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BRITAIN AND EUROPE

A Study of Attitudes in Britain
Towards Britain's Post-War Relationship
With Western Europe, 1942-45

Thesis presented in fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in History

by

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University of Auckland
New Zealand

April 1980
I was drawn to this topic of research by my interest in the European movement, its evolution over the past thirty odd years, and, in particular, the British response to these developments. A great deal has been written in this field for the 1950s, 60s and 70s, but there is almost nothing on the war period itself. This seemed an important gap, for the war was the context within which the nations of Western Europe became open to the possibility of a radically new ordering of the economic and political life of the Continent. And it was in the context of the war that Britain rose to a position of unparalleled prestige vis-à-vis her European allies, who looked to her to provide the leadership essential for such an ambitious undertaking. I have taken the period from 1942-3, when the tide of war turned against the Axis Powers and Allied victory was certain, to the end of 1945, when the period of flux was ending and the first outlines of the Cold War were already apparent. This thesis, then, is an attempt to contribute something to the first chapter of the ongoing Britain-and-Europe debate as it emerged from the Second World War - still a controversial issue today.

British attitudes to Europe did not exist in a vacuum. They were subject to the pressures of relationships then of overriding importance to Britain - with the Russians and the Americans, in particular, but also with the French. In this context, British options were seriously limited. But it is the argument of this thesis that these external pressures do not, by themselves, explain the unwillingness of the British Government and people to give a decisive lead in Western Europe in the crucial Liberation and immediate post-Liberation period. The reasons lie deeper. They concern, among other things, the British self-image, the way the British saw themselves in relation to the world outside. It is a paradox that the war which
brought the British and the Western European nations together to an unprecedented degree, in other ways reinforced the British sense of a quite distinctive, non-European identity. And it is another paradox that the war which raised British prestige so high, at the same time brought a critical and permanent weakening in Britain's position as a world power. The British failure to grasp this profound change and the implications it would have for Britain's international role in the post-war world, was a central dimension in the attitudes of British people towards the new stirrings in Europe.

This thesis is not concerned with an analysis of policy or of the decision-making process at Government level. It is rather a study of attitudes, of currents of opinion, which formed part of the total context within which policy was formulated. I have looked at attitudes within Government, the Foreign Office, and Parliament, and within those identifiable groups in the community which were organised and vocal and which had something to say on important issues of the day - the political parties, the trade union movement, the churches, peace organisations, and the Press, for example. These currents of opinion often cut right across class and party lines, and the stress is therefore on the main currents themselves rather than on the organisations and institutions from which they drew support.

On some related issues, public opinion at large was strong and significant - for example, the great wave of pro-Russian sentiment that swept Britain from 1942 to 1944, the coolness at the popular level in British attitudes towards the French, the approach of ordinary men and women in the Armed Forces and on the Home Front to the treatment of post-war Germany, and their intense preoccupation with what life would be like in Britain after the war. Such public opinion was a major factor in determining the foreign policy options open to Government, and was therefore of fundamental importance. However, when one got down to the debate on the specific issue of possible British leadership in Western Europe, the general public was not interested. Rather one is dealing
here with the educated, articulate, politically oriented and more influential sections of British society, which, of course, was a minority.

Almost inevitably, the Foreign Office holds a central position in this research. Here were 'the professionals' whose whole careers were concerned with the direction of British foreign policy, and who were, to a man, committed to a continuing Great Power role for Britain in the post-war world. Moreover, the debate within the Foreign Office was not only carried on, in written form, by men of unusual ability, backed by a highly efficient system for the handling of all documentation. It also displayed exceptional candour because of the complete confidentiality that covered all discussion within its walls. Hence, the records give unusual insight into motives and attitudes behind the official mask.

I have included as an introductory section to the Bibliography, comments on the various primary and secondary sources used and on the handling of references.

Many people have helped me in the course of my work on this thesis. My greatest debt is to my supervisor, Associate-Professor L.J. Holt, of the History Department, University of Auckland. He has given me a great deal of his time, and without his advice, constructive criticism, and continual encouragement, this thesis would never have been completed. I owe a special debt of thanks to Dr. Margaret Lamb, of the same Department, who later became joint supervisor, and whose perception and judgment were so valuable in the writing of the thesis. During my time in Britain in 1975 and 1976, while working on primary source material, I was under the supervision of Professor Geoffrey Goodwin, then Head of the Department of International Relations at the London School of Economics, who retired in September 1978. He steered me to focus on
the earlier, wartime years, and his stimulating ideas and encouragement played an important part in getting the thesis research off the ground.

I wish to make formal acknowledgement to the following: the Rt. Hon. Julian Amery, for permission to work on his father's Papers; the Librarian of the British Library of Political and Economic Science, for permission to quote from the Dalton Diaries; His Grace, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Trustees of the Lambeth Palace Library, for access to the Bell Papers; the BBC Written Archives Centre, for permission to use material from their holdings; Victor Gollancz Ltd., London, as holders of the copyright, for permission to reproduce cartoons from the David Low collection in Years of Wrath: A Cartoon History, 1932-1945, London, 1949.

I would like to thank many people working in Libraries and Archives in Britain for their courteous assistance, in particular: staff at the Public Record Office; Miss Dorothy Hamerton, Librarian and Archivist, Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, who retired in June 1979; the staff of the Chatham House Press Library; Miss Angela Raspin, Assistant Librarian (Manuscripts), British Library of Political and Economic Science; Mrs. Jaqueline Kavanagh, Written Archives Officer, and staff at the BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham, Reading; staff at the Labour Party Archives, Transport House, London, and at the Library of the Religious Society of Friends, Friends House, London. And in New Zealand, I would like to thank particularly Miss Rosemary Hudson, then Reference Librarian, University of Auckland, (now Deputy Librarian at the University of Otago) for her generous and efficient response to my many queries.

I am specially grateful to the late Lord Strang, who died in May 1978, for his encouragement and kindly interest in my work and for the time he gave me, both in correspondence and in our lengthy interview. My thanks are also due to Lord Gladwyn.
On the financial side, I wish to thank the New Zealand University Grants Committee for the Post-Graduate Scholarship which enabled me to work full-time on this thesis; the Research Grants Committee of the University of Auckland, for assistance in meeting my research costs; and the New Zealand Federation of University Women for their Fellowship, which helped finance my time in Britain.

Finally, I must express my gratitude to my beloved family and friends for their never-failing encouragement and support, without which I would have fallen by the way.

Auckland
April 1980

Judith Elphick
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<td>BBC-WA</td>
<td>BBC Written Archives</td>
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<tr>
<td>BCC</td>
<td>British Council of Churches</td>
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<tr>
<td>CH</td>
<td>Chatham House</td>
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<tr>
<td>COS</td>
<td>Chiefs of Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSM</td>
<td>Christian Science Monitor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dal.t.D.</td>
<td>Dalton Diaries</td>
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<td>DE</td>
<td>Daily Express</td>
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<td>Daily Herald</td>
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<td>Daily Mail</td>
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<td>DT</td>
<td>Daily Telegraph</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAC</td>
<td>European Advisory Commission</td>
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<td>EPA</td>
<td>Empire Parliamentary Association</td>
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<td>FCNL</td>
<td>French Committee of National Liberation</td>
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<td>FO</td>
<td>Foreign Office</td>
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<td>FOMem</td>
<td>Foreign Office Memorandum</td>
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<td>FOMin</td>
<td>Foreign Office Minute</td>
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<td>FORD</td>
<td>Foreign Office Research Department</td>
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<td>FRPS</td>
<td>Foreign Research and Press Service</td>
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<td>F/S</td>
<td>Foreign Secretary</td>
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<td>GH</td>
<td>Glasgow Herald</td>
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<td>LYM</td>
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<td>MG</td>
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<tr>
<td>NC</td>
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<td>NPC</td>
<td>National Peace Council</td>
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<td>NSN</td>
<td>New Statesman and Nation</td>
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<td>NUCUA</td>
<td>National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations</td>
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<td>The Times</td>
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<tr>
<td>TUC</td>
<td>Trades Union Congress</td>
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