studies, in the Université de Lille. This would prove to be a happy coincidence as arrangements were being made in 1910 with the Université de Lille to found the French Institute in London.⁹ Once he had graduated, Saurat took teaching posts in English at Valréas and Bourges. In the First World War, he was spared front-line service because of his myopia. After the war he took the examinations for the *agrégation d'anglais*, in which he was ranked first. Thus was his career launched. In 1920, he was granted a post as *professeur* in a Bordeaux *lycée*, and that year, based at the Sorbonne, he began his doctorate on the thought of the English poet John Milton. During these studies he built on his interests in metaphysics, esotericism and especially occultism. He believed he had discovered an influence of the Zohar, from the Kabbalah tradition, in certain passages of Milton's *Paradise Lost* and in Blake. Later debates in academic journals would take issue with these interpretations, but Saurat's influence in the inter-war period over studies on Milton, Blake and, in France, Victor Hugo, is undeniable. His doctoral studies resulted in his first book, *La Pensée de Milton*, published in 1920 by Alcan (Paris). In 1923, he was appointed professor of English at the Université de Bordeaux.

These achievements impressed those recruiting in 1924 for the directorship of the French Institute in London: Saurat would occupy the post there until 1945. His academic credentials, and knowledge of the English education system, again facilitated his appointment in 1926 as professor of French language and literature at King's College London, a post he retained until

saufs. Que s'est-il passé? Peut-être pourrons-nous quelque jour en parler librement, sans trop de tristesse ni de honte. Cela dépendra de bien des raisons et de celles en particulier qui me font songer à vous, en ce moment, avec un peu plus d'espoir et d'amitié encore que d'habitude'.

⁸ For details of Saurat's career I have drawn principally on documents, CVs and manuscript and typewritten log sheets conserved in DSA, as well as the obituary in *The Times*, 10 June 1958.

⁹ See the chapter in this volume by Charlotte Faucher and Philippe Lane.

1950. With his career as an academic now well established, in 1930 and 1932 he accepted posts of visiting assistant professor at Columbia University, in New York. He made return visits to Paris, where he would often meet with Jean Paulhan; their networks included the Education Ministry. Aged forty-four, his professional and cultural work was recognized by the award of Chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur.¹⁰ The appointments to the French Institute and to King's College represent a considerable achievement, given the formidable workload accruing to a university departmental head, not to mention developing the skills and networks required to organize teaching, as well as a regular cultural programme at the Institute. Sometimes, of course, his dual role created fruitful connections for both organizations.

Emile Delavenay who, as well shall see, would play a leading role in the BBC's European Intelligence Department during the war, had lodgings for a while at the Maison of the Institute, and he records that Saurat recruited him to undertake conversation classes at King's College, as well as teaching at the Institute.¹¹ In regard to his cultural networking, Saurat's posts at King's and the Institute gave him the means (and the budgets) to invite high-profile speakers to London, showing just how vital was his contribution to maintaining French cultural life in the city. Among those whom Saurat invited were Paul Valéry, Georges Duhamel, André Maurois, Paul Morand, André Chamson, Henry de Montherlant, Jean Giraudoux, Jules Supervielle, Paul Eluard and Louis Aragon. In his correspondence with Paulhan he was not afraid to express his frank views. When Jules Romains was due to come to London in 1935, he wrote: 'Romains is really, really weak. He's coming in November and will have an enormous success'.¹² Finally, Saurat's pre-war interests in occultism and esotericism came to fruition in 1935 when, with Herbert Read, he co-edited A. R. Orage's *Selected Essays and Critical Writings*.¹³ According to Saurat, Orage's review, *The New Age*, had been one of the liveliest intellectual forums in Britain between 1910 and 1914.

¹⁰ It is a speculative point, but it is possible that his nomination for this honour was supported by Jean Paulhan, who was often consulted on such conferments by his friend Louis Planté, at the Education Ministry (see L. Planté, *Au 110 rue de Grenelle: souvenirs, scènes et aspects du Ministère de l'Instruction Publique-Education nationale (1920-44)* (Paris, 1967).

¹¹ E. Delavenay, *Témoignage: d'un village savoyard au village mondial* (Aix-en-Provence, 1992), pp. 92ff.

¹² Abbaye d'Ardenne, IMEC, Fonds Paulhan, unpublished letter from Denis Saurat to Jean Paulhan, dated 6 Sept. 1935: '[Romains:] C'est vraiment très très faible ... Il vient en novembre et va avoir un succès énorme'. Delavenay bears witness too to Romains' boorish behaviour, in *Témoignage*, p. 92.

¹³ See also, on the eccentric Russian occultist Gurdjieff, 'Visite à Gourdjieff', *La Nouvelle Revue française*, Nov. 1933, p. 686-98; 'Gourdjieff et Orage', *La Nouvelle Revue française*, June 1934, p. 1052.

Denis Saurat's war

Around the time of the Munich Accords in 1938, because he held semi-official status in London, Saurat told Paulhan he would have to cease his contributions to the *Nouvelle Revue française*. With the outbreak of war in September 1939, he strove to present the French point of view in a series of lectures and talks, some or all of which were broadcast on the BBC, and then published as pamphlets. These efforts were, of course, rapidly overtaken by events once the German assaults began on 10 May 1940. Around the time of Dunkirk, there was still talk in some circles in London of the possibilities of furthering an 'Intellectual Entente' between France and Britain:

The first of a series of four articles by that recognized interpreter of England to France and of France to England M. Denis Saurat ... will be published in our next issue June 22. *The articles will discuss the possibilities of a true entente cordiale in the intellectual sphere.* The first deals with religious differences and affinities as prelude to an examination of the other cultural fields in each country.¹⁴

His lectures and talks came out as brochures, under the titles *The Spirit of France* (Dent) and *French War Aims* (Methuen). Saurat also participated in a short-lived venture entitled the 'Post-War Bureau'.¹⁵ This evidence reminds us that one must strive to retain a sense of historical perspective and not be too tempted to rush to judgement: no-one at the time could yet predict the outcome of the campaign as the Phoney War turned into the Battle of France.

When it did become clear in mid June 1940 that France was indeed heading toward defeat, and that Marshal Pétain was suing for an armistice, Saurat would rally to the cause of the newly arrived General. André Weil-Curiel, a liaison officer with the British Army during the Battle for France, was evacuated from Dunkirk in the first days of June 1940. Almost immediately after his arrival at Dover, he and his comrades were sent to Weymouth where a number of vessels were waiting to repatriate French troops to France. Everywhere along their route, English people were welcoming and generous towards them: this is an observation that recurs repeatedly in the memoirs of the Free French. Eventually, in the confusion, Weil-Curiel was sent to Tidworth camp, near Andover, where 'tens of thousands' of French troops were assembled, awaiting repatriation. However, Weil-Curiel and another comrade had written to Henri Hauck, an attaché at the French Embassy in London responsible for questions relating to work and the trades unions, and just before they were due to return to France, they received a counter-

¹⁴ *Times Literary Supplement*, 15 June 1940, p. 291 (my emphasis).

¹⁵ Letter to *The Times*, 6 May 1940, p. 9. The signatories were Norman Angell, David Astor, Ivor Churchill, Edward Hulton, Denis Saurat and John A. Hutton.

order inviting them to London. This would determine Weil-Curiel's future engagement in the Free French:

Once in London, we went straight to the French Institute, 15 Queensberry Way, where we'd been told to go. Hauck ... brought us up to date. On his initiative, the head of French Information Services, [Paul-Louis] Bret, former Havas correspondent in London, had decided to recruit a number of Frenchmen who spoke English to stimulate the English war effort and aid to an imperilled France by means of radio talks, lectures and press articles. It was all too obvious that the mass of the public had no real appreciation of the gravity of the situation.¹⁶

Weil-Curiel went off to give lectures and talks in the city of Leeds. On his return, by mid June, the situation in France was deteriorating inexorably towards the 'capitulation', culminating in Pétain's broadcast on 17 June 1940 calling for a ceasefire. In the meantime, it had become clear that Hauck, Georges Boris, Emile Delavenay (whose name is misspelt by Weil-Curiel as Delavenai) and Captain Métadier, a doctor by training, a pharmacist by trade and a member of the permanent French colony in London, were all prepared to continue the fight. These men all gravitated around Saurat's French Institute. Weil-Curiel gives an insight into their resolve: 'Métadier approved my plan completely [to form a French National committee]. He realized the importance of our strategic position in this French Institute in London, *a parcel of French territory which could become the first bastion of the resistance*'.¹⁷ At this crucial moment, the Institute represented a rallying point for these few, like-minded French in London: it was essential that it remain under their control so that the British had proof that they would ensure the 'continuity of France'. Despite being thoroughly 'downcast' by the terrible news from France, Saurat agreed to allow the Institute to be used in this way. Weil-Curiel, recalling the moment when 'pétainisme' manifested itself in some quarters of the London French community after the Marshal's broadcast, suggests that he and others were already convinced that the British would be the first to resist Hitler's eventual attempt to

¹⁶ A. Weil-Curiel, *Le Jour se lève à Londres* (Paris, 1945), chs. 11, 12, quotation at pp. 170–1: 'Arrivés à Londres, nous allâmes immédiatement à l'Institut français, 15, Queensberry Way, où l'on nous avait dit de nous présenter. Hauck ... nous mit au fait de la situation. Sur sa proposition, le chef des Services Français d'Information, Bret, ancien correspondant d'Havas à Londres, avait décidé de recruter quelques Français connaissant l'anglais pour stimuler au moyen de discours à la radio, de conférences et, au besoin, d'articles de presse, l'effort de guerre et l'aide à la France en danger. Il n'était que trop évident que l'on ne se rendait pas compte dans le grand public de la gravité de la situation'.

¹⁷ 'Métadier ... m'approuvait entièrement. Il sentait l'importance de notre position stratégique dans cet Institut français de Londres, *parcelle de terre française qui pouvait devenir le premier bastion de la résistance*' (Weil-Curiel, *Le Jour*, p. 203 (my italics)).

invade: 'Yet from this very moment I was ready to bet fifty-to-one that the British would only stop fighting when they had won or when they were no longer capable of doing so. Also, should our efforts fail to keep France in the war, we could still save our honour by fighting alongside the British'.¹⁸

De Gaulle spoke on the BBC the very next day, delivering what would be known as the 'Appel du 18 juin' but which, then, was labelled 'Rien n'est perdu' ('Nothing is lost').¹⁹ The next day was an important one for the French in London: at 10.30am, Saurat hosted a meeting at his house in Cromwell Road, with 'Petit, Métadier, Hauck, Boris, Lord Ivor Churchill', where they resolved to 'rally to de Gaulle'; at 3.00pm, the permanent French Committee met ('Thémoins, Petit, Saurat', etc.), recording in the notes that they wished 'to continue the fight'; and at 10.30pm, with Métadier, Hauck and others, Saurat went to meet de Gaulle at 8 Seamore Place, to pledge the support of the Institute.²⁰ According to Storm Jameson, Saurat was 'fiercely devoted' to the General, pledging that he would do 'anything on earth for him'.²¹

De Gaulle would see him frequently over the next few weeks, as we shall see. Saurat found that he was even busier than usual. He delivered a programme of talks ('practically single-handed') at the Institute as there were few if no French speakers available: 'This effort was so appreciated by the public that the audience was approximately four times bigger than before the war; the Institute never closed, even during the summer months'.²² It was recognized that maintaining the cultural effort was of crucial importance because, as many were to insist in the coming months, France was considered vital to the continuation of Western civilization. The day after meeting de Gaulle, Saurat and Yves Morvan (a journalist of long standing in London and already engaged at the BBC, better known as Jean Marin) performed a dialogue at 8.30 pm, on the 'Ici la France' programme – 'Reflect, and draw up your own account of the philosophical, intellectual and artistic wealth of the world, and see the share of France in all this. The gigantic share of France' – and Saurat mobilized Victor Hugo to launch

¹⁸ 'Toutefois, j'étais prêt dès cet instant, à parier à cinquante contre un, que les Anglais ne cesseraient la lutte que quand ils seraient vainqueurs ou définitivement hors du combat. Et alors, au cas où nos efforts pour maintenir la France dans la guerre échoueraient, il nous resterait toujours la ressource de sauver l'honneur dans les rangs britanniques' (Weil-Curiel, *Le Jour*, p. 206).

¹⁹ See *Discours et messages du Général de Gaulle* (1942), pp. 1–2.

²⁰ IFRU, DSA, typed and MS. log sheets.

²¹ Jameson reports Saurat thus: 'Keep your eyes on him, he isn't only one man, he is France, my France. I'll do anything on earth for him. It rather looks as though no writer has had the sense to follow him to London' (Jameson, *Journey from the North*, p. 76).

²² IFRU, DSA, extract from Saurat CV.

the cultural battle to safeguard French civilization.²³ Thus began a process which led eventually to the dropping by the RAF over France of what came to be known as French resistance poetry.²⁴

Much has been written and continues to be written about de Gaulle's arrival in London, and about how different groups and individuals reacted to his presence there.²⁵ This is not the place to revisit these debates. Suffice it to say that in the first few months his presence and, above all, his words about keeping the 'flame of resistance' burning, are remembered in memoirs with deep affection. Most recall also the experience of the Free French recruitment centre at Olympia Hall, in west London, 'a ghastly, cavernous place', in the words of François Jacob, the future Nobel laureate, 'a sort of cross between the Saint-Lazare train station and the Samaritaine department store':

Discussions went on without end. Always passionate. Sometimes violent ... Our principal theme was: What to join? What army? What branch? ... Rumor had it that General de Gaulle was forming a 'legion' of French volunteers ... A captain came to the Olympia to speak and explain what de Gaulle had in mind, what the Free French forces were to be. Not a legion, but an army ... regular troops with regular officers. Their goal: to return French units to the battlefields; to bring French territories into the war; to have France's part in the struggle against Germany and its allies recognized by foreign countries. The next day, we decided to join up ... I opted for the artillery.²⁶

At Delville camp, part of the Aldershot army base, Jacob was recruited as a doctor: 'At this base in the English countryside were stationed the three

²³ IFRU, DSA, copy of BBC script, dated 20 June 1940: 'O France, ton malheur m'indigne et m'est sacré. / Je l'ai dit, et jamais je ne me lasserai / De le redire, et c'est le grand cri de mon âme, / Quiconque fait du mal à ma mère est infâme' (quoted from V. Hugo, *L'Art d'être grand-père*, xviii: *que les petits liront quand ils seront grands* (Paris, 1877)).

²⁴ J. Bennett, *Aragon, Londres et la France libre* (Paris, 1998); T. Brooks, *British Propaganda to France, 1940-4: Machinery, Method and Message* (Edinburgh, 2007); and V. Holman, 'Airborne culture: propaganda leaflets dropped over France in the Second World War', in *Free Print and Non-Commercial Publishing since 1700*, ed. J. Raven (Aldershot, 2000), pp. 194-221.

²⁵ E.g., J.-L. Crémieux-Brilhac, *La France Libre: de l'appel du 18 juin à la Libération* (Paris, 1996), pp. 43-101; more recently, J.-L. Crémieux-Brilhac, *Georges Boris: trente ans d'influence. Blum, de Gaulle, Mendès France* (Paris, 2010), pp. 137-57. See also the more unconventional and very suggestive reading of the whole question in R. Belot, *La Résistance sans de Gaulle* (Paris, 2006).

²⁶ F. Jacob, *The statue within: an autobiography*, trans. F. Philip (1988), pp. 115-16. For Yves Guéna, Olympia represented the birthplace of Free France (*Le Temps des certitudes, 1940-69* (Paris, 1982), pp. 9-11), and Jean-Mathieu Boris remembers with emotion the spontaneous rendition of the Marseillaise there (see *Combattant de la France libre* (Paris, 2012), p. 45).

or four thousand men who, in July 1940, made up the Free French forces'. Jacob describes what de Gaulle meant for these raw recruits, cut off from family and news from France, in a passage that finds many echoes in other works:

Most of us had never seen or heard the leader of the Free French ... But we knew mainly the tract posted on the walls of London: 'France has lost a battle, but she has not lost the war'. And, then, there was the name 'de Gaulle', which rang like a challenge. A program ... It was a very Gothic personage that I saw when ... the general strode before the assembled troops ... It was France itself standing erect in this corner of England. My spine tingled. A short speech by the general. An impressive figure ... He spoke. He fulminated. He thundered against Pétain's government ... He promised us fights, victories. *The* victory. [We had] the impression that de Gaulle was beyond any doubt the man for the situation. The impression that to make war, to participate in the reconquest of France, we had found the right address.²⁷

Saurat's networks and his knowledge of London were immediately helpful to the Free French cause. When René Cassin arrived at the Institute on 28 June 1940, it was Saurat who recommended lodgings and arranged for volunteer 'conductrices' to drive him to see de Gaulle the next day.²⁸ His contacts afforded immediate access for de Gaulle and his supporters to the highest levels of the British establishment, for instance through Lord Ivor Churchill and Lord Askwith.²⁹ He was also a member of the Athenaeum Club. From 21 June 1940 he met with and accompanied de Gaulle frequently during these first weeks and months. One curious instance arose on 17 July, when, with de Gaulle present in the audience, Saurat delivered a talk at Queen's Hall designed to introduce the General to the public. Entitled 'Modern warfare and civilians', the main theme was that 'the British will not be "done in" ... never will the heart of Great Britain forget France'; 'We will not reconquer France, we will invade Germany'. This was, of course, premature and politically unrealistic at a moment when the German Occupation was ever tightening its grip on France. Saurat's speech

²⁷ Jacob, *Statue Within*, pp. 118, 121–2.

²⁸ R. Cassin, *Les Hommes partis de rien* (Paris, 1987), pp. 71–2.

²⁹ Lord Ivor Churchill (1898–1956) was Winston Churchill's cousin, and an ardent Francophile. He also promoted the Amis des Volontaires Français (see Cassin, *Hommes partis de rien*, p. 179). Baron George Askwith (1861–1942) was a trade union negotiator and civil servant, and served as chairman of the Board of the French Institute (see H. Goiron, *Les Français à Londres* (Pornic, 1933), p. 239). Saurat's papers show that he and Askwith were close friends. Angela Mond, widow of the one of the principal benefactors of the Lycée Français, the eminent chemist Emile Mond (1865–1938), offered charitable donations to the French Institute (letters in DSA).

was, however, enthusiastically welcomed by the *Evening Standard*, whose reporter's interest was clearly piqued by the attitude of the 'Silent General'.³⁰ Yet this did not prevent the theme from being taken up by Georges Boris and developed into the very first book published on de Gaulle, *De Gaulle's France and the Key to the Coming Invasion of Germany*, by James Marlow, the nom de plume of journalist Richard Crawford. Mass-Observation was present at the talk, and recorded that the ovation lasted for 117 seconds, observing too that this was a 'surprisingly large gathering for such a meeting'. It was a rather embarrassed Saurat who returned to the podium to offer apologies for the General making no speech: 'he will speak after the victory'.³¹ In the coming months, once de Gaulle's HQ became established in Carlton Gardens, changes were made which tended to side-line Saurat; he nevertheless travelled the length and breadth of the country, delivering lectures on behalf of the Free French, stressing the importance of French Africa and the future, post-war, role for France.³² Indeed, between February and May 1941, Saurat was sent on an exploratory teaching mission to the Congo, Chad and the Cameroon, the result of which was another 'war pamphlet', *Watch over Africa* (Dent, 1941).³³ And as the numbers of French people arriving in London increased, Saurat continued the programme of talks at the Institute. Military and political speakers included Louis Marin, Félix Gouin, Henri Queuille, Vincent Auriol, Philippe Barrès, Generals Petit, Sicé and Valin, and Admiral Thierry d'Argenlieu.

In early July 1940, while accompanying Saurat to an appointment, de Gaulle requested him to 'do what I asked you last Friday [28 June]: we need a philosophy'.³⁴ The result was *Regeneration*, published in September 1940, with an introductory letter from de Gaulle in which he referred to Saurat as at once 'an analyst' and 'a synthesist'. 'There are two parts in the

³⁰ IFRU, DSA, press cutting, 'Silent General', *Evening Standard*, 18 July 1940.

³¹ IFRU, DSA, log sheets and press cuttings; Mass-Observation report on France for July 1940, 'Lecture by Professor Saurat'. See also J. Marlow, *De Gaulle's France and the Key to the Coming Invasion of Germany* (1940); and Crémieux-Brilhac, *Georges Boris*, p. 109.

³² E.g., IFRU, press cuttings in DSA, *Perthshire Constitutional*, 15 Oct. 1940; *The Scotsman*, 22 Oct. 1940; *Eastern Daily Press*, 18 Nov. 1940; *Dean Forest Mercury*, 22 Nov. 1940. See also 'France waits for another 14 July', *Daily Mail*, 14 July 1941. There is evidence to suggest that Saurat distanced himself from the De Gaulle camp because to him the General appeared too dictatorial and with René Cassin wished to transform the Institute against Saurat's wishes (see Atkin, *Forgotten French*, pp. 213–14, and V. Dupray, R. Lacombe and O. Poivre D'Arvor, *Londres sur Seine. Une histoire de l'Institut français du Royaume-Uni (1910–80)* (Paris, 1996)).

³³ An extract appeared in French: 'Attention au Tchad', *La France Libre*, ii (20 June 1941), 142–6.

³⁴ IFRU, DSA, foolscap MS. log sheet, [July 1940]: 'Faites ce que je vous ai dit vendre: il nous faut une philosophie'.

human soul', began Saurat, 'a part of the soul which is clear and precise ... It is conscious of itself and resolute when at its best. This may be called the Head'. But there was a much larger, chaotic, part of the soul 'best referred to in the plural as the Masses'. He went on: 'The relationship between the main parts, the head and the masses, is complicated and not clear'. In what appears to be a reference to de Gaulle, Saurat noted that 'A new head has been thrown up by the masses in an emergency'. There was a kind of dialectic in play: the head was fed by the masses, but this head should not be overpowered; at the same time, the masses should follow the head, all the while remaining free and spontaneous. Saurat's philosophy for de Gaulle, or, more accurately, for a restored Western civilization, arose more from a restoration of religiosity than from practical politics: 'The spirit of man is truly liberated for higher purposes than even those of mankind when this true relationship of leadership to the masses within the soul is realized. Then the soul is polarized and its energies flow in the direction of God'.³⁵

Looking towards future 'Spiritual Reconstruction', Saurat assumed that, as in the past, 'all civilizations have a religious basis'. Nazism and communism were dominant because they resembled 'animated' and 'active' religions, 'whereas our religions are so tepid that they hardly stir at all'. Religion and education had failed, so in future they would need to be properly reconstituted. In the end, concluded Saurat, 'the problems of politics can only be solved in the religious sphere; for God is the Chief really'. The decadence of French (and Western, Judaeo-Christian) civilization would only be arrested by a true return, in the post-war world, to religiosity.³⁶ Saurat argued for reform of education after the war, not only in Germany, but everywhere: 'Literature is education, it draws certain things out of the human heart and spirit'.³⁷ It is not recorded what de Gaulle thought of this text, which owes more to Saurat's interests in spiritualism than to political philosophy.

After his return from his African mission, in September 1941 Saurat hosted the seventeenth International Conference of PEN at the French Institute. As Jennifer Birkett has shown, with Storm Jameson, Saurat was central to the organization of this impressive conference; he participated himself. Despite the windows of the Institute being blown out by bombs, the conference went ahead. 'London had taken the place of Paris as a cultural hive (alas, without cafés)', quipped Jameson; PEN representatives from thirty-five countries attended, and the proceedings were published.

³⁵ D. Saurat, *Regeneration* (1940), pp. 7–9.

³⁶ Saurat, *Regeneration*, pp. 51, 52–62, 64.

³⁷ Saurat, *Regeneration*, p. 49.

André Labarthe laid much stress on the propaganda value of the conference, as it provided a striking example from a city 'in the front line of the battle' showing that 'the spirit remains free though the battle rages'.³⁸ For Storm Jameson, despite the Blitz and the thousands of civilians who were being 'assassinated' by the Luftwaffe, and despite London's 'ravaged streets', 'London had become the cultural centre of Free Europe'.³⁹ The conference defiantly showed that, against the odds, the Institute was keeping French and European culture alive in London when France and Europe were under the thrall of the Nazis; it also laid much stress on the importance of a new, European, organization of cultural politics after the war.

La France Libre at the French Institute

The most important cultural effort at the Institute on behalf of the French in London centred on the creation there of the journal *La France Libre*, under the direction of André Labarthe, with the tireless contributions of Raymond Aron.⁴⁰ Saurat's networks in educational and intellectual circles in London helped to expedite its creation, as shown by a circular letter sent to potentially interested parties in August 1940 and signed by various luminaries of British intellectual life, among them William Bragg, president of the Royal Society, Frederick Kenyon, secretary to the British Academy, Edwin Lutyens, president of the Royal Society of Arts, and J. B. Priestley. With France in German hands, there was now no opportunity for free expression. This clearly threw into relief the cultural, political and ultimately propaganda value behind the continuation and promotion of a 'free' French culture. Those few 'exiles' to have escaped to London, and who had intellectual interests, now needed to express themselves, and to do so they planned a 'periodical', *La France Libre*. Moreover, it would have 'intrinsic' value which scholars would 'relish', and there was cause for great confidence as there 'will be many able contributors'. Expressions of support and interest were to be addressed to 'Dr André Labarthe'.⁴¹ The resulting issues of this review – the first one appeared on 15 November 1940 – do not disappoint. The magazine was read avidly by its French readers in London,

³⁸ Jameson, *Journey from the North*, p. 103; J. Birkett, *Margaret Storm Jameson* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 202–14; for Labarthe, see *Writers in Freedom*, ed. H. Ould (1942), pp. 38–43, at p. 38. Jacques Maritain's message from New York was also translated by Storm Jameson, and Saurat's intervention was recycled from *Regeneration* (*Writers in Freedom*, pp. 43–51).

³⁹ M. S. Jameson, 'Le 17^{ème} Congrès international des P.E.N.', *La France Libre*, ii (1941), 395–9, at p. 395).

⁴⁰ For Raymond Aron's role in this review, see the chapter by David Drake in this volume. See also Belot, *La Résistance sans de Gaulle*, pp. 52–60.

⁴¹ IFRU, DSA, circular letter dated 'Aug. 1940'.

British university libraries readily subscribed, and on the review's first anniversary Winston Churchill wrote to congratulate Labarthe for keeping alive the flame of hope in Frenchmen for a future in which they would all be able to express themselves freely.⁴² Later, *La France Libre* was also printed in a miniature edition for distribution by the RAF over France.⁴³

La France Libre was dedicated to Franco-British amity, and sought to understand and explain the Allied defeat of June 1940. 'M. R.', in an article in the first issue, offered a close examination of the successive reactions in Britain to the 'capitulation'. A clear distinction should be made between the 'French people' and the 'Vichy government'. There were now plenty of eye-witness accounts to counter the view that French soldiers had been hopeless in battle. The British too were willing to admit their faults during the years of peace. Once again, the British recognized the need to fight towards victory to liberate France and to restore France to 'its true greatness'.⁴⁴ In the following article, which extolled 'French humanism' – again, seen as indispensable to European civilization – the novelist Ignace Legrand saw the inter-war period as a crisis of humanism; as soon as its 'corrupters', Hitler and Mussolini, were swept away, 'then our French humanism, for an instant obscured, will be reborn more alive and more glorious than ever'.⁴⁵ David Murray, the editor of the *Times Literary Supplement*, thought that Legrand's sentiment here 'might be taken as the motto of *La France Libre*'.⁴⁶

Another writer to leave France for exile in London was Albert Cohen. He would carry out a mission representing the international Jewish Agency to various exiled governments in the English capital. He submitted a tribute to *La France Libre* in which, among other things, he celebrated the attitudes of the British towards France and of Londoners in the Blitz: 'Their French friend has given up the fight but they love her as before'. In fact, the English always took care to remember that 'France was betrayed, not traitorous'. 'This gentle people is strong', continued Cohen, and likened the British war effort to the biblical struggle between David and Goliath. In highly-charged, poetic and rhythmic prose, repeating the phrase 'Victoire de l'homme' ('Man triumphant'), Cohen paid tribute to Londoners' tenacity:

⁴² Churchill Archive, CHAR 20/22 C, letter from W. S. Churchill to André Labarthe dated 29 Oct. 1941.

⁴³ Brooks, *British Propaganda to France*, p. 135.

⁴⁴ M. R., 'L'amitié franco-anglaise depuis la capitulation de juin 1940', *La France Libre*, i (15 Nov. 1940), 70–1.

⁴⁵ I. Legrand, 'L'humanisme français', *La France Libre*, i (15 Nov. 1940), 72–6: 'Alors notre humanisme français, un instant obscurci, renaîtra plus vivant, plus glorieux que jamais'.

⁴⁶ *Times Literary Supplement*, 30 Nov. 1940, p. 597.

Every night, for months on end, Londoners held firm, with no idle words, maintaining their daily routine. They would never mention freedom. They were defending it. Every night, there were noses torn off, eyes put out, jaws smashed, burials alive, and, worst of all, heads expecting death to fall on them. But every night there was calm and decency in every English head.⁴⁷

Jean Vacher contributed a fascinating article, inspired by some important contemporary sources, to mark the second anniversary of the declaration of war. What was different now, in September 1941, was that in a world whose face had become distorted by hatred and violence, France was rising again, 'more radiant than ever', because of 'her martyrs' following the example set by the Battle of Britain, which had not merely saved the country from invasion, it had shown too that resistance could become a philosophy of existence.⁴⁸

Finally, there is no doubting that the French Institute was truly in the front line during the Blitz, as it was damaged at various points during the war. In 1943, or during a 'baby Blitz' in 1944 (the sources vary), Robert Loyalty Cru, London correspondent of the Paris newspaper *Le Temps* and manager of the Maison de l'Institut at Queen's Gate, was killed outright by a bomb, along with all the inhabitants of the Maison. Despite having constructed a solid shelter in the garden, the building 'was smashed to bits'.⁴⁹ In a somewhat dubious play on words, Franck Bauer writes that 'poor Mr Cru [which means 'raw' in French] was cooked in his shelter'.⁵⁰ Later, Denis Saurat himself was severely injured by a V1 explosion at 33 Cromwell Road: 'During the air-raids a bomb brought his house down on him, dislocating his joints; he endured weeks of pain by coolly and subtly

⁴⁷ A. Cohen, 'Angleterre', *La France Libre*, ii (20 June 1941), 114–23, quotations at pp. 119–21 (collected in A. Cohen, *Ecrits d'Angleterre* (Paris, 2002)): 'Leur amie française qui a renoncé à la lutte, ils l'aiment comme autrefois ... Les Anglais savent ne jamais oublier que la France fut trahie et non traîtresse ... Cette race douce est forte. Au mois de juin de l'année dernière, cette petite île ... s'est trouvée seule. Vraiment David contre Goliath ... Chaque nuit, pendant des mois, les hommes de Londres tenaient ferme, sans rhétorique, en toute quotidienneté. Ils ne parlaient jamais de la liberté. Ils la défendaient. Chaque nuit, il y avait des nez arrachés, des yeux crevés, des mâchoires fracassées, des enterrements vivants et, pire que tout, la tête qui attend la mort sur la tête. Mais chaque nuit, il y avait le calme et la décence dans chaque tête anglaise'.

⁴⁸ J. Vacher, 'Témoignages sur l'Angleterre en guerre', *La France Libre*, ii (15 Sept. 1941), 378–83. Vacher had been a member of the military mission in London before the war and chose to stay on in London (Delavenay, *Témoignage*, p. 228).

⁴⁹ Delavenay, *Témoignage*, pp. 90, 273; R. Mengin, *No Laurels for De Gaulle*, trans. J. Allen (1967), pp. 104–6, 134. Some of Robert Cru's pithy articles are collected in *Propos d'un Londonien* (Paris, 1936).

⁵⁰ 'le pauvre M. Cru fut cuit dans son abri' (F. Bauer, *40 à Londres: l'espion qui venait du jazz* (Paris, 2004), p. 303).



Figure 13.1. 33, Cromwell Road, after the V1 attack,
July 1944, IFRU, Denis Saurat Archive.

examining the nature of pain’. He was fortunate to escape with his life. Indeed, Saurat never fully recovered his health.⁵¹

London-French journalists fight the War of the Airwaves

At the end of the war, Georges Bidault, then French foreign minister and former Resistance leader, wrote a stirring tribute to the BBC to open the corporation’s *Yearbook* for 1945.⁵² He recalled that the French had been ‘hurled living into the grave, [that] they had been walled up in a prison of silence where no friendly voice could ever reach them again’. In words echoing those of many who lived with the shock of defeat and Occupation, he described how those first days were dominated by fear, rumour and confusion. Bidault remembered that ‘the law imposed by the occupying power would allow only submissive voices to be heard in France ... voices soiled with vile ambitions’; France had been reduced to ‘a hideous chattering of slaves’. However, inspired by de Gaulle’s broadcast of 18 June 1940, and the daily offerings of the BBC French Service over the next four years, France was finally able to ‘lift up the tombstone and from that time the voice of the BBC each day gave fresh impetus to the miracle of French resurrection’. He ended with a reminder of the call-sign-cum-title of the French Service: ‘Ici Londres, les Français parlent aux Français’. This was the signal which, Bidault concluded, in the silence of the Occupation, ‘when every mouth was gagged, helped the French to surmount and overcome the lies of the enemy. Largely thanks to you, our minds stayed free while our limbs were bound’.⁵³

The BBC could never have fulfilled this extraordinary task without the unceasing efforts of many staff, who exploited the information they gleaned from the gradually increasing numbers of people who were arriving in London from France. The talents of the broadcasters themselves, the team of ‘Les Français parlent aux Français’, recruited by Cecilia Reeves and Darsie Gillie from July 1940 largely among French journalists already resident in London (and who did not wish to be repatriated), have been celebrated by historians, most recently in Crémieux-Brilhac’s biography of Georges Boris, who spent much of the war engaged as a liaison officer between the Free French HQ at Carlton Gardens and the BBC.⁵⁴ Journalists

⁵¹ Jameson, *Journey from the North*, pp. 74–5; IFRU, DSA, copies of Saurat CVs; *The Times*, 10 June 1958.

⁵² Some of the material in this section is drawn from an unpublished paper entitled ‘The BBC and French Resistance’ prepared for the 70th anniversary of *L’Appel du 18 juin* conference, 16–17 June 2010, hosted by IFRU, and some of whose sessions may be consulted online at <<http://culturetheque.org.uk>> [accessed 14 January 2013].

⁵³ *BBC Yearbook 1945* (1945), pp. 12–14.

⁵⁴ Crémieux-Brilhac, *Georges Boris*, pt. 3; see also Crémieux-Brilhac, *La France Libre*, pp. 211–31.

Pierre Maillaud (better known as Pierre Bourdan) and Yves Morvan (Jean Marin) were the among the first, to be joined by theatre impresario Michel Saint-Denis, better known as Jacques Duchesne, and Maurice Schumann, who was responsible for the five-minute 'Honneur et Patrie' section linked with de Gaulle.⁵⁵ Others joined them, including Jean Oberlé, the humourist Pierre Dac and the jazz musician Franck Bauer, who was recruited in March 1941 for his amenable radio voice.⁵⁶ However, the BBC did not just make broadcasts. It was of vital importance in providing a reliable point of contact for the target audience, which in effect was the whole French population. Put succinctly, the BBC mediated the ideas and motivation necessary for awakening, encouraging and sustaining resistance in France. Alongside the Special Operations Executive (SOE), of course, over the months and years it slowly helped to transform vague notions of resistance into the more unified force it ultimately became.

Among the fraternity of French journalists in London who gravitated around Saurat's French Institute was Emile Delavenay, assistant director of the BBC's European Intelligence Department (EID).⁵⁷ A former student of the elite Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris and Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, specialist in the life and work of D. H. Lawrence, in the 1930s Delavenay worked in London at Havas, the French news agency, as well as carrying out diverse teaching duties, as we saw above. At Havas he developed an extensive network of contacts with other London-French journalists, such as the long-established Paul-Louis Bret, Paul-Henri Siriex and Jean Marin.⁵⁸ Stéphane Hessel remembers Delavenay (they were both former *normaliens*) as 'being a friend' and, alongside Saurat, as being 'incontestably one of the spokesmen for French culture in London'.⁵⁹ In 1939 Delavenay was recruited by the BBC and put to work on monitoring and, soon after, he joined the EID. Because of the recognized importance

⁵⁵ See C. Rimbaud, *Maurice Schumann: sa voix, son visage* (Paris, 2000), pp. 54–104.

⁵⁶ See, respectively, J. Oberlé, *'Jean Oberlé vous parle'...* (Paris, 1945); P. Dac, *Un Français Libre à Londres en guerre* (Paris, 1972); and Bauer, *40 à Londres*. See also T. Miller (dir.), *Libres Français de Londres 1940–4* (Cinétévé/ECPAD, 2010).

⁵⁷ See M. Cornick, 'The BBC and the propaganda war against Occupied France: the work of Emile Delavenay and the European Intelligence Department', *French History*, viii (1994), 316–54; and M. Cornick, "'Fraternity among listeners': the BBC and French Resistance', in *Vichy, Resistance, Liberation: New Perspectives on Wartime France*, ed. H. Diamond and S. Kitson (Oxford, 2005), pp. 101–13.

⁵⁸ P.-L. Bret, *Au feu des événements: mémoires d'un journaliste, Londres, Alger 1929–44* (Paris, 1959); P.-H. Siriex, *Souvenirs en vérité 1930–80: Oxford, Londres 1940, Afrique, Madagascar, Djibouti, Inde, URSS, Sibérie* (n.p., [1992]); and J. Marin, *Petit bois pour un grand feu* (Paris, 1994).

⁵⁹ Author interview with Stéphane and Christiane Hessel, Paris, 27 June 2012.

of France, Delavenay was eventually made assistant director. Along with Henri de Kérillis and Denis Saurat, on 19 June he called on de Gaulle.⁶⁰

To carry out its task, the BBC relied on its EID to gather information. It produced interview reports for distribution, not only to programme planners and members of the BBC French Service, but also to higher echelons of wartime government, including the Ministry of Information and the Political Warfare Executive (PWE). When it was proposed later to streamline intelligence-gathering, the BBC, in the form of Ivone Kirkpatrick, Delavenay's superior, successfully resisted any merger with the PWE. The work of the EID was based on several sources of intelligence, the most important of which were daily digests from the BBC Monitoring Service and listener correspondence. A further component of this huge effort was added when, as we shall see, Delavenay and his staff interviewed a steady flow of refugees and returners from France. As regards the Monitoring Service, the Foreign Office had begun listening to Italian and German broadcasts in Arabic during the 1930s. With the increasing likelihood of war in Europe the BBC was asked to monitor European language broadcasts. This service was based at Evesham, in Worcestershire. According to one report, 'more than a million words in thirty languages are monitored each day from voice, morse [code] and other transmissions'.⁶¹ Some 300,000 words were transcribed, with an average of at least 24,000 flashed by the Information Bureau, for news bulletins. For the analysis of foreign propaganda, the Service produced a Daily Digest reducing a huge and often highly repetitive mass to 100,000 words. This was published, fully indexed, in two sections, one of which was devoted solely to enemy transmissions. It was this Digest on which Delavenay's staff drew to produce the EID's intelligence reports, and it was also used extensively by Boris and Crémieux-Brilhac.⁶² In 1943, the monitoring effort had become so large that it was moved to Caversham Park outside Reading, where the BBC written archives are now housed. There were around 1,000 people, mostly foreigners, working there.

Once people in France had had a chance to gauge the realities of the German Occupation, after November 1940 in particular, for those inclined towards dissidence, or resistance, a steady trickle of escapees began to arrive in London. The work of Delavenay's department in conducting over 500

⁶⁰ J. Lacouture, *De Gaulle* (3 vols., Paris, 1984), i. 373; and Crémieux-Brilhac, *La France Libre*, pp. 76–8.

⁶¹ Information from *BBC Yearbook 1945*, pp. 50–3; and T. Hickman, *What did you do in the War, Auntie?* (1995), pp. 124–6.

⁶² Crémieux-Brilhac, *Georges Boris*, pp. 120–9; and AN, 72AJ220, 'Témoignage de J.-L. Crémieux-Brilhac, Commissariat de l'Information', Jan. 1949. I thank Sébastien Albertelli for alerting me to this source.

interviews provides a fascinating insight into the background of their arrival, in addition to the invaluable information they were able to provide on social and listening conditions. The range of people interviewed is astonishing. Among them were personnel wishing to join the Free French armed forces; radio experts; returning English expatriates, including commercial representatives and a significant number of women; Irish priests; a Dutch writer; a Hungarian novelist; commercial travellers; journalists; Breton fishermen; and many political and Resistance personalities (including Pierre Mendès France, Henri Queuille and Fernand Grenier among the former, and Jean-Jacques Mayoux, Yvon Morandart and Raymond Aubrac among the latter). The year 1942 was the most productive, with 175 records; a further 141 and 131 were produced in 1943 and 1944 respectively.⁶³

As was the case with most refugees arriving from Occupied Europe, when individuals or groups landed on British soil they were taken for screening to the London Reception Centre (LRC), based from January 1941 at the Royal Victoria Patriotic School (RVPS), in Wandsworth, south London. Some 33,000 'aliens' passed through the LRC.⁶⁴ Whether people arrived with valid papers or no papers at all, security officers interrogated refugees to check their stories. Some of the better connected were released after a few days; for others, whose stories needed more detailed verification, the wait could be 'months'. Because of his German background Stéphane Hessel spent at least four weeks there in April 1941, and remembers watching London burning in the distance while waiting for his credentials to be checked. Maurice Druon recalls the quiet efficiency of successive interrogation officers who crosschecked each refugee's story.⁶⁵ The writer Joseph Kessel has left a vivid portrait of 'Patriotic School', whose gothic exterior did nothing to allay the abiding sense of the bizarre to which it gave rise.⁶⁶ One or two came out only to 'face execution'. Yet the conditions were comfortable enough: the dormitory beds were 'excellent' and separated by curtains; there were bathrooms, soap, palatable food, a library and indoor and outdoor games facilities. This was a 'tower of Babel', yet a common cause – liberty, and the struggle against Nazi oppression – united the genuine refugees detained there. For Kessel, the RVPS was a 'no-man's-land between the past one

⁶³ Cornick, 'Fraternity among listeners'; and Delavenay, *Témoignage, passim*.

⁶⁴ O. Hoare, *Camp 020. MI5 and the Nazi Spies* (Richmond, 2000), pp. 16–17.

⁶⁵ M. Druon, *C'était ma guerre, ma France, et ma douleur: mémoires II* (Paris, 2010), pp. 157–60.

⁶⁶ J. Kessel, 'Patriotic School', *Bulletin de l'Association des Français Libres*, i (Dec. 1945), 18–19, also available at <<http://www.france-libre.net/temoignages-documents/temoignages/patriotic-school.php>> [accessed 22 July 2012]. Throughout, Kessel mistakenly writes 'Harmsworth' instead of Wandsworth.

had fled and an uncertain future'. The French were the most impatient to be released and, while they waited, Kessel listened to dozens of their individual adventures. One young sailor, detained on a French naval vessel in Indochina, eventually escaped via China and India and, after his ship was sunk in the Mediterranean, re-embarked for London at Malta: 'He dreamed of leaving Patriotic School to serve on convoys'. Later in the war there was a Free French-run office there. After rigorous questioning, with the resulting information compiled on a large card index ('fichier'), resisters were sent to Jean Pierre-Bloch, of the Bureau Central des Renseignements d'Action (BCRA; the Gaullist secret service).⁶⁷ LRC log sheets were passed to Delavenay's office, and refugees who were thought to be helpful for the radio effort were given his address. Interviews were conducted in BBC offices, either at Bedford College in Regent's Park, at Bush House, or in hotel bars or restaurants. We shall return to the interviews shortly.

Very early in the war, British resolve and capacity for resistance had been underlined by the writer Bernard Faÿ, reporting on a trip to London in November 1939. Well before the Blitz ever became a reality, Faÿ concluded his whimsical piece with the view that because of his 'positive qualities and creative power', 'the Englishman carries within him an extraordinary capacity for resistance'.⁶⁸ Once the German Occupation of France had become established, British resolve in the face of the Battle of Britain, the threatened invasion (Hitler's Operation 'Seelöwe') and then the Blitz represented a potent sign of resistance. Thus it was the British who were the first to be seen to resist the Germans. This became a key theme for the BBC, and Churchill, in his broadcast in both French and English of 21 October 1940, used the bombing of London to bind Britain's lone destiny with that of defeated France. Churchill's defiance of the Germans in this broadcast made a deep impression on the French team at the BBC.⁶⁹ From the BBC's point of view, the demonstrably simple fact of surviving the Battle of Britain had already been more potent than the most sophisticated propaganda: the message that Hitler could be and was being resisted within the island was

⁶⁷ J. Pierre-Bloch, *Londres, capitale de la France libre* (Paris, 1986), pp. 33ff. On the BCRA, see S. Albertelli, *Les Services Secrets du Général de Gaulle* (Paris, 2009).

⁶⁸ B. Faÿ, 'Londres en guerre', *La Revue de Paris* (15 Dec. 1939), pp. 1107–15, at p. 1115: 'Pour ma part, j'ai toujours goûté la qualité positive et la puissance créative ... Aussi porte-t-il en lui une force de résistance extraordinaire'. Under Vichy, Faÿ displaced Julien Cain, the Jewish director of the Bibliothèque Nationale, and prosecuted a crusade against Freemasonry in France. He has emerged from relative obscurity to become the subject of scholarly attention: e.g., A. Compagnon, *Le Cas Bernard Faÿ* (Paris, 2009); and B. Will, *Unlikely Collaboration: Gertrude Stein, Bernard Faÿ and the Vichy Dilemma* (New York, 2011).

⁶⁹ Bauer, *40 à Londres*, p. 331. For the impact of the Battle of Britain on public opinion, see F. Bédarida, *La Bataille d'Angleterre* (Brussels, 1985), pp. 95–111.

being received and understood in France. Once the Blitz began in earnest in September 1940, persisting almost daily until May 1941, anyone arriving in London, as Stéphane Hessel explained, had to accept the danger of the bombing 'without moaning or complaining', and had to adopt, as it were, the legendary British 'flegme'. Such composure under duress was usually explained (as Faÿ had done) by reference to the British 'national character'. Pierre Bourdan, a seasoned observer of Londoners, noted that their 'patience arose from a daily rebirth of hope, one of the ingredients of British tenacity'. In one of the most striking passages in memoirs on the Blitz, Bourdan noted that for six months, with monotonous regularity, 'London lived its nights as a city on the front line, and during the days it worked, drew breath, took an hour off, went about its business, restored its public services and entertained its passers-by'.⁷⁰ Cassin felt similarly, though his own morale was severely sapped for a time in September to October 1940.⁷¹ Jacques Soustelle remembered that while still in New York,

Geneviève Tabouis had painted the darkest picture of England, exclaiming: 'My poor friend! What are you going to do over there [in London]?' For her, the island was open to the risk of invasion, or at the very least being pulverized by bombing; and Henri de Kérillis added: 'To leave America for London was sheer madness.'⁷²

It is this bravery to which Pierre-Olivier Lapie refers in the opening pages of his memoirs, which are among the best available on the philosophical, even existential, implications of joining the Free French cause: the dilemma of whether to return to France, or whether to find exile in London in the Blitz, asked monumental questions of very ordinary men, he wrote, in whom the most intense heroism was revealed.⁷³

One of Delavenay's earliest visitors was Maurice Halna du Fretay, whose spectacular arrival in London would make a deep and lasting impression

⁷⁰ P. Bourdan, *Carnet des jours d'attente (juin 40–juin 44)* (Paris, 1945), pp. 69, 72ff.: 'sa patience était faite d'un rajeunissement quotidien de son espoir, qui est un ressort de la ténacité britannique ... Pendant ces six mois Londres vécut la nuit comme une cité en ligne, le jour, comme une ville qui travaille, respire, prend une heure de détente, vaque à ses occupations, entretient ses services publics, distrait ses promeneurs et même ses oisifs'. There is an even longer tribute by Bourdan to British wartime resolve in his *Perplexités et grandeur de l'Angleterre* (Paris, 1945), pp. 354–9.

⁷¹ A. Prost and J. Winter, *René Cassin* (Paris, 2011), pp. 167–71.

⁷² Author interview with S. Hessel; J. Soustelle, *Envers et contre tout* (2 vols., Paris, 1947), i. 29: 'Geneviève Tabouis m'avait dépeint l'Angleterre sous le jour le plus sombre: "Pauvre ami! qu'allez-vous faire là-bas?". Elle voyait l'île envahie ou, en tout cas, pilonnée sous les bombes; ... de Kérillis aussi: "Quitter l'Amérique à cette époque pour aller à Londres, c'était folie".

⁷³ P.-O. Lapie, *Les Déserts de l'action* (Paris, 1946), pp. 9–11.

on the Free French exiles. In late November 1940, Lapie was introduced to du Fretay at Carlton Gardens. Aged only twenty, this young airman, who held a private pilot’s licence, had decided to join the Free French by re-assembling the kit of a flimsy one-seater aircraft. On 15 November 1940, having waited for bad weather to help avoid detection, he took off from Ramléon, near Dinan, and landed just outside Dorchester, in Dorset. At first the British imprisoned him. Yet the arrival of this young man in London at last represented, wrote Lapie, ‘the response of France’ to their efforts. ‘It meant that we had made contact, that we were not mistaken’:

Thus our efforts were not in vain: this was France’s response, a response embodied by such an airy and so noble a person, who had arrived in such an unexpected and courageous manner that it made a much deeper impression on us than other recruits to the cause. Du Fretay became, for the English as well as for us, a symbolic figure, a young and promising hero ... ⁷⁴

Du Fretay visited Delavenay who interviewed him for information about listening conditions (there was a ban already being widely defied), techniques to avoid the ‘very strong’ German jamming, and favourable reception of British propaganda leaflets. ‘Everybody listens’, was du Fretay’s answer, when asked about BBC programmes: ‘The radio is the chief source of information and the main moral support of the people of Brittany’; ‘There is utter distrust of everything from French (German-controlled) sources, and complete confidence in the “French in London” [*sic*]’. Most interesting was early evidence of distrust in Pétain, whose status had hitherto been widely regarded in London as sacrosanct:

This young man’s uncle, a general and a senator, told him he was a fool to go to England to join the dissident and insubordinate de Gaulle. He told him that he ought to respect the orders of Marshal Pétain. The men of that generation ... are impressed by Pétain; for them, he is above all the hero of Verdun. ‘For us’, says Corporal D., ‘he is nothing of the sort. We have not known him as a hero, we only know his decadence.’⁷⁵

⁷⁴ ‘C’était le contact établi, l’assurance formelle que nous ne nous trompions pas ... Notre effort n’était donc pas vain: voici la réponse de la France et matérialisée dans un personnage si aérien et si digne, venu d’une manière si inattendue et si audacieuse qu’elle frappait nos esprits bien plus que d’autres ralliements. Du Fretay devenait, et est resté pour les Anglais comme pour nous, un personnage symbolique, un jeune héros annonciateur’ (Lapie, *Déserts de l’action*, pp. 61–2).

⁷⁵ Paris, Archive of the Institut d’Histoire du Temps Présent (IHTP), ARC 042, Fonds Emile Delavenay (hereafter Fonds Delavenay), ‘Conversation at Broadcasting House with Air Corporal Duffretet [*sic*] of the Free French Air Force’, report dated 29 Nov. 1940.

Everyone who met him was bowled over, reassured and enthused by du Fretay. The young pilot went for training with the RAF and was assigned to 607 Squadron. Tragically, though, on 19 August 1942 he was lost at sea returning from a mission providing air cover for the abortive Canadian attack on Dieppe.⁷⁶

The primary function of these interviews was to gather as much information as possible about the effectiveness of BBC broadcasting. Almost all the reports carry data on wavelengths and jamming, and how listeners tried to avoid it. A radio engineer, M. Fua, who had fled Paris in June 1940 and who had lived around Pau until he left France on 7 February 1941, gave early confirmation that listening to the BBC was widespread in all the towns he had visited. He also confirmed that when jamming became too strong, listeners would fine-tune their dials, because there were fewer problems on short wave. This showed that people were following BBC broadcast advice:

It was quite clear from his conversation that our transmissions ... have priority over everything else in the French listener's mind. I asked [him] whether he would go so far as to say that the majority of French set owners listened to us. He considered his answer rather carefully and said, 'I would not say so. I would say *la totalité*'.⁷⁷

When active resisters began to arrive in London, further evidence emerged confirming the effectiveness of the BBC line. In early 1942, Paulin Bertrand, alias 'Paul Simon', manager of the Paris-based clandestine newspaper *Valmy*, provided such proof. Founded in January 1941, fifty copies of *Valmy* had been produced on a child's printing outfit. It took one month to do so. By August 1941, its producers were roneo-printing 3,000 copies in four pages. Yet this was extremely dangerous and had to be halted during the winter. Significantly enough, Simon, in a broadcast interview with Jean Oberlé, confirmed that their primary motivation for this act of defiance against the 'now intolerable' German presence in Paris had been inspired very early on in the Occupation when 'we saw that the British were resisting'.⁷⁸ Simon confirmed that despite the dangers incurred in listening to heavily jammed radio broadcasts, many Parisians still took the risk. More importantly, people were organizing themselves into listening groups: 'Monsieur S. knew of a number of listening groups

⁷⁶ See the entry on du Fretay at <http://www.ordredelaliberation.fr/fr_compagnon/450.html> [accessed 2 Aug. 2012]; and Bauer, *40 à Londres*, p. 371.

⁷⁷ Fonds Delavenay, report dated 28 March 1941.

⁷⁸ Interview broadcast on 3 Feb. 1942, reproduced in *Ici Londres: les voix de la liberté* 2, 8 décembre 1941–7 novembre 1942, ed. J.-L. Crémieux-Brilhac (5 vols., Paris, 1975), ii. 45.

organized among people living in one block so that the curfew did not affect them and they could get back to their own flats after listening to the programme’. Furthermore, he confirmed that the V-campaign (drawing Vs on walls, etc.) had been ‘invaluable in making it possible for all and sundry to show their spirit of resistance to the enemy’.⁷⁹ Group listening occurred in various forms: in major towns, listeners ran the risk of capture or denunciation. In more remote rural areas, where people were sure they would not be denounced, group listening took place more openly. Mrs. Cedar Paul, while near Grasse, received ‘peasants’ in her home, eager for news. She could listen in English to the BBC Home Service, which was not jammed, and paraphrase the news in French for her visitors.⁸⁰

In the months leading to the desperately anticipated D-Day landings, Delavenay met more active political resisters. Among these was Raymond Aubrac, who came to London in February 1944. Delavenay caught up with him on 22 February, just before Aubrac’s departure for Algiers. By this stage in the war, radios had become a precious commodity: it was ‘impossible to get sets except “by stealing them”. Valves are very scarce’. Aubrac was critical of aspects of the BBC’s coverage. Worst of all was the ‘war of nerves ... you have played’. ‘Talk about “Autumn Leaves” [an invasion codename] and similar promises’ had completely ‘upheaved’ the lives of hundreds of French families. These had had two major effects: ‘1) to put Frenchmen “beside themselves” with irritation, 2) to create an anti-British mentality’. In these complaints Delavenay saw the necessity, post-war, for British and French to understand each other better. Yet despite the criticisms, ‘A[ubrac] was full of praise of [*sic*] the BBC and said that in spite of the efficiency of the resistance organizations the latter were “pebbles” whereas the BBC was “the cement” which united the “pebbles in one solid block”’.⁸¹

This was high praise indeed, and pays tribute to the long and patient efforts of the BBC. The ever-increasing numbers of French arriving in London, as the war went on, spoke through the vector of the BBC and began to populate Bidault’s very human ‘miracle of French resurrection’. Sooner or later the ‘fraternity of listeners’ would resist the occupier more actively, and would look forward to the post-war period. Mainly through their French personnel, this was how the BBC helped the people of France to see beyond the darkness and repression of the Occupation.

⁷⁹ Fonds Delavenay, interview with Paul Simon, report dated 9 Feb. 1942. For the launch of the ‘V-campaign’, see the talk by Jacques Duchesne broadcast 22 March 1941 (Crémieux-Brilhac, *Ici Londres*, i. 204).

⁸⁰ Fonds Delavenay, interview with Mrs. Cedar Paul, report dated 5 Feb. 1942.

⁸¹ Fonds Delavenay, interview with Raymond Aubrac, report dated 23 Feb. 1944.

Ignace Legrand and the 'Homage to France by ... English writers'

Another Frenchman who sought exile in London, and who left an account of his escape and his reflections on his hosts, is the writer Ignace Legrand. Today he is almost entirely forgotten, whereas at that time he enjoyed a reputation as a relatively successful novelist, having been a contender for the Goncourt Prize in 1934 with *A sa lumière* (Gallimard). According to the few critics who have commented on his novels, he appears to have produced work not dissimilar to that of Jacques Chardonne, another purveyor of fictions presumed to offer insights into the psychological relationships between spouses, a subgenre which was something of an inter-war phenomenon, but which has long since fallen out of fashion. René Lalou, for instance, wrote that Legrand's fiction revealed the existence of a 'patrie intérieure', a kind of inner, or mental, homeland which governs our personality and determines couples' relationships.⁸²

In his memoir *Nos amis les Anglais*, Legrand relates the circumstances surrounding his escape at the end of the *exode*, in June 1940. This text was destined for publication in a special issue of the French-language review, *Aguedal, revue des lettres françaises au Maroc*, based in Rabat, Morocco. In Rabat, *Aguedal* was managed by the writer Henri Bosco, the translations carried out by his wife Madeleine. There was another connection with Rabat. Legrand's brother, Edy, had lived there since at least the early 1930s and enjoyed a reputation as an artist.⁸³ Legrand's involvement in this venture shows that he did make his own contribution to an Anglo-French cultural mobilization demonstrating that despite the Anglophobic regime operating in Occupied France, the French and the British were still, at heart, close allies, sharing a common aim to protect the cause of liberty and the restoration of democracy in Europe. Accompanied by his wife and young daughter, Legrand left France in late June 1940 aboard HMS *Galatea*. This Royal Navy cruiser had, on 16 June, the eve of Pétain's call for a ceasefire, embarked the British ambassador to France, returning him safely to Plymouth, whereupon the ship returned to the Gironde estuary. At Le Verdon, HMS *Galatea* took the Legrands on board among one of the very last transports of refugees fleeing France; they arrived in Plymouth on 27 June 1940. Thus began an adventure which, he said, was 'one of the most important if not the capital event' of his life.⁸⁴ Storm Jameson recalls

⁸² R. Lalou, *Histoire de la littérature française contemporaine, de 1870 à nos jours* (Paris, 1953), pp. 838–40.

⁸³ See *Vingt ans de peinture au Maroc, 1933–53 – Edy Legrand*, exhibition catalogue (Rabat, 1953).

⁸⁴ 'La découverte, la révélation de l'Angleterre et des Anglais a été un des plus grands événements de ma vie, peut-être son phénomène capital' (I. Legrand, *Nos amis les Anglais* (1944), p. 9).

that Legrand had been expecting 'to be made use of by his countrymen in London', yet added that 'they did not want him, and he was in depths of misery and poverty when D. L. Murray rescued him'.⁸⁵

In London, Legrand was befriended by Storm Jameson, and as we have seen he contributed to the first issue of *La France Libre*. The special issue of *Aguedal* that he composed was dated December 1943 and entitled 'Homage to France by contemporary English writers'; the contents were 'unpublished texts written especially for *Aguedal*'.⁸⁶ There is insufficient space here to do full justice to this issue; we will devote a separate detailed study to it. Suffice it to say that Legrand – aided, one imagines, by Saurat and Jameson – assembled an impressive array of writers, twenty-three in all, including Charles Morgan, T. S. Eliot, the poet laureate John Masefield, E. M. Forster, Rosamond Lehmann, Raymond Mortimer, Irene Rathbone, Cecily Mackworth, Enid Starkie, David Murray, Basil Liddell-Hart and Douglas Goldring.

A prefatory note, presumably by Bosco, explained that Legrand's 'fine and long study of England' could not be included in the issue, and that it would be published later. It had become, by now, a familiar portrait: 'The English, in all classes of society, appear as uncomplicated, unselfconscious heroes, childishly naive. Moved by the misfortunes of others, they welcome exiles with a kind of discreet affection'.⁸⁷ In the messages included in the special issue, this affection shone through clearly. Charles Morgan was a popular author in the 1930s and had a considerable following in France, especially after the success of his novels *The Fountain* (1932) and *Sparkenbroke* (1936). During the war he worked at the Admiralty in naval intelligence, but continued writing. An article translated as 'Génie français' was published in France by Editions de Minuit, and he contributed 'L'Angleterre et les Français libres' to Aron and Labarthe's review.⁸⁸ He contributed his 'Ode à

⁸⁵ Jameson, *Journey from the North*, p. 114. D. L. Murray, editor of the *Times Literary Supplement*, was a successful novelist in his own right (see D. May, 'Murray, David Leslie (1888–1962)', *ODNB* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/68898>> [accessed 24 July 2012]). René Cassin, however, briefly praised Legrand's efforts in a radio broadcast of 7 June 1941 (Cassin, *Les Hommes partis de rien*, p. 486).

⁸⁶ 'Hommage à la France des écrivains anglais contemporains', *Aguedal, revue des lettres françaises au Maroc*, vii (Dec. 1943). *Aguedal*, or *Agdal*, is derived from a Berber word for 'walled garden'.

⁸⁷ 'L'Anglais, de toutes les classes, y apparaît héroïque, presque à son insu, simple, bon enfant. Il s'émeut des misères d'autrui, et accueille, avec une sorte de tendresse discrète, les exilés ... C'est la flamme persistante de cette affection qui éclaire les messages que l'on va lire' (*Aguedal*, vii (Dec. 1943), 3).

⁸⁸ See C. Morgan, 'L'Angleterre et les Français libres', *La France Libre*, i (16 Dec. 1940), 114–15; and T. Hinchcliffe, 'Morgan, Charles Langbridge (1894–1958)', *ODNB*.

la France' (pp. 13–19), composed in September 1942, and which would be read on stage at the Comédie Française after the Liberation. For *Aguedal* Morgan sent a simple message, pleading exhaustion from his wartime duties: in all his writings, including his 'Ode', the message was simple, and needed no further explanation. Morgan felt a lifelong, deep love for France. Were France to be lost, then so would civilization.

T. S. Eliot's poem 'Little Gidding', written in 1942, during which time Eliot walked the streets of Kensington as an air-raid warden, was translated into French by André Gide and Madeleine Bosco. In his short message to Legrand, he insisted that it was one of the most important duties of writers to 'remind people that there were other values than those in politics and in struggles for power'. The 'literary periodical' was one of the most forceful ways of fulfilling this duty. Without referring by name to the *Criterion*, he himself had been engaged in this, especially through forging close friendships between French and English writers. He was waiting impatiently for this issue of *Aguedal* to inaugurate a happier future.⁸⁹ Rosamond Lehmann submitted a 'Letter to Jean Talva'. This was the pseudonym of her translator, Mme. Levêque. This moving letter laments the 'hard curtain of steel' that had come down between the two countries, preventing contact between them. Called upon by the BBC to broadcast to 'the women of France', she mused that 'Talva' would agree that 'we had all been responsible for our current suffering'. Then a letter arrived containing a single line in English, written, it turned out, before Lehmann's broadcast: 'With love and grief'. Lehmann's response, including her narration of a day in mid May 1943, ended 'With hope and faith'.⁹⁰ Raymond Mortimer was literary editor of the *New Statesman* and, in 1940–1, fulfilled a liaison role between the Ministry of Information and the BBC's French Service. In his message, he celebrated how much France had meant to cultured English people over the centuries. France and Britain shared 'a great intellectual tradition', and both execrated

⁸⁹ 'Nous devons rappeler aux hommes qu'il existe d'autres valeurs que celles de la politique et des luttes pour le pouvoir. Et pour accomplir de devoir, l'un des instruments le plus fort [*sic*] est le périodique littéraire ... En ce qui concerne la maintenance de la culture européenne, j'ai toujours affirmé qu'une association et une amitié étroites entre les hommes de lettres français et anglais étaient d'une importance capitale. J'ai toujours lutté pour cette compréhension ... j'attends avec impatience ce "Aguedal" comme l'oiseau annonciateur d'un printemps heureux' (T. S. Eliot, 'Little Gidding', *Aguedal*, vii (Dec. 1943), 17–23, and 'Message', *Aguedal*, vii (Dec. 1943), 27).

⁹⁰ 'Je pensai que, vous, ce que je voulais dire, vous le comprendriez: la faute, la responsabilité, incombaient à nous tous; à nous tous appartenait la souffrance ... Puis quelques semaines plus tard, arriva une enveloppe. A l'intérieur, une seule feuille, mince; et, de votre écriture délicate une seule ligne en anglais: "With love and grief"' ('Lettre à Jean Talva', *Aguedal*, vii (Dec. 1943), 38–44).

the cult of the state and the leader, which amounted to nothing less than idolatry. Lacking fanaticism did not translate as decadence: 'the history of French as much as English resistance has already refuted this calumny'.⁹¹

The overall message behind this special issue was simple: at the turn of the year 1943, into 1944, the destinies of France and Britain were bound together as much as they had been in June 1940: by celebrating their common culture, whatever political differences there might be, by reaffirming their beliefs in the shared values of liberty and freedom from oppression, and by joining together in resistance, then the two countries were sure to prevail.

Conclusion

What emerged from preparing this chapter was the realization, and the surprise, that there is still so much to discover about the broad question of the French in London just before and during the Second World War. While it is difficult to agree fully with his contentions, Jean-François Muracciole argues that in French national memory the 'Français libres de Londres' have been squeezed out by Vichy, on the one hand, and the Resistance, on the other; that Vichy has in some sense 'taken revenge' over London.⁹² As Robert Belot has written, and as we saw in several examples above, 'resistance is an intrinsically fractal phenomenon ... arising from a multitude of individual decisions which then gradually coalesce'.⁹³ So, considering the sheer numbers, the variety, the complexity of the 'Free French in London', these factors should give rise to further research. Denis Saurat's role deserves to be better understood: there is more that will be revealed from research into his archive. More light has been projected on to the central role played by the French Institute as a rallying-point in the first months of the war. And the deployment of the French journalists already in the capital, the refugees, the new arrivals, with their accumulated knowledge of conditions in Occupied France, made a considerable contribution to the anti-Axis war effort, understood in the broadest sense. I was struck by what Stéphane Hessel

⁹¹ 'Les Français et les Anglais ont en commun une grande tradition intellectuelle ... Ils détestent le culte mystique de l'Etat et du Chef, ils y voient une idolâtrie à la fois perverse et ridicule ... Parce que nous manquons de fanatisme, on nous a taxés de décadence. L'histoire de la résistance tant française qu'anglaise a déjà réfuté cette calomnie' ('Ce qui est gravé dans notre cœur', *Aguedal*, vii (Dec. 1943), 45-4, at p. 47)

⁹² 'Si les Français libres ne trouvent pas leur place dans la mémoire nationale, c'est certainement qu'ils sont écrasés entre le repoussoir pétainiste et l'astre résistant ... [I] flotte comme une revanche posthume et mémorielle de Vichy sur Londres' (J.-F. Muracciole, *Les Français Libres: l'autre Résistance* (Paris, 2009), p. 362).

⁹³ 'Car la Résistance est un phénomène intrinsèquement fractal qui naît dans la dispersion, hors de tout plan d'ensemble, à partir d'une multitude de décisions individuelles qui vont tenter peu à peu de faire coagulation' (Belot, *La Résistance sans de Gaulle*, p. 12).

said in his interview: despite the fact that he was billeted initially with two fellow-recruits to the BCRA – one of whom was Tony Mella, the son of a London Frenchman – and in spite of the fact that their work kept them busy in the secret war with the enemy in France, they still felt that they had become Londoners, that they knew how to take the tube or a bus to Soho or King's Cross or to their favourite restaurants, and that they acquired a respectful fondness for shopkeepers and the 'bobbies on the beat'.⁹⁴ There is also a realization, finally, that the arrival in London of refugees from France did so much to help the BBC's monumental efforts in the radio war, because those refugees had understood the message that British resolve to stand firm against the odds was an example of resistance worth emulating. Culture – as a form of 'soft propaganda' – could continually be mobilized too, as shown by the 'Homage to France by ... English writers', compiled by a French novelist in exile.

Resistance – resisting violent oppression or occupation – if at first a fragmented or individualized phenomenon, may grow subsequently to mobilize outrage, outrage about acquired rights having been diminished or suppressed, about perceived or experienced persecution. It is salutary to remember that there is a historical continuum leading from the Free French who rallied to London in 1940 to the controversies and debates surrounding the publication of *Indignez-vous!* by one of the last survivors of that very cause ... Stéphane Hessel.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ 'Dans Londres, n'est-ce pas, nous sommes devenus très vite de vrais londoniens, on savait comment fonctionne le métro, le bus, comment aller plus rapidement à Soho pour manger de la cuisine grecque. Ou aller plutôt vers Haymarket ou vers King's Cross. Donc, on devenait, je pense, des londoniens, on avait naturellement le respect de tous les anglais pour les policiers, pour les Bobbies' (author interview with Stéphane Hessel).

⁹⁵ See the sources listed at <http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indignez-vous_!> [accessed 10 Aug. 2012].