

**ROWLAND KENNEY AND BRITISH PROPAGANDA
IN NORWAY: 1916-1942**

Paul Magnus Hjertvik Buvarp

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
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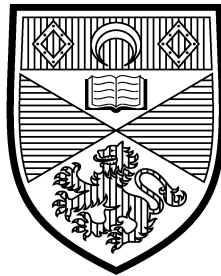
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in Norway: 1916-1942

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University of
St Andrews

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of PhD
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Abstract

Rowland Kenney was a British propaganda agent operating in Norway during both the First World War and the Second World War. He has been forgotten by history but the re-discovery of his private collection of materials allows for an analysis of his work. Kenney was deeply involved in the development of propaganda policy and practice. In the First World War, his work in Norway resulted in thousands of pro-British articles appearing in the Norwegian press as well as the realignment of the Norwegian national news agency. In the interwar years, in spite of severe medical difficulties, Kenney continued to work within the field of propaganda, becoming instrumental in the establishment of the British Council. At the start of the Second World War, he returned again to Norway, but was forced to flee during the German invasion of April 1940. During the Second World War, Kenney became the Director of the Northern Section of the Foreign Division in the Ministry of Information where he continued to affect policy-creation and the development of propaganda. There is no doubt that Kenney was a key figure in this development. His professional network and his varied roles within the propaganda bureaucracy speak to his level of involvement, and his documented accomplishments even more so. Finally discovering Kenney's story and his impact illustrates vividly a few aspects of how the practice of propaganda mutated and changed between 1916 and 1942.

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This work could not have been accomplished without the generous help of:

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I am also indebted to my supervisor, Professor Andrew Williams, who gave me this opportunity, showed great patience and offered invaluable advice. I would not be here at all were it not for his help and his confidence in me. It has been my sincerest pleasure to work with you.

I would also like to thank Professor Nicholas Rengger, and Professor Tom Kristiansen (of the Norwegian Institute of Defence Studies) for their advice and support through this process.

A very special and warm thanks goes to Asta Maria Kenney, who so generously has allowed me to get to know her grandfather. It has been an honour. This work is for you.

I have to thank my examiners, Dr. Timothy Wilson and Professor Patrick Salmon, whose advice and comments made this work, and possibly future works, better. Thank you for an engaging and challenging viva.

It would be remiss of me not to thank my parents, Jenny Hjertvik and Håvard Buvarp, for their unwavering support through this sometimes-maddening endeavour.

My thanks go also to my friends, who with grace permitted my tireless oratory on propaganda theory and wartime history, on soldiers and spies and journalists. My apologies. Your enthusiasm has been an inspiration.

I am forever grateful to everyone who has offered help on the way: Dr. Tony Insall, Professor Helge Pharo, Dr. MJ Fox, Professor Peter Putnis, Professor Rune Ottosen, Harald Engelstad, Hans Christian Erlandsen, Peter Day, Robert Pearson, John Entwisle, Ivar Kraglund, Frode Færøy, and such a vast collection of other individuals that I could not hope to fill a conclusive list. Please accept my heartfelt thanks.

I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain. We had heard them, sometimes standing in the rain almost out of earshot, so that only the shouted words came through, and had read them on proclamations that were slapped up by billposters over other proclamations, now for a long time, and I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stock yards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it.

— Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is very important that it should not be known that these copies have come into my possession...¹

There is a handwritten list with the heading 'Interviews 1945-46' in the collection of papers belonging to the principal subject of this thesis, Rowland Kenney.² Its cursive lettering is wide; the pencil it was written with was stub, the lead strokes broad and grey. Dates run down the right-hand column, appointments set in stone a year in advance for some. The left column carries names: E. Gerhardsen, T. Lie, O. Torp, and on. It is a remarkable list. In 1945, Einar Gerhardsen was the Norwegian Prime Minister. The list carries his name and the names of members of his cabinet: the Foreign Minister, the Finance Minister, Minister of Education, all present. The spacious cursive is unmistakable after years of studying it on the back of postcards, on wafer-thin

¹ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Sir Roderick Jones*. 28 May, 1918. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 2.

² *Interviews 1945-46*. Rowland Kenney Papers. It is worthwhile at this early stage to quickly remark on the fact that Rowland Kenney's name is often misspelled in letters and literature. 'Rowland' sometimes becomes 'Roland', and Kenney has appeared both as 'Kenny' and in one instance 'Kennedy'. This can sometimes be confusing.

copy-paper, in the margins of some secret report. It is nonetheless arresting to see it here, listing these names. The mind is drawn to Rowland Kenney, the working-class boy, wandering aimlessly along the dirt roads of Lancashire looking for work, not a half-century earlier. There was nothing in particular about this boy that would suggest he would be arranging interviews with the entire political elite of another country. There was nothing to hint that he would play a part in toppling a national news agency. Indeed, there was nothing at all that seemed to intimate that this was a man who would play an influential role in the development of international propaganda. And yet, against all odds, he did.

The (re-) discovery of Rowland Kenney's papers (introduced properly below) has prompted an opportunity to investigate the practice of modern state propaganda from its very early days in the First World War, through the interwar years and into the Second World War. This was a time of massive development of the practice, and to witness the course of this development through the eyes of a pioneer is a staggering experience. Kenney's many roles in many different segments of the British propaganda machinery gives an unparalleled insight into how propaganda was run, how it evolved and how it affected the relations between Norway and Britain during a trying period of modern history. What is perhaps the most striking aspect of the story is that the man himself has been neglected for so long, in spite of his manifest impact on history and on international relations. This thesis aims to address this problem, to allow Kenney his deserved recognition, but mainly to display in what way and to what extent he effected the development of propaganda.

Purpose

It is important to be absolutely clear about the purpose of this thesis, and it would be better to overstate it than to offer some chance for misunderstanding. The thesis is precisely an investigation into the work of a single man, Rowland Kenney, and his impact on the development of modern propaganda between

1916 and 1942. While he worked within a range of institutions, such as the Ministry of Information, the Political Intelligence Department and the British Council, the arcs of these are not the point of the thesis. The development, in total, of any single bureau, method or branch of propaganda is not what this paper seeks to explain. Neither is the thesis a full biography of Kenney, nor a treatise on the definition of propaganda or kinds of propaganda. This thesis simply seeks to examine the evolution of propaganda principles and practices through the work of one forgotten pioneer.

Several themes and stories are of course native to any such discussion. In order to capture the fullest view of Kenney and the evolution of propaganda, certain discussions must be had. These include a conceptual foray into what propaganda is and how it functions, a brief discussion of the structures and functions and timelines of a number of propaganda institutions, as well as a detailed account of the most relevant periods of Kenney's life. Propaganda as a concept must be visited in order to have a clear understanding of the scope of the term as it is used throughout the thesis. Institutions must be charted in order to gain some understanding of the major ebbs and flows of propaganda development. Kenney's life, the circumstances of his work, must be held in view in order to appreciate his own involvement. This does not, however, make the thesis a definition of propaganda, an analysis of singular development nor a biography. A corollary: if one can imagine a paper, the aim of which is the analysis of E.H. Carr and the development of the theory of realism, then it is clear that such a work would have a fairly limited scope and line of argument. It would not be a complete history and valuation of the theory, nor would it be a worthy biography of an illustrious character. It would simply be an investigation of the scholar and his impact on the idea. Imagine, further, that E.H. Carr, in spite of his work, had been forgotten by history, and not a single work, biography or theoretical investigation considered his importance. This is a similar position to Kenney's. Consequently, the thesis traces Kenney's work and in so doing uncovers one particular line of the development of propaganda as a tool of statecraft.

With such a tight delineation of purpose, the importance of the work may not be immediately obvious to the reader. In essence, importance is a major part

of the argument of the thesis. Without a comprehensive analysis of Kenney's work—and there is none, bar this one—who could assess his importance to the field? Fundamentally, the thesis is the first and so far only detailed account of this man and his struggles and accomplishments, apart, perhaps, from his single and very limited autobiography.³ It is a fairly large collection of privately held documents that have enabled this research. The documents have never before been thoroughly analysed, and thus the originality alone of the thesis serves as a strong argument for its importance.

MATERIALS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The secondary literature used in this work is wide-ranging and varied. This is in part because of the rather stretched and multi-disciplinary nature of the research, but also because truly relevant texts are few and far between. In this section, the material and literature used is mapped out, beginning with a discussion on the Rowland Kenney Papers and then discussing the works integral to the argument. The goal is to demonstrate several things: 1) that the author has considered all possible advantages and disadvantages of the materials employed, 2) that there exists a gap in the current understanding which this thesis can play a part in bridging, 3) that the author is keenly aware of current research both intimate and tangential to the subject at hand, and 4) that the conceptual, methodological and analytical framework of the thesis is both embedded in and demonstrated by the literature and academic context.

The Rowland Kenney Papers

A central element of the thesis—both in terms of purpose and originality—rests in a trove of previously unseen documents, hereafter referred to as the Rowland Kenney Papers. These documents form the backbone of the material analysis and are introduced here in the literature review. It is important to be aware of

³ His autobiography, *Westering*, will be described in the Literature Review section.

the context of the documents, as well as their strengths and weaknesses (the weaknesses being discussed primarily in the *Limitations* section in this chapter), since these are so important to the argument.

The collection is comprised of a large number of papers ostensibly obtained or created by Rowland Kenney throughout his lifetime. The types of documents range from private and personal letters to official and secret reports. Much of the material appears to be carbon copies or in some cases drafts of materials written by Kenney himself, though there are almost as many documents addressed to Kenney from others. A small number of documents are handwritten and some are nearly illegible, but most are typed, well preserved and accessible. Some documents are devoid of either dates, or addressees or even author indications. Some lack all three. However, the papers have by and large been preserved in a hybrid chronological and thematic order, so the placement of the document in the collection more often than not gives a fairly clear indication of where it falls in the story.

The collection itself is comprised of several independent folders, each containing a distinct series. Primarily used in this thesis are individual series corresponding to the First World War, to the interwar years, two series on the Second World War as well as one series of papers from 1945-46. Series not included are mainly those concerned with Poland⁴ or with Kenney's life before the First World War.

It is risky to suggest too much when discussing the originality or rarity of these documents. Nevertheless, after several searches in The National Archives in London, where such materials by all accounts should be found, only a very small fraction of copies have been uncovered. This is not to say with utmost certainty that the Rowland Kenney Papers contains a very large majority of entirely singular documents, but it is to suggest that it is likely that this is the case. In illustration of this fact, documents used from the Rowland Kenney Papers that also exist in public archives are cited doubly in this thesis. What is striking after years of research is how difficult it is to find references to Rowland

⁴ Kenney was an agent of the Foreign Office, and possibly also of the British Security Service in Poland between the end of the First World War and the signing of the Treaty of Versailles.

Kenney at all outside his own collection. Barring a few documents from the British National Archives or from the Norwegian National Archives, as well as extremely brief (often misspelled) references to him in the literature, there is simply nothing to be dug up. One conclusion that may be extrapolated from this fact, especially the paucity of references to the man in books, is that Kenney is indeed virtually absent from the archives, in such a way that authors and academics have in large part glossed over, or perhaps been oblivious to, his work and his influence. It also points to the assumption that the collection has never before been analysed, or at least that it has never been the subject of any publication anywhere. This collection, then, and this thesis, both become much more important in light of the possibility.

The documents were revealed to the author by Professor Andrew Williams of the University of St Andrews and are available to the examiners. It was vital to the author to trace the origin of the documents, so an investigation was set in motion. The author gained contact with the living grandchild of Rowland Kenney, Asta Maria Kenney, who was able to provide useful information on the man himself and his activities. Originally, the documents were collected and kept by Kenney himself, possibly in order to write a second autobiography, which would explain the mix of private and professional documents as well as the careful arrangement of the collection. When he died in 1961⁵ the documents were inherited by his son, Kit Kenney. Kit Kenney passed away in 1988⁶ prompting his widow and daughter, Asta, to discover the collection of papers belonging to his father, Rowland. Recognising that the collection may be of interest to historians, they donated the papers to the University of Kent, where they were unfortunately forgotten and set aside in an obscure cupboard. Some years later, the materials were unwittingly slated for destruction, but were saved by Professor Williams, who at the time was employed at the University of Kent. Since then, the collection remained in the

⁵ Obituary for Mr Rowland Kenney. *The Times*. 10 Apr. 1961. p.18.

⁶ *Family of Kit Kenney, 1988*. KP/CLA/3. The Kenney Papers Archive. University of East Anglia; it was, in fact, this entry in the East Anglia archive in honour of Rowland Kenney's sister—the famed suffragette Annie Kenney—that led to the discovery of his living grandchild Asta Maria.

possession of Professor Williams, who took them with him to the University of St Andrews where they now rest in his care.

The collection offers an unparalleled and personal view into Rowland Kenney's life and labour, allowing for a rigorous and comprehensive analysis of what he accomplished and how he accomplished it. There is simply no better resource for this undertaking than the Rowland Kenney Papers. The official memoranda and reports give a clear and objective picture, while the personal letters and correspondence colour the story with Kenney's own idiosyncratic narration. Not only is the reader given access to the inner workings of the propaganda machinery, but also to this agent's thoughts, his conscience, and his sarcastic quips. The comprehensiveness of the collection also allows for certain guesses to be made about the negative space, the periods that it does not follow. As a result, the Rowland Kenney Papers is undoubtedly a treasure both of historical and political significance, and its usage as a centrepiece here only adds to the value of the thesis.

Literature

As noted, material and literature outside of the Rowland Kenney Papers is varied. The difficulty in obtaining anything on Rowland Kenney himself means that there is little directly relevant to his work or person. This results in the usage of literature primarily as context, in order to flesh out the framework of the story, or to provide alternate perspectives. The literature therefore mainly revolves around conceptual or historical works on propaganda, the First and Second World War, Anglo-Norwegian relations, and the history of British institutions such as the Ministry of Information or the British Council. Some Norwegian literature is included and where indicated has been translated by the author, but most remains Anglophone and primarily British in origin.

In terms of literature focusing on Rowland Kenney himself, there is only his own works. Of utmost relevance is his autobiography *Westering*.⁷ This book is highly valuable to the thesis and is used accordingly where appropriate.

⁷ Kenney, Rowland. *Westering: An Autobiography*. London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1939.

However, published in 1939, the book does not address the Second World War, and indeed contains fairly limited sections regarding his work in the First World War and the interwar years. It is likely that Kenney, still active in the propaganda sector, would have been keen to maintain some secrecy about his work, and therefore was tight-lipped on some subjects integral to the argument. As a signatory of the Official Secrets Act it is unlikely that he would have been able to publish much of what can now be discovered in the collection, especially given the then prevailing 'Forty Years Rule', which made the publication of official documents within the period of forty years unlawful. It is also clear that an autobiography, while being a great resource for tapping into the filtered psyche of its main subject, is inherently biased and unreliable, and must be considered sceptically. Care is taken to match statements from *Westering* with documents from the Rowland Kenney Papers, hopefully achieving something akin to truth in the cross-reference. Kenney also wrote a much more impersonal book called *The Northern Tangle*.⁸ This book was a political history of the Scandinavian countries from early recorded history until 1946. While impressive in ambition, a single volume could not hope to go into much detail. The book is rarely referenced within the thesis, substituted with more heavy-hitting works where its subject is called for. It nonetheless is useful in understanding Kenney's own views on Scandinavia, if only as background reading.

One of the basic conceptual discussions central to the thesis is one on propaganda as a concept. Forming the backbone of this discussion are three scholars and their works. Harold Lasswell's *Propaganda Technique in the World War*⁹ remains to this day a seminal work within the field, discussing propaganda from a particularly communications studies perspective. It is used in this thesis appropriately as a foundation for propaganda theory. Similarly canonical is Jacques Ellul's work *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*¹⁰, which is

⁸ Kenney, Rowland. *The Northern Tangle: Scandinavia and the Post-War World*. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1946.

⁹ Lasswell, Harold D. *Propaganda Technique in the World War*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1938.

¹⁰ Ellul, Jacques. *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*. Trans. Konrad Kellen and Jean Lerner. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969.

concerned rather specifically with propaganda technique but also engages in theory. Finally, Philip Taylor's works, especially his two books *British Propaganda in the 20th Century*¹¹ and *Munitions of the Mind*,¹² give a very lucid and well-respected historical account of British propaganda. These three academics together provide a total perspective of the concept by in turn addressing theory, technique and historical development. A more modern overview of not only theory, but also research methods and analysis within the study of propaganda can be found in Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell's *Propaganda and Persuasion*.¹³ This book acts almost as a textbook and brings together various points of view. Another modern scholar to keep in mind, especially with regards to propaganda theory, is Nicholas Jackson O'Shaughnessy who wrote *Politics and Propaganda: Weapons of Mass Seduction*.¹⁴ Keith Somerville's *Radio Propaganda and the Broadcasting of Hatred*¹⁵ similarly falls into the category of recent research, this book in particular focusing on the use of radio after the Cold War, but also giving an excellent history of the development of the practice. Modern critics of propaganda are also important to take note of, if only to gain some insight into the on-going debate on the ethics of the issue. Particularly useful in this regard is Randal Marlin's *Propaganda and the Ethics of Persuasion*¹⁶ as well as Stanley B. Cunningham's *The Idea of Propaganda*.¹⁷ Altogether, the literature surrounding propaganda remains fairly wide-ranging and disparate, so that most academic

¹¹ Taylor, Philip M. *British Propaganda in the 20th Century*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999.

¹² Taylor, Philip M. *Munitions of the Mind: A history of propaganda from the ancient world to the present era*. 3rd ed. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003.

¹³ Jowett, Garth S., and Victoria O'Donnell. *Propaganda and Persuasion*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1999.

¹⁴ O'Shaughnessy, Nicholas Jackson. *Politics and Propaganda: Weapons of Mass Seduction*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004.

¹⁵ Somerville, Keith. *Radio Propaganda and the Broadcasting of Hatred: Historical Development and Definitions*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

¹⁶ Marlin, Randal. *Propaganda and the Ethics of Persuasion*. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2003.

¹⁷ Cunningham, Stanley B. *The Idea of Propaganda: A Reconstruction*. Westport: Praeger, 2002.

writing must return to the early scholars like Lasswell and Ellul. This scholar is no exception.

The non-conceptual literature, mainly historical or political in nature, follows many different strands. In terms of pure history, the historical range of the thesis, as well as the national focus, demanded that a rather specialised list of works were solicited. J. M. Bourne's *Britain and the Great War*¹⁸, Gerard J. Degroot's *The First World War*¹⁹, and David French's *British Strategy & War Aims: 1914-1916*²⁰, are great resources for a British-centric First World War analysis. Conversely, on the Norwegian side, a great introduction to the Norwegian experience of the war is found in the book *Scandinavia in the First World War: Studies in the War Experience of the Northern Neutrals*, edited by Claes Ahlund.²¹ Perhaps the most well regarded work on the subject, however, is Olav Riste's *The Neutral Ally*,²² which takes a somewhat politico-economic analysis of Norway's relationship with the warring states in the First World War into great detail. For a lucid and in-depth synthesis, focusing on the relationship between Britain and Norway during the First World War, Patrick Salmon's work is unparalleled, in this thesis exemplified by his book *Scandinavia and the Great Powers, 1890-1940*,²³ and an article for the Royal Historical Society entitled 'Between the Sea Power and the Land Power'.²⁴

The literature on propaganda in the First World War is similarly wide and varied. As a point of entry into the field in this time period, the work of Gary S. Messinger is invaluable. His book *British Propaganda and the State in the First*

¹⁸ Bourne, J. M. *Britain and the Great War, 1914-1918*. London: Edward Arnold, 1989.

¹⁹ DeGroot, J. Gerard. *The First World War*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.

²⁰ French, David. *British Strategy & War Aims: 1914-1916*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1986.

²¹ *Scandinavia in the First World War: Studies in the War Experience of the Northern Neutrals*. Ed. Claes Ahlund. Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2012.

²² Riste, Olav. *The Neutral Ally: Norway's Relations with Belligerent Powers in the First World War*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1965.

²³ Salmon, Patrick. *Scandinavia and the Great Powers, 1890-1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

²⁴ Salmon, Patrick. 'Between the Sea Power and The Land Power': Scandinavia and the Coming of the First World War 1993. *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 6, no. 3. 1993. pp. 23-49.

*World War*²⁵ is immensely useful in mapping out the institutions that arose and the politics behind the scenes. Philip Taylor has also written work relevant to the propaganda history of Britain during the First World War. His book, *British Propaganda in the 20th Century: Selling Democracy*, is absolutely necessary to include here. In addition, Taylor offers invaluable insight into the role of the Foreign Office in his article 'The Foreign Office and British Propaganda during the First World War'²⁶ which is very appropriate for this thesis. A number of smaller texts, such as book chapters and journal articles are necessary to gain a full view of the propaganda institutions of the time. Worth particular mention is Stephen Badsey's chapter 'The Missing Western Front', in Mark Connelly and David Welch's *War and the Media*,²⁷ and J. M. McEwen's article 'Northcliffe and Lloyd George at War, 1914-1918'.²⁸ Together, these works, and a handful of others, paint a very clear picture of the policies, strategies and practices of the often byzantine British propaganda systems of the First World War.

Since the propaganda of the First World War often revolved around the use of traditional news media, it is useful to map out some of the main works surrounding the media as well. Particularly interesting is Donald Read's official history of the Reuters news agency, *The Power of News*.²⁹ Similarly focused is Graham Storey's *Reuters' Century: 1851-1951*,³⁰ though having been published at the close of its titular century, it is more dated than Read's book. This, of course, carries both advantages and disadvantages. The article 'Share 999'³¹ by Peter Putnis is a great in-depth examination of the restructuring of Reuters, and gives

²⁵ Messinger, Gary S. *British Propaganda and the State in the First World War*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992.

²⁶ Taylor, Philip M. The Foreign Office and British Propaganda during the First World War. *The Historical Journal*, vol. 23, no. 4. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Dec. 1980. pp. 875-898.

²⁷ Badsey, Stephen. 'The Missing Western Front': British Politics, Strategy, and Propaganda in 1918. *War and the Media: Reportage and Propaganda, 1900-2003*. Eds. Mark Connelly and David Welch. London: I.B. Tauris, 2005. pp. 47-64.

²⁸ McEwen, J. M. Northcliffe and Lloyd George at War, 1914-1918. *The Historical Journal*, vol. 24, no. 3. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Sep. 1981. pp. 651-672.

²⁹ Read, Donald. *The Power of News: The History of Reuters*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

³⁰ Storey, Graham. *Reuters' Century: 1851-1951*. London: Max Parrish, 1951.

³¹ Putnis, Peter. Share 999. *Media History*. Vol. 14, no. 2. Aug. 2008. pp. 141-165.

insight into the entanglement of the news agency with the British Foreign Office. Alternately, for literature concerning the media history of Norway, the newly published four-volume work *Norsk Presses Historie*³²—*The History of the Norwegian Press*—edited by Martin Eide is a fantastic work which covers the entirety of the modern period for the Norwegian media. Both the Norwegian National Archives and the Reuters Archive (curated by the Thompson Reuters Company) also contain a variety of materials very useful to understanding this history.

Further into the chronology, the inter-war period becomes a necessary point of focus. An immensely detailed, well-researched and up-to-date account of European international history in the inter-war period is found in the two works by Zara Steiner, *The Lights that Failed* and *The Triumph of the Dark*.³³ There are several institutions of great interest to the thesis that arise in this period as well. Erik Goldstein's book, *Winning the Peace: British Diplomatic Strategy, Peace Planning, and the Paris Peace Conference*,³⁴ is a great resource for understanding not only the transition from the First World War into the interwar period, but also the policies and history of the short-lived Political Intelligence Department which features in Chapter VI of his work. Goldstein also published an article on the Political Intelligence Department, called 'The Foreign Office and Political Intelligence 1918-1920',³⁵ which is well worth an examination. The British Council is also a point of interest, where Frances Donaldson's official history of the institution's first half-century is a necessary source of information.³⁶ A newer look, primarily at the British Council and cultural propaganda during the Second World War, can be gained from Edward

³² *Norsk Presses Historie*. ed. Martin Eide. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2010.

³³ Steiner, Zara. *The Lights that Failed: European International History 1919-1933*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005; Steiner, Zara. *The Triumph of the Dark: European International History 1933-1939*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

³⁴ Goldstein, Erik. *Winning the Peace: British Diplomatic Strategy, Peace Planning, and the Paris Peace Conference, 1916-1920*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.

³⁵ Goldstein, Erik. 'The Foreign Office and Political Intelligence 1918-1920.' *Review of International Studies*, vol. 14, no. 4. Cambridge University Press, Oct. 1988. pp. 275-288.

³⁶ Donaldson, Frances. *The British Council: The First Fifty Years*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1984.

Corse's *A Battle for Neutral Europe: British Cultural Propaganda during the Second World War*.³⁷ The interwar period also saw the return of the Ministry of Information in preparation for the Second World War. Philip Taylor again provides a lucid article on the subject in 'If War Should Come: Preparing the Fifth Arm for Total War 1935-1939'.³⁸ Two articles by Robert Cole are also highly worth a mention here. Cole examines the pre-war planning for the Ministry in 'The Conflict within: Sir Stephen Tallents and Planning Propaganda Overseas before the Second World War',³⁹ whereas in 'The Other 'Phoney War'',⁴⁰ he delves into the Ministry's experience of the first few months of the war.

The literature surrounding the Second World War is so extensive as to make any selection of essential works banal. However, in relation to this thesis, Antony Beevor's *The Second World War*,⁴¹ and John Keegan's book by the same name,⁴² are examples of recently published works of great detail and insight. Anglo-Norwegian war-history is helped a great deal by Patrick Salmon's work. His works mentioned previously also enter into the discussion surrounding the Second World War, but particularly useful in this regard is the book he edited: *Britain & Norway in the Second World War*.⁴³ Giving a personal and enthralling account of the German invasion of Norway in April 1940 is Margaret Reid's diary, *April 1940*.⁴⁴ Margaret Reid was Frank Foley's secretary, and a member of the party that fled Oslo together with Rowland Kenney.

³⁷ Corse, Edward. *A Battle for Neutral Europe: British Cultural Propaganda during the Second World War*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

³⁸ Taylor, Philip M. 'If War Should Come': Preparing the Fifth Arm for Total War 1935-1939. *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 16, no. 1. Sage Publications, Jan. 1981. pp. 27-51.

³⁹ Cole, C. Robert. The Conflict within: Sir Stephen Tallents and Planning Propaganda Overseas before the Second World War. *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, vol. 14, no. 1. 1982. pp. 50-71.

⁴⁰ Cole, C. Robert. 'The Other 'Phoney War': British Propaganda in Neutral Europe, September-December 1939. *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 22, no. 3. Sage Publications, July 1987. pp. 455-479.

⁴¹ Beevor, Antony. *The Second World War*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2012.

⁴² Keegan, John. *The Second World War*. London: Random House, 2011.

⁴³ *Britain & Norway in the Second World War*. Ed. Patrick Salmon. London: HMSO, 1995.

⁴⁴ Reid, Margaret. *April 1940: En krigsdagbok: Margaret Reids dagbok*. Oslo: Gyldendal, 1980.

In terms of the propaganda of the Second World War, there are again too many sources to begin to list them all. Narrowing the field down to the type of propaganda in which Kenney was engaged adds some limitation. Ian McLaine's book, *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War II*,⁴⁵ is a good resource to understand the significance of domestic propaganda in Britain during the Second World War. Similarly useful in gaining insight into the use of offensive propaganda is Charles Cruickshank's *The Fourth Arm: Psychological Warfare 1938-1945*.⁴⁶ Much of Philip Taylor's work is again highly relevant here. One specific entry from Taylor would be his book *Britain and the Cinema in the Second World War*,⁴⁷ which takes as its subject the usage of film propaganda. For a general Taylorite view of Second World War propaganda the 23rd chapter of his *Munitions of the Mind*,⁴⁸ however, remains a cornerstone, as well as his book *British Propaganda in the 20th Century*.⁴⁹ These last two sources from Taylor also serve as a more general history of propaganda developments following the Second World War.

Thus it can be argued that the literature surrounding this work is spread out. With regard to the historical literature, it is difficult to find detailed sources that connect perfectly with Kenney's work and position. The same is true for the propaganda literature, often focusing on subjects like hostile or domestic propaganda, the use of specific media for propaganda purposes, or, if neutral propaganda is discussed, then it is more often than not the neutral propaganda aimed towards the United States of America that is brought under scrutiny. This presents a difficulty in establishing the correct detail in the context of Kenney's particular activities. Therefore, the Rowland Kenney Papers remains at the forefront of the analysis throughout, with the more general literature furnishing

⁴⁵ McLaine, Ian. *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War II*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979.

⁴⁶ Cruickshank, Charles. *The Fourth Arm: Psychological Warfare 1938-1945*. London: Davis-Poynter, 1977.

⁴⁷ Taylor, Philip M. *Britain and the Cinema in the Second World War*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1988.

⁴⁸ Taylor, Philip M. *Munitions of the Mind: A history of propaganda from the ancient world to the present era*. 3rd ed. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003.

⁴⁹ Taylor, Philip M. *British Propaganda in the 20th Century*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999.

the contextual basis in which to plant the new information. These limitations (as well as the advantages in employing the Rowland Kenney Papers) inform the method of this thesis significantly.

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

As has been stated repeatedly, at the very core of this work stands the Rowland Kenney Papers of Rowland Kenney. The Rowland Kenney Papers is primary source material, which in turn makes the research conducted primary, documentary research. Considering the time-period studied, the opportunity to undertake primary documentary research is a rare one, especially when it is at the level of detail, scope, and impact the Rowland Kenney Papers affords.

The primary source material certainly needs secondary sources which can test—and hopefully confirm—the primary source claims, and also form the context. However, the lack of secondary sources specifically on Kenney, handicaps the available analysis somewhat. This is because much of the work and space afforded must go into mapping out Kenney's activity. It would be useless and rather myopic to attempt to analyse Kenney's work as head of the Northern Section of the Ministry of Information, for example, because in order to understand his focus, his drive and his abilities, there must be some basic understanding of what he had done before and how he had gained the position. The fact that there never has been—until now—a full and detailed narrative account of Kenney's progression, necessitates at least some narration in this thesis. The thesis cannot make simple references to Kenney's role in the establishment of the British Council, it must be explained at least to some degree of detail. Not only does this narration allow for better and more thorough analysis in the thesis, but it also aims to fulfil the secondary source requirement so that future research can engage in more pure analysis of the man and his accomplishments and trials.

The narrative bent of many sections of this thesis is not only a necessary sacrifice, however. In answering the question at the centre of the work—in what way and to what extent Kenney took part in developing the practice of

propaganda—narration becomes one of the most appropriate methods of so doing. Narration addresses the way in which he took part; analysis addresses the extent of his partaking.

The analysis focuses mainly on discovering position, initiative and influence. Certainly, it becomes very difficult to historically assess the impact of someone not placed directly into a seat of power, but it is nonetheless possible. One method used in this thesis is in mapping out Kenney's personal and professional network. This places him relatively well within a sphere of influence and can give some indication of how close to the top of the decision-making structure he was, and indeed, how much autonomy he was likely to enjoy. Policy-shifts and initiatives can of course be analysed from the point of how they were effected, but it remains a strong assertion in this thesis that these are not spun out of thin air. While Kenney may not have been the spearhead of the creation of policy in the halls of politics and bureaucracy, he may certainly have created the circumstances and fathered the push for policies.

The final force of the argument in this thesis is based on the idea of legacy. An effective way of measuring impact is in discovering the trail of effects from an original event. Therefore, an effort will be made to very generally chart the course of propaganda development not only through Kenney's lifetime, but also beyond it, and then to discover whether a red thread can be pulled back and tacked reliably, if not firmly, on Kenney's own work. The focus of legacy is of course helpful to the argument, but it is also an aesthetic presentation: in unveiling the forgotten life of a very interesting man, it is impossible to deny the impulse in this author to create for him a vehicle for remembrance.

Limitations

It would, of course, be disingenuous to propose that any thesis of this kind could be bulletproof. In keeping with good academic practice it is important to be fully aware of the limitations of the research and to keep these in mind throughout the process. This holds the argument in check and is in effect a practice of prophylaxis against unwarranted assumption and intellectual hubris. It also

cedes to the reader the notion that what is offered is not necessarily the truth, but rather a heuristic, which is both adaptable and fluid.

Doubtless the most glaring limitation lies in the marriage of source material and methodology: relying heavily on the veracity of the Rowland Kenney Papers of Rowland Kenney. The reliance on this material cannot be circumvented, since it remains, after thorough and exhaustive searches, the only resource of information on Kenney for large swathes of his career. While the origin of the material has been ascertained to the greatest possible degree, it remains a fact that with regards to the material's believability a non-zero value of blind trust must be assumed. While highly unlikely, it is not entirely outside the realm of possibility that all or parts of the material are not representative of the truth. This is always a problem when one uses documentary or personal accounts. The fact that the papers have not passed through any official archives does not help in this regard.

The real problem here, however—considering the unlikeliness of a case of massive forgery or intentional falsehood—is bias. Kenney, if you will, is the curator of the collection. He may have, and it is indeed likely that he has, omitted negative incidences and highlighted positive ones. Care has therefore been taken to match the Rowland Kenney Papers with other archival and non-archival sources where possible, and also to appraise the Rowland Kenney Papers with a critical and sceptical gaze. It cannot be asserted that perfect objectivity has been reached—what, if anything, can indeed be truly objective in such a field?—but the ideal of objectivity has certainly been paid its due attention. Nonetheless, the irony of relying on a pioneer of propaganda to tell his own story without bias or bent does not escape the author.

Another limitation with regards to the Rowland Kenney Papers is its stupendous scope. This author has no exact figure for the number of documents within the collection, but it is extensive to the point of being byzantine. While archival research is in itself a demanding process, the sifting through of wide-ranging and hitherto uncatalogued materials is considerably more challenging. It is not beyond this author to suggest emphatically that details have been missed. In arranging and rearranging the manuscriptal remains of a prolific and accomplished individual, it is impractical, if not impossible, to guarantee that no

stone has been left unturned. It can only be hoped that continuous analysis of the material will reveal further details that may have been lost in the flood. This particular limitation would be more egregious were this thesis simply a biographical exposé. While it should be kept in mind that there may be more to the story, this does not meaningfully take away from the question being explored. In what way and to what extent Kenney was significant in the establishment of a system within international relations does not much hinge on trivia, and the arguments herein are made fully and extensively within more general observations.

Furthermore, and departing slightly from the limitations of the Rowland Kenney Papers, the very nature of Kenney's work makes its uncovering a challenge. Propaganda is naturally a secretive business. Whether there are elements not disclosed by Kenney himself, or whether there have existed or do exist records that would greatly aid in the argument of this thesis which have been redacted, there is in most cases simply no way to tell. Fundamentally, a practice which relies on secrecy and tact and discretion becomes nearly impervious to confident and full analysis and there remains always a sense of doubt as to obtaining the full truth. A case in point is Kenney's involvement with the Secret Intelligence Service. Aside from a very clear episode (discussed in Chapter VI), there are a few compelling hints that Kenney may have acted also as a spy. In spite of this author's attempts to follow up those leads, the archives on the Secret Intelligence Service and its earlier iterations remain closed and unapproachable. In this way, the sensitive nature of Kenney's work adds to the limitations by allowing for the possibility that some things have not been documented or publicised. The thesis may be only a fraction of the truth, or it may be nearly all of it, it is impossible to know for sure.

A final limitation is the inherent weakness in the thesis proposed. It is admittedly ambitious to suggest that much can be proven as regards a single man taking part in developing a massive system. The size of the bureaucracy surrounding the creation of propaganda policy is so monumental that singling out any one individual—and especially an individual below the executive level—becomes a somewhat foolhardy proposition. Nonetheless, the work does present a few clear-cut cases, and while many instances may at a glance seem to be

circumstantial, the argument takes this into account and is aware of it. Hard proof is rare in the social sciences, and thus the quality and force of the argument is all the more important. In sum, the thesis faces a not insignificant number of challenges. In spite of this, it is this author's position that simply the possibility that Kenney has had an impact on the development of propaganda, and that his work has thus far remained unknown, not only validates but positively necessitates the exploration herein.

THE ROAD AHEAD

A brief outline of the remaining chapters in the thesis will serve the purpose of lighting the way ahead. Chapter II concerns itself with the concept of propaganda. While this thesis is not particularly theoretical, it is important to be closely familiar with the idea in order to fully grasp the developments at the centre of the thesis. A very brief history of propaganda up until the First World War highlights a few developments of early propaganda, setting the stage for further developments during and between the First and Second World War. This is followed by a discussion of different definitions of the concept, as well as an investigation into the moral and ethical position and a look at propaganda's relationship to truth. The chapter goes on to discuss the conditions required for propaganda, mainly a glimpse at the role of mass media, before the chapter rounds off with a summary explaining how propaganda works, and in which disciplines the functioning of propaganda is rooted.

In Chapter III, the thesis begins to discuss the historical and political background to the First World War. This is done so as to highlight the context of Kenney's work and enable the reader to have a perspective of the situation prior to Kenney's arrival. The British position immediately before and during the First World War is discussed, with focus on Britain's relationship to neutral countries, the power structure within Britain at the time, and the role of the media and propaganda through the war. The Ministry of Information is given its own section. Its genesis is brought to light here, including a discussion of the people involved in the practice. The chapter concludes with a focus on the Norwegian

position before and during the war, Norway's relationship with Britain, and finally Norway's importance to the warring parties, setting up the argument for why Kenney would have been sent there.

Chapter IV details Kenney's work and activities during the First World War. This is the first of the three central chapters in the thesis and is closely tied with Chapter III. The main thrust of the chapter lies in the analysis of Kenney's role and position in the development of propaganda. First, the chapter makes a narrative case for Kenney's purpose in Norway, as well as his many and varied accomplishments. Second, the chapter investigates Kenney's network in Norway in order to accurately place him within the greater structure of propaganda work both in Norway and Britain. The final part of the chapter seeks to explain some general developments in propaganda at the time and to link these to Kenney's work.

The focus of Chapter V is on the NTB-Reuters affair, a particular episode from the First World War. This chapter builds on the details from Chapters III and IV, but is in the style of a case study, designed to allow for the detail present in this very interesting case. Kenney's role in the transfer of the Norwegian Telegram Bureau from private ownership into the ownership of a group of pressmen is an integral one. In the first section of the chapter, a brief history of the Norwegian bureau is offered as context. Secondly, the chapter turns to the series of events surrounding the takeover of the company, exploring Kenney's role in the matter. Finally, the chapter rounds off with a short analysis of the case.

In Chapter VI, the timeline shifts to the interwar years. The first part of this chapter continues to follow Kenney and his labour, focusing on his professional and personal life with regards to propaganda during this period. Particular attention is given to Kenney's professional advancement—or lack thereof—, and a critical discussion is given space here. This section in addition explains Kenney's role in the establishment of the British Council. The next section in this chapter concerns itself with the background, build-up and context of the Second World War in Britain. Space is also afforded here to explain how the propaganda efforts were revitalised and spun into gear ahead of the war.

The final section details the Norwegian position before the Second World War, and analyses the reasons for Norway's importance to the warring parties.

Kenney's work during the Second World War is the subject of Chapter VII. This chapter is thus the final central chapter in the thesis, and rounds off the discussion about Kenney's role in developing propaganda. The first section of this chapter is dedicated to the narrative explanation of Kenney's work during the period, ranging from his stay in Norway, cut short by the German invasion and his escape, to his position within the Ministry of Information in London and secondment to the Norwegian Government. The second section, similarly to Chapter IV, analyses Kenney's network in brief, by highlighting a few of the people around him in order to place him in a suitable context. Finally, the chapter steps back and discusses the general development and evolution of propaganda during the war, and displays how these can be linked to Kenney and his efforts.

The final and concluding chapter, Chapter VIII, serves to gather the narrative lines and the conceptual discussion in order to arrive at a clear argument. A summary of the preceding chapters is given in order to show the sweep of Kenney's story. A discussion of Kenney's impact upon the development of propaganda then emerges in order to uncover traces of a Kenney legacy.



Propaganda remains, to this day, a powerful force in international politics. It also is granted significantly less attention than more overt uses of power, both in the public and academic spheres. At a time when the conventional warfare of the 20th Century has all but disappeared from the global playbook, and where hybrid wars unfold in a mesh of conflicting stories and outright lies, it is more important than ever to pay attention to the practice of influencing public opinion. However, in order to reach a fuller understanding of the use of propaganda today, it is wise to investigate the roots of the practice. In uncovering the work of Rowland Kenney, greater truths about greater questions may shift a little more into the light.

CHAPTER II

CONCEPTS IN PROPAGANDA

...if you are taking up the general running of the propaganda for us...⁵⁰

Before engaging with Rowland Kenney and his specific work, it is useful to consider the conceptual background to the discussion. This background concerns itself mainly with the concept of propaganda. Delineating cleanly the ideas involved provides for a much more unambiguous argument, where definitions are set, moral judgments are reserved and conceptual confusions are limited if not entirely avoided. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to give a somewhat brief explanation of the history and definition of propaganda as it pertains to the discussion at hand, and also to make a clear case for the borders of the discussion of ideas in this work. In essence, this chapter presents the conceptual side of what will be discussed.

As a point of study, propaganda remains less understood by academics than the public may expect. In popular culture, propaganda is most often

⁵⁰ O'Neill, Herbert Charles. *Letter to Rowland Kenney*. 24 May 1918. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

signposted by flagrant and highly stylised visuals or sounds bringing to mind the heavy-handed and bludgeoning version of propaganda most often associated with Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union. Any academic foray into the field, therefore, almost necessarily, becomes an entry in the debate on what propaganda *is*, what it *is not*, and *how it is practiced*. This thesis is no exception. First, however, it is useful to look at the origins of the idea.

THE BEGINNING

It becomes an exercise of broadening definitions to attempt to pinpoint the very first usage of propaganda as a technique. Some authors go so far as to suggest that the practice “predates man”⁵¹ and can be found in competitive mating rituals among animal species. Of course, ancient rulers and civilisation utilised a number of methods of communication to display their might and reach, methods certainly possible to depict in terms of propaganda. However, what is generally agreed upon is that sustained, campaign-like propaganda arose out of the Catholic Church and its efforts to consolidate its socio-religious control over Europe and the Middle East in the eleventh century.⁵² Propaganda historian Philip Taylor has described the propaganda of the Crusades as exceedingly thorough, and cited the period as the one “with the most fertile evidence to date”⁵³ of medieval propaganda usage. The need to convince the Christian population to take up arms, as well as the use of grisly tactics in order to frighten and subjugate the enemy, suggest very early forms of propaganda and psychological warfare were understood and employed.⁵⁴

Another great event in the early history of propaganda arrived in the form of the printing press. This allowed a more efficient and uniform system to arise in order to spread information of propagandistic bent. Propaganda’s

⁵¹ Somerville, Keith. *Radio Propaganda and the Broadcasting of Hatred: Historical Development and Definitions*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. p. 8.

⁵² Taylor, Philip M. *Munitions of the Mind: A history of propaganda from the ancient world to the present era*. 3rd ed. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003; Somerville. *Radio Propaganda*.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

reliance on mass media was given its first true push here.⁵⁵ While precise points in time marking a change in eras is a particularly lazy type of historicism, even seasoned historians would designate the arrival of the printing press as an “appropriate dividing line”⁵⁶ separating the Middle Ages from more modern times. This is especially the case with the history of propaganda, since printing meant that “reading and writing now became an important means by which a man could make his way in the world and rise up through society other than the time-honoured method of warfare.”⁵⁷ The invention of printing truly bolstered the power of information and created a significantly larger point of access not just for the privileged few. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation movements were simultaneously born out of and also the first true test of the printing press as a propagandistic tool, and “it is difficult to overstate the significance of the printing press as a medium of Reformation propaganda.”⁵⁸ Such was the power of printing that King Francis I of France ordered a temporary ban on printing following the distribution of Protestant writings in Paris.⁵⁹ The Reformation and Counter-Reformation movements were also the stage upon which the term ‘propaganda’ was born. Seeking to establish Christendom in the New World, as well as to counter the rise of Protestantism in Europe’s Reformation, Pope Gregory XV established the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (*Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*) in 1622.⁶⁰

Philip Taylor’s book, *Munitions of the Mind*, details a few of the major steps in the evolution of war propaganda. It describes the internationalisation and massive increase in scale of propaganda during the Thirty Years War, the usage of propaganda in the English Civil War, the role of the practice in both the American and French Revolutions and the significance of propaganda to the Napoleonic Wars of the 19th Century.⁶¹ Propaganda, in one form or another has played a part in innumerable wars and conflicts throughout history, but it was not until the Boer War at the start of the 20th Century, however, that modern

⁵⁵ Somerville. *Radio Propaganda*.

⁵⁶ Taylor. *Munitions of the Mind*. p. 87.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 97.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Somerville. *Radio Propaganda*; Taylor. *Munitions of the Mind*.

⁶¹ Taylor. *Munitions of the Mind*.

propaganda truly began to take shape. The Boer War became the first war where a series of conditions allowed propagandistic material to reach a mass audience—the popularity of media, the increase in literacy rates, and so on. Thus this became a moment that heralded what was to come, in spite of the fact that the propaganda did not emanate from a particularly centralised source.⁶² The Boer War appears in hindsight to be a kind of impromptu dress-rehearsal for the massive propaganda machinery that would colour the 20th Century and beyond. The true starting shot of modern propaganda can be said to have coincided with the shots fired by Gavrilo Princip on Franz Josef Street in Sarajevo in 1914. Two years later, Rowland Kenney would begin his own work, which is the subject of this thesis.

PROPAGANDA DEFINED

A definition of propaganda is important, not only in the context of this thesis, but for the wider study of the term, because propaganda is manifestly a state practice which has a clear effect on the masses. However, like any coherent academic field of study, it must be cordoned off and distinctly marked, so as not to include too much or mean too little. A study that spans from the work of Goebbels to the misrepresentations of an ill-informed street-preacher is of little value to any clear taxonomy of the concept, and it risks being watered down. While there are issues which are certainly challenging, an effort will here be made to examine a few of the more compelling definitions offered in academic literature, and then to synthesise this author's own definition.

A compelling definition is surprisingly difficult to find. Propaganda straddles a multitude of academic fields from communication studies⁶³, psychology⁶⁴, and sociology⁶⁵ to history⁶⁶ and some would even claim

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ e.g. Lasswell, Harold D. *Propaganda Technique in the World War*. New York: Peter Smith, 1938.

⁶⁴ e.g. Doob, Leonard W., and Edward S. Robinson. *Psychology and Propaganda*. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 179. May 1935. pp. 88-95.

philosophy⁶⁷. This thesis considers propaganda from a political or international historical point of view. Instead of parsing through the unnumbered multitudes of possible interpretations of the word, a systematic filter is employed to categorise and exemplify broad definitions; the academic discussion of the definition of propaganda can be coarsely divided into two sub-categories: *form* and *function*. A discussion of propagandistic *form* is a discussion of technique, of mechanism, and of the shape of propaganda systems, discussions commonly found in works within the field of communications studies or sociology. A discussion of propagandistic *function* is a discussion of aims, results and intentions, and is most prevalent in works concerned with psychology, history or political science. This distinction will be carried through this chapter. Any full definition of propaganda, in order to be relevant, must address both discussions. A definition of propaganda as pure *form* neglects the goal-oriented motivation of trying to persuade or influence the masses. Similarly, a definition in the pure terms of *function* forgets the specific methods of delivery and the necessary structure of the system. However, in a joined definition, the two categories may be weighted differently, and it is vital to be aware of the fact in order to have a meaningful understanding of any definition employed.

One of the first great scholars of modern propaganda was Harold D. Lasswell. Lasswell was very interested in communications studies, a perspective which informed his research and theorisation on the topic. His broad definition of propaganda was that it was “the control of opinion by significant symbols”⁶⁸ and that propaganda was significant in its internal method of social suggestion, as opposed to a method of altering the external conditions of the subject. Lasswell is markedly different from other great propaganda scholars in his continued references to the significance of ‘symbols’⁶⁹ or ‘representations’⁷⁰ in

⁶⁵ e.g. Ellul, Jacques. *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*. Trans. Konrad Kellen and Jean Lerner. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969.

⁶⁶ e.g. Taylor. *Munitions of the Mind*.

⁶⁷ e.g. Cunningham, Stanley B. *The Idea of Propaganda: A Reconstruction*. Westport: Praeger, 2002.

⁶⁸ Lasswell, Harold D. *Propaganda Technique in World War I*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

describing method. This is a point of *form*, which remains the thrust of Lasswell's investigations.

Perhaps one of the greatest scholars of propaganda theory was Jacques Ellul. His book, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* is a seminal study mainly, again, of the *form* of propaganda. "Propaganda," writes Ellul, "is a technique rather than a science."⁷¹ Further definitions abound in the book, the most concise of which is probably given to the concept of political propaganda which "involves techniques of influence employed by a government, a party, an administration, a pressure group, with a view to changing the behaviour of the public."⁷² While always acknowledging the inherent *function* present, Ellul remains "focused on the technique of propaganda."⁷³ Perhaps overly so. Ellul's conception leads to an overuse of the term propaganda, where "nearly all biased messages in society were propagandistic even when the biases were unconscious."⁷⁴ This becomes problematic, because it risks the conflation of propaganda with simply biased information, and broadens the concept to the point of being ubiquitous and therefore immaterial (in all senses of the word). Lasswell's argument from *form* has a similar weakness.

A more modern and equally important scholar is Philip M. Taylor, who has written a series of books and articles on the history and concept of propaganda. Taylor's work is often cited throughout the thesis. His definition of propaganda relies heavily on the aspect of *form*, describing propaganda as primarily a process of "targeted persuasion techniques"⁷⁵, focusing on the information-bearing content, with present but limited reference to the intent behind the message—i.e. that it is targeted, persuasive and strategic. This definition limits the use of the term to fairly clear cases, where specific

⁷⁰ Lasswell, Harold D. *Propaganda*. Ed. Robert Jackall. New York: New York University Press, 1995. pp. 13-25. p. 13.

⁷¹ Ellul. *Propaganda*. p. 3.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁷³ Jowett, Garth S., and Victoria O'Donnell. *Propaganda and Persuasion*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1999. p. 4.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4-5.

⁷⁵ Taylor, Philip M. Third Wave Info-Propaganda: Psychological Operations in the Post-Cold War Era. *Propaganda: Political Rhetoric and Identity 1300-2000*. Eds. Bertrand Taithe and Tim Thornton. Stroud: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1999. pp. 327-342. p. 336.

techniques are highlighted with the express purpose of persuading a selected group of people. However, Taylor is also interested in propagandistic *function*, and goes so far as to suggest “if the intent is to persuade people to think and behave in a way desired by the source, then it is propaganda.”⁷⁶ This explicit definition of propaganda as purely *function* in at least one iteration, marks Taylor out as much more interested in *function* than for example Lasswell and Ellul. A purely functional argument however, suffers the same overreach as the previous two cases, defining propaganda as any action with persuasive intent.

There are almost as many definitions as there are scholars writing about the term, which naturally speaks to the difficulty in arriving at an agreed-upon, concise definition. Some have argued that defining propaganda is impossible due to the complexity of socio-psychology and cultural relativism.⁷⁷ Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell attempt to describe propaganda mainly in terms of *function*: “Propaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.”⁷⁸ In this version, Jowett and O’Donnell again make the mistake of relying too much on one aspect, risking the inclusion of absurd scenarios. Is the coaxing of a class of children by a schoolteacher into appreciating the beauty of mathematics to be classed as propaganda? The schoolteacher certainly both deliberately and systematically tries to shape the children’s perceptions, manipulate their cognitions and direct their behaviour to achieve the goal she has set for them. The definition is lacking further qualifying clauses.

Another point Jowett and O’Donnell make is the one-sidedness of the trade-off. They claim “propaganda does not seek mutual understanding or mutual fulfilment of needs,” but instead “deliberately and systematically seeks to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.”⁷⁹ In a kind interpretation, what the authors mean is that propaganda never specifically

⁷⁶ Taylor, Philip M. *Global Communications, International Affairs and the Media Since 1945*. London: Routledge, 1997. p. 17.

⁷⁷ For example, Leonard W. Doob, referenced in: Jowett and O’Donnell. *Propaganda and Persuasion*. p. 4.

⁷⁸ Jowett and O’Donnell. *Propaganda and Persuasion*. p. 6.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

seeks mutual gain, though it may occur coincidentally. Even this soft interpretation renders the supposition incorrect. Though an argument can be levied as to the meaning of ‘gain’, ‘understanding’ or ‘fulfilment of needs’, it would take fairly incredible semantic acrobatics to suggest that the domestic propaganda used in Britain to unite the British during the Second World War, to name one of many examples, was not an intentionally mutually beneficial exchange. A united and strong British identity fostered feelings of belonging and security, while at the same time strengthening the home front.⁸⁰ Thus, it cannot be gainfully argued that propaganda is necessarily beneficial exclusively for the propagandist.

In keeping with traditions of writing academically about propaganda, this author suggests his own definition: *Propaganda is a set of techniques employed by a political power against a population in order to persuade the members of that population to accept or internalise specific and intended ideas as truth.* The main focal point is the *form*, the techniques. However, the definition limits the actor into necessarily being a political power, which is not necessarily a state, but does demand a defined power-relationship present, excluding single actors. This definition also defines the audience dually; that propaganda is delivered massively, but ingested individually—an idea Ellul also promoted: “propaganda reaches individuals enclosed in the mass [...] yet it also aims at a crowd.”⁸¹ Finally, there must be a clearly defined and pre-ordained *function* intended, which focuses primarily on the planting of ideas as truth. Some ideas carry with them behavioural suggestions; some are simply ideas of identity and definition. The aspect of presentation as truth, as opposed to argument or claim, is also very important and will be discussed in its own section later in this chapter. This definition intentionally does not address whether the propaganda is received consciously or subconsciously, whether the propaganda is benevolent or malicious, or whether or not the propagandist holds political power over the recipient mass. Importantly for the thesis, it also does not distinguish between

⁸⁰ McLaine, Ian. *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War II*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979.

⁸¹ Ellul. *Propaganda*. p. 6.

hostile, attacking propaganda and cooperative, allied propaganda—which, after all, is the type of propaganda at the centre of this work.

The Morality Aspect

Perhaps immediately paradoxical to the layman, allied propaganda is not a contradiction of terms. A view held by a small minority⁸² of scholars, but a large majority of the masses, is the inherent vice in the employment of propaganda; that it is somehow corrupting or deplorable. “Despite the efforts of many scholars to argue that propaganda is a value-neutral process which should more appropriately be judged by reference to the intentions of those undertaking it, it remains a pejorative term in the minds of most people.”⁸³ While the question is fairly moot in the literature of modern academics, the nature of the discussion in this thesis, a discussion precisely of allied propaganda, means that it is useful to tackle here, if only for emphasis.

Ellul counters the notion of propaganda as evil or illegitimately top-down by appealing to the importance of “the psychological factor”⁸⁴ in the construction of political identities and in fostering political participation. Ellul’s argument is one of necessity out of pervasiveness and organisational merits. While Ellul is generally concerned with propagandistic *form*, this is an argument that withdraws into *function*. Necessity and merits of usage are fundamentally functional calculations. Taylor, on the other hand, defends what he calls propaganda’s ‘value-neutrality’ by citing its *form*. Referring to other scientific uses of the term, he writes that propaganda is “a process for the sowing, germination and cultivation of ideas and, as such, is – or at least should be –

⁸² An example of this minority view can be found to a degree in Randal Marlin’s book *Propaganda and the Ethics of Persuasion*, where Marlin argues for the employment of techniques to counteract the deleterious effects of propaganda. The book received praise from relatively radical scholars like Noam Chomsky. Marlin, Randal. *Propaganda and the Ethics of Persuasion*. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2003; another example is found in: Cunningham. *The Idea of Propaganda*.

⁸³ Taylor. *Third Wave Info-Propaganda*. p. 336.

⁸⁴ Ellul. *Propaganda*. p. 119.

neutral as a concept.”⁸⁵ An argument of *function*, such as Ellul’s, suffers from a particularly stretched version of morality which would have to rest on the premise that all things necessary are at least not morally bad. Any lazy examination of such a proposal would yield staggering counterpoints. Therefore, the argument out of *form* is the most compelling in defending the amorality of propaganda.

This is not to say that propaganda cannot be malicious, which would be a self-evidently preposterous proposal. The argument is simply that propaganda, in itself, must be considered neutrally if it is to be useful. Morality enters only into the discussion in terms of modulated *function*. If the intended purpose of the propaganda is malicious, then so is the propaganda. If the intended purpose is benevolent, the propaganda may be judged as benevolent. The point is, in essence, that persuasion in itself cannot be said to be immoral.

Perhaps one other reason for the popular, though mistaken, view of propaganda as a morally dubious practice rests in the very nature of propaganda as a tool that is self-destructive when it is discovered. Like any covert action, once made overt it must be demonised, and usually demonised by the offended party. The best way to counter propaganda defensively is to expose it for what it is, and to vilify it and its propagators. An offended party will turn to “denouncing the other’s devious techniques and lack of credibility,”⁸⁶ while making no reference to its own use of the tool. Often, then, propaganda is seen publicly as a practice favoured by *the other*, and is necessarily and without fail portrayed as deceitful and immoral. It becomes entertaining to imagine that this thesis, in its uncovering of Kenney’s work, could somehow make Kenney’s work deplorable. It is, of course, faulty logic.

⁸⁵ Taylor. *Munitions of the Mind*. p. 2.

⁸⁶ Taithe, Bertrand, and Tim Thornton. ‘Propaganda: A Misnomer of Rhetoric and Persuasion.’ *Propaganda: Political Rhetoric and Identity 1300-2000*. Eds. Bertrand Taithe and Tim Thornton. Stroud: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1999. pp. 1-26. p. 1.

To Lie or not to Lie

One aspect of the belief that propaganda is inherently malicious derives from the idea that propaganda necessarily is deceitful and has a casual relationship with truth. “The real paradox of propaganda arises from the fact that most readers will assume that it is largely composed of lies and deceits and that propagandists are ultimately manipulators and corrupt.”⁸⁷ The obvious fact is that some propaganda is deceitful and false, while other propaganda is true. It is valuable, however, to establish the academic thought surrounding propaganda’s relationship to truth, in order to firmly plant as complete a conception of the practice as possible in the discussion. The point of this section is to claim that propaganda is not in any and all cases devoid of truth, a point rather useful to make when discussing allied propaganda.

Ellul distinguished between two categories of expression in propaganda, with opposed relationships to truth. Propaganda explicitly addressing values, he argued, was necessarily false. This follows from the logic that values are subjective, and therefore cannot be adequately proven to be true. Alternatively, some propaganda deals only in selected factual statements, which must be said to be true.⁸⁸ This author would suggest that such a distinction is meaningless if not banal. Expressions of values are not only impossible to link to truth, but also impossible to link to falsity. There is a conceptual distance embedded in any value statement that disqualifies its own relationship to fact. When being told that something is *bad*, a listener may agree, and may even accept the statement as if it were fact, but semantically and logically, there is no confusion between a value ‘fact’ and *fact*. The human languages are all steeped in metaphor and semantic abbreviations, the understanding of which are entirely necessary for correct social functioning. In essence, language semantics necessarily separate values from fact, creating a filter whereby values remain entirely distinct from hard, factual interpretation. Neglecting this filter for the purposes of discussing propaganda is disingenuous.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ellul. *Propaganda*. p. 59.

A sub-argument to be followed up here is the fact that propaganda, especially in value formulations, must remain consistent and truthful within itself. It must be “convincing, viable and truthful within its own remit.”⁸⁹ Relative or reflexive truth then becomes a necessary characteristic of successful propaganda. Both Ellul and Taylor have argued similarly, that propaganda is “a reciprocal message, self-reinforcing and flexible, which must contain the logic and elements of truth, which must explain and make sense of political and social reality to the point that the propaganda message will become significant of a whole political cosmology.”⁹⁰ Propaganda enters into a description of a total worldview, what Ellul calls “a complete system for explaining the world,”⁹¹ and informs the receiver within this defined boundary. This is not an unimportant observation, since it uncovers a particularly structural aspect of truth in propaganda, that it is internally logical, self-referential and part of real, true context. Propaganda is, and must be, a truth and not an argument. It is a vitally important distinction. Regardless of its relationship to real-world truth, it must present itself as truth.

Taylor describes the historical and ideological relationship of propaganda to truth succinctly:

Scholars of propaganda, as well as practitioners, are only too aware of the legacy of Dr Goebbels and his ‘Big Lie’. Indeed, as the western democracies were increasingly forced to engage in propaganda from the First World War onwards, they developed an appreciation of the need to adopt a ‘strategy of truth’. This meant that the tradition of democratic propaganda in this century was factually based upon information closely linked to the truth. This is not to suggest that the whole truth was told, but rather that democratic propaganda was rooted in the principle encapsulated by Lord Reith that ‘news is the shocktroops of propaganda’. And if accurate news and information form the basis of the historical tradition, it remains a fundamental principle of contemporary democratic propaganda.⁹²

⁸⁹ Taithe and Thornton. *Propaganda*. p. 2.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Ellul. *Propaganda*. p. 11.

⁹² Taylor. *Third Wave Info-Propaganda*. p. 336.

It is an intuitive thought, that propaganda is more effective if it is factual and true than if it is false, and this intuition did not and does not escape practicing propagandists. Selecting *which* truths are disseminated becomes the best method by which to achieve the desired effect. Lying by omission is, of course, a counterpoint here, but it becomes rather desperate when one considers the amount of information omitted by even the most comprehensive descriptions.

The emphasis on not only the possibility of truth in propaganda, but the desirability of it is fundamental to the understanding of the type of propaganda discussed in this thesis. It also sets the work apart from the most flamboyant representations of propaganda, those which continually focus on cases of flagrant insincerity. While studies on efficiently deployed lies are doubtless interesting, it is arguably more interesting—and indeed more valuable—to consider the power of efficiently deployed truths.

THE CONDITIONS FOR PROPAGANDA

Having detailed the definition and moral standing of propaganda, as well as its complex relationship to truth, it is important also to understand how it arises and how it grows. This is not least because the thesis concerns itself with propaganda development, and thus requires an investigation into the general conditions of development. Primarily, these conditions centre around the technological capabilities of the actor, more specifically, the media used to convey the propagandistic message. This section therefore has a strong focus on the role of the mass media in propaganda, as well as the consequences of such a role.

The mass media is without doubt one of the primary conditions which allow the usage and development of propaganda. Without “the inventions that produced press, radio, television, and motion pictures,” the practice “could not exist.”⁹³ This is because the mass media offers the channels through which propaganda is delivered and becomes as such the cornerstone of propagandistic *form*. The proof of propaganda’s reliance on mass media can be seen throughout

⁹³ Ellul. *Propaganda*. p. 86.

history, with techniques and developments in the practice in close lockstep with techniques and developments of new media.⁹⁴ Propaganda is almost without fail a very early adopter of new media channels since these have “extended considerably the range of propaganda techniques available.”⁹⁵ Indeed, very clear correlations can be found when analysing the development of media use and technology and the development of propaganda. In the First World War, the early adoption of cartoons and films had a massive impact on the range and effect of propaganda,⁹⁶ and some scholars credit the success of British propaganda in the Second World War to its commitment to “innovate and use many new techniques which, contrasted with some of the cruder attempts, reveal great ingenuity and manipulation.”⁹⁷ Propaganda then rests at the cutting edge of media technology, and its successes or failures can often be traced back to its adoption of emerging techniques. This is a particularly interesting idea when studying contemporary or emerging propaganda channels.

Another point to make about the use of mass media for propaganda is the implicit context it lends to the message. A great number of traditionally useful media, such as cinema, radio, television and cartoons to name a few, are sources of entertainment for the masses. Not only is the success of propaganda dependent on the reach and scope of those delivery mechanisms, but also on the voluntary seeking out of the material. This context allows propaganda to be snapped up hungrily by people seeking entertainment, which adds to the value of the channel.⁹⁸ Propagandists are aware of this advantage. During the Second World War, for example, the British Ministry of Information had as one of its principles that for “film to be good propaganda it must also be good entertainment.”⁹⁹ In this vein it is not surprising that British propagandists

⁹⁴ See for example Taylor. *Munitions of the Mind*.

⁹⁵ Taithe and Thornton. Propaganda. p. 10.

⁹⁶ Demm, Eberhard. Propaganda and Caricature in the First World War. *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 28. Sage Publications, 1993. pp. 163-92.

⁹⁷ Taithe and Thornton. ‘Propaganda’. p. 15.

⁹⁸ Taylor. *Munitions of the Mind*.

⁹⁹ Taylor, Philip M. *British Propaganda in the 20th Century*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999. p. 178.

systematically sought out and worked with Hollywood filmmakers and other grand entertainers.¹⁰⁰

A caveat to the discussion of the media arises in the idea of media control. It is not enough for a state, or any political power, to simply coincide with a burgeoning and innovative mass media sector; it must be able to effectively utilise such a sector. In addition, such a utilisation must be efficient and importantly secretive, calling to mind a controlling relationship between the political power and the mass media. Furthermore, the media themselves must be effectively and centrally controlled. Ellul took this caveat to heart: “where film production, the press, and radio transmission are not centrally controlled, no propaganda is possible.”¹⁰¹ Ellul unpacks the idea by discussing media power and the related ability to “hold the individual constantly and through all channels.”¹⁰² This is a necessity of consistency. As has been discussed, propaganda constructs its own view of the world, indeed its own political cosmos. The viability of that cosmos is necessary to maintain the full force of propaganda. Aberrant influences weaken propaganda efforts considerably, and chip away at the claim to the propaganda’s own reflexive truth. Nevertheless, Ellul certainly did not imagine some shrouded cabal exercising authoritarian power over a centralised media. As both propaganda and the media interact in the cultural sphere, the concept here of power is also one of cultural power. Centralisation may be, and most realistically is, seen as a soft concept of cultural allegiances which shepherd the media into the fold.

How propaganda works

Having accounted, as much as possible, for what propaganda *is*, it is now pertinent to discuss how it works, and the mechanisms of the practice. There is of course some overlap between what something is and how it works, but focusing here on the more systematic process by which propaganda influences an audience gives a practical understanding of the process. This is helpful

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 188.

¹⁰¹ Ellul. *Propaganda*. p. 102.

¹⁰² Ibid.

because it can be used as a metric to separate efficient propaganda from inefficient propaganda, and it also allows for a closer understanding of the propagandist's process in achieving his or her objective.

On a basic level, propaganda must ultimately be described as “a form of communication”¹⁰³ with a goal of “changing ideas or opinions, of making individuals ‘believe’ some idea or fact, and finally of making them adhere to some doctrine—all matters of mind.”¹⁰⁴ Ellul's work in particular focuses on these psychological mechanisms of persuasion used in propaganda. Such a view of the technique falsely insinuates a simple mechanism. One can imagine a model based on the idea that a message is received, processed and then acted upon. While rudimentarily true, this in turn implies that a propagandistic message can be fairly simple and biased, since it is only delivering an idea. However, “propaganda works not by being simple or deceitful but in being credible and complex.”¹⁰⁵ It essentially constructs a version of reality, or an alternate reality, and invites or coerces the audience to engage with it. This is a mode of meta-persuasion, where not only the message is designed to be persuasive, but also its context, delivery and its multitude of cultural, ideological and conceptual referents.

While propaganda necessarily is dressed up and presented as truth or fact, its main push does not concern itself with imparting these directly onto the audience. And this is important: those facts and truths are only the vehicle of the final objective, they are used to legitimise and deliver the underlying impetus of psychological action. Ellul illustrates this wonderfully:

After having read an article on wheat in the United States or on steel in the Soviet Union, does the reader remember the figures and statistics, has he understood the economic mechanisms, has he absorbed the line of reasoning? If he is not an economist by profession, he will retain an over-all impression, a general conviction that ‘these Americans (or Russians) are amazing ... They have methods... Progress is important after all,’ and so on. Similarly, emerging from the showing of a film such as *Algérie française*, he forgets all the

¹⁰³ Jowett and O'Donnell. *Propaganda and Persuasion*. p. 46.

¹⁰⁴ Ellul. *Propaganda*. p. 25.

¹⁰⁵ Taithe and Thornton. *Propaganda*. p. 12.

figures and logical proofs and retains only a feeling of rightful pride in the accomplishments of France in Algeria. Thereafter, what remains with the individual affected by this propaganda is a perfectly irrational picture, a purely emotional feeling, a myth. The facts, the data, the reasoning—all are forgotten, and only the impression remains. And this is indeed what the propagandist ultimately seeks, for the individual will never begin to act on the basis of facts, or engage in purely rational behaviour. What makes him act is the emotional pressure, the vision of a future, the myth.¹⁰⁶

The point then becomes that propaganda, in a manner of speaking, seeks to plant seeds of fact, which then, sprout and rise into an irrational space of values, judgements and deep-set emotions. Propaganda works by influencing the indirect, almost subconscious level of being, which in turn describes and informs behaviour on an ideological level.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, “propaganda works primarily on the emotions and feelings [...] it is essentially emotional manipulation through the transmission of ideas and ideology.”¹⁰⁸ Operationally, in terms of this tiered process, propaganda is undeniably a psychological tool, and it may be said to have developed into a highly sophisticated one.

Indeed, the development of sociology and psychology coincides fairly well historically with the development of propaganda. As Ellul notes, “the findings of social psychology, depth psychology, behaviourism, group sociology, sociology of public opinion are the very foundations of the propagandist’s work.”¹⁰⁹ Understanding psychology is fundamental to propaganda’s functioning. Propaganda, after all, must act on the psychological underpinnings already present in the minds of the audience. It references not only the external cultural or ideological currents within a group or society, but also that which “already exists in the individual.”¹¹⁰ The process of propaganda can therefore be said to be both communicative and psychological.



¹⁰⁶ Ellul. *Propaganda*. p. 86.

¹⁰⁷ O’Shaughnessy, Nicholas Jackson. *Politics and Propaganda: Weapons of Mass Seduction*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004.

¹⁰⁸ Somerville. *Radio Propaganda*. p. 7.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

The history of propaganda development is extensive, possibly even going beyond the scope of recorded history. Various elements of propaganda have been in use for millennia. It was the invention of the printing press and the struggles of the Reformation that truly began to lead to a system of propaganda, however. It was, after all, the Catholic Church that gave the practice the name propaganda in 1622. Wars both before and after utilised propagandistic practices, with varying degrees of success. The Boer War at the turn of the 19th Century was the first test of modern, mass propaganda, whereas the First World War truly centralised the practice and created many of the systems of propaganda that run through this thesis.

A definition of propaganda is very difficult to ascertain, with nearly every academic entry into the field offering up some new, nuanced delineation. Scholars like Lasswell, Ellul and Taylor do well to provide their own limits on the concept, but at the same time fail to find the right balance between the definitional *form* and *function* of propaganda, resulting in definitions that are much too broad. A better definition would be a synthesis of several differing definitions in order to maintain a particular focus. This thesis, as mentioned, defines propaganda as: *a set of techniques employed by a political power against a population in order to persuade the members of that population to accept or internalise specific and intended ideas as truth.*

While morality is a problematic facet of propaganda for the layman as well as for a handful of critical academics, most scholars agree that propaganda is not inherently immoral. It certainly can be immoral, if the intention is immoral, but in and of itself, it is not necessarily so. This allows the conception of beneficial allied propaganda. The practice's relationship to truth is also an interesting and convoluted one. Much of modern propaganda, and especially British propaganda (which of course is the subject of the thesis), generally seeks to employ truthful propaganda, and not to lie. Perhaps more importantly, propaganda must always present itself as truthful, and remains true relative to the ideological framework in which it is built.

A mass media is necessary for propaganda to function. Propaganda requires channels of distribution that can reach a great number of individuals,

and it is no coincidence that the development of propaganda mirrors rather finely the development of communications technologies. The usage of many of these media also aid in the dissemination of propaganda in that it arrives in an entertainment context. Propaganda is often not force-fed to its audience, but rather the audience seeks it out, embedded as it often is, in entertaining and beguiling programming. A final condition as regards the media is that media control is vital. Propaganda requires a centralised structure from which to flow in order to maintain its ideological persuasion. This centralisation often arises in the form of cultural cohesion, and not in direct control of media outlets.

Finally, it is vital to understand how propaganda works. Propaganda is, at its most basic level, a communicatory practice, but it is not a simple one. It seeks to construct a reality, and does so through the usage of symbols and representations. It is also important to acknowledge that while propaganda in essence spreads what it claims to be facts, these are not the final objective. Propaganda seeks to impart facts not for their own utility, but for their transformation into emotional or ideological imperatives. Propaganda therefore is a highly psychological and complex practice which rests upon the study of psychology and sociology.

While this chapter focused on the concept of propaganda, it is important to remember that Rowland Kenney was not a theorist, but a practitioner. The thesis will not aim to show Kenney's influence on the development of propaganda as a concept, but rather as a practice, institution or technique. The concept is of course still highly relevant in any such discussion, not least in informing interpretations of Kenney's professional actions. It also provides useful conceptual context to the development of propaganda institutions and the adoption of new techniques throughout history, a point central to the thesis. Finally, a rigorous conceptual analysis maintains a close quarantine on terms used throughout.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST WORLD WAR: TIME AND PLACE

Mr. Carnegie will tell you how necessary it is to shepherd the Norwegians if you want them to enter any fold at a given time.¹¹¹

The aim of this chapter is to build the backdrop to the first part of the thesis, namely Kenney's work in the First World War. This does not mean that the thesis will here outline the First World War in its entirety, or indeed the British or Norwegian position entirely. Whole books (and indeed multi-volume works) are written on these subjects. Instead, this chapter takes a variety of topics and unifies them under a few given premises of Kenney's work. First, the British position is outlined, which includes the grand war aims of Britain, the social structure of power at the outbreak of war, and the role of the British press and of Reuters at this time. In the following section, the focus turns to the Ministry of Information and the British propaganda machinery, outlining its development through the war, highlighting key players in the bureaucracy as well as discussing the idea of soft power as it related to this wing of British wartime policy. The final section discusses Norway in the First World War, examining the

¹¹¹ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Mair*. 15 June 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

country's position, Norwegian sentiment to the warring parties and then Norway's value to the warring parties. This thread should trace the context of Kenney's work in several ways.

In the purely practical sense, the findings in the Rowland Kenney Papers would be difficult to discuss without this background work in place. It would be a hindrance to the point of the thesis to discuss the work of Rowland Kenney without addressing what kind of significance he had within the larger system around him. In this background chapter, as well as the background chapter for the Second World War (Chapter VI), the main thread to follow is this of significance within context. It is also important to understand why certain policies were followed and what kind of situation Kenney was operating in, in order to properly understand his work. This allows us to pursue the line that Kenney's work impacted international society and formulated significant portions of propaganda technique.

BRITAIN IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

This section serves to describe the British position and its relevance to the topic of propaganda in neutral countries. The importance of neutral countries to British policy is an interesting point to examine, considering that Norway was a neutral country in the First World War, and considering Kenney's placement there. Parallel to this, there are also points to be made about the basis for British propaganda policy; the methods followed in propaganda work were no accident, but rather flowed directly from an overarching strategy. A discussion of British policy towards Norway and greater Scandinavia will appear in the final section of this chapter, under the examination of why Norway was interesting to the warring parties (this is primarily because many points of interest for Britain as regards Norway were also points of interest for Germany).

The British Position

Before the start of what would become known as the First World War in 1914, Great Britain had enjoyed an undeniably strong position of power on the global stage. Industrialisation and imperial reach gave the small island nation a powerful economic position backed up and supported by the most powerful navy in the world. British leaders desired to maintain this position at the outbreak of war, especially against the potentially expansive growth—both economical and military—of Germany.

Thus, perhaps the clearest aim of British wartime policy was that Britain should retain this position as a world leader. To this end, British strategy relied to a large extent on its allies tapping the resources of the Central Powers.¹¹² It is an interesting recognition of the ‘world war’ nature of the conflict, since it required deft international diplomatic navigation as well as persuasive methods (i.e. propaganda) to sway neutrals to their side. Furthermore, in contrast to the imposing clout of the maritime forces, Britain’s land army was small and volunteer-based. The continental conscript armies were much larger, and so again Britain would rely on allies, or convincing neutrals to fight on the British side.¹¹³ Neutrals were an important aspect of British war aims, given more than a passing thought.

Kenney’s work in Norway, just based on the value of neutrals, can be supposed to be in some way significant. As the following chapter (Chapter IV) details, his task seems to fall perfectly under the purview of swaying neutrals, which, as demonstrated, was a key priority. This certainly speaks to significance, and thus to the idea that Rowland Kenney and his work indeed are worth examining. To further establish this significance, it might also be useful to examine the loci of power in Britain at the time before and during the war. This should help again in placing Kenney into a suitable context and in showing to what extent he should be seen as a key player.

¹¹² French, David. *British Strategy & War Aims: 1914-1916*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1986.

¹¹³ Bourne, J. M. *Britain and the Great War, 1914-1918*. London: Edward Arnold, 1989; DeGroot, J. Gerard. *The First World War*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.

The People in Power

The power to in some way affect policy is an important aspect of this thesis. If Rowland Kenney is to be said to have had a role in the development of some part of international society, then the relevant networks and routes of power must be understood. In the next chapter about Kenney's work in Norway during the First World War (Chapter IV) and in the corresponding chapter on the Second World War (Chapter VII), the importance of this aspect is put in relief by highlighting 'persons of interest'. Establishing Kenney's position within these networks helps to underscore his relevance to the project. Before that, however, it is also necessary to establish the nature of the power networks of the time: to what extent it was exclusive, meritocratic, effective, and so on.

The power structure of British society in the 19th and early 20th Century has been characterised as aristocratic and fairly rigid. Especially those government offices concerned with diplomacy, international affairs and the military were populated by a small group of people connected closely through their elite education and their family ties.¹¹⁴ The political elites were generally from a higher social standing, and to some degree exclusively so. "The aristocracy still remained the leading group within the ruling classes, and it continued to fill half the places and all the top positions in the cabinets of both political parties."¹¹⁵ This was certainly true of jobs where candidates were approached or appointed. But even for civil service jobs, this sort of nepotism was prevalent. In fact, "over a quarter of those who entered [civil service] by open competition in the years preceding 1914 had been at one of the nine Clarendon schools."¹¹⁶ What all this means is that power was localised in rather small circles where people were known to each other prior to their professional

¹¹⁴ Guttsman, W. L. The British political elite and the class structure. *Elites and Power in British Society*. Eds. Philip Stanworth and Anthony Giddens. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974. pp. 22-44. p. 24; Hewitt, Christopher J. Elites and the distribution of power in British society. *Elites and Power in British Society*. pp. 45-64. p. 62.

¹¹⁵ Reid, Alastair J. *Social Classes and Social Relations in Britain, 1850-1914*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1992. p. 17.

¹¹⁶ Kelsall, R. K. Recruitment to the higher civil service: how has the pattern changed? *Elites and Power in British Society*. pp. 170-184. p. 176.

engagement. If you were in a position of power, you were likely to have childhood or family friends crop up in corresponding positions throughout the political and professional structure of the country. Members of this kind of close-knit socio-political milieu can be said to have been able to exercise more power and influence than, say, members of broader classes. In other words, with the power structure so small and self-referential, if one was within it, one had a relatively considerable effect on national and international policy.

In spite of this aristocratic exclusivity, there were of course exceptions to the rule, and it cannot be denied that Rowland Kenney was one such exception. He was a member of the civil service, though he was far from an aristocrat. His autobiography, *Westering*, published in 1939, tells the story of a large, working class, poor family. At the age of 9 he describes himself as “reaching bread-winning age.”¹¹⁷ Before eventually landing in the civil service, Kenney worked his way from a cotton mill (where his sister—the famous suffragette Annie Kenney—lost a finger) through a coalmine and a railway goods yard and much else, finally becoming a London journalist and newspaper editor.¹¹⁸ His arc was an extraordinary one by far; it nonetheless makes his later achievements all the more impressive. Kenney must have been very talented to take such strides from the fields of the West Riding of Yorkshire onto the grand politics of the world stage.

And Kenney was not the only exception. In fact, Sir Roderick Jones, Director of Reuters news agency, was another man who had clawed his way up the ranks, and he and his company also played a very significant role in the war. Jones was, like Kenney, born close to Manchester, but of a slightly higher class, as his father was a hat salesman. Through self-study and determination, and purportedly self-imposed grandeur to a fault, he eventually managed to climb to the very top of the then-struggling, though undeniably powerful news agency Reuters.¹¹⁹ An examination of Reuters and Jones’ role in the First World War will exemplify the power of these cliques as well as provide some detail to the part played by the media in propaganda.

¹¹⁷ Kenney, Rowland. *Westering*. London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1939. p. 15.

¹¹⁸ Kenney, *Westering*.

¹¹⁹ Read, Donald. *The Power of News: The History of Reuters*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

The Sword and the Pen

It is not enough, when discussing propaganda, to only describe the politics and people involved in it. Propaganda is inherently a function of popular information, and the arbiters of popular information are the media. The role of the British media in the propaganda efforts of the First World War was not a small role, and it had a particular part to play in the work of Rowland Kenney. Assessing the role of the press serves to set the stage of Kenney's operation, exemplifies the power of a small group of people, and explores the deep (and sometimes unsettling) dynamic of information and power.

There were of course many novel developments of media usage in the First World War. Everything from photography and front-line journalism to war-poetry and rudimentary filmmaking took some sort of new turn, and there has already been written an extensive amount on the subject. While these themes are certainly interesting, they bear little relevance to Kenney's work and to the kind of propaganda this thesis explores, and the author would for that reason direct the reader toward other works for more information on and discussion of them. In Kenney's case, in the First World War, the main objects of interest in terms of media are the news agencies and international correspondents.

Ties between loci of power were close and this was also true of the relationship between the press and government. Most striking, perhaps—at least on the surface of things—is the well-known connection of Lloyd George with the powers that be at Fleet Street.¹²⁰ But more fundamentally, the role of the news agencies, the core machinery of news on the international scale, became more and more enmeshed in the politics of war.

Since their creation in the mid 19th Century, the three major European news agencies had coexisted to some extent symbiotically. A ring agreement guaranteed the three bureaux—Havas of France, Wolff of Germany and Reuters of Britain—a virtual monopoly on the international markets, with carefully

¹²⁰ Badsey, Stephen. 'The Missing Western Front': British Politics, Strategy, and Propaganda in 1918. *War and the Media: Reportage and Propaganda, 1900-2003*. Eds. Mark Connelly and David Welch. London: I.B. Tauris, 2005: 47-64. p. 50.

crafted borders marking certain sectors as belonging to certain agencies. In somewhat of a generalisation, Havas owned the southern European market, Wolff the northern (ergo Norway and the rest of Scandinavia), and Reuters had access to the British Empire. This agreement generally stood fast, though this is not to say the agencies did not from time to time attempt to deceive and outcompete each other. However, it was not until the First World War that the political and national tendencies of these agencies came into full view.¹²¹

It would also be a mistake to suggest that these agencies had previously operated in a political vacuum. The mix of press and politics was not a new cocktail, not even in 1914. In 1869, for example, the German government obtained a secret deal with Wolffs, trading subsidies and prioritised network usage in return for control of the flow of news.¹²² The same was true for Reuters, and it has been suggested that “during the last forty years of the nineteenth century Reuters news agency functioned increasingly as a semi-official institution of the British Empire.”¹²³ In a similar fashion to Wolffs, Reuters reached an agreement with the Foreign Office in July 1894:

That [Reuters] will forward all political telegrams to the person designated by the Secretary of State as soon as they are received.

That in regard to any telegrams of which the correctness may seem doubtful, or the publication inexpedient, time will be given for rectification before they are sent to the press.

That confidential reports of information received from your Agents on the Continent will be compiled by Dr Engländer [Reuters’ representative in the negotiations] and forwarded for the Secretary of State’s information.

That the Company will publish on its own authority through its Agents abroad any statements or announcements which may be requested by the Secretary of State, strict secrecy being observed as to the source from which they are derived.

The sum to be paid to the Company in consideration of the above to be £500 per annum.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Read, *The Power of News*; Storey, Graham. *Reuters’ Century: 1851-1951*. London: Max Parrish, 1951.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 91.

It is an interesting point to make that it was Reuters who initiated the agreement and not the Foreign Office with Engländer approaching Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, Sir Thomas Sanderson.¹²⁵ What is clear is that both the major bureaux and their states recognised the value in a symbiotic relationship, but also maintained an independent position outward.

It was only natural that nationally based, territorial information empires would support their domestic counterparts in the territorial First World War. “After a year of war, Wolff and Havas were acting avowedly and aggressively as national Agencies.”¹²⁶ This, of course, demanded some sort of a response from Reuters, a demand that was not unwelcome to the agency. Six months after the start of the war, Baron Herbert Reuter himself tellingly wrote to Roderick Jones, the man who—unbeknownst to them both—would soon lead the company:

We here who have professionally to watch and follow, and, for the proper conduct of the Reuter organisation, interpret the meaning of all that unfolds itself to the eye of the observer, are staggered by the energy, resources, organisation, and skill with which the Germans entered into, and have conducted this stupendous conflict. Every day I realise more deeply the colossal task before us, and the necessity of sparing no sacrifice to succeed where failure spells ruin to three Empires, and will involve the unspeakable blight of German military tyranny over the whole Continent.¹²⁷

It was clear that Reuters was to be partisan in its interpretation. This became all the more important when the German origin of the Reuter family became a public question at the start of the war.¹²⁸

Reuters had, in the years leading up to and into the war, experienced a distinct downturn due to business gambles involving a failed advertising section and a banking section. A weakening company, coinciding with a war that more and more demonstrated the value of controlling information, meant that fears arose concerning the political allegiance of its shareholders. When, upon hearing the news of his wife’s sudden death, director Baron Herbert committed suicide,

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Storey, *Reuters’ Century*. p. 157.

¹²⁷ Read, *The Power of News*. p. 118.

¹²⁸ Read, *The Power of News*.

the cup finally flowed over. Roderick Jones jostled his way into the position of managing director in October 1915, and within a month the company had been turned out of net loss.¹²⁹

Jones and the Chairman of the company, Mark Napier, then began a campaign to completely restructure the company so as to function without being “exposed to the whims of a large body of shareholders.”¹³⁰ In Jones’ own blunt words: “the only way to make certain of Reuters’ safety, and of our own personal security in Reuters, was to get rid of the shareholders altogether.”¹³¹ Napier had shared lawyers’ chambers with the then-Prime Minister H. H. Asquith and thus had inroads to the kind of political support that would help in such a situation. It was, however, not an easy task, and the final attempt to restructure the firm was successful in the autumn of 1916, a year after Jones had begun his efforts. The reconstruction in itself, however, is a brilliant example of the role Reuters came to embody in the war.¹³²

The familial connections of power are again here apparent: Asquith’s brother-in-law was Lord Glenconner, the chairman of the Union Bank of Scotland and a friend of Napier. It sounds almost like the premise of a bad joke: the Prime Minister, the banker and the Reuters chairman arranged for the shareholders to receive a windfall sum to buy them out of the company. The sum, borrowed from the Union Bank had been secretly guaranteed by the British Government to be repaid within three years. The new company was to be owned equally by Jones and Napier, though this was also kept secret. 999 shares were issued at the launch of the new Reuters, 498 of which were divided between Jones and Napier. The Foreign Office, through the virtue of the loan guarantee, divided 500 of the shares between three more or less nominal “public figures above suspicion.”¹³³ The final remaining share was designated a public policy share which in effect “allowed the Foreign Office secretly to nominate one director with powers to veto the appointment of any other director; to veto any

¹²⁹ Ibid. p. 128.

¹³⁰ Ibid. p. 129.

¹³¹ Ibid. p. 130.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid. p. 131.

share transfer; and to exercise a veto on questions of public policy.”¹³⁴ The arrangement was described by the Foreign Office to Napier in 1916:

...the Foreign Office should be able both to prevent the Company from taking any action which might be contrary to public policy (such as the dissemination of reports prejudicial to the national interest, the employment of undesirable correspondents or other employees, the undertaking or continuation of undesirable contracts with other news agencies, or the admission of undesirable persons as shareholders or directors) and also to secure that the Company's operations and actions are in conformity with the public policy or the national interest, and that information of national importance is properly collected and circulated.¹³⁵

This is clearly a significant measure of control held by the Foreign Office over the agency. Indeed, several authors describe the terms of the establishment of Reuters Ltd. as an effective government takeover of the agency at least for the remainder of the war.¹³⁶

An even clearer example of Reuters' role is the Agence-Reuter service launched in 1914. Officially kept apart from Reuters' operations, the agency still used the Reuter name and operated out of Reuters' headquarters in London. It was set up in order to distribute wartime news propaganda to Allied and neutral countries and was attached to the regular Reuters dispatches. Jones wrote about the service: "Its object is to secure that a certain class of news, of propaganda value, is cabled at greater length than would be possible in the normal Reuter service."¹³⁷ Reuters made very little financially from this service and in a very real sense put its own credibility on the line, it can thus be seen as a nationalistic sacrifice for the good of the country.¹³⁸

Reuters' new practices certainly had an effect. By 1915, concentrated efforts were being made in Germany, for example, to expose Reuters' partisan

¹³⁴ Ibid. p. 131.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 131-132.

¹³⁶ Redley, Michael. *Origins of the Problem of Trust: Propaganda during the First World War. Communication in the Age of Suspicion: Trust and the Media.* eds. Vian Bakir and David M. Barlow. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. pp. 27-38; Putnis, Peter. Share 999. *Media History*, vol. 14, no. 2. Aug. 2008. pp. 141-165.

¹³⁷ Read, *The Power of News.* p. 134.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

bent.¹³⁹ Jones was rather proud of this effect, which is unsurprising given the sort of awe-like descriptions that were lavished on the company. In November 1917 he quoted an article from the *Vossische Zeitung* of Berlin: “We might march into Petrograd or Paris tomorrow... If Reuter, the day after, assured the honest neutral that it was of no importance, he would be believed. Reuter rules the market, not Wolff; London makes foreign opinion, not Berlin.”¹⁴⁰ This is a meaningful concession from the German media at a critical point in the war and should demonstrate the flair and success with which Reuters commanded public opinion.

Even this Agence-Reuter service, clearly cooperative as it was, pales in comparison to Roderick Jones’ own personal involvement in the propaganda mission. When the Department of Information came into being in 1917 (an event described in the next section on the Ministry of Information), Jones was offered a position in its cable and wireless propaganda section. Though he purportedly took the position without pay, the dual role as head of the office that created content and also head of the office that distributed this content is undeniably a conflict of interest.¹⁴¹

When the Department was reformed to become a Ministry under Lord Beaverbrook, Jones was made the director of propaganda, still unpaid and still managing director of Reuters. This drew public criticism and finally, in July 1918, the Select Committee on National Expenditure began an enquiry. Large sums of money were of course being paid from the Ministry to Reuters and the Select Committee found this objectionable on principle. Despite unquestionably being involved in the negotiation of these payments, Jones continually defended his dual capacity. With pressure mounting, Jones finally resigned from the Ministry of Information in September 1918, having earned the gratitude of Beaverbrook and made his own impact on the official propaganda services.¹⁴²

There was thus clearly heavy involvement from Reuters, and indeed all of the major national news agencies, in the war. It cannot be said to be surprising, given the unprecedented nature of the war. New technologies were being

¹³⁹ Storey, *Reuters’ Century*.

¹⁴⁰ Read, *The Power of News*. p. 135.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

employed in national service on all fronts, and one would have to be a particularly entrenched sort of idealist to suppose that communications and information technology would remain aloof. This cooperation between press and politics will of course be further explored in the case of Kenney's work

THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

The title of this section reflects only the late iteration of the British propaganda machine, though the section itself deals with relevant developments before and beyond the point at which the Ministry was created. Significant to the argument is especially the structure and hierarchy present in the system, described first in its bureaucratic development, and then in its particularly significant members.

*The Making of the Machine*¹⁴³

The development of the British propaganda machinery is a cornerstone of the thesis argument. One important feature to take note of is the chaos present in the bureaucracy, raising questions about efficiency. Contrasting this development section with Kenney's rather uniform, stable work in Norway (laid out in Chapter IV), one can begin to wonder who were the true creators of propaganda policy: the London bureaucracy or the men on the ground? In addition to the comparison, this section also serves to illustrate more context around Kenney's work, especially the larger links in the chain of command and the priority given to propaganda work.

British propaganda had been a relative priority since the start of the war. Anti-British propaganda in neutral countries had bloomed as a consequence of German efforts at the outbreak, and the Cabinet quickly found that a counter-

¹⁴³ This section evolved from a paper presented at the British International Studies 2013 conference in Birmingham. The paper was presented at a British International History Group sponsored panel entitled 'Anglo-Scandinavian Relations in the 20th Century'. The paper can be found and downloaded at http://bisa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_bisa&task=download_paper&no_html=1&passed_paper_id=339.

measure was necessary. The Foreign Office [FO], being the primary department to deal with international affairs, quickly seized upon what it felt was in its rightful domain. This became the formation of the News Department in the FO. The News Department was created to handle the demand for news about the war from both foreign and domestic correspondents. It functioned mainly as a distribution office, not necessarily creating propaganda products, but rather monitoring and controlling the flow of information. A novel—and to many, a distasteful task—, it received hesitant acceptance as the war proved to drag on.¹⁴⁴ It can be said that the News Department was the first reluctant step into the field of propaganda for the British government.

Parallel to this, the Foreign Office, through the course of the war, became gradually weakened as an institution of the state. This was not all that surprising; in war, the practice of foreign relations becomes much more complicated, and priorities become shuffled. So when war broke out in 1914, the whole structure of decision-making was altered. Matters previously left to the Foreign Office and the Foreign Secretary were now war matters and the final say-so on these had to come from the Cabinet. Furthermore, the rather troubled leadership of Sir Edward Grey, Foreign Secretary until 1916, also depleted the power of the Foreign Office in these first two years.¹⁴⁵

Perhaps because of this slow weakening of the Foreign Office, and its hesitance to fully engage with the topic of offensive propaganda, new, more direct measures were taken. One of the major offices that came into being soon after the News Department was the War Propaganda Bureau, headed by Charles Masterman.¹⁴⁶ Masterman coloured the methods and practices of early British propaganda in such a way that they differed from the German style. He was

¹⁴⁴ Taylor, Philip M. The Foreign Office and British Propaganda during the First World War. *The Historical Journal*, vol. 23, no. 4. Cambridge University Press, Dec. 1980. pp. 875-898. pp. 876-880.

¹⁴⁵ Warman, Roberta M. The Erosion of Foreign Office Influence in the Making of Foreign Policy, 1916-1918. *The Historical Journal*, vol. 15, no. 1. Cambridge University Press, Mar. 1972. pp. 133-59, p. 134.

¹⁴⁶ Messinger, Gary S. *British Propaganda and the State in the First World War*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992. p. 38. ; Reeves, Nicholas. Film Propaganda and Its Audience: The Example of Britain's Official Films during the First World War. *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 18, no. 3. Sage Publications, July 1983. pp. 463-94. p. 463. ; Taylor, The Foreign Office, p. 877.

intent on that the government programme was to be kept secret from the public. He also stressed the importance of facts, as opposed to falsities, rather relying on selective representation of those facts for political effect. The German propaganda effort was ruled heavy handed and simple-minded, so Masterman made an effort to promote subtler material, with a keen sense of who the audience was in order to tailor the effort accordingly.¹⁴⁷

This new model of propaganda practice was not without drawbacks. Masterman's effort to keep secret his and his bureau's work meant that his labour went largely unnoticed. The War Propaganda Bureau had been headquartered at Wellington House, a moniker by which the bureau itself soon began to be called. Wellington House was also the headquarters of the National Health Insurance Commission, Masterman's previous employer, which meant that traffic in and out of the building was nothing noteworthy, and the bureau thus remained hidden in plain sight. The British government faced quite a bit of criticism from its own people due to the apparent lack of engagement with the question of popular opinion.¹⁴⁸

The truth was, as is now known, very different. The War Propaganda Bureau quickly outgrew the FO News Department to become the most productive propaganda office.¹⁴⁹ Masterman's organization was large and sprawling and the sub-departments and management structure were unprecedented for this type of work in Britain. Again, as with the Foreign Office, the main thrust of the bureau, the Cabinet decided, was to be employed in commanding public opinion in neutral and allied countries.¹⁵⁰ This was again a departure from strident methods of propaganda, the kind used offensively by Germany at this time.¹⁵¹

The different departments of the War Propaganda Bureau were tasked with monitoring the public opinion in their respective geographical areas. This meant studying newspapers and gathering information on whatever might be

¹⁴⁷ Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p. 38 ; Taylor. *The Foreign Office*. p. 877.

¹⁴⁸ Messinger, *British Propaganda*; Reeves, *Film Propaganda*.

¹⁴⁹ Taylor, *The Foreign Office*. p. 877.

¹⁵⁰ Messinger, *British Propaganda* ; Reeves, *Film Propaganda*. p. 463.

¹⁵¹ Bernays, Edward L. *The Marketing of National Policies: A Study of War Propaganda*. *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 6, no. 3. American Marketing Association, Jan. 1942. pp. 236-44; Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p. 38.

useful for propaganda purposes. Of course, the region of the highest priority was that of the United States, but other neutral and allied countries were also targeted, like, in our case, the Scandinavian countries whose department was headed by William Archer.¹⁵² From time to time, specific situations called for the bureau to send out its own people to assess their regions in person and to provide strategies for propaganda production. The information gathered was subsequently translated into the appropriate language and produced as content. Once content had been created, the material was passed on to the Foreign Office News Department, which disseminated it to its various officials abroad, mostly within diplomatic or consular circles. Often the diplomatic officers in the targeted region would function as direct agents for the News Department, as was true in Kenney's case.¹⁵³

The broad range of British war publicity work, under which Masterman's bureau and the News Department can be categorised, was indeed a byzantine construction, and subsequently, the mess of offices, responsibilities and contradictory departments, eventually led to Masterman's fall and the fundamental restructuring of the system. Aside from the described work of the War Propaganda Bureau, the Press Bureau handled newspaper censorship, the War Office took care of censorship of communication through post, cable and wireless, working together with a separate censorship office at the Admiralty, and the Foreign Office News Department and the Home Office Neutral Press Committee both carried out the publishing of news articles.¹⁵⁴

This confusing, lateral structure of war publicity kept escalating and by the close of 1915, the system had developed two opposing camps. The civilian Foreign and Home Offices on the one side (with their respective News Department and Neutral Press Committee bodies) were pitted against the military offices at the War Office and the Admiralty on the other; each side trenchantly concerned with their own views on what was necessary, desirable and prudent.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p. 41.

¹⁵³ Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p. 40 ; Taylor, *The Foreign Office*. p. 877.

¹⁵⁴ Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p. 47.

¹⁵⁵ Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p. 47 ; Taylor, *The Foreign Office*. p. 880.

A good example of the lack of structure in the British propaganda effort at this point is the position of George Herbert Mair, who incidentally is also—in all probability—Kenney’s first point of entry into the business. Mair had been first given charge of the Neutral Press Committee, the third major propaganda office next to the News Department and the War Propaganda Bureau. This Committee officially operated under the Home Office. The Foreign Office believed this was a mistake as the nature of Mair’s operations was more in line with the News Department than any department within the Home Office. Even the home secretary, Sir John Simon admitted to this in part, writing to Lord Robert Cecil in December 1915: “so far as [Mair’s] operations are guided by any Government Department, it is by the Foreign Office.”¹⁵⁶ It was in fact this conflict over Mair and his Neutral Press Committee that threw the problem into stark relief. By January 1916, an inter-departmental conference was called and despite conflicts mounting even here, there was consensus that something had to be done. Disregarding the calls for complete restructuring, Cecil decided to increase the efficiency of the existing system with some minor changes. Mair’s committee was handed to the Foreign Office, Masterman was promised to be left in peace at his bureau, and the Foreign Office News Department was restructured and streamlined so it could function as the main hub of international propaganda. The War Office received next to nothing in Cecil’s new scheme and the conflict between the Foreign and War Office steadily rose.¹⁵⁷ Cecil’s scheme did improve the system slightly, but the confusion remained clear. Even Mair, with his new, seemingly clear directive proved to have difficulties in practice as he reportedly as late as in 1917 “drifted between the Home Office, Press Bureau and the Foreign Office.”¹⁵⁸

Less than a year later, towards the end of 1916, the whole machinery of British propaganda again underwent a major restructuring. This was prompted by the instatement of Lloyd George as Prime Minister on December 7th, 1916. With Asquith’s departure, and the establishment of Lloyd George’s War Cabinet, the Foreign Office’s position was further weakened. The War Cabinet was

¹⁵⁶ Taylor, *The Foreign Office*. p. 882.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 884.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 879.

designed to streamline war policy by eliminating structural and departmental confusion. It was a direct result of the mess experienced in the field of propaganda, only on a larger scale. The Cabinet only had five members, and Balfour, the new Foreign Secretary, was not one of them. Although in practice Balfour was present at many of the meetings, he had no direct power to influence policy. Balfour and the Foreign Office were therefore in a weakened position at this point, though they still had a proverbial foot in the door when it came to the distribution of propaganda material.¹⁵⁹

The arrangement of propaganda offices, however, was to be shaken up considerably. Previously, Asquith had shown little interest in the topic of propaganda, and the mess of departments had been sustained due to inaction on his part and the part of his Cabinet. However, three days after Lloyd George assumed power, at his very first meeting with the War Cabinet, the new Prime Minister stressed the importance of propaganda and within a month, the War Cabinet decided to create a department of propaganda. This was in line with the recommendation from the War Office and the Admiralty, but in some act of compromise or characteristically British moderation, the new Department of Information was headquartered with the Foreign Office.¹⁶⁰

It was John Buchan who was given the position at the head of the new Department of Information. Buchan formally reported directly to the Prime Minister, and his Department absorbed Masterman's War Propaganda Bureau, the Neutral Press Committee, and the Foreign Office News Department. The Department was then structured so as to maintain the production integrity of the War Propaganda Bureau in one section, pushing the distribution of news, cables, film and wireless into another section, and political intelligence into a third. The process of dissemination remained much the same, with the Foreign Office's diplomatic network serving as the main channel. Thus, the Foreign Office had largely maintained and consolidated its control over the propaganda machinery.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Warman, *The Erosion of Foreign Office Influence*. p. 135.

¹⁶⁰ Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p. 49. ; Taylor, *The Foreign Office*. pp. 885-888.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

The solution of the Department ultimately still proved to be unsatisfactory. Buchan, as department head, had little influence in the greater structure of policymaking. Furthermore, his bias toward the Foreign Office made matters difficult when dealing with other offices of the state. The Department also suffered since it was not a ministry and thus was not properly represented. Deadlock on the fields of war added pressure to reform alternative methods of warfare, of which the Department of Information was one. With all of these factors weighing heavily on Buchan and his Department, the decision was made in January 1918 to create a Ministry of Information.¹⁶²

The new Ministry was set up the following month, with Lord Beaverbrook at its helm. A parallel department designed to engage in enemy propaganda was also established under Lord Northcliffe at the same time. Beaverbrook did not carry forward Buchan's special relationship with the Foreign Office. The Foreign Office, in fact, experienced a renewed decline in influence and existed in conflict with other departments, especially the War Cabinet, the War Office, the Cabinet Secretariat, and even Lloyd George himself. But the greatest opponent to the Foreign Office during the war was, pertinently, the Ministry of Information. Since 1917, the then Department of Information had begun to include policy suggestions in its memoranda. Under Beaverbrook, this practice expanded and the Ministry began to champion its own interpretations of established foreign policy, causing rifts in the practical cooperation of the Foreign Office diplomats and Ministry of Information agents. Although both the Foreign Office and the Ministry fought through the summer of 1918 to clear up the issue, no solution was reached.¹⁶³

In the restructuring, the News Department had been transferred out of the Foreign Office into the new Ministry. In return for giving up the News Department, the Foreign Office received the political intelligence section previously housed under the Department of Information. This section was renamed the Political Intelligence Department, and was a major stumbling block in the ensuing conflict between the Ministry and the Foreign Office. In a dramatic move in March 1918, Beaverbrook managed to regain the Political Intelligence

¹⁶² Taylor, *The Foreign Office*. p. 891.

¹⁶³ Warman, *The Erosion of Foreign Office Influence*. p. 140.

Department from the Foreign Office through an inter-departmental conference decision. Immediately, the staff of the Political Intelligence Department resigned *en masse*, forcing Beaverbrook to backtrack and before long, the department was again housed at the Foreign Office.¹⁶⁴

The bureaucratic gridlock remained. And as the war sputtered to a close, no grand unifying solution had been reached. The Ministry remained decidedly unpopular with civil servants due to its heavy, labyrinthine structure, where management was given to bureaucrats in place of practitioners. As will be evident in Chapter IV, there are often instances in which a civil servant functioned under several different departments simultaneously while only being paid by one. This often occurred when departmental politics hindered particular work in being carried out, or when colleagues reached across the structure that split them. In Kenney's case, for example, he jumped between the News Department, the Ministry of Information and the Political Intelligence Department.

What is understood is that the machinery developed from the sport of amateur gentlemen into a burgeoning office of the state, not without teething issues and growing-pains. Kenney's operation in Norway must be seen in light of these developments, and they will be cross-referenced in the discussion of his work. So far, an apt description of the machine is one whose end product matches with greater wartime strategy, but whose cogs and flywheels are too intricate to appropriately describe tactics. An examination of those significant persons who coloured the development will serve to further contextualise Kenney's labour.

Persons of Interest: The Propagandists

In placing value on Kenney's position within an international system, it is necessary to also be familiar with the context of this position. Position in itself depends entirely on context, of course, as it is necessarily a property of relation. This is the reason for the inclusion of this particular section of the chapter, as well as the corresponding 'Persons of Interest' sections in Chapters IV and VII.

¹⁶⁴ Taylor, *The Foreign Office*. p. 894.

Perhaps the most obvious clues to look for are the persons with whom Kenney had contact, what sort of people these were and what positions they held. Kenney's relation to powerful characters is doubtless a qualitative measure of his own import to the system.

This particular section, however, so as to avoid overlap (with the section in Chapter IV), focuses less on persons who had direct contact with Kenney. Such persons will of course be much more interesting to examine in the context of Kenney's work. Therefore, this section seeks rather to frame the population of the British propaganda machine, in order to give an overview of what kind of people were involved. This is again useful as a reference for Kenney's involvement in the greater sense, defining the stratum of which he was a part, and adding context to later encounters. It may also be useful to keep in mind the idea of the small cores of power, as were discussed previously, as examples of these are prevalent in this section.

Perhaps the most interesting and renowned personalities from the early history of British official propaganda are the Lords Northcliffe and Beaverbrook, John Buchan (later styled Lord Tweedsmuir), Charles Masterman, Prime Ministers Herbert Asquith and David Lloyd George, and Lord Robert Cecil, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. An excellent resource—at least for the first half of this list, the half containing those who can be considered primarily propagandists, as opposed to politicians—is Gary S. Messinger's book *British Propaganda and the State in the First World War*. Messinger relates the history of the propaganda bureaucracy from this period through a series of biographical chapters, and it is highly recommended as a more in-depth analysis of those populating this new venture.

Chronologically, it makes the most sense to begin with Prime Minister Asquith. Asquith had of course been the natural successor to Prime Minister Campbell-Bannerman, having served as his chancellor of the exchequer. Winston Churchill praised his work ethic, even comparing the new Prime Minister to Sir Robert Peel.¹⁶⁵ It almost goes without saying that Asquith belonged to a highly

¹⁶⁵ Hazlehurst, Cameron. Asquith as Prime Minister, 1908-1916. *The English Historical Journal*, vol. 85, no. 336. Oxford University Press, July 1970. pp. 502-531.

privileged set of men. His stance toward the need for propaganda was a reluctantly pragmatic one, as evidenced by the snail's pace at which the mess of offices congealed in the early years of the war. He recognised its value, but was more comfortable with the work being carried out by "private or quasi-governmental organisations."¹⁶⁶ Lloyd George, even during Asquith's time, worked within these bounds, though he would push the limits from time to time, consorting, as he did, with Fleet Street journalists and taking an interest in the topic.¹⁶⁷ After Lloyd George had cleverly manoeuvred his way into Asquith's seat, however, he shed these restraints and pushed a much more active propaganda campaign, playing a key role in centralising the offices into first the Department and later the Ministry of Information.¹⁶⁸ Lloyd George as well moved natively in the corridors of power. Lord Robert Cecil's social stature can also be summarily stated as a high one, given his title. Anyone with any knowledge of these three people, their accomplishments and their networks, would certainly not hesitate to mark them out as people who belonged to the highest of tiers in the British social structure of the time. Their personal and varyingly deep involvement in the propaganda policy of the time is a testament both to the importance of said policy and also to the kind of work being done.

Those who worked more practically with propaganda can also be described more or less chronologically, starting then, with Charles Masterman. This was the man who headed the War Propaganda Bureau from its outset, and certainly coloured the propaganda policy of Britain. Some describe him as a natural choice "if one were to pick a single person who, more than any other, caused the British state to become a major actor in the propaganda arena."¹⁶⁹ Asquith appointed Masterman to the position of Under Secretary of the Local Government Board in 1908. The move was praised as a good one, Masterman characterised as a "most unpractical politician."¹⁷⁰ Masterman's rise, unconventional as he was, can be attributed in part to social manoeuvring. For example, he married Lucy Lyttleton, whose father was a renowned military man

¹⁶⁶ Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p. 4.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p. 25.

¹⁷⁰ Hazlehurst, Asquith as Prime Minister. p. 506.

and a politician. This opened doors for him, leading him eventually to work closely with Lloyd George. However, Masterman was never to be considered a member of the cliques of power, regarded as “small fry” and “whitebait”¹⁷¹ by Asquith and his family. This is perhaps simply a demonstration of Asquith’s disdain for the propaganda work at the start of the war. Masterman may not have represented the proverbial cream of the crop, but he was not unconnected. He in one sense signifies the lowest threshold of social stature given a foothold, at a time when the propaganda services were looked upon with the lowest regard. This was due to change, of course, when Lloyd George took over.

Lloyd George’s increased and increasing interest in propaganda matters, as well as the difficulties emerging between the offices engaged in it, encouraged a restructuring of the system. John Buchan, the novelist, was given the task of constructing and directing the Department of Information. Buchan had come from a religious family, and had, after attaining a scholarship for Oxford and taken the bar, gone with Lord Milner to South Africa “as one of his assistant private secretaries.”¹⁷² After this, he had a busy career both as a lawyer as well as a writer, and was held in high regard by many of the powerful people of the time. For his position at the Department, he was, of course, appointed by Lloyd George and had prior to that been recommended for the position by Lord Milner. Lloyd George had fruitlessly searched for “some highly prominent figure”¹⁷³ but Buchan would have to do. Again, he was no aristocrat, but had gained his position in the propaganda machine through his connections to the aristocracy.

The Lords Northcliffe and Beaverbrook were of course self-made men, though they both quickly gained impressive wealth and power. Beaverbrook started out his career under the name of William Aitken, born without means in Canada. By his thirties he had worked up both wealth and influence through a series of business investments. He decided to use this to obtain “a place for himself within the Establishment in Britain.”¹⁷⁴ Earning his seat in parliament by way of a lavish campaign, he then consolidated his power by buying the *Daily Express* and the *Globe*. During the war, Beaverbrook made his influential and

¹⁷¹ Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p. 30.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 87.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

eclectic network useful by strengthening the Canadian and British coalition, earning a lot of experience in publicity and press work. He also grew close to Lloyd George and was asked by him to head the new Ministry of Information once this took shape.¹⁷⁵ Beaverbrook being a close friend to Lloyd George, as well as an immensely powerful press-owner and politician, certainly points to the seriousness with which the Cabinet began to regard propaganda work toward the close of the war.

Lord Northcliffe was a similar sort of man. Born Alfred Harmsworth, to an excessively talented generation of a semi-successful family, Northcliffe showed early proclivities for journalism. He set up his own publishing firm in 1887 and quickly earned enough money to buy up and found a series of newspapers around the country, among them the *Daily Mail*¹⁷⁶, *The Times*, and the *Evening News*.¹⁷⁷ By the outbreak of war, Northcliffe was the most powerful press-baron of Fleet Street, indeed, as many said, “The Most Powerful Man in the Country.”¹⁷⁸ He was of course closely in touch with the political elite, though his relationship with Lloyd George would be a turbulent one. Northcliffe was consulted and involved in much of the higher policymaking on a casual level until in 1918, when the Ministry of Information was set up under Lord Beaverbrook, and Beaverbrook convinced Lloyd George to give Northcliffe the position of Director of Propaganda in Enemy Countries.¹⁷⁹ Here again is a testament to the radical shift in importance placed on the issue.

There should be no mistaking that the tight-knit cliques of power described in the earlier section extended well into the arena of propaganda policy. A growing interest in the work was expressed in the increasing stature of those assigned to it. This is not a surprise, of course, given the times, but it does offer some observations on the state of the industry that Kenney entered into.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Interestingly, Northcliffe hired Robert Blatchford to write for the *Daily Mail* in 1909. Blatchford was an early fascination of Kenney's, and perhaps the principal catalyst for Kenney's staunch socialist views. Ibid., p. 149.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ McEwen, J. M. Northcliffe and Lloyd George at War, 1914-1918. *The Historical Journal*, vol. 24, no. 3. Cambridge University Press, Sep. 1981. pp. 651-672. p. 651.

¹⁷⁹ Messinger, *British Propaganda*.

Working for organisations that extended up to the likes of Lloyd George and Northcliffe certainly speaks to the possibility of large-scale impact.

NORWAY IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Having explored at length the different facets of the British position in the First World War, it is time to look briefly at Norway. Norway is of course the second country of relevance to this paper, and much of Kenney's work described in this thesis takes place there. In this section, the first point of interest is Norway's position and aims in the war; the second, Norwegian sentiment toward the warring parties; before, finally, we examine the reasons for Norway being a target of the belligerent states.

The purpose here, as has been the purpose throughout this background chapter, is one of context. It would be silly to go into any detail of Kenney's activities in Norway without understanding the specific situation in the country. With regards specifically to the thesis, parts of this section is also useful as a justification for why his activities in Norway can be seen in the light of international society—put simply: Norway's significance. The sources for this section are in some cases Norwegian sources. This author has done his best, as a native speaker of Norwegian, to translate these effectively while keeping faithful to their meaning. Another point on sources: Kenney himself wrote an ambitious political history of the Scandinavian countries in 1946, entitled *The Northern Tangle*. Given that Kenney is the subject of the thesis, it is amusing to use this resource where it is relevant.

The Norwegian Position

By the start of the war in 1914, Norway had been a fully independent country, freed from its union with Sweden, for only nine years. Although the union had recognised Norwegian independence internally, Norway's foreign affairs and its crown were new institutions. The dissolution of the union had been a remarkably peaceful affair, and although there were some minor diplomatic

tensions in the immediate aftermath, the Scandinavian countries quickly settled into what could only be described as a spirit of peace and cooperation.¹⁸⁰

Almost a century prior to its full independence, Norway had passed a liberal constitution—the first of its kind in the region, and thus enjoyed a robust and entrenched democratic system. It had also been the first in the region to adopt a parliamentary-style government in 1884, and by 1912 it had granted full voting rights to both men and women. The pre-war politics were dominated largely by the Conservative (Høire) and Liberal (Venstre) parties, the latter with “a clear social-liberal profile.”¹⁸¹ It was Venstre who, in 1912, secured a majority and would guide the country through the war.¹⁸²

The Norwegian economy was engaged in the throes of industrialisation. It was still largely an agricultural economy, but with a distinctive trend of ever-increasing commercialism and export. The mining and chemical industries were especially in bloom, feeding raw materials to the large European powers. Topographically, the country is a long mountain chain, offering little respite to grow crops and greatly hampering travel. For this reason, the Norwegian merchant marine was a key economic asset. This fleet was the fourth largest of its kind in the world, which is remarkable considering the relatively diminutive size of the Norwegian population and economy. The losses incurred, both materially and financially to the fleet would remain one of the hottest topics of the war to Norwegians, and would sincerely test the flexibility of Scandinavian and Norwegian diplomacy.¹⁸³

Militarily, the position was rather weak. Prior to the dissolution of the union, armament had been somewhat of a priority, but only in case of Sweden attempting to keep the union by might. These forces were by no means substantial enough to withstand or even meaningfully resist any of the greater European powers. A relaxation of military preparedness after the successful dissolution made matters even more precarious. At the root, Norway expected,

¹⁸⁰ Kenney, Rowland. *The Northern Tangle: Scandinavia and the Post-War World*. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1946.

¹⁸¹ Hobson, Rolf, et al. Introduction: Scandinavia in the First World War. *Scandinavia in the First World War: Studies in the War Experience of the Northern Neutrals*. Ed. Claes Ahlund. Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2012. pp. 9-56. p. 14

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

in any eventuality, to be under the protection of the British Royal Navy if its neutrality was violated.¹⁸⁴

The Norwegian position, culturally and politically, was decidedly neutral, a decision made in agreement with both Denmark and Sweden. Neutrality had been declared resolutely on the 8th of August, 1914, at least by Norway and Sweden. Five months into the war, to demonstrate their position, the three kings of their respective countries—King Gustav V of Sweden, King Haakon VII of Norway and King Kristian X of Denmark—met in Malmö, Sweden, alongside their entourage of foreign ministers and policymakers. Despite significantly divergent interests, this unified neutrality would last through the war, reaffirmed in late 1917 in Christiania, Norway.¹⁸⁵

Interestingly, the initiative for the agreement came from the Swedish side, emerging out of a more radical proposal from Swedish Foreign Minister Knut Wallenberg. Wallenberg's idea was to create an offensive-defensive military alliance between Norway and Sweden. The alliance would prevent Norway, whose natural proclivities tended towards Britain, to ally itself with the British and Russia, which in turn would have forced Sweden—conversely tending towards Germany—to ally with the Central Powers, thus avoiding bringing the war to their own doorstep. It would also, perhaps more fancifully, attempt to keep Britain out of the war by introducing an imposing neutral alliance “instead of an isolated, controllable Norway.”¹⁸⁶ It is not surprising that this proposal fell on deaf ears, however, given the natural suspicion of the Norwegians of any move giving ground to the Swedes.

Nevertheless, common neutrality was agreed upon, and the meeting of the three kings in Malmö cemented this pact. The Scandinavian neutrality however, was not embedded in international treaties, like the neutrality of other small European states. Nor was there really an agreed-upon set of rules to

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.; Salmon, Patrick. 'Between the Sea Power and The Land Power': Scandinavia and the Coming of the First World War 1993. *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 6, no. 3. The Royal Historical Society, 1993. pp. 23-49. p. 23.

¹⁸⁵ Kenney, *The Northern Tangle*; Hobson, et al. Introduction; Salmon, Patrick. *Scandinavia and the Great Powers, 1890-1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

¹⁸⁶ Salmon, *Scandinavia and the Great Powers*, p. 127.

govern neutral status. Indeed, as Olav Riste writes: “the world was to enter the Great War without a common legal framework for the distribution of rights as between neutrals and belligerents.”¹⁸⁷ In 1865, in the Declaration of Paris, the rules of neutral trade in times of war had been set down. This was the first agreement of its kind and had been signed by Great Britain, Russia, Prussia and by 1914 had been given the nod in all but a handful of countries (most notably the United States). After this, a series of additional declarations and agreements were proposed, particularly the Hague Conventions of 1907 which dealt with contraband, and the London Declaration which was included in the Naval Prize Bill submitted to Parliament and voted down by the House of Lords on the 12th of December, 1911.¹⁸⁸ Thus, it was not entirely new territory, but the details had yet to be ironed out on the international stage.

Therefore, Scandinavian neutrality was of a more pragmatic nature, since Scandinavia was composed of small countries with small military might that depended on vast and open economic ties. Neutrality was rather a cultural tradition than a legal one. Indeed, the Norwegian “armed forces had not been to war or fired a shot in anger since 1814.”¹⁸⁹ As had been set down in some of the international agreements, there were obligations that went along with neutrality. The neutrals were, for example, obliged to protect their waters from use by warring parties. Norway, on the 5th of August, mobilized its entire Navy, as well as a host of supporting systems for a neutrality guard. This force would be active and on alert for the duration of the war.¹⁹⁰

Not Quite Friends but Not Quite Strangers

Perhaps one of the most influential accounts of the relationship between Norway and the warring parties is Professor Olav Riste’s book *The Neutral Ally*. The title of the book is, in any case, widely regarded as an apt description of the Norwegian attitude toward Britain during the First World War; officially,

¹⁸⁷ Riste, Olav. *The Neutral Ally: Norway’s Relations with Belligerent Powers in the First World War*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1965. p. 26.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Hobson, et al. Introduction. p. 25.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

Norway remained neutral, but unofficially it leaned toward Britain. A major indication of the Norwegian inclination prior to the war was its choice of king. A plebiscite had been held in the country after the dissolution of the union, with a vast majority rejecting republicanism in favour of monarchism. But who was to be the king of Norway? The Swedish king refused to accept the initial request for one of his own family, a Bernadotte, to sit on the new throne. So Norway turned to Denmark and their Prince Carl. Incidentally, Prince Carl's wife, and thus the new queen of Norway was Maud of Wales, daughter of Edward VII.¹⁹¹ Reminiscent of royal diplomacy from bygone centuries, this new constellation showed the clear pro-British sympathies of the Norwegians. The new king, eager to demonstrate his willingness to adopt the throne, took the name King Haakon, an Old Norse name used by Norwegian kings of the past.

More indicative, surely, was the economic reliance. With its rich merchant marine, Norway operated widely as a "carrier nation."¹⁹² Western Europe was Norway's main focus of trade before the war; in 1913 there were "over 7,000 calls at British ports, more than 4,000 calls in Norway, and about 2,300 visits to ports in the United States."¹⁹³ Conversely, France only received 1,900 calls; Germany, 1,700; and the West Indies 1,400.¹⁹⁴ The deepest connections were made to Britain and the United States. Somewhat of the same tendency can be noted when looking at export figures, with 24.31% of Norwegian exports destined for Britain in 1913, higher than the 20.84% to Germany.¹⁹⁵ Nevertheless, over 1/5 of exports going to Germany did mean a distinct reliance *also* on Germany. This was a major case for open neutrality. The case is even clearer with imports from the same year, with almost 30% of Norwegian imports arriving from Germany, and just shy of 25% from Britain. It was not clear-cut, but the frequency of visits, as well as the economic advantage vested in exportation, leaned in the British direction.

There were still obvious reservations to be had. As will be seen in the next chapter, the Norwegian Foreign Minister during the war, Nils Claus Ihlen,

¹⁹¹ Salmon, Patrick. *Between the Sea Power*.

¹⁹² Riste, *The Neutral Ally*, p. 42.

¹⁹³ *Ibid*, p. 42.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid*.

was seen as perhaps the most difficult political figure in Norway for the British to stomach. Interestingly, Ihlen's sometimes pernicious attitude to the British can be explained by personal traits. Ihlen did, for example, receive part of his higher education at the Technical Institute of Zurich, and so "spoke German and French, but not English."¹⁹⁶ And this language question was important; since the British Minister for Norway, Mansfeldt Findlay, did not speak Norwegian, communication between the two was done in French, a language Ihlen mastered better than Findlay.¹⁹⁷ Perhaps at least some of the troubles between these two derived from a simple misunderstanding and irritation of language.

The Norwegian language is of course of Germanic roots, as are other aspects of its culture that complicate the picture of Norwegian allegiances. Trade and economics held close ties to the British, but much of the political culture (some translated through the other Scandinavian countries) had a distinct German bent. This was true of education systems, arts and literature, as well as political movements such as the burgeoning socialist movement which "owed much of its inspiration to German sources."¹⁹⁸ In spite of this, Norway clearly leaned in favour of Britain.

The Norwegian sentiment was governed mainly by its economics. Official neutrality meant that it could maintain its heavily dependent trade network. A purely neutral stance, however, could have lost Norway the protection from Britain; protection that Norwegian officials even openly relied upon.¹⁹⁹ This also answers to political opportunism, "simply because it was, after all, less dangerous to antagonize Germany than to incur the wrath of Great Britain."²⁰⁰

Why Visit?

The only piece remaining is Norway's relevance to the warring parties. Essentially, the question is: why were Britain and Germany interested enough in Norway to spend time and resources there, in this particular case, on

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁹⁹ Salmon, *Between the Sea Power*.

²⁰⁰ Riste, *The Neutral Ally*, p. 226.

propaganda? Part of this has already been discussed in the first section of this chapter, namely that Britain sought to use neutral countries to its advantage in tiring its enemies. The truth is that it was both in Britain and Germany's interest that Norway remain neutral, at least outwardly so. The reasoning for this, again, was the trade network. Both Britain and Germany benefitted enormously from trade flowing peaceably in and out of Norway. Risking to upset this network by an act of aggression was out of the picture, at least unless the circumstances changed dramatically.

This was at least the bigger-picture position during the war, but there had been serious and sincere considerations of alternatives for a long time prior. An internal memorandum from the British Admiralty, dated the 24th of June, 1908 and entitled 'Preparation of War Plans', reserves a special place for Scandinavia. The paper is not signed, but is confidently supposed to have been drafted by "Rear-Admiral Edmond Slade, the Director of Naval Intelligence, and Julian Corbett, the eminent naval historian."²⁰¹ In a passage concerned with the geographical regions of particular importance to any eventual campaign, Denmark and Sweden are given lengthy consideration, alongside, almost even superimposed, to countries like Russia, Japan, France and Germany. "Denmark and Sweden," the memorandum states, "are hovering between the Sea Power [Britain] and the Land Power [Germany], uncertain with which to throw in their lot, most anxious to remain free from all complications, but, from their geographical position, almost certain to be drawn into the struggle in certain eventualities."²⁰² The two Scandinavian countries' weight in this paper is surprising; also surprising is the omission of Norway (though it can most likely be explained by the fact that the state had come into its own only three years prior, and that its interests rested relatively squarely with British interests).

What is certainly the case is that Scandinavia—and by extension, Norway—was taken seriously in the run-up to war. The main thrust of the concern centred on the Baltic Sea, a vital access region for the German and Russian navies. A series of dramatic rapprochement plans and diplomatic manoeuvrings between various constellations of Russia, Germany and Great

²⁰¹ Salmon, Patrick. *Between the Sea Power*.

²⁰² *Ibid.* p. 23.

Britain played out over this area in the period 1905-8, illustrating its importance.²⁰³ The crux lay in the fact that access to the Baltic Sea demanded routes that crept into Scandinavian maritime territories (the safest route passing well within Norwegian maritime borders). If the British Navy would block the English Channel, this would be the only access route to the North Sea or the Atlantic available to German and Russian maritime forces.²⁰⁴ Naturally, the military minds of the Great Powers began thinking about the possibility of taking and controlling Norwegian ports in the event of war.

Primarily, the idea was that either the Germans would try to establish free passage into the Atlantic by setting up their own naval bases on the western coast of Norway, or that the British would pre-empt this possibility by seizing a defensive post on the southern coast. Since the German fleet was more modest than its British counterpart, it was assumed that the first possibility was foolhardy, though not beyond the realm of reason. Lord Lansdowne, the British Foreign Secretary (1900-1905), purportedly said even as early as 1905 that a German move of this kind would be “a serious blow to British interests”²⁰⁵ and that it had to be avoided at all costs. The second possibility, of Britain seizing ground in Norway, was held as a viable option, even to the extent of influencing the 1907 Integrity Treaty for Norway so that it would omit “any reference to Norwegian neutrality.”²⁰⁶

The Norwegian authorities certainly took this into consideration by the start of the war in 1914. Believing, perhaps, in British naval superiority, the most likely event was deemed to be a British move to gain the port of Kristiansand on the southern coast of the country.²⁰⁷ This would naturally be resisted. The French Minister to Norway, Abel Chevalley, on the 31st of July, 1914 reported to his superiors that “‘high sources’ had assured him of Norway’s preparedness to defend herself against possible British or German attempts to capture bases on

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Riste, *The Neutral Ally*.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 34.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 34.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

the south or west coasts.”²⁰⁸ It would eventually become fairly clear, however, that no such measures would be taken, and Norway would be allowed to remain neutral, and—for all intents and purposes—ostensibly unengaged in the war.

So this was the context of Kenney’s situation as he landed in Norway in August, 1916. The image to consider is that Kenney landed in a neutral country of substantial interest both to Britain and to Germany. Considering the extent to which the Norwegians were involved in wartime trading, it is not difficult to imagine the interests involved in swaying the Norwegian public opinion in one direction or the other. Kenney, in one sense, had home advantage, but these were uncertain times, and there would doubtless be challenges that had to be overcome.



The objective of this chapter has been to paint a picture of the time and place wherein Kenney began his work as a propagandist and secret agent for the British Government. Britain was at war, and was keen to employ allies and neutrals in order to whittle down their enemy, a position which could make use of Norway in an indirect sense. Kenney’s work is interesting in part because those in charge of these wartime policies generally belonged to powerful cliques and had friends in high places. This power structure was also true of the British press, and of Reuters, which certainly did not object to taking the British side and fighting for the British cause. Recognizing the need to counter German propaganda efforts, the British organized their own departments which grew from the small ventures of gentlemen amateurs to a sprawling bureaucratic beast by the end of the war. Like other power structures, the propaganda bureaucracy was populated by powerful and influential people, increasing in influence in step with the build-up of bureaucracy. Norway, in tune with Sweden and Denmark, quickly declared neutrality at the start of the war, mainly to protect its position as a naval trade powerhouse. In spite of this declaration of

²⁰⁸ Interestingly, Riste continues: “He also reported on German attempts to influence public opinion in Norway.” *Ibid.*, p. 36.

neutrality, the Norwegian sentiment remained largely pro-British throughout the war. Both Britain and Germany had a vested interest in Norwegian neutrality, and although these had considered active plans including Norway, the development of the war made these plans unnecessary.

With Norway firmly planted outside the theatre of war, the struggle began behind the curtain. Propaganda matters, though they were often poorly regarded and initially poorly understood, began to take centre stage. Onto this stage stepped Rowland Kenney, 32 years old. Having come from nothing, he would direct and execute propaganda policy in Norway for the final two years of the war. He would construct a system of information gathering and distribution, the likes of which had not been seen. He would topple a national news agency, become a shepherd of Norwegian popular opinion, and help shape the genesis of a dangerous and subtle discipline. The story begins in 1916.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST WORLD WAR: ROWLAND KENNEY IN NORWAY

'You are, then, in effect', he blurted out the first day, in the lounge of the Grand Hotel, the most dangerous place in Christiania, 'a secret agent of the Foreign Office.'²⁰⁹

Having accounted for the background to Rowland Kenney's work in the First World War as a British agent in Norway, this chapter details his activities and operations during this period. This chapter examines the general nature of his work, whereas the next chapter looks at a more in depth analysis of a specific and influential episode. The purpose of this chapter is to display Kenney's work as it is relevant to the establishment of a system. Again, one of the primary objectives, then, is to demonstrate his position and his influence. This is accomplished by reference back to the context aspect presented in the previous chapter. This chapter also begins to outline, in specific, Kenney's role in the development of systems, institutions and dynamics.

In order to meet this purpose, the chapter is composed of three parts. First, there is the pseudo-narrative explanation of what he was doing in Norway;

²⁰⁹ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Carnegie*. 24 July 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 2-3.

his specific purpose and what he managed to accomplish. Second, Kenney's network is examined, detailing persons of interest in contact with Kenney and his relationship to them. Finally, the development of the system of propaganda is given central stage and an assessment is made as to what extent Kenney had an influence in advancing it.

A MAN BEHIND MANY MOVEMENTS AND EVENTS²¹⁰

It is difficult to date Rowland Kenney's exact arrival in Norway, but his general movements are clear. It is known from his autobiography, *Westering*, that he went with his new wife to Norway in 1910 for their honeymoon. After returning to London and working in Fleet Street for some time, he went back to Norway in August 1916, two years after the start of the war. He would remain there, with his family, throughout the war, save for a handful of trips elsewhere, mainly to Sweden and Britain.²¹¹

The Mission

It is useless to contemplate Kenney's work and influence without taking into account the purpose for which he was taken aboard, so to speak. Discussing purpose assists in establishing a frame of reference for his operations in Norway, and accomplishing this purpose signifies some effect of influence. In addition, where this purpose arises from can have a lot to say about what segment of the institution Kenney partook in, where development may be found, and the relative importance of his task.

Perhaps the most basic hint at purpose could be found in the questions of why he was sent and who sent him. The previously discussed, chaotic

²¹⁰ This subheading title is taken from a Times Literary Supplement review of *Westering*. The phrase, of course, refers to Kenney. McLaren, Moray David Shaw. Wanderings of a Revolutionary. *Times Literary Supplement* [London, England]. 23 Dec. 1939: 739. *Times Literary Supplement Historical Archive*. Web. 8 Mar. 2013.

²¹¹ Kenney, *Westering*.

development of the relevant institutions of Britain muddles this task considerably. Kenney himself writes in answer to the first question that he “had been sent to study the attitude of the Norwegian public and press to war problems.”²¹² He also notes to the second question that his “first connection with official propaganda was through [Sir William] Tyrrell and his assistants.”²¹³ One of these assistants was George Herbert Mair. Kenney had met Mair in the course of his work as a journalist in 1911, when Mair had been at the *Manchester Guardian*. Whether by choice, coincidence or command²¹⁴, Mair would be Kenney’s primary point of contact in Britain for the first part of Kenney’s stay in Norway.

If the reader takes care to remember the complicated process out of which the Department and subsequent Ministry of Information was born, then they will see that neither of these institutions were in place at the time of Kenney’s arrival in Norway. In January, 1916, however, Mair’s almost free-floating Neutral Press Committee had been handed from the Home Office to the Foreign Office where Tyrrell worked. Kenney could therefore be assumed to be working for the Foreign Office and its News Department. This is certainly corroborated by archival papers.

In search of purpose, it is necessary to examine Kenney’s first stay in Norway. In the archives the earliest record of Kenney’s being taken on as a civil servant lies in the correspondence between Ben Tillett, General Secretary of the Dock, Wharf, Riverside & General Workers Union of Great Britain & Ireland, and Sir Edward Grey, Foreign Secretary at the time. Whether on his own volition, or on the urging of Kenney himself, Tillett appealed several times in the spring of 1916 for the Foreign Office to take on Kenney’s services in the war effort. A May 9th letter, for example, urges Grey to use Kenney to counteract “the Germans having drained the Scandinavian countries of food and having there their secret

²¹² Kenney, *Westering*, p. 219.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

²¹⁴ Command is by far the most likely of these three, but the other options are not outside of the realm of possibility. For example, in describing Mair, Kenney makes a point to mark him out as a man whom it was “possible to deal with... on a natural, human basis instead of through the usual official channels, festooned with red tape.” *Ibid.*, p. 232.

service, especially journalists, very effectively organised.”²¹⁵ The overture by Tillett was first rebuffed by Grey²¹⁶ and then by Masterman’s War Propaganda Bureau, though in this second answer, Kenney’s qualifications are deemed to be “rather in Mair’s line than in ours.”²¹⁷ The front of the archival docket corroborates this by noting that Mair has written a letter to Kenney.

In July, Mair wrote to Montgomery at the Foreign Office, referencing a memorandum drawn up by Carnegie on the Norwegian situation, and also suggesting that Kenney go to Christiania to file a report from location.²¹⁸ Carnegie’s attached memorandum also supports this idea: “It would seem advisable to send a man [to Christiania] with a knowledge of the Norwegian people and language, to study the subject on the spot and advise as to what steps should be taken.”²¹⁹ The subject at hand appears to be the problem of untying the Norwegian press from the German Wolff’s Bureau. Meanwhile, Tillett, eager to promote Kenney, continued to send letters to the Foreign Office until when, in August, he was informed “that it has already been arranged through Mr Montgomery that Mr Kenney shall proceed to Norway on behalf of the Foreign Office.”²²⁰ It would appear thus that Ben Tillett advocated that Kenney be made use of internationally, a view adopted by Mair and Carnegie, who in turn advised Montgomery to accept him.

His first trip only lasted for three weeks, and his task was presumably completed with the filing of a short series of reports from the end of August through the beginning of September. The first of these, from the 29th of August, is missing from Kenney’s own collection, but it is found in the British National Archives. This report is the earliest report referenced, so this—together with a

²¹⁵ Tillett, Ben. *Letter to Sir Edward Grey*. 9 May, 1916. London. The National Archives (TNA): FO 371/2845, no. 89336.

²¹⁶ Newton. *Letter to Tillett*. 16 May, 1916. London. TNA: FO 371/2845, no. 9562. p. 1.

²¹⁷ Gowers, Ernest. *Letter to Montgomery*. 17 May, 1916. London. TNA: FO 371/2845, no. 9562. p. 2.

²¹⁸ Mair, George Herbert. *Letter to Montgomery*. 11 July, 1916. London. TNA: FO 395/29, no. 134704. p. 1.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3

²²⁰ Newton. *Letter to Tillett*. 2 Aug., 1916. London. TNA: FO 371/2845, no. 9562. p. 6.

three-week estimate cited in his autobiography before writing his reports²²¹— makes for a decent guess as to the timeline of this first wartime visit.

The first report appears to have been written somewhat reluctantly, at the suggestion of Mair. This is inferred from Kenney's introduction, acknowledging his receipt of Mair's letter some days prior and then justifying his own lack of reporting by citing the need to dig deeper and gain a better perspective. A comprehensive 5-page report then follows, outlining in the first instance German efforts in Christiania and the German Minister's connection to certain papers and editors. Next Kenney discusses the shortfalls of the British effort of propaganda in the country and a few solutions to these problems, before concluding that "it would be unwise to start a News Bureau in Christiania"²²² due to the fact that the Germans had poisoned the well with their own, too strong propaganda. The final paragraph deals with the news that a German press agent is developing a news bureau and that therefore the British need to counter, and counter fast.²²³ This appears to give credence to the idea that Kenney's purpose was to formulate an on-the-ground report on the conditions of the Norwegian press and public opinion.

A report dated September 6th, titled 'Report on the Norwegian Press', is probably the most important document relating to Kenney's First World War purpose. In this document, Kenney himself lays down what he believes needs to be done. The passage is important enough to warrant being cited in full:

We require a British representative in Christiania who is an accredited representative of the British press; He must do his best to get live matter through to Britain; He must be in constant touch with the British Legation and well informed on all British-Norwegian affairs; By personal contact with Norwegian Editors, who will wellcome [sic] him if he is the right type of man, he will influence Norwegian feeling and opinions; Whenever German efforts are made he will be ready to counter them. The extension of his sphere of influence will depend largely upon the enemy and upon circumstances that cannot be foreseen. I imagine that it would ultimately be well worth while for him to get hold of a

²²¹ Kenney, *Westering*.

²²² Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to George Herbert Mair*. 29 Aug., 1916. TNA: FO 395/29, no. 182558. p. 3.

²²³ *Ibid.*

competent, trustworthy Norwegian journalist and develop [sic] a bureau that would fight out or absorb the Norsk Telegrambureau. But this must not be attempted or even mentioned until the British press representative, as such, has established himself.²²⁴

Effectively, Kenney himself had here proposed a comprehensive British press and propaganda strategy for Norway. Although the collection does not contain any reply to the report, Kenney wrote that on his return to London it “was immediately accepted and I was asked to return to Norway to carry out the plans I had formulated.”²²⁵ This in itself is obviously a good point to be made for the thesis; without Kenney’s formulation (provided its success), British information policy in Norway could very well have been markedly different.

Thus, Kenney’s purpose, formulated by himself, can be said to circle around creating an efficient channel of information between Britain and Norway, influencing Norwegian public opinion, and recreating the Norwegian news agency. This final point, that of outcompeting or absorbing the Norwegian Telegrambureau (NTB), deserves more attention than this chapter alone can give it. Therefore, the entire next chapter (Chapter V) concerns itself with this highly interesting case. Exploring the way the other two objectives were tackled, however, can give a good perspective to how influential Kenney was, and how his actions helped in the development of a global system.

The Department

This section marks the entry into the very core of the thesis, which is Kenney’s role within the system. What follows is an in-part detailed account of his work in Norway during the First World War. Since his story is not commonly known, if known at all, this author must take care to tell it, and thus a sizeable portion of this section is dedicated to pseudo-chronological narration. This is in order to maintain the idea of Kenney’s developing role and to remain faithful to events and to context. A collateral objective lies in also establishing Kenney’s story in the broader sense of historical narrative. Nevertheless, care has been taken to

²²⁴ Kenney, Rowland. *Report on the Norwegian Press*. 6 Sept., 1916. Rowland Kenney Papers. pp. 11-12.

²²⁵ Kenney, *Westering*. p. 223.

commit to relevance and to summarise or generalise where possible, so as to enable more efficient analysis. The main line to follow is to trace his work in terms of responsibility and authority and get a sense of his task and his execution of that task. Following this section, the same time-period is analysed in terms of the people around Kenney after which a more analytical section pulls everything together.

Kenney's real work began upon his return to Norway after presenting his reports to his superiors in London. In his autobiography, he writes that he returned to Norway in "the beginning of January, 1917."²²⁶ This is not entirely true, as drafts of letters from November and December tell of a short trip to Norway at this time for the duration of about a month or more.²²⁷ It is possible to read into his omission in his autobiography. For example, it could have something to do with the establishment of the Department of Information during the transition of 1916 to 1917, but it could also just be deemed uninteresting or superfluous—his work in Norway was dealt with in *Westering* only over twenty pages, with generous portions devoted to certain notable personalities and events. In any case, there are some relevant pieces of information found in the documents from this short stay.

Perhaps the most striking line is from a handwritten, unaddressed draft, probably written in November 1916. In this document, Kenney discusses current events and issues, as well as the stance toward the war of 'Social Demokraten', a Norwegian newspaper. He also tells of a German Press Agent, by the name of Dr. Harthen, and his much-too-brusque attempt to have Norwegian editors print German news. Careful not to make the same mistake as the German, Kenney proposed a cover. "I could do very much better work here," Kenney writes, "if I were an accredited representative of some newspaper or some News Agency, say Reuters."²²⁸ This cover is eventually established, giving Kenney a much better position from which to work, especially with the NTB affair detailed in the next chapter.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Unknown. 1916. 1916. Rowland Kenney Papers; Unknown. *Letter to Mair*. 12 Dec, 1916. Rowland Kenney Papers; Unknown. *Letter to Carnegie*. 12 Dec, 1916. Rowland Kenney Papers.

²²⁸ Unknown. 1916. p. 7.

From this short stay, the reports seem mainly to concern themselves with the problem of getting British-slanted news—for all intents and purposes, propaganda—out into the Norwegian press. Kenney lamented the lack of material coming through from Britain, and seemed exasperated by the quality of that material which actually surfaced. One prime example of this problem—and of Kenney’s witty phrasing: “A good deal of space has been devoted during the past few days to the British Ministerial crisis, but that is not a subject which lends itself to enthusiastic reports.”²²⁹ The lack of British material was especially dangerous considering the large volume of German material saturating the news market. Kenney wrangled with a series of phrases struck through before he settled: “We can only counter with news; preferably, of course, good news.”²³⁰ Notably, it was Kenney who observed the problems and Kenney who devised the solutions. This was true almost throughout his stay during the war.

After a short trip back to London, Kenney did indeed return to Norway in January 1917, and continued his work. He made connections with several Norwegian pressmen and distributed stories and news items among them. Whenever there was some notable domestic or international event, he either countered it or relayed its effects back to the now-running Department of Information. These were not the only tricks in his repertoire, however. In a letter to Mair dated the 24th of January, 1917, Kenney brought up a man by the name of Nils Vogt, incidentally the brother of the Norwegian Ambassador in London. Vogt was a correspondent for *The Times*, and also worked with *Morgenbladet*, a problematic Norwegian paper headed by an anti-British editor, Carl Hambro. Vogt—working closely with the Norwegian Foreign Minister Mr. Ihlen (a notable critic of Britain during the war)—had published an article in *The Times* that was viewed as an attack on the British Minister to Norway, Sir Mansfeldt de Cardonnell Findlay. Kenney’s proposed solution was emphatic: “As a tainted man Hr. Vogt should no longer be Times’ correspondent, or his telegrams should be subjected to the strictest censorship.”²³¹ A week later, another letter talks of the further developments of the Vogt story, reiterating Kenney’s suggestion that

²²⁹ Unknown. *Letter to Mair*. p. 2.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²³¹ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Mair*. 24 Jan., 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 3.

Mair “approach the Times.”²³² The tools at his disposal were varied, it seems, and he chose them carefully. Another ominous example of what Kenney could do lies at the completion of a settlement of British trade restrictions imposed on Norway in early 1917. In Kenney’s view, the ideal course of action was to lay the blame for the trade restrictions at the feet of the previously mentioned Ihlen, and some Norwegians were turning around to this idea. However, when matters were settled and an agreement was reached, the focus returned in part to the British and in effect vindicated Ihlen from the crisis. In releasing the settlement as early as possible, the problem was solved, to Kenney’s unmistakable regret: “I am afraid we have saved Hr. Ihlen when we should have broken him.”²³³ The exact meaning of the phrase is of course up to interpretation, but with an earlier line citing mounting pressure for Ihlen to step down, the idea seems at least imaginable. Matters of blacklisting journalists and deposing ministers—certainly ministers of such high stance as foreign ministers—must certainly be matters of grave policy. The fact that Kenney suggests these speaks to his position of influence.

A recurring report titled ‘Lectures and Literature’ also began in late February 1917. This report, true to its title, consists of Kenney’s dry observations regarding the presence of propaganda or biased literature (to one side or the other) in Norwegian bookstores, as well as accounts of current lecturers touring the country, their attendance, content, and so on. After these observational remarks, there was usually some sort of discussion on what steps to take in order to enhance pro-British material.²³⁴ Again, Kenney observed, reported and proposed solutions. There appears to be no request for ideas or orders. In a traditional working structure, the character of Kenney’s reports would make it seem like he was in a managerial position, in charge and self-sufficient.

²³² Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Mair*. 31 Jan., 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

²³³ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Mair*. 21 Feb. 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

²³⁴ Kenney, Rowland. *Lectures and Literature*. 31 Feb. 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers; Kenney, Rowland. *Lectures and Literature*. 21 Mar. 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers; Kenney, Rowland. *Lectures and Literature*. 26 Mar. 1918. Rowland Kenney Papers; Kenney, Rowland. *Lectures and Literature*. 9 May, 1918. Rowland Kenney Papers.

Kenney, it appears, was the spearhead of the British propaganda system in Norway. This demanded a lot from him, and those demands were constantly on the rise. With a system in development—that is, not yet streamlined—there are bound to be missteps and misappropriations. In a March 12th telegram to Mair, Kenney appears to have been burdened with the responsibility for the entire Reuters service in Norway. Kenney’s frustration is palpable in his use of the exclamation mark: “these wires from Reuters have a tone (if they are not so wroded [sic]) which seems to imply that I am responsible for their Norwegian service!” The paragraph continues: “That, of course, is frankly impossible. I cannot accept responsibility for something which I do not control; and I have no control, and can conceive no possible circumstances or arrangement which would give me any measure of control.”²³⁵ Kenney’s emphatic wording may be amusing, but it seems pertinent to take note of the level of responsibility and even authority vested in this one man; a point, of course, integral to the thesis. Further to the point, it appears that Kenney had a meeting with a certain Mr. Jones prior to arriving in Norway. Mr. Jones, of course, can be none other than Sir Roderick Jones, the fresh Director of Reuters and arguably the most powerful press figure of Britain at the time; though more on that in the next section.

On the topic of creating propaganda, Kenney also had a say. He suggested not only content for propaganda circulars, but also form. He critiqued the ‘War Monthly’ as having similar value for Germany as for Britain, and called for particular picture subjects, such as colonial troops and naval operations. Kenney also suggested that readers should be reminded of past atrocities of the war and that the circular should employ a less official style of writing.²³⁶ This was also the case in the articles sent to him for the purpose of being published in Norwegian papers. He dismissed lengthy work, silly titles, material irrelevant to the Norwegian perspective, hack work, thoughtless photographs and on and on. On polemical pieces, he wrote they are counterproductive and ham-fisted: “If an unfortunate German should get anything printed, I can phone to any one of half a dozen well known Norwegians and get him bucketed to pieces – which is

²³⁵ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Mair*. 12 Mar. 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 2.

²³⁶ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Mair*. 26 Apr. 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers.

infinitely better than starting arguments from London.”²³⁷ He clearly had a good perspective on what was necessary, and had useful and important connections.

Kenney was well on board with the British view on truthful propaganda. This is of course a major aspect of the propaganda concept as discussed in Chapter II. He claimed he “never made a statement that was even partly untrue,” and that “in my reports to London I stressed the need for letting the facts speak for themselves.”²³⁸ A pertinent letter on this was sent to Mair on June 16th 1917:

It should be realised that “pro-British” is vastly different to “anti-German”. Neutrals will appreciate pride of race, real patriotism, self confidence, whereas they look askance at continual denunciations of the enemy, with all kinds of pinpricks, jibes and jeers. The neutral who appreciates constant “exposures” of the enemy does not need to be converted. For the rest, we should give them the virtues of the British (we have still got to live down the reputation of our ghastly censor) and leave the beastliness and the brutality of the German to speak for itself – Heaven knows it is eloquent and loud enough. Scarcely any of the writers of our propaganda articles seem to realise this.²³⁹

By the spring, he had begun to acquire the network necessary to push out more propaganda material into both major and minor papers. Procuring, writing and disseminating material appears to take up more and more of his time at this point.²⁴⁰ By the end of the war, he claimed this activity as one of his most fruitful undertakings. “In February, 1917, three of our articles were used; in July, 1917, sixty-eight appeared; and in January, 1918, the number had increased to 223.”²⁴¹ These numbers are likely deflated, as Kenney noted that with increased volume, already in April, it was difficult to keep up with what had been published, and where. Thus it is impossible to calculate with any strong sense of accuracy how many articles were published. However, in March, 1918, Kenney provided a list of the numbers. The total number of articles published between February 1917 and February 1918 was 1,226. There is no indication of the amount of articles

²³⁷ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Mair*. 6 June 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 3-4.

²³⁸ Kenney. *Westering*. p. 229.

²³⁹ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Mair*. 16 June 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers.

²⁴⁰ Kenney. *Letter to Mair*. 26 Apr. 1917.

²⁴¹ Kenney. *Westering*. p. 229.

published for the months after February 1918, but it is surely possible to assume that it had stabilised around 200 articles per month, as this had been the trend for six months prior. This would put the number at the end of the war at roughly 3000 articles over a period of 22 months, averaging over 136 articles per month, or just under 5 articles a day. These are impressive figures by all accounts, especially for Norway. And behind it all was Kenney.

Late in June, 1917, Kenney was sent to Stockholm, Sweden for a little over two weeks. The instruction to do so had come from the British Legation, to which Kenney was closely attached. His purpose was to be the British eyes and ears at the Conference of the Socialist International; his own leftist convictions probably had their part to play in his being delegated this task. He still used his Reuters cover, handwriting letters to Mair on Reuters stationery, marked with his name, title of Reuters Correspondent and phone number. This is the earliest instance of this stationery being used, though he had been using the cover position for quite some time already.²⁴²

It appears his visit was difficult in several ways. "I assume that I must report, and yet there is little I can report."²⁴³ Apart from the lack of mentionable impressions, the fact that Kenney had to *assume* his purpose is a little surprising. Had the Legation not been specific in its instructions? Perhaps again, this is a demonstration of the entrepreneurial position Kenney held, that he should himself determine the purpose and value of what he heard and saw. This explanation lines relatively neatly up with the gentleman amateurism that permeated the propaganda services throughout most of the war, and argues similarly neatly for Kenney's importance and value to the development of the whole ordeal. It is also worth noting that Kenney (perhaps in part due to his political leanings, but also due to his ability) was entrusted with these responsibilities. Had he been simply a pawn in a much greater structure, it is difficult to imagine him traipsing between Scandinavian capitals. Sweden, most certainly, had its own collection of British agents, so the choice of Kenney is interesting. Underlining this analysis is the opening line from his next letter,

²⁴² The letter in question contains the phrasing: "I came on to Stockholm... *still* as Reuters correspondent." [Emphasis mine]. Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Mair*. 26 June 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

dated July 17th: “I left Stockholm on July 12th, as I wished to get in touch with Norwegian affairs again and there was really nothing of importance likely to happen in Stockholm for some weeks.”²⁴⁴ Not only did he leave on his own volition, but also he neglected to ask permission, and to let Mair know about his decision until five days later. He was, undoubtedly, an asset.

In July 1917, Kenney sent a letter to E. Fullerton Carnegie, who was in charge of the Scandinavian Section of the Foreign Office News Department. The content of the letter centres on a variety of persons within the British propaganda structure. Kenney’s tone is informal. For example, it is Kenney who tells Carnegie what to do about Roderick Jones and what they want from him. Another character, Mr. Ellison, is painted as stupid, lazy and tactless, and Kenney insists “he ought not to be allowed out of the country in war time.”²⁴⁵ The letter reads almost like a tirade against several members of the British propaganda system, though Kenney makes efforts to impress upon Carnegie that he is “quite calm [sic], without heat, anger, or a shadow of malice.”²⁴⁶ The impression this letter leaves is one of camaraderie, and a lateral structure, with Kenney free to think, act and say what he wants.

In the Autumn of 1917 Kenney again spent a good deal of time in Stockholm, covering another conference there.²⁴⁷ At this time, the matter of the Norwegian Telegrambureau was also coming to a head, and a few reports in September and October deal with this and will be referenced in Chapter V. With regard to his other activities, they remained much the same. In a report to Mair in November, Kenney again insisted on increasing the flow of articles to send out to Norwegian papers. He also returned to the idea of blacklisting journalists, using the actual term ‘blacklist’. Further he reported on the Norwegian political situation, as before, concentrating on Ihlen.²⁴⁸ It appears that these were his general tasks: consolidating the system of dissemination of British material,

²⁴⁴ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Mair*. 17 July 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

²⁴⁵ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Carnegie*. 24 July 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 2.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁴⁷ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Mair*. 20 Sep., 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers; Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Mair*. 25 Sep., 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers.

²⁴⁸ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Mair*. 7 Nov., 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers.

keeping watch on enemy propaganda and enemy journalists, and reporting on political events and how these are digested by the media and the people.

Here follows a gap in the material between the 7th of November, 1917 to the 5th of March, 1918. The only pieces of information known from this time are found in Kenney's autobiography. Kenney writes: "early in 1918 I was called to London and then sent to the Western Front on a special mission, just before the terrific German break-through in April."²⁴⁹ The vagueness of this statement (after which follows no further explanation) is only tempered very slightly by another tiny detail in the book when Kenney describes being in London in early 1918, "on my way to Norway from France."²⁵⁰ What Kenney's special mission in France was is not currently known. There is no mention of this mission in the material prior to or following the gap, and it appears that if anything at all was written about it (as it in all probability must have been) Kenney has uncharacteristically failed to keep it. This could be intentional, but it could also be a matter of coincidence; perhaps that travel arrangements made it difficult to transport or keep documents. However, the alternative, intentional interpretation is also alluring. If the mission was assigned by the News Department, and thus known to Mair or Carnegie, it would be odd that no reference is found in the extant letters. Thus it is possible, based solely on the lack of mention, that some other bureau, department or service had made use of the man. It remains a tantalizing mystery, and yet again builds on the idea that Kenney was—at least to some mentionable degree—an instrumental figure in the war.

The Ministry

As the reader might remember from the second section of Chapter III, the Department of Information transitioned into the Ministry of Information in early 1918. Whereas the creation of the Department of Information had apparently had little effect on Kenney's work and position, this new transition proved much more dramatic. An odd inconsistency exists just here. In *Westering*, Kenney

²⁴⁹ Kenney, *Westering*. p. 232.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 286.

dates the creation of the Ministry to the 4th of March, 1918, and writes that he discovered this *post factum* on his return to London from France.²⁵¹ This would mean that he arrived in London earliest on the 5th of March, and given the time it took to travel between London and Christiania (approximately two days, though probably longer²⁵²), he would have arrived in Norway no earlier than the 8th. And yet, in the materials, the documents pick up again with a letter from Kenney dated the 5th of March, with the location given in Norway, and a note of a new address. Adding to this: he claims Roderick Jones gave him certain instructions and that he sent him a report the week prior, which, barring unlikely turns of phrase, places Kenney back in Norway considerably earlier than he lets on in his published work.²⁵³ Whether this is meaningful or not would be a matter of speculation, the space for which is not afforded here.

Again with reference to the events portrayed in Chapter III, the News Department and the newly created Political Intelligence Department (where Kenney would go to work after the war) were a stumbling block to the restructuring of the British propaganda machine. Kenney's colleagues, upset to be flung under the command of Lord Beaverbrook, "resigned their posts in a body."²⁵⁴ Not one to stay quiet when he felt he had something to say Kenney "approached Tyrrell and expressed my intention of breaking with the Ministry of Information."²⁵⁵ Tyrrell, however, convinced him to stay on and continue his work in Norway, a testament to the importance of the task and to Kenney's aptitude. The reshuffling, however, brought in a change of management for Kenney, who from here on, reported fairly exclusively to Herbert Charles O'Neill and Roderick Jones (the latter with regard to matters of the news agencies—which is an interesting constellation, as shall be seen shortly). O'Neill had evidently taken over the Scandinavian section from Carnegie, whereas Jones was Director of Propaganda.²⁵⁶ Especially Kenney's correspondence with Jones

²⁵¹ Ibid., p. 232.

²⁵² This estimate arises from a passage in *Westering* where Kenney writes that crossing from Bergen to Aberdeen should have taken "under two days" in 1918. Kenney, *Westering*. p. 236.

²⁵³ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to O'Neill*. 5 Mar., 1918. Rowland Kenney Papers.

²⁵⁴ Kenney, *Westering*. p. 232.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Kenney. *Letter to O'Neill*. 5 Mar. 1918.

stands out as a fairly good indication of Kenney's stature in the system, reporting not to middle-management, but straight to the top.

The general work Kenney engaged in did not change very much, though his reports to the Ministry seem (at least in the beginning) more terse and formal than the somewhat conversational letters to Mair and Carnegie. One gets the sense that bureaucracy had finally swallowed them, leaving little room for pleasantries and familiarity. In a sense, the gentlemen amateurs morphed slowly into civil servants. This is not to say that Kenney suddenly began to seek orders and not think for himself. In his first letter to Jones—a hefty, sectioned document with listed headings and subheadings—his general tone remained much the same. It reads as a report to an overseer, explaining what is being done, what is being considered, what steps are necessary, and so on.²⁵⁷ Perhaps one change is that Kenney here began to increase his demand for London to send him certain books and other things, especially O'Neill.²⁵⁸ Kenney's early letters to O'Neill were marked by a significant confusion regarding who was in charge: O'Neill, Mr. Hambro or others, prompting Kenney to send his reports straight to Jones.²⁵⁹

Addressing this question of authority, there was a quick succession of letters back and forth between O'Neill and Kenney late in May 1918. O'Neill insisted he was "in charge of Scandinavia and Finland," and that "Mr. Hambro is the Director of neutral propaganda."²⁶⁰ A little note from O'Neill to Kenney, dated the very next day is interesting: "If you are taking up the general running of the propaganda for us, I will naturally let you have a complete prospectus of all we are doing."²⁶¹ It appears Kenney was in this way made responsible for the propaganda aspect of the Scandinavian Section within the Ministry of Information. If this is not an indication, clear as day, of Kenney's successes and his value to the system, then nothing is.

²⁵⁷ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Jones*. 25 Mar. 1918. Rowland Kenney Papers.

²⁵⁸ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to O'Neill*. 28 Mar. 1918. Rowland Kenney Papers.

²⁵⁹ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to O'Neill*. 9 May 1918. Rowland Kenney Papers.

²⁶⁰ O'Neill, Herbert Charles. *Letter to Kenney*. 23 May 1918. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

²⁶¹ O'Neill, Herbert Charles. *Note to Kenney*. 24 May 1918. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

Kenney's system of dissemination was certainly appreciated. In a June note from O'Neill to Kenney, O'Neill asked Kenney to help his Swedish colleague (a man by the name of Charleston) gain entry into the Swedish press. "Your own success," wrote O'Neill, "is always so encouraging that it throws into higher relief the complete non-success of Charleston."²⁶² This opinion from O'Neill of course underlines Kenney's accomplishment, and provides evidence for its recognition outside of Kenney's own writing. There are instances where one might chalk up Kenney's own statements as self-inflationary, if one were prone to such an interpretation, but this is more difficult knowing of O'Neill's admiration. It should be admitted that O'Neill's statement is attached to a request—and thus can be regarded as flattery—but when the request is that Kenney teach others his ways, this concern appears unlikely, if not unfounded.

The Ministry recognized Kenney's skills and abilities, not least of which was his management of a very extensive collection of informants. In a letter to Jones, Kenney told of a special meeting between the German Director of Propaganda and Wolff's Bureau (the main artery of German propaganda distribution):

Herr Vachtel expressed the opinion that their methods in Norway had been disastrous. They had been too open, too energetic, and far too much had been done. He counselled a considerable diminution in the quantity of matter telegraphed by Wolff's Bureau and suggested that the more moderate method of England was infinitely preferable to their method, which has swamped the country with material and only succeeded in helping to turn the press and the public against Germany. After considerable discussion the meeting was inclined to agree with him...²⁶³

The lines blur a little between being a propagandist and being a spy. Kenney's job description certainly leaned toward being the former, but a whole range of observations can easily be classified as espionage. Kenney dutifully used his network in order to gather information to relay back to London. The fact that the information gathered (at least in this case) seems also to be a compliment to his

²⁶² O'Neill, Herbert Charles. *Note to Kenney*. 5 June 1918. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

²⁶³ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Jones*. 25 May 1918. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

own work, is not so much a reflection of hubris on Kenney's behalf, but rather a reflection of this author's own aesthetic leanings: it also shows that the British propaganda was efficient, and that Kenney was one of the more prominent shapers of it.

In May, 1918, the new structure of propaganda administration seemed more clear to Kenney, though not necessarily more efficient. His letters, as a result, became more pointed. The Ministry's ineptitude in taking care of expenses wore on him, with requests being made direct to Sir Roderick Jones and to O'Neill. Kenney even resorted to threats: "Now I shall spend no more of my own [money], and if same delay occurs in forwarding imprests - I shut up the shop and take a holiday!"²⁶⁴ Although it is difficult to ascertain to what degree Kenney's correspondence with O'Neill was jocular—the degree to which the above statement was serious—the context of the letter and Kenney's clear exasperation with the payment situation leaves little room to doubt that it was meant at least as a strong statement of dissatisfaction. Further, in the same letter, Kenney argued against a proposed propaganda venture: "I consider the idea of an English newspaper here (after begging your pardon!) simply equal to the mind of a 'hobbyist'. It won't do, old man; it will not do."²⁶⁵ [emphasis Kenney's] Again, Kenney appears here not under O'Neill's command. If this letter were taken separately, with no knowledge of the positions of its author and its recipient, it would be natural to assume that this was a message from an overseer to his or her employee. The letter is full of judgements and opinions presented as superior. This lends credence to the idea of Kenney as a key player in the development of the system. At the very least, Kenney shaped slivers of policy; the Ministry wished to explore the idea of sending out a propaganda newspaper, and Kenney shot it down.

Kenney repeatedly, throughout his stay, mentioned the need for him to travel around Norway to other cities than the capital. The first indication of such a trip actually taking place arrives in June, with a handwritten letter from

²⁶⁴ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to O'Neill*. 31 May 1918. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Bergen.²⁶⁶ Bergen is (and at the time was) a major shipping hub on the Norwegian west coast. It was also most likely the point of arrival and departure of Kenney and other British agents to and from Norway. Other trips may have taken place earlier, but there is no record of them. The letter concerns itself with developments in the policies of newspapers, primarily 'Morgenavisen' and 'Verdens Gang'. These two papers were of great concern to Kenney and the Ministry, especially in Bergen. Running together, these could have posed a troublesome adversary for British propaganda efforts in a major region of the country. Therefore, Kenney had spoken with his contacts and come up with a sizeable sum of money "for buying up Morgenavisen and so turn it into a British organ... May I have Kr. 200,000 please?"²⁶⁷ There is no discernible reply from London to this bold proposal, although the suggestion points to the level at which Kenney worked in Norway and within the Ministry. Again it is difficult to know whether Kenney was being serious or was simply making a joke at the expense of his paymasters. Either interpretation speaks to some significant degree of influence, and the latter interpretation also would describe his growing malcontent, which was about to reach its peak.

One possible reason for the lack of reply to this idea is that Kenney, on the 22nd of June, announced his resignation. The actual notice does not appear, but in the collection, a series of letters have fairly consistent references to his retiring from the post.²⁶⁸ A telegram sent from Roderick Jones to Kenney in July makes clear that the reason for his resignation was in large part his salary. It definitely speaks to Kenney's importance when Jones, the Director of Propaganda for the MOI, appears to be bargaining in order to keep Kenney on board. His final paragraph drives the point home:

Do you find the present system of paying out of pocket expenses unsatisfactory? In the circumstances I hope you will not press your resignation, especially as it might be desirable for you to make Stockholm your main headquarters in connection with the new

²⁶⁶ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to O'Neill*. 6 June 1918. Rowland Kenney Papers.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁶⁸ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to O'Neill*. 20 June 1918. Rowland Kenney Papers; Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Willson*. 28 June 1918. Rowland Kenney Papers.

telegraph arrangements, directly we can get you a first class assistant in Christiania.²⁶⁹

Jones' appeal evidently had no impact on Kenney. In his autobiography, references are made to his requests being treated haphazardly and his constant—and constantly ignored—appeals for his salary and expenses to be met.²⁷⁰

Even in the Department of Information, before the Ministry had been created, there were serious problems. A letter to Carnegie in November 1917 contains an excellent description: "In Sept. and Oct. [...] to my amazement, I received letters from my Christiania Bank informing me that the Foreign Office had paid money in to my account! The Foreign Office! It is, of course, too late to protest when the cat is out of the bag, and the spy hunters are dogging your tracks all over the place, but why, oh why, do your people do these things?"²⁷¹ [emphasis Kenney's] And things were not set to improve under the Ministry of Information. On the contrary, more and more acidic remarks permeate many of his letters and reporting since being drafted to the Ministry, and these quips increased in quantity and intensity throughout the spring and summer of 1918. An example: "Am I to take it that the simple alteration of an address is beyond the organising abilities of your department?"²⁷² Despite his announcement of retirement, Kenney continued to work well into August 1918, preparing for his successor, and carrying on with requests for books and articles and so on. The material from this time ends with a series of lengthy and dry memoranda and reports, probably for the benefit of whoever took on the job after him.

His exact date of departure is not certain, though it was in August. He left with his family from Bergen, intending to land in Aberdeen two days later. The trip took instead five days (possibly due to bad weather) with rumours of enemy

²⁶⁹ Jones, Roderick. *Letter to Kenney*. 12 July 1918. TNA: FO 395/187.

²⁷⁰ Kenney. *Westering*.

²⁷¹ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Carnegie*. 10 Nov. 1917. TNA: FO 395/114, no. 221993. pp. 1-2.

²⁷² Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to O'Neill*. Christiania, 6 July 1918. Rowland Kenney Papers.

submarines haunting the crew before they finally “ran aground on the Orkneys.”²⁷³

In his own words, he had, by the end of his stay “established in Norway a centre of information and influence which would run more or less on routine lines.”²⁷⁴ This system “was later adopted all over the world and, in an attenuated form, it is carried out by an ‘appropriate department’ [perhaps another sting at the Ministry of Information?] of Government to this day.”²⁷⁵ It is obvious he held his own accomplishments in high regard, but it is perhaps justifiably so. He had been, since 1916, the spearhead of British propaganda in Norway, had reported meticulously to the British departments and ministries, had established and utilised an extensive network of informants for the benefit of British intelligence, and had served the Norwegian public with thousands of pro-British articles, steering them through crises and troubles into British arms. The most complete test of Kenney’s influence is in looking at what he managed to do, and as has been demonstrated: what he managed to do is impressive.

PERSONS OF INTEREST

A different way of assessing Kenney’s influence is in looking specifically at his network. This section aims to do just that. As was established in Chapter III, power was present in tight-knit communities, and mapping the network Kenney found himself in will award some sense of Kenney’s position in the greater scope of influence on policy and history. Not only does this section outline who Kenney was in contact with, but also the nature of their relationships. Kenney’s network in Britain is here of more interest than the one in Norway, primarily because of the nature of his connections, though a few exceptions exist; in Norway, Kenney’s known contacts spanned mainly a selection of press owners and newspaper editors, and these will rather be drawn into the next chapter, since they are more relevant with regards to the NTB affair.

²⁷³ Kenney. *Westering*. p. 236.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

Firstly, Kenney's primary contacts within the structure of British propaganda were George Herbert Mair and George Fullerton-Carnegie. Mair was appointed the head of the Neutral Press Committee when it was formed in 1914. He had previously been an assistant editor at the *Daily Chronicle*.²⁷⁶ His rather fluid post at the Committee resulted in him, alongside Charles Montgomery, leading the Department of Information until John Buchan was awarded the position in 1917.²⁷⁷ During Kenney's first year in Norway, Mair was in charge of the press aspect of the Department's work.²⁷⁸ When the Ministry of Information was created, he became Assistant Secretary.²⁷⁹ Mair was obviously a well connected, talented man—Kenney writes “he seemed to be personally acquainted with everybody who had ever achieved anything in any sphere of activities anywhere,”²⁸⁰—and for Kenney to have the kind of relationship with him that he had, means a lot for Kenney's own position within the structure. After the war, Mair was awarded with a C.M.G.²⁸¹ and had an illustrious career within the League of Nations before he died, much too young, in 1926.²⁸²

Less is known about Fullerton-Carnegie, the head of the Scandinavian Section of the News Department. He was the cousin of Lord Tyrrell, the then private secretary of Foreign Secretary Grey, a familial connection which in those times presumably meant a lot. In his autobiography from 1939, Kenney writes

²⁷⁶ Taylor, Philip M. *British Propaganda in the 20th Century: Selling Democracy*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999. p. 9.

²⁷⁷ Messinger, Gary S. *British propaganda and the state in the First World War*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992. p. 119.

²⁷⁸ Kenney. *Westering*. p. 231.

²⁷⁹ Mr. G. H. Mair. *The Times* [London, England]. 4 Jan. 1926. p. 14. The Times Digital Archive. Web. 16 Mar. 2014.

<http://find.galegroup.com/ttda/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=stand&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&docId=CS235477540&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0>

²⁸⁰ Kenney. *Westering*. p. 232.

²⁸¹ Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George. Colonial Office List. *Times* (London, England) 1 Jan. 1920: 14. The Times Digital Archive. Web. 16 Mar. 2014.

²⁸² Mr. G. H. Mair. *The Times*.

that Carnegie was and continued to be a close friend.²⁸³ He also appears to have been the British Chargé d’Affaires in Oslo during the inter-war period.²⁸⁴

When the Ministry took over from the Department of Information, Kenney began reporting to Herbert Charles O’Neill and Roderick Jones. O’Neill, like Carnegie, is difficult to source, but he was a journalist, editor and author before the war. During the war, and for a couple of years after, he worked in the Foreign Office before eventually returning to journalism and becoming the editor of *Financial News*.²⁸⁵

Roderick Jones, on the other hand, is a well-known figure. He features heavily in the next chapter, but it is worth noting a few points here. Some of Jones’ background has already been discussed in Chapter 3. Jones was very well connected, running Reuters and serving as Director of Propaganda in the Ministry. During a House of Commons debate on state propaganda in 1918—where Beaverbrook was in the crosshairs—, it was Jones who stayed with Beaverbrook at the Hyde Park Hotel apartment.²⁸⁶ A very powerful figure, Jones “was gazetted one of the first knights of the new Order of the British Empire”²⁸⁷ in early 1918 for his work with propaganda. On a 1918 memorandum detailing the Reuters-FO relationship, Lord Robert Cecil’s hand praises “the loyal and patriotic cooperation of Reuters and particularly of Sir Roderick Jones”, and under it, signed by A.J. Balfour: “I quite agree.”²⁸⁸ An interesting point to make here is how Kenney saw Jones. A 1917 letter to Carnegie, probably near Jones’ entry into the field proper, describes Kenney’s thoughts:

²⁸³ Kenney. *Westering*. p. 231-32.

²⁸⁴ News in Brief. *The Times* [London, England]. 3 Mar. 1933. p. 13. The Times Digital Archive. Web. 16 Mar. 2014.
<http://find.galegroup.com/ttda/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=stand&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&docId=CS218966115&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0>

²⁸⁵ Mr. H. C. O’Neill. *The Times* [London, England]. 2 Oct. 1953. p. 8. The Times Digital Archive. Web. 16 Mar. 2014.
<http://find.galegroup.com/ttda/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=stand&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&docId=CS136532290&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0>

²⁸⁶ Messinger, *British propaganda*. p. 135.

²⁸⁷ Read, Donald. *The Power of News: The History of Reuters*. 2nd Ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. p. 137.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

“Now, first, R.J. [Roderick Jones]. We will leave him alone – almost. I am now principally concerned to see him put the Norsk [Telegraphbureau] matter through. After that, you have not convinced me yet; and his scruples are too mixed for my simple mind. He has scruples about breaking a contract – which the war broke 3 years ago! – because of the sanctity of business contracts; and he exposes the country to all sorts of misrepresentations – because he is a Business-Manager! We must discuss this matter later – in some quiet smoking-room. Only just one more shot! What fools our soldiers and sailors are; neglecting their business prospects – and contracts – for the sake of smiting the Germans! What a world!”²⁸⁹

The excerpt is as humorous as it is telling. Again there is a sort of tension between Kenney as Jones’ agent and Jones as Kenney’s puppet. It is certainly the case that Kenney knew what he wanted from the man, and was not afraid to say it, even to his boss. Whereas Jones might have been at the head of the scheme, the quotation again argues for Kenney, and agents like him, being the motor behind events.

A sort of intermediary step between Norwegian and British contacts, is the then British Minister in Christiania, Sir Mansfeldt de Cardonnel Findlay. Findlay had been the subject of controversy after the ‘Denshawai Outrage’ in 1906. Suffice to say the event was a tragic and embarrassing one for the British in general and for Findlay in particular. The outcome for Findlay was for him to spend over 12 years as Minister to Norway (1911-1923), something he regarded as a punishment, and given that this length of stay was 3-4 times longer than usual, he was probably right. He viewed the post as an unfair exile.²⁹⁰ Nevertheless, Findlay was a powerful and respected man among the British political elite. An example both of his political reach as well as his regard for Kenney is found in a couple of letters written to Arthur Balfour after Kenney’s resignation: “I can only place on record my very high opinion of his character and of the results he has attained,”²⁹¹ and:

²⁸⁹ Kenney. *Letter to Carnegie*. 24 July 1917.

²⁹⁰ Kenney, *Westering*, p. 219.

²⁹¹ Findlay, Sir Mansfeldt de C. *Letter to Balfour*. 25 Aug. 1918. TNA: FO 395/187. p. 3.

I would add that the Norwegian press, including the official paper, have expressed great regret at Mr. Kenney's impending departure and appreciation of the manner in which he has discharged his duties as Reuter's Correspondent. Considering the great influence which Mr. Kenney has managed to exercise on the press there could be no higher tribute to his tact and discretion. I would observe that a German Correspondent (Harthen) who held a similar appointment in German interests had to leave Norway some time [a]go to avoid arrest and trial for espionage.²⁹²

If this is not a suitable and clear adulation both of Kenney's position within the developing system of state propaganda, as well as of his undeniable success, then there is little more to say on the matter.

THE RISING SYSTEM

It seems rather clear, then, that Kenney took the shape of a rather important component in the machinery of state propaganda during the First World War. His accomplishments were not only practical, but they also both shaped and represented larger shifts taking place during the time. These developments were complicated and often subtle, but indicated new ways of thinking in policy and practice. Propaganda during the First World War, and indeed, Kenney's work in the First World War, have ripple effects even to this day.

First and foremost, the nature of this new type of war demanded propaganda efforts the likes of which had never before been seen. "Never before had the temper of the civilian population had such crucial bearing on the outcome of the war."²⁹³ While it is true that propaganda, in some form or another, had been practiced previously, it was certainly a new kind and a new dimension of propaganda which was necessary now. "Organized propaganda, using increasingly sophisticated and efficient communications techniques deliberately to manipulate the opinion of the mass of the people, became an

²⁹² Findlay, Sir Mansfeldt de C. *Letter to Balfour*. 14 Sep. 1918. TNA: FO 395/187, no. 246714. p. 3.

²⁹³ Haste, Cate. *Keep the Home Fires Burning: Propaganda in the First World War*. London: Allen Lane, 1977. p. 199.

indispensable adjunct to twentieth-century politics.”²⁹⁴ This was a new war, and it demanded new weapons.

Kenney’s operation represented the budding idea that information is power, an idea that had enormous effects on the relationship between the state and the press. During the First World War, there occurred a radical shift in the relationship between the state and the press. Apart from a small handful of press barons, prior to the First World War, diplomats generally regarded journalists and editors with haughty disdain. As Arthur Willert notes: “The general feeling on the part of the Press was that the diplomat was an exclusive and rather priggish sort of person who resented anybody trying to break into his laboratory to discover how he performed his mysteries. The average diplomat, on his side, retaliated by treating the emissaries of the Press as nuisances, who, luckily, could usually be avoided.”²⁹⁵ On his arrival in Norway in 1916, Kenney indeed noted the ‘resentment’ he felt when he first met with Findlay.²⁹⁶ It is a very interesting idea to compare this to Findlay’s soaring praise two years later. This was no isolated incident, related to either Kenney’s or Findlay’s particular disposition, but was rather a general mood recognized throughout the field of propaganda agents. “Mrs. Vira B. Whitehouse, for instance, was sent to Switzerland by the Committee on Public Information. The Legation met her cordially, but, owing to the vagueness with which her instructions were defined, refused to give her the recognition and the facilities which were indispensable to her work.”²⁹⁷ Nevertheless, after change comes adaptation and governments slowly began to realize the value of information control and indeed, as Willert wrote in 1938: “Now all Foreign Offices have [...] organized contacts with journalists.”²⁹⁸

In tune with this, and almost as a notable exception in the history of propaganda work, journalism was central to propaganda efforts. The most

²⁹⁴ Haste. *Keep the Home Fires Burning*. p. 201.

²⁹⁵ Willert, Arthur. *Publicity and Propaganda in International Affairs*. *International Affairs*, vol. 17, no. 6. Royal Institute of International Affairs. Wiley, Nov. 1938. pp. 809-826. p. 810.

²⁹⁶ Kenney, *Westering*, p. 220.

²⁹⁷ Lasswell, Harold D. *Propaganda Technique in the World War*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1938. p. 27.

²⁹⁸ Willert. *Publicity and Propaganda*. p. 811.

successful propagandists in the First World War were not the pamphleteers or the cineastes, and not even the editorialists. They were journalists and editors, like Kenney.²⁹⁹ This exists as an exception because previously, no centralized, large-scale effort had been made, and later, the focus became even more state-central, as seen in the Second World War (which will be discussed in Chapters VI and VII). The First World War was in essence the golden age of the gentlemen amateurs, and organically, journalists took to their pens, so to speak. This idea was also represented in reverse, with major resources being put into play in order to have foreign neutral journalists interview British public figures.³⁰⁰

The British propagandists were also beginning to recognize the dangers of carrying out propaganda. Information gathering was no new activity, but with the sensitivity and scope now necessary, a new system was required. This marked the departure of information agents from the central trunk of the foreign services.³⁰¹ New agencies were created, and new roles. Kenney's role, being employed loosely by the Foreign Office, and yet not enjoying full diplomatic status, is an example of this slight shift.³⁰² Growing out of this idea of subtlety was also this idea of pervasiveness. "The influencing of attitudes is implicit in every function, and [...] it is incapable of complete segregation in anything like the degree to which, let us say, the purchasing of horses can be confined to a particular agency."³⁰³ This, again, is mirrored in Kenney's experience, working in part for the Legation, the Foreign Office, Reuters and both the Department and Ministry of Information. Indeed, the messy, lateral structure of early British propaganda offices—and both Kenney and Mair's rather fluid posts within them—testify to the newly-discovered, all-encompassing nature of their work.

Being a new and powerful weapon in the war, propaganda demanded investment. "It is probable that all major powers spent substantial sums to

²⁹⁹ Lasswell. *Propaganda Technique in the World War*. p. 31-32.

³⁰⁰ Davison, W. Phillips. Some Trends in International Propaganda. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 398. Sage Publications, Nov. 1971. pp. 1-13. p. 3.

³⁰¹ Lasswell. *Propaganda Technique in the World War*. p. 27.

³⁰² West, Nigel. *Mi6: British Secret Intelligence Service Operations 1909-45*. London: Panther Books, 1985. pp. 55-56.

³⁰³ Lasswell. *Propaganda Technique in the World War*. p. 16.

influence the press in neutral countries, although specifics are difficult to document.”³⁰⁴ Although Kenney’s own experience was not exactly one of funds being readily available, he was certainly responsible for large sums of money passing through the system, mainly to influence Norwegian editors and newspaper owners. This very method of personal contact in order to influence large swathes of people was also a novel idea:

One of the lessons to be drawn from the success of British propaganda in the United States is the cardinal importance of persons as means of carrying suggestion. No avenue of approach can safely be ignored, but the powers behind the impersonal agencies must be reached, and this is best managed by personal contact. The British were astute enough to work chiefly through Americans [in America], and none of their agents came to the premature disgrace and humiliation that befell Dr. Dernburg.³⁰⁵

Lasswell’s example of America is almost exactly the same as Kenney’s work and experience in Norway, even down to the failures of the German agent, Harthing. Kenney worked chiefly through Norwegians in Norway, signifying a more restrained application of influence emerging in the propaganda sector. It is worth noting that sensitivity, or restraint, is a major tenet of English School thinking; according to Herbert Butterfield, the balance of power survives on states practicing restraint.³⁰⁶ It is a compelling parallel to view Kenney’s sensitivity in navigating the balance of power in Norway with the restraint necessary to successfully maintain the balance of power on the global stage.

All of these developments are most readily seen in the dynamic organization of the state services dedicated to propaganda. Organization naturally feeds into practice, and learns from it. Insofar as propaganda organization was concerned, there was a growing sentiment that propaganda agents were not simply functions of policy; they did not simply *effect* policy, but also *affected* it. “It is important to give the propagandist a place, not only in the

³⁰⁴ Davison. *Some Trends in International Propaganda*. p. 3.

³⁰⁵ Lasswell. *Propaganda Technique in the World War*. pp . 217-18.

³⁰⁶ Sharp, Paul. Herbert Butterfield, the English School and the Civilizing Virtues of Diplomacy. *International Affairs*, vol. 79, no. 4. Royal Institute of International Affairs. Wiley, July 2008. pp. 855-878. p. 859.

actual execution of policy, but in the formation."³⁰⁷ This sentiment acknowledges the rapidly growing importance of influence over public and foreign opinion. It also clearly demonstrates the way in which Kenney's work was of extraordinary relevance to the development and implementation of international systems. The examination of his accomplishments in Norway during the First World War leaves little room to doubt that he *did* affect policy.



This chapter has detailed Kenney's general operations in Norway during the First World War. He was sent to Norway by the Foreign Office in order to assess the position of the Norwegian press and public to the belligerent parties. Upon completion of his report, Kenney was asked to return to Norway to carry out the tasks he had called for. Kenney, during his time in Norway, disseminated pro-British material, provided information to the Foreign Office, monitored the Norwegian press, suggested journalists and editors for blacklisting, and suggested propaganda policies. His efforts were largely successful in spite of the poor conditions he had to suffer. The Ministry of Information's inefficiency led him to resign his post in the summer of 1918. During his time as an agent in Norway, Kenney's relationship to his superiors in London was an interesting one. He seemed to be the driving force behind many initiatives. The people he reported to were very influential people, which places him in a powerful network of individuals capable of effecting change in British propaganda policy. Their high opinion of him also reflects on his importance to the system in development. Kenney's experience in Norway is as much an example of as it is a cause of this development. It was because of agents like Kenney that governments began to really take notice of the subtle art of influence. The First World War would forever change the relationship between the state and the press and Kenney had no small part in this evolution.

Perhaps Kenney's greatest achievement in Norway at this time was the sale of the Norwegian Telegram Bureau. This has not yet been discussed since doing so demands a significant commitment to space and understanding. Even at

³⁰⁷ Lasswell. *Propaganda Technique in the World War*. pp . 27-28.

the very beginning of his stay, Kenney remarked on the importance of uncoupling the Norwegian news agency from the German. This would go on to take years and demand from Kenney patience and skills similar to those possessed by a tightrope walker. It would go on to involve the most powerful political and media elites in the country, even the Prime Minister. It would take tact, secrecy and discretion. Rowland Kenney had all three.

CHAPTER V

THE NTB-REUTERS AFFAIR: A CASE STUDY

There were present Prime Minister Knudsen,
Foreign Minister Ihlen, Board of Trade
Minister Friis Pettersen, Telegraph Director
Heftye...³⁰⁸

In 1918, the privately owned Norwegian Telegram Bureau [NTB] was bought by a conglomerate of influential Norwegian pressmen. The move marked a shift of the international news service in Norway and opened up the bureau for contracts with a wide range of outside institutions and agencies—perhaps most significantly: British Reuters. Negotiations to seal the transaction had been in progress more or less covertly for almost two years, and took the previous owners of NTB and their international partners by surprise. What is as yet untold in accounts of this event is the manifest involvement of the British Foreign Office and Reuters in the affair, and at the centre of this chapter's argument stands the man who bridged those two institutions and the Norwegian press: namely, Rowland Kenney.

³⁰⁸ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to George Herbert Mair*. 2 Oct. 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

The story in this chapter is presented almost like a case study. The reason for this is that the event described offers a very detailed glimpse into Kenney's work, his reach, as well as his impact on a global system of propaganda. Not only is the Rowland Kenney Papers well furnished with materials regarding the affair, but there are also interesting materials found in other archives, such as the Norwegian National Archive and the Reuters Archive maintained by Thompson Reuters. The goal is to demonstrate a specific and pinpointed case of Kenney's work as a propagandist. In the previous chapter, his work was taken in overview, in order to get a full picture of his responsibilities and accomplishments. In this case, it is possible to go very deep and analyse his relationships to those with whom he worked, as well as to uncover the intricate dealings behind the scenes. The NTB-Reuters affair is a perfect demonstration of Kenney's abilities and impact.

Kenney's self-described mission when sent to Norway was covered in the last chapter. Perhaps one of the most significant points raised in his proposal was that a British agent should "develope [sic] a bureau that would fight out or absorb the Norsk Telegrambureau."³⁰⁹ That such a statement should come two years prior to the sale of NTB is not at all a coincidence. In examining the relationship between Reuters and the Foreign Office, the troubled position of NTB, as well as Kenney's activities, a very compelling argument can be made that Kenney, being a Foreign Office secret agent, was at the heart of the scheme.

THE NORWEGIAN TELEGRAMBUREAU

The event takes place within a rather convoluted set of circumstances. It is important to be at least somewhat familiar with the background elements so as to have a clear understanding of the significance of the episode. Having a good grasp of the context also means that certain aspects are more easily explained. For the scope of this chapter, there are two such background elements: the

³⁰⁹ Kenney, Rowland. *Report on the Norwegian Press*. 6 Sept. 1916. Rowland Kenney Papers. pp. 11-12.

collaboration between Reuters and the British Foreign Office (as was discussed extensively in Chapter IV) and the history of the Norwegian Telegram Bureau.

Since the creation of NTB in 1867, it had (and still has) maintained a monopoly on the international market of news into and out of Norway. This was also very much the case during WWI. Created as an offshoot of the Danish bureau Ritzau—which itself was a satellite of Wolffs Bureau in Berlin—, NTB had well-established, early ties into the news bureau ring which by the close of the 19th Century controlled most of the news-traffic around the world.³¹⁰ Wolffs, together with Havas of Paris and Reuters of London, had agreed to split the news-world into territories, each to be fed by their respective organisations. Kenney wrote: “the large international News Agencies, such as Reuters in London, Woolfs [sic] Bureau in Berlin, and the Havas Agency in Paris, had divided the world into various spheres of influence... Scandinavia had fallen into the German zone, and the Norsk [Norwegian] Telegram Bureau was naturally friendly to the Germans”.³¹¹ A Norwegian politician, Dr. Arnold Ræstad, referred to NTB in a letter as “a sub-sub-department of Wolff’s.”³¹²

The inter-bureaux competition for territories was not a casual affair. In the earliest written agreement between Reuters, Wolffs and Havas, signed in 1859, Wolffs expressly laid claim to Scandinavia.³¹³ This did not stop Julius Reuter from attempting to absorb Ritzau of Copenhagen in 1867.³¹⁴ Though he was unsuccessful, Wolffs’ territorial claim was reaffirmed in the famous ring agreement of January 1870, with a pointed clause demanding Reuters refrain from operating in territories held by Wolffs.³¹⁵

The bureaux’ control was not purely a business agreement. A document titled ‘Memorandum on the Norwegian News Service’, found in the Rowland Kenney Papers and likely written by the same Dr. Ræstad in 1917, describes Wolffs Bureau as being “opposed to [the creation of a new Norwegian bureau]

³¹⁰ Berge, Kjell Lars, et al. *Norsk Presses Historie, vol. 1.* ed. Martin Eide. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2010.

³¹¹ Kenney, Rowland. *Westering.* London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1939.

³¹² Ræstad, Arnold. *Confidential Report.* 26 Sept. 1917. Norwegian National Archive, PA-0949. p. 2. [Translation author’s own.]

³¹³ Read. *The Power of News.* p. 55.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

for reasons of a political nature, acting, as it would do, under the dictates of the German Government.”³¹⁶ This political absorption of the bureaux had begun long before the war and became most apparent in inter-bureaux dealings: as an example, it was Bismarck himself in the late 1860s who secretly sabotaged negotiations through which Reuters was attempting to acquire Wolffs.³¹⁷

The political influence on the bureaux had clear effects on the satellite organs such as NTB. With such deep-seated power behind the industry, there was little room for the smaller institutions. “It may be stated confidentially,” the Memorandum on the Norwegian News Service notes, “that the relations between NTB and Ritzau [and on to Wolffs] can not be terminated at will, e.g. after a certain amount of years, by the Norwegian Bureau, but run on indefinitely.”³¹⁸ The contract between the parent service and its satellites was rather draconian, with NTB paying a fixed annual sum to Wolffs, as well as paying all its own expenses in the news transmission between itself and Ritzau and also sharing some of Ritzau’s expenses in obtaining news from Wolffs.³¹⁹ It was laid out so as not to be directly prohibitive for NTB to communicate with other agencies (such as Reuters), but apart from the cost of such communication, there also had to be notification from NTB to Ritzau and Wolffs if this was done. It was “evident that the whole system works in such a way as to discourage very much the receiving or transmitting of news direct from or to centres outside of Copenhagen and Berlin.”³²⁰ NTB was contractually and practically within the sphere of Wolffs of Berlin, which, as was laid out in the previous section, meant that it was closely linked to the German government.

Additionally, NTB had not been very well regarded among the news professionals and consumers in Norway. It was seen by most as slow and inefficient, and it was jokingly said that NTB was an abbreviation of ‘Nogen Tid Bagefter’ [Dano-Norwegian for ‘Some Time Later’].³²¹ Consequently, competitors attempted to replace the bureau, but “owing to the connections of the

³¹⁶ *Memorandum Concerning the Norwegian News Service*. 8 Feb. 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 9.

³¹⁷ Read. *The Power of News*. p. 56.

³¹⁸ *Memorandum Concerning the Norwegian News Service*. p. 10.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1-2.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³²¹ Berge. *Norsk Presses Historie*. p. 441.

Norwegian bureau through Ritzau and Wolff with the great international news service ring, it was very difficult, not to say impossible, to start serious competition with NTB.”³²² With the start of the war, and the introduction of Rowland Kenney, however, the situation was about to change.

THE NTB AFFAIR

The ‘Memorandum Concerning the Norwegian News Service’, presumably written by Arnold Ræstad, is one of the earliest documents indicating a plan was under development in order to replace the current NTB. The document was, if the assumption is correct, written during Ræstad’s second visit to London within a year at the turn of 1916. According to NTB itself, Ræstad had taken it upon himself to try to find a way to fix the problems of the bureau and to gain a contract with Reuters.³²³ While in London, he visited with officials in the Foreign Office as well as Reuters and was told that, due to the war, Reuters saw an opportunity to gain the Scandinavian territories from Wolffs.³²⁴

Ræstad’s memorandum made the case that it was in the Allies’ interest, and especially British interest, to facilitate a change in the Norwegian bureau situation. In support of this view, it claimed that the German government had used its influence over Wolffs agency to support an anti-Allied press policy.³²⁵ This was a thinly veiled accusation that Germany was pushing propaganda through NTB. The memorandum went on to suggest that the only solution was to be found through a deal with Reuters.³²⁶ It seems clear that the purpose of the document was to persuade some British authority (most likely Reuters or the Foreign Office) that an agreement both could and should be found. Together with Kenney’s 1916 call to ‘fight out or absorb’ NTB, this document represents the early stages of planning. It is, of course, unclear whether Kenney and Ræstad had, at this point in time, spoken, and impossible to tell if Kenney had in any way

³²² *Memorandum Concerning the Norwegian News Service*. p. 5.

³²³ Olsen, Einar. *Notat om NTB og Byråforbindelsene*. 30 Dec. 2011. E-mail.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*

³²⁵ *Memorandum Concerning the Norwegian News Service*.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

influenced Ræstad to make the move. However, parallel to this, Kenney was pursuing the NTB matter as well, writing to Mair in December 1916 and declaring that NTB was useless for siphoning news from Britain into Norway and that it would be necessary to open a competing agency or await the natural reorganisation of the existing bureau.³²⁷

Again according to NTB's own historian, Ræstad returned to Norway in the spring of 1917 and presented the results of his foray to the newly formed Norwegian Press Association, which proceeded to deliberate on the matter for a considerable amount of time.³²⁸ A report written by Ræstad in September of that year gives a thorough account of the events. The report, marked 'Confidential', details his two trips to London and mentions meetings with officials from Reuters, the General Post Office and the Foreign Office. The link to the Foreign Office appears almost cursory, with a note that the Foreign Office unofficially "would be happy to see these negotiations completed."³²⁹ The report also makes a mention of Kenney (it is one of very few instances in which Kenney appears in the Norwegian archives), tellingly referring to him as "Reuters' representative here."³³⁰ The cause for Kenney's inclusion in the document is also his first documented interference with the process. According to the report, Kenney had counselled against accepting Reuters insistence that the current NTB leadership be included in the negotiations. Evidently, he had also convinced Reuters to drop the suggestion, securing the strict confidence of the negotiations between Reuters and the Norwegian Press Association.³³¹ This is no minor moment. Kenney, under guise of working for Reuters, had directed the negotiations to avoid a major hurdle. His and the Foreign Office's propaganda interests had trumped Reuters' financial interests.

³²⁷ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to George Herbert Mair*. Rowland Kenney Papers. 1 Dec. 1916.

³²⁸ Olsen. *Notat*.

³²⁹ Ræstad, *Confidential Report*. p. 3.

³³⁰ *Ibid.* This is a soft indication that Kenney's cover identity (established in Chapter IV) was operational. Whether Ræstad was aware that Kenney was actually an agent of the Foreign Office is impossible to tell, but even assuming this was the case, the fact that the cover was maintained in a confidential report presumably meant for the Norwegian press elite, is notable.

³³¹ *Ibid.*

Kenney had certainly been aware of Ræstad's meetings in London for some time before this. Immediately upon Ræstad's return to Norway, Kenney met with one of Ræstad's associates, Mr. Aars Johanssen. Kenney acted as a sort of facilitator, on his own initiative placing Johanssen—as a representative of the Norwegian Press Association, which was fundamentally an association of journalists—in contact with the owner of one of Norway's largest newspapers, Rolf Thomessen of *Tidens Tegn*. In his writings to Mair, Kenney expresses himself in a way that makes him seem to be directing the entire affair, suggesting to the parties which path to take.³³² Ultimately, his work in connecting the Association with the newspaper owners was a bridge connecting the contract with Reuters to the possibility of a new NTB. It seems plausible from the constellation of confidences that Ræstad and Johanssen were at least partly aware that Kenney was more than a Reuters journalist, though this remains mere surmise.

The preparations for a new bureau in place of NTB required rather complicated preparations, not least of which was the laying of a new communications cable from Britain to Norway. This, naturally, required more than even the most diligent press association, newspaper owner or propaganda institution could muster. Kenney's announcement to Mair that "we [presumably the cabal in Norway looking to overthrow NTB] have now the Minister for the Board of Trade and the Prime Minister enthusiastic for the proposal,"³³³ is therefore a major step in the planning phase. This particular moment also demonstrates how closely connected Kenney was with the very elite of not only the Norwegian media, but also the Norwegian political elite. If there is any doubt as to Kenney's importance to the process, a letter from Kenney about a trip to Sweden in the summer of 1917, surely gives ample evidence. Kenney was eager to impress upon his superiors in the Department of Information, that his trip should not slow the process down: "It will be a thousand pities if this should interfere with the Telegram Bureau arrangements. [...] Mr. Carnegie will tell you how necessary it is to shepherd the Norwegians if you want them to enter any

³³² Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to George Herbert Mair*. 2 Apr. 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 2.

³³³ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to George Herbert Mair*. 24 May 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 2.

fold at a given time.”³³⁴ That Kenney’s absence from the country should possibly bear such significance on the matter indicates the level of his involvement.

By autumn, the planning had entered into a difficult phase. While Ræstad had been the main negotiator on the side of the Norwegians, and had been what appears to be a close associate of Kenney’s, he proved to ultimately be unnecessary for the final transaction. The question of financing quickly became a problem with Ræstad at its unfortunate centre. According to Kenney’s letters to Mair, Ræstad staked a claim to a rather large sum of money to cover his expenses and act as a fee for his services. Two newspapermen in particular, Ola Christoffersen (of *Aftenbladet*) and Rolf Thomessen (of *Tidens Tegn*), set themselves against such an arrangement, implying that Ræstad’s interest in the matter was purely a speculative one. Christoffersen also made a remark to Kenney that Ræstad had made veiled threats, reminding him that the contract was in effect between Ræstad and Reuters. Kenney was emphatic in naming Christoffersen the “most important man with whom we have to deal.”³³⁵

Particularly interesting in this problem is Kenney’s positioning. Having worked seemingly closely with Ræstad as a sort of middleman between the Norwegian Press Association, the Foreign Office, the Department of Information and the Norwegian pressmen, Kenney was now detached from Ræstad. He was quite clear in his letters that Ræstad had not approached him about the problem, and even further, Ræstad was not aware that Kenney knew of it at all. This is significant because it separates Kenney from the interests of the press association, making much clearer his role as wholly propagandistic. Kenney’s stake in the matter became even more visible when he suggested a solution to the problem:

Perhaps the best method would be for the Special Committee to invite me to a meeting where the matter will be raised; then, whilst expressing no opinion on the matter as to the reasonableness of Dr. Ræstad’s claim, I will remind all present that we are none of us primarily interested in personal gain, and

³³⁴ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to George Herbert Mair*. 16 June 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

³³⁵ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to George Herbert Mair*. 1 Sep. 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 3.

suggest to Dr. Ræstad that he hand over the whole of the papers to me.³³⁶

The proposal alone is a manifestly telling one; that Kenney could find himself in such a position as to take complete charge of the affair from the Norwegian side, acting, as he presumably was, as Reuters' representative. He was rapidly taking centre-stage in the preparations. Added to this, Kenney obtained assurances from Christoffersen and Thomessen that they would come to him first if they were considering leaving the scheme.³³⁷

The matter came to a head in a meeting held on the 28th of September 1917. Present at the meeting were a series of newspaper editors (including Thomessen and Christoffersen), the Telegraph Director Heftye, Dr. Ræstad, and both the Foreign and Prime Ministers. The affair was certainly not to be left to chance. It is unclear whether any of Ræstad's demands were met, but he agreed nonetheless to give up the final, signed contract to a company recognised by the Norwegian government and by Reuters.³³⁸ The preparations for the establishment of a new bureau were thereby complete, not least due to Kenney's careful interventions. Kenney's work with regards to the NTB affair was therefore practically complete. The new agency was established and an offer to purchase the old NTB was accepted on March 25th, 1918.³³⁹

What is interesting to note is that Roderick Jones, the Director of Reuters, had since 1917 been engaged in the Department of Information (subsequently the Ministry of Information) as head of "cable and wireless propaganda."³⁴⁰ Jones was therefore responsible both for Reuters' business as well as propaganda policy in the Department. By March 1918, the Ministry of Information had been established, and Kenney received instructions to report to new individuals (as was discussed in Chapter IV). Regarding his work with NTB,

³³⁶ Ibid., p. 4-5.

³³⁷ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to George Herbert Mair*. 17 Sep. 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 3.

³³⁸ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to George Herbert Mair*. 2 Oct. 1917. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

³³⁹ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Sir Roderick Jones*. 25 Mar. 1918. Rowland Kenney Papers.

³⁴⁰ Read. *The Power of News*. p, 134.

Jones asked Kenney “to report direct to him.”³⁴¹ In the Rowland Kenney Papers, all material and discussion surrounding NTB after March 1918 is between Kenney and Jones, whereas all other matters are parsed through O’Neill. This undeniably is a conflict of interest.

With the new NTB in place, and the conditions for the Reuters-NTB contract being worked on, Kenney had little more to do with the matter, except reporting faithfully to Jones. One particular instance, which also serves to cast light on the episode, was a case of a slip of the tongue by a member of the American Legation. The importance of Allied “control in Norway”³⁴² apparently sent a particularly prickly Norwegian newspaper editor, Mr. Hambro of *Morgenbladet*, into a rant suggesting “that this effort to reorganise the telegraphic services was part of the Allied scheme for ‘controlling’ Norway.”³⁴³ An implication, of course, related to the truth, but perhaps put too bombastically.

The deal between NTB and Reuters remained difficult to pin down, mainly due to disagreements over the fee structure, as well as the massive task of laying a new cable to facilitate the increased flow of information. This resulted in the NTB contract with Wolffs being renegotiated at the transfer of the old firm to the new one. Kenney assured Jones that this was simply because the original Wolffs contract from 1910 had not yet expired, and that the German bureau effectively conceded their sole control over NTB in the renegotiation. Kenney had surreptitiously managed to obtain copies of both the 1910 contract and the renegotiated contract and sent these to Jones with a note that it should not be known that he had them.³⁴⁴ It appeared the Ministry was satisfied to let the matter be resolved by the overt parties, as it gave Kenney no further instructions. In due course, the new NTB did reach an agreement with Reuters and Havas.³⁴⁵

Kenney’s work, however, seems to have been impressive to the propagandists in Britain. Later in 1918, a similar coup was performed against

³⁴¹ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Herbert Charles O’Neill*. 5 Mar. 1918. Rowland Kenney Papers.

³⁴² Kenney. *Letter to Sir Roderick Jones*. 25 Mar. 1918. p. 2.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁴ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Sir Roderick Jones*. 28 May 1918. Rowland Kenney Papers.

³⁴⁵ Olsen. *Notat*.

the Swedish bureau. John Buchan, the Director of the Ministry of Information, informed Reuters in August that a new bureau had been established in Sweden, and that the contracts between the Svenska [Swedish] Telegrambureau and Reuters could now be transferred to the new Nordiska Telegrambureau.³⁴⁶ Furthermore, Buchan made it clear to Reuters that “in accordance with the high interests involved, the Ministry intend to do all in their power to fulfil their part of the obligation to prevent news from all parts of the world from reaching the Svenska Telegrambyrån.”³⁴⁷ This not only shows the immense scope of the operation Kenney undertook and its ripple effects into new propaganda policy, but also demonstrates the level at which Kenney operated.

ANALYSIS

What the NTB-Reuters case demonstrates is the extent to which the Department and Ministry of Information acted to ensure access to and control of foreign channels of news distribution in the First World War. The official history of NTB does not account for the Foreign Office or the propaganda institutions’ involvement to any realistic degree. So in terms of historical value, the case study uncovers a previously unknown factor. In terms of the thesis, without Kenney’s direct involvement, the affair might have fallen apart on numerous occasions, whether by Reuters tipping off the owners of the private NTB or by Ræstad spoiling his own contract and his relationship with the newspaper owners, or a number of other difficulties. This is a particular instance where Kenney’s work can demonstrably be shown to have had significant effects, not only on wartime propaganda, but also on the shape of the international news-agency politics.

While it is impossible to determine with any appropriate level of confidence the extent to which Kenney initiated the affair, he was certainly involved from the beginning. Naturally, there had been those in Norway who had

³⁴⁶ Buchan, John. *Letter to Messrs Reuter's Telegram Co.*. 17 August 1918. London: Reuters Archive, Thomson Reuters.

³⁴⁷ Buchan, John. *Letter to Messrs Reuter's Telegram Co.*. 22 August 1918. London: Reuters Archive, Thomson Reuters.

disliked NTB and who had sought to replace or undermine its operations long before Kenney arrived. Indeed, several attempts were launched, and promptly failed, because of NTB's monopoly of news from the governing big-three agreement.³⁴⁸ It could of course be argued that the war destabilised enough of the situation for a real threat to be mounted, and that Kenney's involvement could of course all be a matter of fortuitous coincidence. Kenney, looking for a way to open the Norwegian news-market to British propaganda, realised he had a sharp ally in Ræstad who was already on the path to securing a contract. However, while unproven, one other, quite likely scenario is that Kenney recruited Ræstad—who was already sympathetic to the cause—and steered him to London. In support of this, one could present the facts: a) that Kenney was intimately aware of Ræstad's trips to London while they were still on-going, in spite of Ræstad's very cursory contact with the Foreign Office, b) that Ræstad's trips to London took place at the precise moment when Kenney began his work in Norway, c) that the immediacy of the issue is much more present for Kenney than for Ræstad, and finally d) that it was Kenney who gathered the newspaper owners and linked them to Ræstad and his negotiations with Reuters, thereby materialising the true window of opportunity.

Kenney also seems to have maintained an apparent lack of interest in the business, at least toward those directly involved. He is not mentioned in attendance in any meeting (even the meeting in which he suggested he could challenge Ræstad for control of the contract). Instead, his conversation with the interested parties appear to have happened in confidence, information kept closely guarded. The assurances extracted from the concerned newspaper owners, and his handling of Ræstad's fee-demands are excellent examples of this type of behaviour. Kenney's role seems to exist behind the curtain, perhaps in some way pulling the strings in secret and unofficially. The suggestion of taking the contract from Ræstad is the most direct involvement in the affair throughout the documents, perhaps save for his introduction of Ræstad's man to the newspaper owners. The remainder of his action in the affair is fairly consultative. This, of course, points to the idea that his role was secret, at least to some or even all of the primary parties.

³⁴⁸ *Memorandum Concerning the Norwegian News Service.*



There is no doubt that the news agencies were under strain to be channels for propaganda purposes from different sides. Kenney was at the forefront of a push not only to use NTB as a channel, but to recreate it and redefine the international press in Norway. Indeed it was largely successful, the new company taking over the old NTB's contract and opening up the ties to other news agencies. Kenney was a part of restructuring the news media of Norway, a restructuring that would survive The Second World War and the Cold War; in fact, today's NTB has its roots in the company created in 1918.

CHAPTER VI

THE INTERWAR YEARS

...the hammer fell, however, in spite of your generous and valiant efforts, and here I am doing my best...³⁴⁹

Rowland Kenney's work in the interwar period is very interesting and even raises countless points for the purpose of this thesis, but with the space afforded here the events must be paraphrased. It is not exaggeration to suggest Kenney's activities during this period could be the subject of at least two more theses, but it is in accordance with this, not in spite of it, that this thesis omits a very detailed discussion at this point; it cannot be afforded to give it the consideration it deserves. While Kenney was important and showed great nous and skill during this period, advancing his already impressive position, the main focus remains with his work in Norway, if only to give a suitably detailed and analytical account.

Another reason to avoid going too deeply into this episode, is that Kenney's private collection of documents—an extraordinary resource for his

³⁴⁹ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Sir Robert Vansittart*. 4 Nov. 1939. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 3.

work in Norway—here falters considerably. Documentation from 1919 until 1939 is sparse. It is therefore difficult to understand with any sufficient confidence what exactly his activities were in this period, though there are tantalizing clues. What is undeniably true is that the man did not disappear in 1918 and reappear, fresh-faced and eager, in 1939, and it serves the reader to at least offer a summary of the known arc during these two decades. Small arguments as to Kenney's position and influence in developing an international system are made, but in large part, this section simply traces the movements and interests of the man. It also serves to deliver some context to Kenney's role going into the Second World War, as well as the position of Great Britain and Norway leading up to the war.

HE WAS A CIVIL SERVANT

After his resignation from the Ministry of Information and return to Great Britain, Kenney reported to Carnegie and Tyrrell at the Foreign Office. The focus at the Foreign Office was preparations for the Peace Conference. Kenney was subsequently made Assistant Commissioner on the Foreign Office's Political Mission to Poland. The object for Kenney was to assess the Polish position "from the point of view of the Polish Left Wing."³⁵⁰

In this Kenney proved characteristically capable. Through his travels to and within Poland, Kenney met with dignitaries and royalty. From December 1918 until February 1919, he travelled and reported.³⁵¹ On his arrival in Paris on the 2nd of February, 1919, Kenney was taken the very same evening to meet with A. J. Balfour, then of course Foreign Secretary, to tell of his findings.³⁵² This is surely an extraordinary testament to Kenney's influence at the time. A short time later, Kenney was again sent to Poland, with Esme Howard, who had gone

³⁵⁰ Kenney, *Westering*, p. 240.

³⁵¹ Documents from this period are extensive and exist in the Rowland Kenney Papers. I would like to encourage further study into Kenney's work in Poland, though, as mentioned, doing so here would be leaps and bounds beyond what can be afforded both in terms of scope and depth.

³⁵² Kenney, *Westering*.

on request from Lloyd George himself. While obviously flippant, Kenney apparently dreamt up the European Union at a party in Warsaw during this trip. “I suggested that the only sensible way to settle our international troubles would be by the establishment of a United States of Europe [...] I had no supporters; it was a lively party, and I was shoved under the table.”³⁵³ While Kenney cannot in all likelihood claim to have grandfathered the union in its current form, his work in Poland and in Paris do tell of a man shaping policy and personally advising some of the most influential figures of the time.

He returned again to Paris, noted a dejected mood, but was eager to do more work.³⁵⁴ More than a decade later, Kenney related this part of the story to Arthur Willert—the same Arthur Willert who authored the cited piece titled ‘Publicity and Propaganda in International Affairs’ in 1938—: having completed his Polish assignment, and with nothing more to achieve in Paris, Kenney spoke to Carnegie and Tyrrell at the Foreign Office who suggested he would be given some leave and then be sent on a Mission to Germany, before continuing on within the Political Intelligence Department.³⁵⁵ A German Mission in the wake of the First World War speaks, of course, to Kenney’s stature. The prognosis for his career seemed on the rise.

With a view to experience the thrill of flight, Kenney was authorised to return to London by air and climbed into the observation seat of a D.H.9—an open biplane. The Canadian pilot ferried him across the channel safely, landing at Lympne to refuel, whereupon Kenney recalled some complaints made about the fuel tank. Upon climbing again, they encountered heavy fog and the pilot determined to land³⁵⁶:

Four times we dived, without result. It was the most weird experience. Twice we came down over woods, so low that twigs in the tree-tops scraped our under-carriage. The fog was so thick that we were almost on the ground before we could see anything. On our fifth dive we did hit the ground. I had just time to see a farm and the surrounding fields rushing up to us, and entertain one desire, before we struck.

³⁵³ Kenney, *Westering*, p. 279.

³⁵⁴ Kenney, *Westering*, p. 280.

³⁵⁵ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to A. Willert*. 24 July 1931. Rowland Kenney Papers.

³⁵⁶ Kenney, *Westering*.

I had no fear, no sense of horror. There was simply this one desire, absorbing my whole conscious being, for sudden death.³⁵⁷

Instead, both Kenney and the unnamed pilot survived, miraculously, though Kenney would be plagued for the rest of his life with medical problems due to the crash-landing. The immediate problems were a broken right arm, which due to poor setting at the hospital had to be rebroken without anaesthetic; several episodes of collapse, including a heart attack; two broken ribs which had punctured his lungs; and finally chronic pneumonia and sciatica. More heart attacks followed, resulting in the discovery of a “nine-inch thrombus of the femoral vein”³⁵⁸ in his left leg. In his own words: “the air crash left me with a crooked arm, a crooked leg, a spine which was only free from pain in one position, and worst of all, ruined nerves.”³⁵⁹

Relating this story serves three purposes. First, and most obviously, it simply advances the narrative of Kenney’s life, so that the reader is aware of what kind of trouble he had undergone during this time. Second, it serves as a foundation for an argument that in spite of Kenney’s incredible achievements, his health (as well as, of course, his radical politics and impoverished background) hindered his professional advancement. And, finally, Kenney’s misfortune led to a significant change in Treasury policy.

Kenney came to at a massive financial loss and was eventually told “the Treasury repudiated financial responsibility for any accident to an officer travelling by air, unless he were under definite instructions to do so.”³⁶⁰ Kenney himself appears convinced that the regulation to that effect was drafted based on his own accident and of course found it very unfair. Not only did he lose his salary while recovering, but he also lost a period of his pension.³⁶¹ It is therefore no surprise that the details of his complaints feature in the letter to Willert, written twelve years after the fact.

³⁵⁷ Kenney. *Westering*, p. 281.

³⁵⁸ Kenney. *Westering*, p. 284.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁰ Kenney. *Letter to Willert*, 24 July 1931. p. 2.

³⁶¹ Kenney. *Letter to Willert*. 24 July 1931.

As mentioned previously, little is known from the period of 1920-1939. A newspaper article published in *Norsk Tidend* and translated either for or by Kenney, appears in the collection with the following summary:

When he returned to the Foreign Office in 1920, he was appointed to the Political Intelligence Department as specialist on the Northern European countries. This department was abolished, and Mr. Kenney was transferred to the News Department, where he continued to work as head of the Cultural Section until the outbreak of war in 1939. For many years Mr. Kenney was almost alone in this publicity work, which was responsible for informing the world of British cultural values. Later, when the importance of the work came to be recognized, a semi-official organisation, the British Council was set up, and Mr. Kenney, as was natural with his experience had a great deal to do with the establishment of this institution, and with training and advising the staff in their work. Right up to the outbreak of war in 1939 he was the Foreign Office representative on nearly all the various British Council Committees.³⁶² [Emphasis in original.]

While it may appear to be a poor source, it is in fact the most succinct record of his activities during this time. Kenney's appointment to the Political Intelligence Department (PID), as had also been the plan before his fateful crash, is in itself a valuable point.

The PID was formed within the Foreign Office as part of the preparations for the peace conference after the First World War. It held a series of functions, primarily producing reports detailing political developments and realities in a wide range of countries, which were subsequently "circulated to the War Cabinet and the principal officers of the state."³⁶³ Erik Goldstein contends that the creation of the PID "was clearly motivated by the obvious eclipse of the Foreign Office in policy formulation"³⁶⁴ by Lloyd George's informal secretariat. The PID was thus expressly populated by "the best available experts"³⁶⁵ in order to gain authority and clout. In the literature, the PID is nearly invariably

³⁶² An old Friend of Norway. *Norsk Tidend*. Rowland Kenney Papers.

³⁶³ Goldstein, Erik. *Winning the Peace: British Diplomatic Strategy, Peace Planning, and the Paris Peace Conference, 1916-1920*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991. p. 63.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 58.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

described as “highly effective”, in light of “the calibre of the individuals employed,” giving it the nickname “The Ministry of All the Talents.”³⁶⁶ By proxy, it can be argued that Kenney’s deliberate placement within the PID is a clear reference to his abilities and value. The PID also united a group of people who had played or would play rather important roles in Kenney’s professional life. The Department included Fullerton-Carnegie, Reginald ‘Rex’ Leeper, Lewis Bernstein Namier, and Robert Vansittart among others.³⁶⁷ In a handful of cases, it is likely that Kenney first met these people here.

The department steadily grew in influence, eventually being regarded as an important and highly effective development in the Foreign Office. At the Paris peace conference, the patron of the PID, Lord Hardinge—who at the time also was the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office—was “the superintending ambassador of the British delegation.”³⁶⁸ Having been created for the purpose of aiding the British peace aims, this would be the height of the department’s influence. In the following several months, in spite of great support for its work within the Foreign Office, the department was wound down due to Treasury cuts. It would remain obvious that the PID had played a very important role in the revitalisation of the Foreign Office, and in fostering a group of highly successful diplomatists and civil servants who would colour the Foreign Office for the decades to come.³⁶⁹ Not least among them was Kenney.

In addition to his work in the PID, Kenney’s purportedly instrumental role in the establishment and running of the British Council is an important point to make with regards to the thesis. Kenney recalled his work with the British Council in a 1945 memorandum to Laurence Collier who at the time was the British Ambassador to Norway and had worked with Kenney through the Second World War (see Chapter VII). Kenney saw the foundations for the British Council arising from the ashes of the First World War. With the war over, and plenty of propagandists to spare, the government began to consider how it

³⁶⁶ Goldstein, Erik. *The Foreign Office and Political Intelligence 1918-1920. Review of International Studies*, vol. 14, no. 4. Cambridge University Press, Oct. 1988. pp. 275-288. p. 285

³⁶⁷ Goldstein. *Winning the Peace*.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 85-86.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*; For a detailed discussion of the Political Intelligence Department, see Chapter 2 of Erik Goldstein’s book, *Winning the Peace*.

might increase British cultural value abroad. This coincided with a particularly nasty backlash against the concept of propaganda—one might recall the point made in Chapter II, that propaganda often demonises itself—which in turn shut down large swathes of the official machinery and certainly left little room for the remains to grow.³⁷⁰

One of the granules left was precisely Kenney, who had settled once again in the News Department of the Foreign Office. Together with one other colleague, Kenney populated a section “concerned with certain publicity which had been, apparently by accident, left over from the war, [...and] dealt with the many requests for publicity material which were constantly being made by H.M. Embassies, Legations and Consulates.”³⁷¹ In a battle for public money for the section—and, recognising the shadow cast upon the term—Kenney began substituting the phrase ‘propaganda work’ for ‘cultural work’ and lobbied the Treasury for a ruling that funds may be spent in this regard. After what he claimed was “many years of effort”³⁷² he succeeded, and landed a small sum of £1,000 per year.

Even with this relative pittance, Kenney recalled making headway. “The results of even the small amount of cultural publicity we could get for our £1000 a year were such that it soon became obvious to everyone who considered the matter that more money must come from somewhere.”³⁷³ He managed to raise the Treasury funds allotted to £2,500 per annum, but lost ground again when the economy ground to a halt at the start of the 1930s. Around this same time, Rex Leeper (who will be properly introduced in Chapter VII) made his way into the News Department, and in spite of initial misgivings, took an interest in Kenney’s section. He “became enthusiastic about it and determined that it should be strengthened and its work considerably expanded.”³⁷⁴ Through Leeper’s enthusiasm the small section in the News Department went through a series of renditions in 1934, including as a part of the short-lived Cultural

³⁷⁰ Kenney, Rowland. *Memorandum to Laurence Collier*. 18 Sep. 1945. Rowland Kenney Papers.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

³⁷² *Ibid.*

³⁷³ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Relations Committee in which it was joined by the Travel Association and the Empire Marketing Board among others, and the Advisory Committee for the Promotion of International Relations.³⁷⁵ Finally, “on 14 November Leeper informed the Foreign Secretary of the formation of an as yet unnamed committee under the chairmanship of Lord Tyrrell, and on 5 December there took place its first meeting at which it was agreed that it should be called ‘The British Committee for Relations with Other Countries’.”³⁷⁶ This was the organisation which would soon be known as the British Council.

In the academic literature, such as Frances Donaldson’s *The British Council: The First Fifty Years*³⁷⁷ and Edward Corse’s *A Battle for Neutral Europe*,³⁷⁸ Leeper is of course the man credited with the founding of the British Council. However, as Kenney’s account emerges, this might be kindly called a simplistic understanding. Kenney himself states that “Mr. (now Sir) Rex Leeper and I were responsible for the founding of the British Council.”³⁷⁹ Nevertheless, interestingly—and perhaps disappointingly—Kenney does not appear at all in either Donaldson’s or Corse’s books. This may problematize Kenney’s own assertion that he was essential to the British Council’s formation. However, Kenney’s continued elusiveness with regards to nearly all aspects of his work in nearly all alternative sources other than his own Rowland Kenney Papers, suggests that this is not a specific problem, but a general one. For whatever reason (some explored in this chapter), Kenney has been forgotten in so many respects that it is difficult to believe he has in this instance inflated his own import. Additionally, in Kenney’s defence, the memorandum about the British Council outlining Kenney’s recollections was addressed to Collier, a close colleague of Leeper’s, who would doubtless have recognised and challenged any falsity.³⁸⁰ The most inviting conclusion, then, becomes the idea that Kenney is truthful in his statements about founding the British Council, but that in the

³⁷⁵ Corse, Edward. *A Battle for Neutral Europe: British Cultural Propaganda during the Second World War*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

³⁷⁶ Donaldson, Frances. *The British Council: The First Fifty Years*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1984. p. 28.

³⁷⁷ Donaldson. *The British Council*.

³⁷⁸ Corse. *A Battle for Neutral Europe*.

³⁷⁹ Kenney. *Memorandum to Laurence Collier*. 18 Sep. 1945. p. 1.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

literature, because of the paucity of sources available to the public concerning Kenney (outside of the recently discovered Rowland Kenney Papers) he has been overshadowed by more immediately prominent figures, like Leeper and Vansittart, for example. This again highlights the importance of the thesis which, in admittedly grandiose terms, sets the record straight on a man left behind in the history books and the archives.

A final note on the British Council in this context arises from the fact that at its bedrock lay the British propaganda expertise from the First World War, particularly manifest in Kenney himself. The British Council practiced—indeed, practices—what Jacques Ellul (discussed in Chapter II) would call ‘sociological propaganda’, which is the use of propaganda in order to consolidate or project the sense of belonging to a group: what is often referred to as cultural propaganda.³⁸¹ A full discussion of the theories behind such cultural propaganda is helpfully laid out in chapter two of Corse’s *A Battle for Neutral Europe*.³⁸² Historically, however, the difficulty in distinguishing political from cultural propaganda—with the British Council and the Ministry of Information as proxies for this duel—materialised in the final months of peace before the Second World War. In February 1939, it was agreed that in case of war, the Ministry of Information would absorb the British Council entirely, assuming responsibility for its staff and output until it could be restored in peacetime.³⁸³

What followed was a drawn-out debate between several interests within the sphere of British propaganda. The original proposal was put down, replaced instead by a solution of combination. The Ministry of Information agreed that insofar as the British Council engaged in cultural and educational work, it was outside of the expertise of the Ministry and should continue these tasks undisturbed. However, any activity concerning true propaganda, including all work concerning film, would have to be previously approved by the Ministry,

³⁸¹ Ellul. *Propaganda*.

³⁸² Corse. *A Battle for Neutral Europe*.

³⁸³ Donaldson. *The British Council*, p. 69.

and a liaison position was created for this to work.³⁸⁴ It is remarkable, then, to read Kenney's own thoughts on this careful division of labours:

We still held to the word 'cultural', and worked it into the title, because after careful enquiry we found that both in the Foreign Office and in the Treasury, as well as among outside bodies whose support we were canvassing, we should have met with resistance had we suggested that the activities should be extended in any directions which could be called political. Thus the British Council, which has since grown to such dimensions and absorbed such an enormous amount of public money, was limited in its scope purely for opportunist reasons, and in my opinion there is no reason whatever why the work subsequently undertaken by the Foreign Division of the Ministry of Information and that done by The British Council should not be carried out by one organisation.³⁸⁵

The entire memorandum to Collier is virtually built up toward this conclusion, Kenney only coasting through his role in the Council's founding so as to establish that it was and is simply a tool for propaganda, though propaganda by another name.

What is perhaps the most remarkable thing about this period is his own cryptic message on the subject. His autobiography, *Westering*, was written during this time and published in 1939. In the book, Kenney goes to great length to describe all of the episodes of his life, from early childhood to the then-present day. Part one of the book, dealing with his childhood up until he became a young professional in his twenties is exactly one hundred pages long. Part two, about his work with the unions and the socialist press before the outbreak of the First World War spans one hundred and fourteen pages. And his life during and immediately after the war is described in part three, over ninety pages. The following part, titled 'Bondage' and ostensibly covering the period between 1920 and 1939, is a simple single page with two ominous paragraphs, worth repeating here in full:

³⁸⁴ A full account of the debate and surrounding the British Council and the Ministry of Information can be found in Donaldson's book, chapter 5. Donaldson. *The British Council*. pp. 68-81.

³⁸⁵ Kenney. *Memorandum to Laurence Collier*. 18 Sep. 1945. p. 2.

Chapter I

In the spring of 1920 I accepted an offer of a post in the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office, where I have continued to serve in various capacities ever since; and the day of deliverance is not yet.

I hope I shall live long enough for much to be forgotten, lest some unkind friend defile my grave with the epitaph:

*He was a civil servant.*³⁸⁶

This, remarkably, is it. Kenney, who was not a man to let one word do the job when ten could do the same, was surprisingly taciturn about his activities during this period. The obvious question is why, which can only be answered by speculation. Perhaps the most exciting theory would be that Kenney was engaged in work so secret in nature that he would not speak of it. Perhaps his role in the British Council would betray its purportedly benign intentions. This would also explain the glaring lack of material that he kept from this time. While he did make references to some of his activities in Norway in the First World War, it is obvious that he left a great deal of sensitive information out in his autobiography. While enticing, a more likely theory would be that Kenney, defeated from his trouble with the air-crash and generally dejected by his work, had little eagerness to talk about it.

The truth, as usual, must lie somewhere in between. It is likely that his condition after 1919 was poor, and he fought for years to be given what he felt was owed to him. This must have dampened his spirits considerably. In addition, he was by all accounts still engaged in propaganda and intelligence work, by its very nature a sensitive field, where secrecy was, and is, a virtue. By 1939, when the book was published, he may have had a sense of what was coming, and may have found it irresponsible to lay bare the inner workings of his profession, especially while still engaged in it. Kenney would return to Oslo as Press Attaché at the start of the Second World War, the same position he had left more than twenty years earlier.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁶ Kenney. *Westering*, p. 301.

³⁸⁷ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Kit Kenney*. 6 Sept. 1939. Rowland Kenney Papers.

The Glass Ceiling

Were the world a simpler place, one's stature and professional rank within a system might adequately provide a measure of one's particular success and influence therein. In such a world, the reader might expect Kenney's name, given his described accomplishments thus far, to be one rising in the ranks of the Foreign Office, for example. One might, at this juncture, expect to see him at least courted for higher office; perhaps heading a department, perhaps rising to join ever tighter circles of power, or beginning to fill the contours of an *éminence grise*. Were the world a simpler place.

Kenney had, after all, arrived—from striking, if not abject, poverty on the outskirts of industry, through a string of more or less backbreaking jobs reserved for the lowest orders, through unions and radical journalism both mocked and feared by the powers that be, through war and diplomacy and tact and secrecy—at the door of the elite.³⁸⁸ If the reader can forgive the out-of-place imagery, it is certainly tantalising to imagine the open biplane soaring over the Channel, and in the observer's seat: a man at the prime of his life, climbing to increasing heights, ever upward against the odds. And then a faulty fuel tank. And then the fog. And then oblivion. As if to say: here, but no further.

The drama is not far from the truth. Kenney's career at the conclusion of his affairs at Versailles, indeed, at the moment between flight and impact, seems if not at its peak, then at least at the immediate point of levelling off. Professionally, Kenney became dead in the water, and his accelerating ascension was suddenly, though perhaps not unexpectedly, curtailed. The crash and subsequent illness is of course a part of the reason for this, but there were more deliberate causes as well. His political background and convictions—coupled with the stifled atmosphere of career mobility within the civil service sector, and indeed in the general British society of the time—suspended him.

The argument is made here to counter one particularly naïve criticism, as well as to strike a point against what can be described as a myopic view of historical understanding: the idea that it is of ultimate importance to take into

³⁸⁸ Kenney, *Westering*.

account the persons and indeed personalities only at the top of a structure. It is of course natural that academics examine those with obvious influence. However, the result can perhaps be described as a sort of hierarchical Darwinism, where history favours the tip of the iceberg, and where historiography provides a feedback loop, isolating a select few. Of course, not all historical writing suffers this fault, and this author does not wish to suggest it is inherently wrong to focus on leaders and pioneers. The point is simply that there are uncountable opportunities to reach an even greater understanding of not only history, but also of the functioning of systems, if there is an effort to include those less-than-titular characters. In this spirit, the thesis provides ample support for a crusade for the forgotten.

One of the main problems with this time-period is that it is entirely unclear what Kenney's position was within the system. His return as Press Attaché in 1939 of course bookends the period at a level grade, but the reference in *Westering* to his service "in various capacities"³⁸⁹ is tantalizingly vague. The cited newspaper article of course references to him as the head of the Cultural Section in the News Department of the Foreign Office, though no confirmation of this exists, and other clues seem to counteract the statement. Letters from early in the Second World War place Kenney in connection with film propaganda, an exciting new venture, to be sure.³⁹⁰ In letters to Sir Robert Vansittart, the renowned diplomat who was also involved in film, Kenney discusses film propaganda policy with authority. "Pity our BRITISH FILM COUNCIL was not formed and financed when first proposed! We should have been in a position for active operations when the war started."³⁹¹ The use of the possessive 'our' here is interesting, of course. Before the outbreak of war, Kenney was a bridge between the film industry and the Foreign Office, and it seems he was well liked.³⁹² In a memorandum allegedly (according to Kenney's scribble) dictated by E.H. Carr and signed by Colonel Bridge, Kenney's superiors at the Ministry of

³⁸⁹ Kenney, *Westering*. p. 301.

³⁹⁰ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Sir Robert Vansittart*. 4 Nov. 1939. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

³⁹¹ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Sir Robert Vansittart*. 24 Nov. 1939. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

³⁹² Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Sir Robert Vansittart*. 29 Jan. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

Information during the Second World War, Kenney is referred to as “a senior Officer” with a salary of “£1,000 a year.”³⁹³ He had certainly received some recognition, but was doubtless still very low on the ladder. Another clue lies within the previously cited letter from 1931, wherein Kenney hints that he is regarded as a ‘temporary’ within the civil service.³⁹⁴

While Kenney may now have slipped from the historical records unfairly, his employers most certainly had not forgotten about his past. Before joining the Foreign Office in 1916, Kenney had been an active and vocal opponent to the establishment. He was a radical. To sum up in a grossly inadequate manner: Kenney’s work as a young man, on the railway or as a navvy or in the mines meant that he was useful to the Labour press since he “could write of labour from actual experience.”³⁹⁵ With an apparent talent for journalism, Kenney rose quickly from writing a few articles for the *English Review* about the railroad strikes to becoming the editor of the newly cast radical labour publication the *Daily Herald*.³⁹⁶ Throughout, he was neither shy nor careful: “my policy on the paper was one of no compromise with the enemy—the ‘capitalist.’”³⁹⁷

In his vitriol against the establishment, through the megaphone that the *Daily Herald* became, there was in his own words “a case quite strong enough to get me gaoled for a considerable period.”³⁹⁸ Even the Labour Party grew angry at these radicals:

The ‘big guns’ in the Labour Party detested us. We represented only a small dissident minority which, they believed, was never happy except when sniping at the solid, sensible majority of the Party—and themselves [. . .] I scarcely blame them.³⁹⁹

With this history, and with an obvious predisposition to a radical political viewpoint and a flair in its exposition, it is no surprise that his relationship with

³⁹³ *Letter to Waterfield*. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 2.

³⁹⁴ Kenney. ‘Letter to Willert.’ 24 July 1931. p. 2.

³⁹⁵ Kenney, *Westering*. p. 163.

³⁹⁶ Kenney, *Westering*; Steed, William. *Letter to Mr. Kenney*. 7 June 1912. Rowland Kenney Papers.

³⁹⁷ Kenney, *Westering*. p. 183.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

the government, even as an employee, was strained. His irreverent disdain was not well hidden, and his letters and memoranda throughout his service, though mostly pleasant and professional, often carried in their sarcasm a hint of acrimony.

It is also evident in his letters and reports that dealing with various officials within civil service was at times difficult. Especially striking is his careful and almost methodological gratitude expressed at every instance whereupon a more or less unlikely person could bear to hear him out. Findlay, the Ambassador to Norway during the First World War, was described as a stiff and isolated aristocrat. However, Kenney writes: "I feel that it was greatly to his credit that he not only had the patience to try to understand my point of view on politics and social questions—which must have been for a time almost insufferable to him—but to come to tolerate me and them, and ultimately give me his whole confidence."⁴⁰⁰ Throughout both the autobiography as well as his letters, he makes special mention of those figures who tolerated him, surely an indication that these were special events for the man. Regardless of whether or not Kenney was eager and itching to move forward, it is clear that it would be difficult for those in charge to elevate someone with such outspoken and controversial political ideals.

On the other hand, while in a very real sense a detriment to further advancement, there is merit to the idea that this had also helped his career thus far. In particular, his mission in Poland was largely informed and buttressed by his leftist leanings, and this was in all likelihood also a factor for his placement in Norway (as the reader might recall, it was the dockers' union leader Ben Tillett who ostensibly offered up Kenney to the Foreign Office for the mission). Kenney was likely looked upon as useful within a certain set of bounds. To put an overly dramatic spin on it, Kenney could infiltrate more leftist societies and social circles effectively. There is obviously also a rich history of the British establishment making use of leftists, such as, perhaps most infamously, Kim Philby (who may have crossed paths with Kenney through his work with the

⁴⁰⁰ Kenney, *Westering*. p. 228.

Special Operations Executive in 1940).⁴⁰¹ His political leanings were a proverbial double-edged sword.

It is also manifestly true that the upper echelons of the Foreign Office were difficult to reach for anyone. The general rule was that the higher the position, the more locked down that position would be. Recognizing the stiffness of the system, as well as a need to incorporate the Diplomatic Service with the Foreign Office, efforts were made to open up mobility both internally and externally. A series of articles in 1919 and 1920 in the influential journal *New Europe*, railed against “the closed society of the Foreign Office based on an unsound classification of function and a survival of class favour.”⁴⁰² And while reforms were pursued and to some degree accomplished, tradition remained tenacious. Between 1919 and 1939, only sixteen men held positions at the levels of Permanent, Deputy and Assistant Under-Secretaries, and Chief Clerks.⁴⁰³ This is a remarkably small number, indicating a clear rigidity in the system. Additionally, ten of those sixteen men spent the entirety of the 20-year, interwar period in the Foreign Office.⁴⁰⁴ While there were some improvements in mobility in the lower levels of the chain, “it is not even true that continuity was lost at lower levels.”⁴⁰⁵ The interwar years thus became more of the same for the Foreign Office, with mild improvements in lower-level mobility, but without any real opening up higher up on the ladder.

Kenney describes his own employment during the period:

For over twenty years I have been engaged in the News Department of the Foreign Office on such work as is now regarded as necessary for propaganda purposes.

Now that positions in the New Foreign Publicity Department have been allocated, I am placed in a subordinate

⁴⁰¹ Seale, Patrick, and Maureen McConnville. *Philby: The Long Road to Moscow*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1973.

⁴⁰² Steiner, Zara, and M. L. Dockrill. The Foreign Office Reforms, 1919-21. *The Historical Journal*, vol. 17, no. 1. Cambridge University Press, Mar 1974. pp. 131-156. p. 132.

⁴⁰³ Lerner, Christina. The Amalgamation of the Diplomatic Service with the Foreign Office. *Journal of Contemporary History*. vol 7, no. 1/2. Sage Publications, Jan 1972. pp. 107-126. p. 114.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

position. Men who have only recently become British subjects and who have really no experience of this work are made heads of sections; I am not.⁴⁰⁶

Kenney was undoubtedly disappointed at his own progress within the system, and was not afraid to let his superiors know. By the time the Second World War had begun, it was clear that Kenney was aware of the limits to his rise. In another letter to Vansittart, he writes of Foreign Office gossip he has heard: "That man Rowland Kenney would have been put in charge of Foreign Publicity if he'd had any natural sense for intrigue, and hidden his dislike and contempt for the crowd he had to work with, and under.' I don't believe it."⁴⁰⁷ While it might be a mistake to rely too heavily on compliments about himself cited from gossip, it certainly shows his own feelings on the subject, and given the context, it is hard to disqualify the central idea.

A combination of the inherently choking structure of the workplace, his own ineligibility due to his political fervour, and his debilitating physical condition following his crash left him at a standstill. It would therefore be a mistake to attempt to glean any particular qualitative conclusions about his influence based solely on his position. Kenney was likely undervalued, even though he still had a significant part to play in the coming war.

BRITAIN AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

It is, as with Chapter III and the First World War, important to set the stage for the Second World War, so as to place Kenney's activities in a clear context. Again similarly to Chapter III, the purpose is not here to give an exhaustive history of Britain and Norway and their roles in the war, since it is assumed that the reader has an understanding of this picture. Rather, the object here is to establish some sort of framework understanding of the relevant developments pertaining to Kenney's immediate sphere of influence. Britain's position and aims should

⁴⁰⁶ Kenney, Rowland. 'Letter to Sir Robert Vansittart'. 6 Oct. 1939. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 2.

⁴⁰⁷ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Sir Robert Vansittart*. 24 Nov. 1939. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

highlight why Kenney's area of expertise was again called into action. The section is tied off with an examination of how and under what circumstances the British propaganda machinery was revived, giving a neat run-up into Kenney's wartime activity.

The British Position, part two

Britain's position and aims with regard to the Second World War is a topic that has been—and indeed continues to be—covered so extensively as to nearly make its inclusion here redundant. Nearly, because with such a vast library of literature on the subject, it is entirely helpful to offer some sort of focus and keep close a more detailed and to-the-point context of the issues at hand. The objective of the thesis is to bring to light the development of modern systems of information control and propaganda, as well as establish Kenney's markedly important role in this regard. Therefore, this section will examine the British position and aims through such a lens.

While appeasement remains a contentious issue in British diplomatic history as regards the Second World War, it is not directly relevant here, save for a short demonstration of the likely motives for the policy, and extending these motives to cover a further understanding of British national identity at the dawn of the war. Such an understanding assists in the idea of the kinds of commitments Britain was prepared to make and can be tied to its goals with the use of propaganda. A useful contemplation of the main arguments of the issue is found in Stephen G. Walker's article 'Solving the Appeasement Puzzle' published in the *British Journal of International Studies* in 1980. His analysis of several competing theories virtually leads him to conclude that Britain was constrained by imperial overreach, as well as the negative effects of the Depression, which led to a lack of interest and resources (both physical and symbolic) in dealing with foreign affairs.⁴⁰⁸ Commitments had to be prioritised. To pull and prod somewhat at this idea leads to a supposition that Britain perhaps was stretched

⁴⁰⁸ Walker, Stephen G. Solving the Appeasement Puzzle: Contending Historical Interpretation of Diplomacy during the 1930s. *British Journal of International Studies*. vol. 6, no. 3. Oct. 1980. pp. 219-246. p. 240.

thin in its international relations, and was struggling to retain a position of power. This, obviously, has interesting effects on primary tools of power projection, among which propaganda and information control are prominent.

The early days of the war are often characterised from the British side as the 'Phoney War', considering the lack of any outright commitment of forces on the continent.⁴⁰⁹ This was a result of a lack of Allied preparation, both practically and diplomatically, for war. Primarily, then, the early stages of the war were spent trying to rally together and coordinate allies. Neutral Europe was a prime target from which to draw support.⁴¹⁰ The result was therefore an increased interest, as was seen in the First World War, in obtaining and consolidating a strong leadership position for Britain in the Allied constellation. Naturally, the most effective method of reaching such a position would be through swaying these nations to the British and allied side: "to overcome inadequate pre-war preparation, and the effect of Britain's appeasement policy on neutral opinion, which entertained serious doubts regarding its capacity and will to fight."⁴¹¹ Propaganda, again, was at the forefront of British strategic aims from the beginning.

Thus, the British position and aims, at least at the outset of the Second World War, were fairly similar to those of the First. Propaganda was rather quickly deemed an effective method of achieving certain strategic aims and solidifying the British position as a spearhead of the Allied forces. Gathering the support of neutral countries was seen as an important objective. With this in mind, it is clear that British wartime relations with foreign powers were of great importance to policy. As already mentioned, the position of Britain relative to the neutral countries was a very important factor. Norway, being one such neutral country, with a history of at the very least a casual alignment with Britain, was of course a valuable target.

Nevertheless, Norway was particularly problematic. There were "specific questions in Norway regarding the 'honesty of official British attitudes toward

⁴⁰⁹ Cole, Robert. "The Other 'Phoney War': British Propaganda in Neutral Europe, September-December 1939." *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 22, no. 3. Sage Publications, July 1987. pp. 455-479.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., p. 456.

war'. Norwegian opinion clearly favoured the Allies; but 'it was by no means certain that any serious breach of neutrality or act of coercion by the Allies would not stampede the country into a support of Germany.'"⁴¹² Thus, Norway was a particular case, requiring deft skill and careful handling. For years, there had been a small but lively academic debate on to what extent Norway would depend on Great Britain in its further economic and national development. An example of one such debate is found in a lecture given in 1937 at Chatham House, delivered by George Soloveytchik and published in *International Affairs*.⁴¹³ The fact that Kenney was asked to return to Norway at the start of the war, replacing the already-present agent (who was in fact Kenney's own son⁴¹⁴), speaks to Kenney's undeniable quality.

The Remaking of the Machine

The propaganda machinery that had finally been consolidated by the end of the First World War had been superfluous in peacetime and was subsequently dismantled in 1918.⁴¹⁵ All that meaningfully remained was the skeleton crew of the Foreign Office News Department as well as the British Council which was established somewhat later.

In deliberation as to what kind of system should be in place for propaganda and publicity services were war to break out, a debate was begun in a sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) in 1935. The debate concerned itself mainly with which pre-existing sections of government should be in charge of the propaganda effort—if indeed, any. The resulting opinion was that “a return to the 1918 system [of a Ministry of Information separate from the Foreign Office News Department] was infinitely preferable to a return to the arrangements which had existed before the Ministry of

⁴¹² Ibid., p. 463.

⁴¹³ Soloveytchik, George. Fears and Realities in Scandinavia. *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1931-1939)*, vol. 16, no. 6. Nov., 1937. pp. 894-919.

⁴¹⁴ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Kit Kenney*. 6 Sept. 1939. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁴¹⁵ Larson, Cedric. The British Ministry of Information. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol 5. no. 3. 1941. pp. 412-431.

Information had taken charge of propaganda from the Foreign Office.”⁴¹⁶ This was in part because it was felt that there was an opportunity now to solidify a streamlined and centralised machine, maintaining accountability, efficiency and oversight. However, it also resulted from a somewhat lacklustre planning-phase, due to the heavy load of work already placed on those serving in the committee, the secrecy of their objective, and the political risk in making plans for political information control in peacetime.⁴¹⁷ The debate and considerations back and forth as to what this new Ministry eventually would become, would continue at a slow and confused pace up until the final year of peace.

Even the appeasement policy played a major role in the conflicts surrounding the planning stage of the Ministry. “MOI planners were hampered at the start by departmental and personal feuding, which was permitted because no war emergency existed, and, after 1937, by the adherents of appeasement policy who dominated Whitehall.”⁴¹⁸ A government desperately avoiding the idea of war naturally becomes a government uneasy and uncommitted in its war preparations. The building of the propaganda machinery, being a vital part of the British war effort, suffered under the idea that war should not come, as well as under the overstretched control of the Treasury. “Every department had to scramble for funds in the context of expanding demands created by war preparations.”⁴¹⁹ Appeasement would only, however, last so long.

By 1939, it was becoming evident that the preparations had to be set into high gear, if not directly into motion. A Ministry of Information had been settled on, in the spirit of its 1918-edition, but it was important now to organise effectively the transfer of certain tasks from the Foreign Office to the Ministry. This resulted in the first public indication that a Ministry of Information was forthcoming, primarily because of the appointment by Chamberlain of Lord Perth to direct the newly formed Foreign Publicity Department in the Foreign

⁴¹⁶ Taylor, Philip M. ‘If War Should Come’: Preparing the Fifth Arm for Total War 1935-1939. *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 16, no. 1. Sage Publications, Jan. 1981. pp. 27-51. p. 36.

⁴¹⁷ Taylor, If War Should Come.

⁴¹⁸ Cole, C. Robert. The Conflict within: Sir Stephen Tallents and Planning Propaganda Overseas before the Second World War. *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, vol. 14, no. 1. 1982. pp. 50-71. p. 50.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

Office. This is the same Foreign Publicity Department that Kenney was absorbed into, as referenced in his letter to Carr, cited previously. The Foreign Publicity Department came about through a reorganisation of the Foreign Office News Department, where the new section would handle any and all purely propaganda work, leaving the News Department to deal with press.⁴²⁰ That Kenney was involved at this point should come as no surprise (neither should his noted criticism of the organisation in the letter) but it certainly again displays Kenney's position as rather central to the reanimation of the propaganda services. Indeed, if we can make the assumption that Kenney was a pioneer and a definitive force in the shaping of British propaganda policy during the First World War, then the return of a relatively similar system in anticipation of the Second World War speaks to his importance.

It deserves mention, of course—if only to mollify the reader that all considerations have been made—that the Ministry of Information was characterised, especially for its work in the early years of the war, as a grossly incompetent institution. The faults of the Ministry have almost been elevated into historiographical cliché, famously solidified by Evelyn Waugh, Norman Riley and other social commentators of the time as well as a whole host of historians.⁴²¹ While certainly the Ministry as a whole cannot be described as a massive success, this has little bearing on the relevance and importance of Kenney's work. It should also not dissuade historians and policy-makers from seeking the lessons learned. Rather than throwing the baby out with the bathwater, the Ministry “is best seen not as a dead end but as part of a transition.”⁴²² In spite of its glaring shortcomings, it displayed a stunning, if misguided, dedication to information control, and the work of its many components—of which Kenney was a sizeable one—carries with it a myriad of valuable insights and smaller victories.

⁴²⁰ Taylor, *If War Should Come*.

⁴²¹ Grant, Mariel. *Towards a Central Office of Information: Continuity and Change in British Government Information Policy, 1939-51*. *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 34, no. 1. Sage Publications, Jan. 1999. pp. 49-67; Larson, Cedric. *The British Ministry of Information*; Cole, C. Robert. *The Conflict within*.

⁴²² Grant, Mariel. *Towards a Central Office of Information*. p. 50.

NORWAY AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Similarly to the analysis of Britain's position and preparations leading into the war, it is also necessary to evaluate and contextualise the Norwegian side. Here it is important to establish not only Norway's own position before and during the war, but also the perception of Norway of the warring parties. This will assist in evaluating Kenney's work as a function of British objectives relating to Norway. No conclusion about Kenney's influence and impact can be made without understanding the framework surrounding his mission. This final part of the chapter will therefore examine Norway's position and aims, as well as what Norway represented for the warring parties, primarily Britain and Germany.

The Norwegian Position, part two

In the First World War, Norway was constantly cast as a sympathetic but reserved state with reference to Great Britain. From the Norwegian side, the relationship could still largely be described as such through the interwar period and into the Second World War. Norway's disproportionately powerful and state-of-the-art merchant fleet was a key component of the relationship, establishing a clear economic interest for both parties in maintaining a tenuous bond between the nations.⁴²³ By the early-to-mid-1930s, at a point in time when Germany was at its most introspective and internationally disinterested, Britain secured its economic ties with the Scandinavian region and Finland. "The depreciation of sterling, together with the bilateral trade agreements concluded in 1933 with Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland, helped to make Scandinavia one of Britain's most important export markets."⁴²⁴ This economic bond would continue to be relevant well into the war and serves as the backbone of the Anglo-Norwegian relationship, even as priorities shifted.

⁴²³ Salmon, Patrick. *British strategy and Norway 1939-40. Britain & Norway in the Second World War*. Ed. Patrick Salmon. London: HMSO, 1995. pp. 3-14. p. 4.

⁴²⁴ Salmon, Patrick. *Scandinavia and the Great Powers, 1890-1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1997. p. 235.

There is something to be said for a mismatched perception between Norway and Britain of their own constellation. Norway prided itself in maintaining strong independence (as a relatively young state) and displaying somewhat isolationist policies. On the eve of war, “Norwegians were beginning to question the degree to which Britain would be able to maintain in wartime the naval supremacy on which Norway’s security depended.”⁴²⁵ On the other hand, in what can perhaps be described as a classic greater-power misunderstanding, Britain presumed Norway was more invested in the relationship than ostensibly was the case. “British policy makers neglected Norway on the assumption that the Norwegians were so sympathetic towards, and so dependent upon Great Britain that little attention needed to be paid to them.”⁴²⁶ These respective attitudes of course fed off of each other, creating a noticeable distance between the two states on the eve of war. It was the Northern Department in the Foreign Office that eventually began problematizing this misunderstanding and argued that Norway had to be shown good faith in order to achieve a good relationship in the war to come.⁴²⁷

Eventually, the Northern Department, together with Sir Robert Vansittart—a prominent friend of Kenney’s (who will be given due consideration in Chapter VII)—convinced the Foreign Secretary that Norway was a question worth considering. If Germany were to attack, could Britain formally guarantee it would come to Norway’s aid?

The matter was debated at such length in the Foreign Office that a request was not sent to the Chiefs of Staff until 24 August, and their report was presented only on 4 September, a day after the outbreak of war. The Chiefs of Staff endorsed the Foreign Office’s proposal with the proviso that ‘no assistance as regards direct air attack can be given’. Dormer duly gave this assurance to [the Norwegian Foreign Minister] on 16 September.⁴²⁸

The Norwegian position was thus an uneasy one. Norway sought to remain as neutral as possible to protect its vital trade-ties, though it was still markedly,

⁴²⁵ Salmon, Patrick. *British strategy and Norway 1939-40*. p. 5.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

though not unreservedly, aligned with Britain. As mentioned earlier, the backbone of trade and economics would serve to both test and cement further relationships throughout the war. A convincing case can be made to suggest that it was this sphere that eventually sucked Norway into the war and made it a prominent geopolitical target both for Germany and Britain.

Trade and Territory

In general, the trade between Norway and both Germany and Britain was an important aspect of Norway as a wartime objective. There were four general factors at play: strategic resources, the efficacy of the Norwegian merchant fleet, trade-based neutrality and the strategic geographical advantage of the Norwegian coastline and territorial waters. The first three factors can be coalesced to form a rather sizeable economic asset—or, indeed, weapon—for each warring parties and the final factor presents itself as a significant geostrategic asset. An additional factor to be tacked on to the list is the political one, which represents an ideological concern.

The political factor may ostensibly bear the most obvious significance to British propaganda as it describes not only a British objective (as the economic and geostrategic factors do) but also provides insight into the content and indeed method of propaganda. Propaganda is of course a political instrument more than a military one, though it can be militarily strategic nonetheless. This political strategic significance of Norway closely follows the mismatched perception of the Anglo-Norwegian relationship. On the one side, British officials were convinced that Norway, being “a small, democratic, peace-loving country with close links to the United Kingdom [...] should, many felt, align itself openly with the Allied cause in combating Hitlerism, which threatened the whole of Europe.”⁴²⁹ The Norwegians were certainly mainly anti-Nazi but on the other hand a curious, if not widely evidenced, Norwegian idiosyncrasy was an innate suspicion of international power-politics. The Norwegian national spirit “tended to brand all great powers as equally culpable”⁴³⁰ and thereby shy away from

⁴²⁹ Ibid., p. 4.

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

direct involvement or alignment one way or another. This position was further shifted by a presumption that British naval supremacy would shield Norway from danger and that as such Norway had little skin in the game. And finally, Norwegians were more concerned with the British violations of Norwegian neutrality “—which tended to be few but conspicuous—than [...] those of Germany, which were more frequent but less visible.”⁴³¹ In effect Norway did not appear to fall in line as easily as the British expected it would. This was problematic for many reasons.

First and foremost, Norway “was the source of a number of strategic raw materials such as nitrates, ferro-alloys and non-ferrous metals, as well as fish products and whale oil.”⁴³² These were important resources in any war economy and were useful both to strengthen oneself by obtaining them and weaken the enemy by denying them. The Norwegian merchant fleet can be considered in the same way, as its sheer tonnage was stupendous for a relatively small country like Norway. Whether chartering Norwegian ships for own use or denying the enemy those ships, it was a useful resource to consider.⁴³³

Specifically, however, it was Swedish iron ore that held strategists’ attention. Of primary importance to the strategic war-aims of Germany was the supply and supply-chain of iron ore, which was entirely necessary for the German war economy. “When the [British experts] from the [Industrial Intelligence Centre—under the Ministry of Economic Warfare] examined which route the iron ore convoys used, they discovered that even though the ore was usually sent to Germany through the Swedish ports Luleå and Oxelösund by the Baltic Sea, it was sent to Narvik [in Norway] by train in the winter, from November until April, since the Bottenvik in the Baltic Sea was frozen over. From Narvik the ore was transported by sea to Germany.”⁴³⁴ For six months out of the year, that is, Norway was the main transport route of what the British War

⁴³¹ Ibid.

⁴³² Ibid.

⁴³³ Ibid.

⁴³⁴ Kersaudy, François. *Vi stoler på England: 1939-1949*. Transl. Sidsel Mellbye. Oslo: Cappelens Forlag, 1991. p. 21. [Translation mine.]

Cabinet described in the spring of 1940 as “the Achilles’ heel of the German war economy.”⁴³⁵

Added to this, tensions in the Baltic were high, and it was not entirely out of the realm of possibility that German imports through that sea might become restricted, leaving Narvik as the only reliable export point for the resource come winter or summer.⁴³⁶ In fact, the worry that the British might seal off the Baltic was not at all unfounded. Operation Catherine, a daring plan suggested by Churchill, described a scenario of establishing an entire fleet in the Baltic to make this the primary setting of the naval battlefield. The plan was never set into motion, but certainly shows that Narvik could become a serious hotspot. On the German side, Great Admiral Erich Raeder advised Hitler to invade Norway specifically with reference to Narvik and the iron ore.⁴³⁷ Conversely, on the British side, Churchill was also concerned with the issue and “wanted to halt the supply of Swedish ore transported to Germany from the port of Narvik, but Chamberlain and the War Cabinet were firmly against the violation of Norwegian neutrality.”⁴³⁸ The iron ore and the port of Narvik was to remain a sort of fulcrum for the war.

An imagined possibility on the German side was that Allied assistance for the Finns early in the war might take the shape of British and French units landing in the north of Norway, jostling Norway into the war by violating neutrality as well as extending a force across northern Scandinavia.⁴³⁹ This could be a major blow to the iron ore supplies, with Allied forces potentially taking control of the Kiruna-Gällivare iron ore deposits in Sweden.⁴⁴⁰ While also halting the ore exports to Germany, this would force closed the neutral coastline which provided a serious problem for the British naval blockade of Germany. Britain could not inviolably force the blockade into Norwegian waters, and thus there existed an open corridor along the Norwegian coast.

⁴³⁵ Salmon, Patrick. *British strategy and Norway 1939-40*. p. 3.

⁴³⁶ Beevor, Antony. *The Second World War*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2012. p. 71.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁰ Keegan, John. *The Second World War*. London: Random House, 2011.

And the importance of the Norwegian coastal corridor cannot truly be overstated. It was a massive hole in the blockade, provided a route for German shipping, submarines and other military units into the North Atlantic and essentially, it presented a large open flank from which Germany could “operate against British shipping.”⁴⁴¹ Control of these waters was a formidable geostrategic asset if it could be acquired reasonably. Both parties were worried that the other might seek to control southern Norway, Britain could launch devastating naval forces from there—sealing the blockade and the Baltic very effectively—⁴⁴², and Germany could potentially “establish bases for air and sea attacks on the United Kingdom.”⁴⁴³ It was clear to all that Norway possessed a nexus of economic, geostrategic assets that caught the attention of both sides of the war and painted it as a valuable objective over which to gain control. It was entirely unclear whether either warring party would respect Norwegian neutrality and territory. While perhaps not entirely accurate historically, Max Hastings provides a somewhat humorous picture of the position the Norwegians subsequently found themselves in: “At 0130 on 9 April, an aide awoke King Haakon of Norway to report: ‘Majesty, we are at war!’ The monarch promptly demanded: ‘Against whom?’”⁴⁴⁴



While Kenney is unmistakably difficult to place in the interwar years it is certain he was still instrumental in propaganda and intelligence affairs for Britain. His missions to Poland and his subsequent reporting to Balfour, as well as his planned mission to Germany all tell of a man highly valued in his field. It is impossible to tell what would have happened had he not suffered the airplane crash in 1919, but he was certainly doing important work both before and after that fateful incident. His continued service within the revered Political Intelligence Department as well as in the News Department until 1939 shows his

⁴⁴¹ Beevor, Antony. *The Second World War*. p. 71.

⁴⁴² Ibid.

⁴⁴³ Salmon, Patrick. *British strategy and Norway 1939-40*. p. 4.

⁴⁴⁴ Hastings, Max. *All Hell Let Loose: The World at War 1939-1945*. London: HarperPress, 2011. p. 43.

loyalty and exceptional quality within propaganda work. The role he played in the establishment and running of the British Council does likewise.

It is clear, however, that Kenney at this time faced considerable difficulties with regards to professional advancement. His past, as a labourer and radical labour journalist, propelled him onto a stage from which he could expound his radical views. These political leanings stayed with him throughout his career and his life, and while they certainly helped him progress up to a point they doubtless made it at times difficult to gain the favour of his superiors. Civil servitude by itself was a difficult ladder to climb, and with his background, his problematic health and his political fervour, he remained at this time on the lower rungs until 1939.

In the run-up to the Second World War, Britain was faced with economic problems as well as imperial overreach. This spilled out into the policy of appeasement, which markedly delayed appropriate war-preparations, including preparations pertinent to propaganda. Unprepared Britain therefore spent the first months of the war in a surprisingly non-committal position, rather focusing on rallying allies for their cause. Norway, an officially neutral European state, was a prominent target for this push. Propaganda was seen as a useful tool in establishing these relationships, though the creation of a Ministry of Information was to take a long time and careful debate.

The relationship between Norway and Britain was similar in this period to what it had been in the First World War, one of reserved connection. Especially naval and economic interests were largely aligned. Britain, however, misunderstood the extent to which Norway looked to Britain, which resulted in a last-minute scrambling to gain Norwegian confidence. The problem was that Norway displayed isolationist tendencies, and while politically aligned with Britain, was suspicious of great-power politics. In addition, Norway's merchant fleet, trade connections, neutral coastline and geostrategic importance painted Norway as a target for control both for Britain and Germany. Especially significant was the port of Narvik, through which iron ore—necessary for the German war economy—flowed. Norway thus hung on in uneasy neutrality, suspicious both of British and German machinations before the alarm finally sounded in the early morning of April 9th, 1940.

What is abundantly clear is that though Kenney suffered unimaginable setbacks during this period he was still heavily involved in propaganda and information control. Though little information remains, he would return to Norway in the fall of 1939 in exactly the same position he had left 21 years prior. While a pleasing historiographical symmetry, it should not be overlooked that Kenney had achieved great things in this period, and had suffered tremendously. And for Kenney the Second World War would in no way resemble the First.

CHAPTER VII

THE SECOND WORLD WAR: ROWLAND KENNEY IN NORWAY

...Congratulations good wishes England
expects and is never disappointed Stop Black
cats and Horseshoes.⁴⁴⁵

The Second World War would prove to contain its own immense challenges for Rowland Kenney. He had, as discussed in Chapter V, remained active during the interwar period in propaganda work, both as a practical agent, as well as in developing certain systems within the field. The Second World War would test many of these developments and also inform its own evolution of the practice. This chapter focuses on Kenney's widely varied work during the period of the Second World War, primarily to establish Kenney's position as a forgotten key figure in the development of propaganda as a system.

In order to achieve this aim, the chapter first outlines the work of the man in detail, seeking to describe his professional accomplishments and place him in the appropriate context. Kenney's context within the network of people

⁴⁴⁵ *Telegram 1830*. 12 Apr. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

responsible for the development of propaganda is further described by a short description of a few of the personalities he worked with. Finally, a section is reserved for the examination of how propaganda principles and techniques developed during this time, linking Kenney's own work to these developments.

KENNEY RETURNS TO NORWAY

By the time the Second World War sparked in September 1939, Rowland Kenney was a veteran of propaganda. For nearly a quarter of a century, Kenney had been an agent for a number of official institutions in the practice of propaganda. He had witnessed the evolution of the machinery from the sport of amateurs to the sophisticated bureaucratic behemoth that would now run the show. The Second World War would see Kenney return to the Ministry of Information, eventually heading his own section. It would also see him escaping a German invasion, embedding with MI6, and being recognised for his work by the King of Norway.

The Second World War is perhaps, alongside the Cold War era, the most studied period when it comes to the use of state propaganda. Nonetheless, following Kenney gives the reader an unmatched inside view not only of the inner workings of the propaganda institutions that would define the practice in the modern era, but also of the extent to which a single agent participated in its shaping. At the start of the war, Kenney was around 57 years old. It would be his final trial and his final opportunity to make his mark. This chapter outlines this meandering period and seeks to show the beginning of Kenney's legacy, a legacy that may well have been forgotten, but one which still has impact both on information control and Anglo-Norwegian relations to this day.

Return to Oslo

It was not at all foreseeable that Kenney would return to Norway at the start of the war. In fact, Kenney's return to Oslo as Press Attaché and point man for British propaganda in Norway could very well have not happened at all. In early October, a series of letters were sent between Kenney and his superiors

revealing the level of intrigue that led to the appointment. Kenney saved them all, and multiple copies of some, perhaps hinting at his strong feelings on the matter. After all, why would he accept taking a job he had held twenty years earlier, surely he had progressed since then?

It began in early September, a few days after the war officially started for Britain. Kenney was employed in the Foreign Publicity Department of the Ministry of Information, which was gearing up to shuffle the deployment of Press Attachés for the overseas propaganda work.⁴⁴⁶ The Press Attaché in Oslo at the start of the war was, funnily enough, Rowland Kenney's son Kit. A letter from father to son (affectionately addressed "Kjaere Kit-Ko"⁴⁴⁷), on the 6th of September 1939, brings up what must have been a sensitive subject: it seemed on the cards that Rowland was to replace Kit. In the letter, Rowland interestingly appears to have some sort of sway with regards to the placement, writing: "I am told that it had already been decided that, as you had expressed a preference for Oslo, Tennant was to be sent to Stockholm; but Oslo will no longer be open if I am to fill the post. I have been asked whether you would care to take over Helsingfors [Helsinki], if they get rid of Hewins."⁴⁴⁸ Kenney at the very least seems intimately knowledgeable about the placements, which places him relatively close to the centre of power in the department.

Heading the Foreign Publicity Department was Colonel Charles Bridge, and as Kenney put it "between Col. Bridge and myself are three or four more or less incompetent people."⁴⁴⁹ One of these people that he refers to was probably E. H. Carr, who would play a role in the debacle soon to unfold. A letter with no date, but with a note to suggest it was dictated by Carr and signed by Col. Bridge, references to Rowland Kenney as a senior officer who is proposed to be sent to Oslo and paid £1,000 a year, nearly double the pay of the officers sent to the other three northern countries (£600).⁴⁵⁰ On the 16th of September, the decision appears to have been made. "We desire to make the following appointments as soon as possible: [...] Mr. Rowland Kenney to be Press Attaché to the Legation in

⁴⁴⁶ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Kit Kenney*. 6 Sept. 1939. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁴⁴⁷ 'Kjære' being Norwegian for 'Dear'. Ibid. p. 1.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁰ 'Letter to Waterfield'. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 2.

Oslo (salary £1,000, local allowance £200)."⁴⁵¹ The letter continues further on: "We should like all these appointments to take effect not later than Wednesday, September 20th, on which date Mr. Tennant leaves for Stockholm. Mr. Rowland Kenney will leave a few days later."⁴⁵² This was not to be so.

The story is not easy to piece together, but it begins with a letter from Col. Bridge to Sir Robert Vansittart, the Diplomatic Advisor to the Government. Almost diffidently, Bridge writes that he has just been notified of some negative comments being made about him or one of his subordinates, presumably Carr.

I want to assure you, without any shadow of a doubt whatever, that Mr. Kenney applied in writing to be appointed as Press Attaché to Oslo. The memorandum or letter containing his request was addressed in manuscript by Mr. Kenney personally to Mr. E. H. Carr. I was shown it and, as a result, instructed Mr. Carr to take the necessary steps to send Mr. Kenney to Oslo.⁴⁵³

Bridge goes on to say that the letter from Kenney to Carr can no longer be found at the Ministry, but highlights again that Kenney did indeed apply. It appears that someone has made a problem out of Kenney's application, and that it might have been suggested that Kenney had been pushed into the job unwillingly. The letter was copied both to Kenney and Carr.

The very next day, Kenney wrote to Vansittart to tell his side of the story. He referenced Rex Leeper, the Head of the News Department of the Foreign Office who Kenney had worked with for a long time. Kenney had been told by Leeper, when the Ministry of Information was being re-established, that he "should be put in charge either of a section in the Film Department or the Foreign Publicity Department."⁴⁵⁴ Some time later, this suggestion was watered down to heading a dedicated Fenno-Scandinavian section in the Foreign Publicity Department. Kenney appears to be disappointed at finding himself on a much lower rung than what had been suggested. "I had applied for the post of

⁴⁵¹ *Letter to Woodburn*. 16 Sept. 1939. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*

⁴⁵³ Bridge, Charles. *Letter to Sir Robert Vansittart*. 5 Oct. 1939. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁴⁵⁴ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Sir Robert Vansittart*. 6 Oct. 1939. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

Press Attaché to Oslo,” writes Kenney, “only because I felt my position in the Foreign Publicity Department of the Ministry of Information to be an impossible one.”⁴⁵⁵ He then informs Vansittart that he has attached a copy of the letter he sent to Carr, the letter Bridge has declared lost.

The letter to Carr is not dated, but it is fair to imagine it must have been written and sent some time before Kenney informed his son he would be filling the position. It is a letter written rather confrontationally, and seems to come on the heels of what might have been a heated discussion between Carr and Kenney. Kenney writes about his experience and his value to the Ministry, making no effort to conceal his disappointment at being placed subordinate to ‘experts’ who he claims “have only recently become British subjects and who have really no experience of the work.”⁴⁵⁶ If the reader can forgive a brief interjection to muse on Kenney’s primary motivation: Kenney makes the point first that these experts have only recently become ‘British subjects’, as if national piety should elevate him. Considering Kenney’s rather radical political views, a compelling question throughout the research is what motivated him to engage so vitally with the establishment and the government that he ostensibly fought against. This instance offers up what can be regarded as a plausible explanation: nationalism. Perhaps he felt very deeply that his service was founded in nationalism, that he fought for his country, and this would explain his suspicion towards foreign experts brought in and rewarded with higher positions than his own. Alternatively, Kenney may simply have been annoyed at his own lack of promotion.

In any case, Kenney continued and formally requested a raise in position and salary. And then the fateful alternative: “Otherwise: Sir C. Dormer has asked for a Press Attaché, at a suggested salary of £1,000 a year, my present normal salary; I apply for the post – which will only put me in the position I occupied twenty-three years ago!”⁴⁵⁷ In the context of the letter, the suggestion seems to land somewhere between dejection and sarcasm. Vansittart, sensing the same, agreed, and sent a reply to Col. Bridge the same day he received Kenney’s letters.

⁴⁵⁵ Kenney. *Letter to Sir Robert Vansittart*.

⁴⁵⁶ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to E. H. Carr*. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

“I have received your letter of October 5th. I am afraid however that I must tell you frankly that I do not think it gives a complete account of what has passed.”⁴⁵⁸ Kenney had friends in high places.

But what had prompted Col. Bridge to contact Vansittart in the first place? The answer lies in a scrawled, handwritten letter from Carr to Kenney, posted ten days later. According to the letter, Laurence Collier, the Head of the Northern Section in the Foreign Office and soon to be Ambassador to Norway, had stated that sending Kenney to Oslo was “a put-up job”⁴⁵⁹ between Carr and Bridge, which had angered Carr. Vansittart had apparently also made some negative comments about Carr in relation to Kenney’s case. Knowing that Kenney had been to the Foreign Office and had seen both Vansittart and Collier, Carr made the assumption that Kenney had encouraged this and had lashed out at him. “I’m sorry,” wrote Carr, and sympathised with Kenney that he “ought to have had some other job,”⁴⁶⁰ but that it was not within his power. “As you know, it wasn’t my wish that you shouldn’t stay in my section.”⁴⁶¹ It is, of course, impossible to know to what extent Kenney was responsible for Collier and Vansittart’s opinions on the matter.

When the dust had settled and apologies had been made, Kenney found himself once again in Norway and began fulfilling his duty as Press Attaché and propaganda officer in the country. As with the First World War, the work would begin slowly and arduously before gaining any touch of momentum. In the First World War, for a time, the propaganda machinery had been allowed to grow somewhat organically. The gentlemen amateurs had been given considerably free reins in their work. By the end of that war, with the establishment of the Ministry of Information, the bureaucracy had begun to catch up, and with the premeditated launch of the Ministry for the Second World War, the bureaucracy was already in place, stifling and limiting as it was.

⁴⁵⁸ Vansittart, Sir Robert. *Letter to Colonel C. Bridge*. 6 Oct. 1939. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁴⁵⁹ Carr, E. H. *Letter to Rowland Kenney*. 9 Oct. 1939. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1-2.

It can be imagined that October was spent setting up and getting to grips with the system, making useful connections and establishing proper channels for communication. By late November, reports begin trickling in from Kenney in Norway. The task was monumental. Not only was the Press Department supposed to carry out propaganda work for the Ministry of Information, but it was also supposed to handle work for the British Council, leaving the Press Attachés swamped and unable to accomplish much at all.⁴⁶² Having experience with the work, Kenney returned to his old self, not so much airing opinions as dictating propaganda policy. He rejected Ministry proposals as “foolish and unworthy pretence,”⁴⁶³ and requested permission “to spend certain sums on translation and printing at [his] discretion.”⁴⁶⁴ Kenney even took steps without authorisation and sought authorisation for this *post factum*. “I should be glad if I could have general authorisation to incur expenditure on small items of this kind without having to refer to the Ministry on each occasion.”⁴⁶⁵ Kenney, it seems, longed back to the state of affairs two decades prior, and was certainly in the driver’s seat of propaganda policy in Norway.

A memorandum written during this time gives the same impression. Kenney mourned British propaganda inefficiency, which, even in the face of German failures of public perception, was damaging. Recognizing the increasing dimension and scope of the British propaganda machine, he warned against using German methods of “false accusations” and “baser types of publicity.”⁴⁶⁶ These were of course policy questions. But Kenney did not only criticise, he proposed the creation of a bulletin to be printed and selectively distributed both to individuals and the press, with the express instruction that it could be filed for reference. The bulletin would only contain true and factual assertions and repudiations and would, in his mind, “become an authority on the rights and wrongs of the various questions raised.”⁴⁶⁷ He wrote enthusiastically of the proposal also to Collier, describing the bulletin as something that “could be

⁴⁶² Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to J. Henderson*. 27 Nov. 1939. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁶ Kenney, Rowland. *Memorandum*. 27 Nov. 1939. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 2.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

made a very powerful weapon for use in almost every country in the world,"⁴⁶⁸ and suggesting he would be the editor of the bulletin himself. Whether the idea ever came to fruition in some iteration is difficult to say, though no further mention is offered in the Rowland Kenney Papers.

Another example of Kenney's complete control of the propaganda in Norway comes in the shape of instructions sent to the Ministry. Bureaucratic overreach appears to have stymied and swamped Kenney with too much material.

Actual news should come through Reuters and the private correspondents; financial and commercial information we can work in through Anker Olsen; what we want for our own distribution are short, light articles, or paragraphs of between 250 and 700 words, they must not be openly propagandist, but informative in an attractive manner about Great Britain and the Commonwealth generally.⁴⁶⁹

It does seem rather backwards that a Press Attaché should be explaining to Ministry officials in London what they should send and what they should not send. In effect, this displays the decentralised structure from Kenney's point of view and places Kenney at the weighted end of the position. In the same letter as cited above, written in February, Kenney appears to have finally begun to get the machine running properly, writing that he "had just got the whole of the Oslo press thundering against Germany."⁴⁷⁰ Momentum appeared to be gathering for Kenney, who just a few days prior had been given the local rank of First Secretary in the Diplomatic Service.⁴⁷¹ This was doubtless a testament to the importance and impact of his work.

The significance of the task was not lost on the man either, in spite of his initial reluctance to take up the position. While there were deep-set challenges both in Norway and in London, Kenney felt it was vital that Norway be handled

⁴⁶⁸ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Laurence Collier*. 27 Nov. 1939. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁴⁶⁹ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Roger Stevens*. 29 Feb. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴⁷¹ Butler, F. G. M. *Letter to R. Kenney*. 23 Feb. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

carefully and well. "The situation up here is difficult, and I fear that we may make the mistake of swiping the Norwegians with an iron hand without keeping in evidence, all the time, the velvet glove! If Norway is to be involved in war, she must be in on our side, and glad that she is."⁴⁷² The difficult work was not made easier by the conditions surrounding the staff. In contrast to the papers from the First World War, the papers from this period are overwhelmingly concerning requests for salary increases, the covering of expenditures, the intolerable amount of work being expected from a much too small staff and the micromanaging imposed by the Ministry on the officers.⁴⁷³ Kenney's irritation is tangible in his letters to the Ministry.

We go toddling on here, but I must confess that I find the line of thought of the Foreign Publicity Directorate difficult to follow: I make a suggestion which I think would lead to wide publicity in the Norwegian provincial press; the response is three letters, signed by three different people, asking for reports with cuttings (why not diagrams?) of space devoted to agency telegrams! I suppose the simple fact is that 30 years' experience of publicity and propaganda work has totally unfitted me for – publicity and propaganda work. So all I can do is follow my own stupid nose, watch and pray, and trust in time, which cures all things.⁴⁷⁴

The 'suggestion' referenced to is in all likelihood the bulletin, and Kenney may have begun gathering what the Ministry had demanded from him in evidence to get it started. However, unbeknownst to Kenney, and indeed to everyone involved: time was running out.

⁴⁷² Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Robert Vansittart*. 29 Jan. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 2.

⁴⁷³ See Kenney, *Letter to J. Henderson*, and attachments for a comprehensive example. See also: Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Roger Stevens*. 20 Nov. 1939. Rowland Kenney Papers; Kenney, Rowland. *Memorandum*. 20 Nov. 1939. Rowland Kenney Papers; Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to E. H. Carr*. 26 Jan. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers; Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Quarmby*. 26 Jan. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers; Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to A. W. G. Randall*. 7 Mar. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁴⁷⁴ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Roger Stevens*. 10 Dec. 1939. Rowland Kenney Papers.

April 1940

Early in the morning on the 9th of April 1940 the alarm sounded. German ships had snuck into the Oslo-fjord under the cover of night and the invasion of Norway was underway.⁴⁷⁵ Kenney made his way from Oslo to Høsbjør—about 140 km to the north of Oslo—in a party of eight people from the Legation staff and the Press Department. He had left Oslo only one hour before the Germans had entered the city.⁴⁷⁶ At Høsbjør Kenney's party met renowned SIS-officer Captain Frank Foley's party and together they made their way further north, eventually arriving at Åndalsnes in the evening of the 10th of April.⁴⁷⁷ Margaret Reid, Frank Foley's assistant, refers to Kenney as one of the two in charge of their party while fleeing Oslo for Åndalsnes; the other, of course, being Foley himself.⁴⁷⁸ It is remarkable that material from this period and indeed the preceding period survives in Kenney's collection. He must have spent time gathering his papers and have carried them with him through the escape and through the harrowing weeks to come.

The papers from this period are a thrilling read. In the early days of the stay at Åndalsnes, the documents mainly consist of telegrams sent to and from Kenney concerned with military and naval movements as well as reports on rumours, bombing raids and which call-signals to use. While very tempting, it is not within the scope of this thesis to delve into this material, as it does little to elucidate on the creation of systems of information dissemination and control. Any researcher keen to get a sense of the British perspective on the ground in the very early days of the invasion of Norway would do well to study these

⁴⁷⁵ Reid, Margaret. *April 1940: En krigsdagbok: Margaret Reids dagbok*. Oslo: Gyldendal, 1980. [translation mine].

⁴⁷⁶ Kenney, Rowland. *Memorandum*. 22 Apr. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁴⁷⁷ Kenney, Rowland. *Memorandum*. 8 May 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁴⁷⁸ Reid, Margaret. *April 1940*.

documents. The focus of this thesis, however, is on Kenney's position and his work in greater effect.⁴⁷⁹

The work of a Press Attaché must of course suffer under invasion and occupation. In light of the new situation, and of being attached to Foley, Kenney adapted and began working as an impromptu intelligence officer. Cross-referencing a memorandum by Kenney on the 19th of April and a telegram received on the 20th, leads to the conclusion that Foley's code-name was '93,000', which confusingly was also the secret country-code for Finland.⁴⁸⁰ The received telegram confirms that Kenney should act in a dual capacity, "cooperating with 93,000 and affording assistance wherever possible to naval and military authorities."⁴⁸¹ A later report typed up by Kenney in London in early May confirms this version of events once more by explaining that upon arrival in Åndalsnes on April 10th he "immediately commenced activities as Intelligence Officer, in co-operation with Captain Frank Foley."⁴⁸² Whether this was Kenney's first introduction to the *bona fide* intelligence services is unknown—his work for decades would have made him a valuable asset—but it certainly speaks to his capabilities and his stature.

To give an example of Foley's, and by extension Kenney's position in this capacity: one message that was passed through Foley at this time was the assurance that British help was on the way, made by the British Prime Minister to the Norwegian Government:

"We are coming as fast as possible and in great strength. Further details later. Meanwhile use every effort at all costs to cut railway communications so that neither Bergen nor Trondhjem can be reinforced by land. We are preventing enemy reinforcements arriving by sea. We are inspired by your message and feel sure that you have

⁴⁷⁹ Documents and memoranda from Kenney's point of view can be found both in the Rowland Kenney Papers as well as in TNA: FO 371/24834, N 5150.

⁴⁸⁰ Kenney, Rowland. *Memo*. 19 Apr. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers; *Telegram incoming No 1*. 20 Apr. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁴⁸¹ *Telegram incoming No 1*. This exchange between Kenney and the Foreign Office concerning his cooperation with Foley also exists in TNA: FO 371/24834, N 4433.

⁴⁸² Kenney, Rowland. *Report*. 7 May 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

only to hold on until we arrive for both our countries to emerge victorious.”⁴⁸³

That a message of such gravity may very well have passed through Kenney is remarkable, and it is noted here to show Kenney’s place in the company of high politics.

Nevertheless, even in the midst of incessant bombing and fear of being overrun, Kenney continued to pursue publicity and propaganda efforts as well. Kenney had spoken with Dr. Arnold Ræstad, a Norwegian acquaintance of his from the First World War who had since held a short term as foreign minister and would soon head the Norwegian national bank in London for the duration of the war. Ræstad had also made it to Åndalsnes, and they had evidently discussed the necessity to establish a media- and information service to counteract the occupation. On the 18th of April, a mere nine days after the invasion and fraught escape from Oslo, Ræstad wrote to Kenney that an organization had been established, under the supervision of Kåre Fostervoll who would later become the director of the Norwegian national broadcasting service. On behalf of the Norwegian government, Ræstad asked Kenney officially to connect the service to the British and allowing an exchange of information.⁴⁸⁴ Kenney transmitted the proposal back to the Foreign Office together with his own blessing, and the proposal was approved shortly thereafter.⁴⁸⁵

In addition to Ræstad’s interim department of information, Kenney spearheaded a proposal to release issues of the local newspaper in Åndalsnes, including items in English in order to raise the morale of the local population.⁴⁸⁶ He also served as an intermediary between the British press and the Norwegian

⁴⁸³ Special Distribution and War Cabinet. *Message to Norway*. 13 Apr. 1940. TNA: FO 371/24834.

⁴⁸⁴ Ræstad, Arnold. *Letter to Rowland Kenney*. 18 Apr. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁴⁸⁵ Kenney, Rowland. *Telegram 1200*. 18 Apr. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers; *Telegram From Unexpected London*. 20 Apr. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁴⁸⁶ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Captain Knight*. 19 Apr. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

news agency NTB—which had narrowly escaped Oslo and had set up temporarily in Åndalsnes as well.⁴⁸⁷

One particular letter in this period of the collection is innocently astounding. Colonel Ernst David Thue had two grave errors in his letter to Kenney: the letter is addressed to ‘Kennedy’ and is dated the 16th of March, 1940. Context, such as the mention of the military command established strictly after the invasion in April, means that a date of April 16th is much more likely, and with Kenney’s name continually misspelled throughout the collection, it can safely be assumed he was the recipient. Errors notwithstanding, the letter concerns itself with the assignment of a particular Norwegian officer to assist Kenney.⁴⁸⁸ The officer in question was Lieutenant Martin Linge, who is still today revered as one of Norway’s greatest war heroes alongside Max Manus. Linge was one of the godfathers of the organized Norwegian resistance movement and his assignment to Kenney may have been his first contact with the British who would train and supply him and his team.

While somewhat speculative, Kenney’s connection with Linge and the resistance movement may run deeper than a fortuitous meeting in a bombed-out town in the Norwegian fjords. Once Kenney had made his way back to London, he penned a letter to his old friend Vansittart:

There were one or two Norwegian officers who had been extremely useful to us, and who were prepared to re-enter occupied Norway for the purpose of carrying out any scheme which we could usefully develop. One of these men, who was wounded, is at present in London and I wonder whether it would not be possible even now for us to develop an underground organization in Norway which would be ready to create havoc among the Germans on the longed-for day when the tide turns against them.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁷ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Foreign Division*. 23 Apr. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁴⁸⁸ Thue, Ernst David. *Letter to Kennedy*. 16 Mar. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁴⁸⁹ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Sir Robert Vansittart*. 1 July 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

The letter was written on the 1st of July, exactly two months after Linge was wounded in battle and transported to Britain.⁴⁹⁰ The only reasonable conclusion, then, is that Kenney was at least involved in establishing the Norwegian resistance movement, if not instrumental in placing Linge at its forefront. This discovery, if accurate, is of great significance to Norwegian war history.

With inadequate defences and a rapidly deteriorating situation surrounding the British personnel in Åndalsnes, Kenney and his assistants were first ordered to evacuate the country on the 26th of April, a plan that subsequently was refused by the Lieutenant Commander in charge. A new plan, to shelter Kenney's party further inland was suggested, but Kenney succeeded in obtaining passage on a ship bound for Scotland, departing from Ålesund in the evening of the 28th of April. The ship 'Lochnagar' was not equipped at all for war and had to anchor off the Scottish Isles for repairs two days later. Eventually, Kenney arrived in Kirkwall and was flown to Aberdeen and took a train from there to London. Kenney reported back at the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Information on the 3rd of May.⁴⁹¹

The German invasion of Norway had thus uprooted Kenney from his usual position, though he had still fought, under what can be regarded as near impossible circumstances, to maintain a hold on the information- and press-services he could render in favour of Britain. In addition to being of great importance to the intransigent occupied publicity service, he also began working as an intelligence officer with one of the greatest known agents of the time. And finally, he may have been instrumental, and was certainly significant, in the creation of a Norwegian resistance force based out of Britain. A force regarded by many as a great help to the Allied cause. In short, Kenney here displayed his remarkable versatility and his undeniable influence in these world events.

⁴⁹⁰ Haavardsholm, Espen. *Martin Linge – min morfar: Familieroman med fotografier*. Oslo: Oktober forlag, 2007.

⁴⁹¹ Kenney, Rowland. *Memorandum*. 4 May 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

Director of the Northern Section

The occupation of Norway rendered Kenney's primary position as Press Attaché and propaganda officer for Oslo virtually irrelevant. There was now no possibility of engaging in broad-scale propaganda in the major Norwegian media. His experience prior to the invasion made him reluctant to continue working for the Ministry of Information at all. Seeking other options, Kenney appealed on his return to Vansittart, in quite stark words, to be given a job worth doing in the Northern Department of the Foreign Office. "Immodestly but quite sincerely, I believe that I know more about national propaganda abroad than the whole staff of the Foreign Division of the Ministry put together, and if I am to work there I ought to be directing it instead of being a mere cog in the wheel – which is being turned by men who have no sense whatever for the job."⁴⁹² Vansittart responded that Kenney would more likely than not have to stay at the Ministry since there was no work at all to be done in the Northern Department, but that he would appeal to the higher-ups in the Ministry to see if something advantageous could be secured.⁴⁹³

At the start of the war, Kenney had of course been passed to the Ministry from the Foreign Office on assignment, but he was now in a strange position of being let down by his principal employer. Kenney made several different appeals during the late spring and early summer of 1940. Rebuffed from the Northern Department, it appears Kenney desired to be returned to the north of Norway to do work in the field there. In late May, his superior in Norway, Sir Cecil Dormer, telegraphed to the Foreign Office that an eventual return to Norway would be advisable on Kenney's part, but that he should wait "until the position has been rather more stabilised and until it is a little more certain that the Legation will not have to move again."⁴⁹⁴ This was not good news for Kenney, who was

⁴⁹² Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Sir Robert Vansittart*. 13 May 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁴⁹³ Vansittart, Sir Robert. *Letter to Rowland Kenney*. 17 May 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁴⁹⁴ Wiskemann, G. O. *Letter to Rowland Kenney*. 31 May 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers. Wiskemann's communications with Collier about the matter are located in TNA: FO 371/24834 N 5667.

advised to remain at his cottage in Haslemere until it could be decided what to do with him.⁴⁹⁵

Precisely two weeks after this dispiriting message, another message arrived from the Ministry of Information.

As I regret there is no way in which we can avail ourselves any longer of your service in this Ministry I have written to Quarmby to ask that the Foreign Office should take the responsibility for any future post to which you may be appointed. I should however like to express our thanks to you for the work which you have done, and at the same time extend the hope that a new appointment may not be long delayed.⁴⁹⁶

Kenney was suddenly free from the Ministry of Information, as he had requested, but without any further instructions from the Foreign Office which had indicated it had no spot for him either. It can only be imagined the frustration which Kenney must have felt, being a veteran of the business, an expert in his trade, and having a burning wish to be of use continually thwarted. A small hope might have been kindled by a note from the Foreign Office asking if Kenney might be interested in working in the Liaison Department on items concerning Scandinavia, though if there would be enough work for a full position remains unclear.⁴⁹⁷ Kenney, understandably, jumped at the idea.⁴⁹⁸ He would work there for a fortnight,⁴⁹⁹ but the true saving grace arrived in the form of a change of heart in the Ministry of Information. Quite out of the blue, Kenney received a letter from Leigh Ashton of the Ministry, informing him that after considering a number of candidates, the Ministry would like Kenney “to come to us and look after our Scandinavian interests.”⁵⁰⁰ At first, Kenney reportedly

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁶ Woodburn. *Letter to Rowland Kenney*. 14 June 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁴⁹⁷ Randall, A. W. G. *Note to Rowland Kenney*. 19 June 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁴⁹⁸ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to A. W. G. Randall*. 20 June 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁴⁹⁹ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to P. F. D. Tennant*. 10 July 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁵⁰⁰ Ashton, Leigh. *Letter to Rowland Kenney*. 4 July 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

refused. It was his good friend Laurence Collier, at the time the head of the Northern Section of the Foreign Office and soon to be the British Ambassador to Norway⁵⁰¹, who persuaded him to take the job, so that “propaganda work in the North should be competently done.”⁵⁰² In a quick reversal, Kenney was let go from the Ministry and then asked back with a title of Director of the Northern Section of the Foreign Division.

The raise in position, to now head a section for the Ministry, gave Kenney much more room in which to discuss policy, and he did not shy away from so doing. A memorandum dated the 19th of July, 1940, gives his preliminary and broad-strokes view of propaganda. It is an interesting exposition of the foundation of Kenney’s view on the nature of his own work. His discussion begins with the posing of three fundamental questions: “Why are we fighting? What do we hope to gain by it? What kind of a world do we wish to see when we have broken German domination in Europe, and prepared the way for reconstruction?”⁵⁰³ In light of what Kenney characterised as an unclear and unformulated response within British policy, he lamented the dangers of the war and the difficulty of conducting effective propaganda in such a system.

A later memorandum, titled ‘The Psychological Weapon’ goes into greater detail. It is in essence a blueprint or a draft of one proposed propaganda offensive to weaken the will of the German soldiers. Kenney suggests “one of the most effective methods of weakening the will of an individual is to confuse him in regard to his aims.”⁵⁰⁴ While it is strange to see Kenney involved in offensive propaganda, it does offer some understanding about what his ideas were on propaganda and its uses. In the document, he proposes that they attack the sexual sensibilities of German soldiers and especially their wives, drawing for them the picture of their men frequenting prostitutes in other European nations and informing them they “must expect to run the risk of venereal disease on the

⁵⁰¹ Goldstein, Erik. Collier, Sir Laurence (1890-1976). *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press, 2004: online edn. Oct. 2006. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/64924>. 2 Aug. 2015.

⁵⁰² Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Sir Robert Vansittart*. 27 May 1941. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

⁵⁰³ Kenney, Rowland. *Memorandum*. 19 July 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁵⁰⁴ Kenney, Rowland. *The Psychological Weapon*. 1 June 1941. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

men's return."⁵⁰⁵ Conversely, the German soldiers could be made to contemplate the effect of foreign migrants being brought into their homeland to fill the labour gap created by the war, and that these foreigners might insinuate themselves with their wives and daughters.⁵⁰⁶ It is a strikingly sinister example; Kenney himself suggests "they deal with an aspect of psychology which, in this country, is not generally accepted as 'quite nice'!"⁵⁰⁷

Apart from policy, there were also a series of very large reports made, outlining press- and media-conditions in his region. These are impressively detailed. One such report lists what can only be imagined to be virtually every national and regional newspaper and news agency in Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland and includes its address, its rate of issue, the name of the director, editor and proprietor, its general policy, general audience, circulation numbers, as well as any special remarks. Where applicable, the list also includes the names of foreign correspondents connected to the publication as well as its stance within advertising.⁵⁰⁸

Kenney was in charge of British propaganda in Finland and Scandinavia, and Iceland, the Faroe Islands, the Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland were added to his list by October 1940.⁵⁰⁹ The work was very comprehensive. A report on Sweden details the scope of the work. Material sent from the Northern Section to the Press Department for use by the Press Attaché in Sweden consisted of input to newspaper articles for print, photographs and pictures, daily reviews of the British press, the Press Attaché's weekly bulletin, the publishing of pamphlets and books as well as window displays. Further discussion in the report revolved around the subheadings: Articles and News; Photographs; Stereos; Pamphlets, Booklets, Posters, etc.; Newspapers and Periodicals; Films; Incoming material; London Correspondents of Swedish Press; Broadcasting; and the Joint Broadcasting Committee.⁵¹⁰ Each of these

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 2.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 1.

⁵⁰⁸ 'Report on Scandinavian Press'. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁵⁰⁹ Kenney, Rowland. *Report to Ashton, Harvey and Peterson*. 10 Oct. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁵¹⁰ Kenney, Rowland. *Sweden*. 10 Oct. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

subheadings were given due consideration for what work the Northern Section pursued.

With regard to Norway, which, after all, is a central part of the thesis, Kenney noted that it was impossible to send material directly. This did not stop Kenney's Northern Section. Kenney "devote[d] a considerable amount of time to Norwegian affairs, mainly in connexion with the B.B.C. Norwegian broadcasts, and the Norwegian paper now printed in London."⁵¹¹ The BBC broadcast to Norway consisted of 65 minutes of programming daily, specifically tailored to occupied Norway.⁵¹² When the Norwegian government had fled to London, some of the broadcasting professionals from Norway had come with them, which was of great use. The Norwegian authorities, according to Kenney, regarded these daily messages as being "of the greatest importance."⁵¹³ Kenney, for his part, took part in "a weekly BBC Scandinavia meeting at which questions of policy are discussed, and I am constantly in touch with the Scandinavian Department of the BBC, and with the Norwegians, and give advice, suggestions, and help in many ways."⁵¹⁴ Kenney was thus also heavily involved in this very significant wartime action.

The broadcasts were effective all over Scandinavia. Kenney attended a meeting in December 1940 to discuss these policies and activities. The meeting considered Swedish, Danish and Icelandic broadcasts by turn, and Kenney was central to the discussion. For example, he actively suggested Swedish candidates for the position of announcer in the broadcast as well as candidates who could offer constructive criticism regularly.⁵¹⁵ Another meeting Kenney attended was the meeting of the Overseas Planning Committee. In a confidential transcript, Kenney is said to have raised the issue of securing the transportation of materials to Sweden, bolstering propaganda efforts in Finland, and cooperating

⁵¹¹ Kenney. *Report to Ashton, Harvey and Peterson*. p. 2.

⁵¹² Kenney, Rowland. *Report to Mr. Law*. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁵¹³ Kenney, Rowland. *The B.B.C. Scandinavian Broadcasts*. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

⁵¹⁴ Kenney. *Report to Mr. Law*. p. 1.

⁵¹⁵ *Broadcasts to Scandinavia*. 3 Dec. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers; for an example of considered criticism of the Norwegian broadcast see *Criticism of Broadcasts in Norwegian*. TNA: FO 371/24838, N 6399.

with British Council officials in Iceland. All of these proposals were agreed.⁵¹⁶ The work in connection with the broadcasts, however, was taxing. In Kenney's own words:

I am at present responsible, as representative of the Ministry for policy and advice in regard to all the Scandinavian broadcasts: Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, and Icelandic. I have a weekly meeting at the BBC to discuss these matters, when I am supposed to know all that has been taking place, in all of them, during the previous week.⁵¹⁷

Kenney was involved in the broadcasts to the point of making decisions and liaising between the BBC and the Foreign Office and Ministry of Information on what topics should be covered in them.⁵¹⁸ And this was only one portion of the total workload.

Apart from policy-creation, report-compilation and attendance in a variety of meetings, Kenney also took part in propaganda in the field. He did not retreat into the labyrinth of bureaucracy, but rather used the position to bolster his own work and his standing. One large affair in the field was his leading of a tour of foreign correspondents to assess the damage caused in Kent and Sussex by German bombers. In a newspaper article cut out by Kenney from an unknown newspaper he is cited as saying "We are looking for the enormous damage done by the Germans but we cannot find it!"⁵¹⁹ Kenney's report following the tour provides Kenney's views that the tour was a success, thought that it could have been better organised and carried out. He also outlines a series of suggestions on how future tours might be improved.⁵²⁰ Kenney not only showed an active role in fieldwork for propaganda purposes, but also sought to systematise the efforts. In all of Kenney's efforts in this period rests a reflective instinct to uncover

⁵¹⁶ *Overseas Planning Committee*. 10 Dec. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁵¹⁷ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to D. B. Woodburn*. 9 July 1941. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

⁵¹⁸ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Laurence Collier*. 22 Aug. 1940. TNA: FO 371/24838, N 6364.

⁵¹⁹ *Vain Search for Nazi's "Enormous Damage": Foreign Newsmen in Sussex*. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁵²⁰ Kenney, Rowland. *Memorandum: Conducted Tour of a Party of Foreign Journalists to Kent and Sussex*. 22 Aug. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers.

weaknesses and avoid them in future work. This shows a distinct wish to codify and embed particular practices into a system of propaganda and information control.

The usual bureaucratic hurdles, however, marred Kenney's time as the Director of the Northern Section. The chief problem was found in the inordinate amount of work expected by Kenney and his small staff. As early as in October of 1940, a few months into the job, Kenney admitted to being "perturbed about the present condition of affairs in the Northern Section of the Foreign Division, owing to lack of staff. For some time it has been difficult to keep abreast of the work, in the near future it will be quite impossible."⁵²¹ Quite a few of the letters and reports from this period are studded with remarks which echo the desperation. Almost a year later, when it appears the Ministry had given Kenney authority to add one position to the Section, Kenney cited the several months that had passed with the Section understaffed and work piling up.⁵²²

Kenney's secretary, Miss Elizabeth Kitson, had been by his side since the start of the war and had assisted him in Oslo as well as during the invasion and retreat to Åndalsnes. Kitson was regarded as completely indispensable by Kenney, who repeatedly lauded her to his superiors in order to have her promoted.⁵²³ A series of letters and notes from August to October in 1940 chronicle the fight to have Elizabeth Kitson be promoted from Kenney's secretary to a research assistant, which was eventually granted.⁵²⁴ Even this was grossly inadequate for the amount and type of work she was doing, as nine months later, Kenney again claimed that she must at all costs be further promoted.⁵²⁵ His crusade for his own subordinates was certainly exemplary.

⁵²¹ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Leigh Ashton, Oliver Harvey and Sir Maurice Peterson*. 10 Oct. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

⁵²² Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to D. B. Woodburn*. 13 June 1941. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

⁵²³ Kenney, Rowland. *Report to Mr. Law*. 31 July 1941. Rowland Kenney Papers; Kenney. *Letter to D. B. Woodburn*.

⁵²⁴ Kitson, Elizabeth. *Letter to Rowland Kenney*. 13 Aug. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers; Kitson, Elizabeth. *Note to Miss Wade*. 19 Aug. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers; Kitson, Elizabeth. *Letter to Rowland Kenney*. 7 Oct. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers; Kenney, Rowland. *Note to Leigh Ashton*. 7 Oct. 1940. Rowland Kenney Papers; Ashton, Leigh. *Note to Rowland Kenney*. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁵²⁵ Kenney. *Report to Mr. Law*. p. 2-3.

The job, by 1941, was in Kenney's estimation nearly unbearable. In a letter to a Norwegian friend, he wrote that conditions were "idiotic" and cited "permanent irritation and a sense of frustration."⁵²⁶ Elaborating in a letter to Peter Tennant, the Press Attaché in Stockholm, he went as far as to suggest that the work in the ministry left him feeling more helpless and "hopeless of doing a decent job"⁵²⁷ than he had ever experienced in his life, which, of course, is saying something. A later letter to Tennant, headed with the uproarious phrase "Burn When Read!" shines light once more on Kenney's dark humour: "The German bombs continue to destroy buildings round about, but continue to miss us! If the Nazis only knew the Lord is on their side in misdirecting their bombs and leaving this place to carry on!"⁵²⁸ By the summer of 1941, he was looking for a way out.

The first true indication of an escape plan is in the form of a letter which is undated, but in tune with the related correspondence, it was presumably written in the late spring or early summer of 1941. The letter is unsigned, and no definitive indication is given concerning its author. However, it is possible to risk one educated guess. Firstly, the author is from within the Foreign Office, based on his usage of "us", "our" and "we." He is intimately knowledgeable about the internal affairs of the Norwegian government in exile. And he is very complimentary and warm towards Kenney. Excluding Vansittart—to whom the letter is addressed, notably with the friendly: "My dear Van,"—the odds seem to stack overwhelmingly in favour of presuming the author to be Laurence Collier. Collier had, of course, been a long and dear friend to both Vansittart and Kenney, and had fought in Kenney's corner previously, so to speak. Collier was also close with the Norwegian establishment as Counsellor and then Ambassador.

In essence the author of the letter seeks to pull Kenney out of the Ministry of Information, back to the Foreign Office, in order to send him to the United States of America together with a delegation of Danes and later to assist

⁵²⁶ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to C. L. Paus*. 10 May 1941. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

⁵²⁷ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Peter Tennant*. 22 Feb. 1941. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

⁵²⁸ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Peter Tennant*. 18 Apr. 1941. Rowland Kenney Papers.

with shoring up the morale of the Norwegian Americans. The language surrounding Kenney's capabilities is astoundingly glowing. Kenney is described as "the only man we know with the necessary knowledge and experience and the qualities requisite for undertaking such an investigation for us,"⁵²⁹ and they "know of no one else who would be so capable of undertaking this task as Rowland Kenney."⁵³⁰ Furthermore, the letter highlights Kenney's close connection to the Norwegian elite, worth citing in full:

There is no Norwegian of any standing with whom he has come in contact, and that includes a very large number of them, who has not complete confidence in him. They will, as the saying is, 'do anything for him'. I know that M. Trygve Lie, the Norwegian Foreign Minister, has not only complete confidence and trust in Kenney, but holds him in the highest esteem and regard. We should certainly get Kenney out to the U.S.A. immediately.⁵³¹

Kenney also appealed himself to Vansittart to be released.⁵³² Feeling placed under the thumb of superiors without sufficient knowledge about propaganda, he was desperate to be of use somewhere else. His escape was not an easy one. Kenney rounded up a small group of allies, including Vansittart, Collier, Warner and Charles Hambro to argue his case to the Foreign Office.⁵³³ The Ministry, however, did not want to let him go. "It is really a ridiculous position: I am absolutely indispensable; and yet regarded, apparently, and treated, with contempt by a drove of incompetents."⁵³⁴

His reports and memoranda to his superiors during this period begin to show more and more contempt. In what might have been a calculated effort to have himself ejected from the Ministry, Kenney lamented the fact that his salary had effectively dropped since his secondment to the job. He still received a base

⁵²⁹ *Letter to Sir Robert Vansittart*. Rowland Kenney Papers. p. 1.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1-2.

⁵³² Kenney. *Letter to Sir Robert Vansittart*. 27 May 1941.

⁵³³ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Charles Hambro*. 7 June 1941. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁵³⁴ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Sir Robert Vansittart*. 14 June 1941. Rowland Kenney Papers.

salary of £1,000 per annum, but was now without the additional income he had enjoyed previously from other work for the Foreign Office and from the Empire Parliamentary Association. He therefore requested of his superiors an increase in salary to reflect his losses.⁵³⁵ His request was vehemently denied. One unattributed phrase gave him the ammunition he may have been seeking for: “Mr. Kenney is not, of course, even graded as a Head of Section...”⁵³⁶ In a particularly bitter reply Kenney suggested “the most satisfactory solution of our problems would be to return me to the Foreign Office.”⁵³⁷ And in the context of the Second World War, Kenney’s Rowland Kenney Papers finishes there, with no indication of what happened further.

The British National Archives, however, sheds valuable light on the situation. It does appear that Kenney made every effort to leave the Ministry, and it was his old friend Collier who assisted him. Kenney was seconded to the Norwegian Government in the position of Honorary Adviser.⁵³⁸ The arrangement was made between Collier and the Norwegian Government and included the provision that Kenney’s salary was covered by the Foreign Office.⁵³⁹ Letters surrounding this arrangement point to the Norwegian Government making the suggestion and asking for Kenney’s services.⁵⁴⁰ As referenced above, in the unsigned letter, the Norwegian elite held Kenney in high regard. The Ministry, somewhat unwillingly, let Kenney return to the Foreign Office, citing that they would “be sorry to see him go because he has done good work here.”⁵⁴¹ If genuine, it is highly doubtful that the feeling was mutual. Kenney left the Ministry of Information on the 20th of September 1941 and began working for

⁵³⁵ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Oliver Harvey, Leigh Ashton, Sir Maurice Peterson and the Establishments Division*. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁵³⁶ *Note of comments*. 29 May 1941. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁵³⁷ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Oliver Harvey, Leigh Ashton, Sir Maurice Peterson and the Establishments Division*. 7 June 1941. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁵³⁸ Hougén, E. *Letter to Anthony Eden*. 22 Aug. 1941. TNA: FO 371/29452, N 4805.

⁵³⁹ Colban, Erik. *Letter to Anthony Eden*. 28 Aug. 1941. TNA: FO 371/29452, N 4893.

⁵⁴⁰ Cadogan, Sir Alexander. *Letter to Sir Walter Monckton*. 5 Sep. 1941. TNA: FO 371/29452, N 4893.

⁵⁴¹ Monckton, Sir Walter. *Note to Sir Alexander Cadogan*. 18 Sep. 1941. TNA: FO 371/29452, N 4893.

the Norwegian Government on the 6th of October, following a spell of influenza.⁵⁴²

With regard to what Kenney did for the rest of the war, there is little definite indication. There are only two mentions in the archives of Kenney between the autumn of 1941 and the end of the war. The first is in a letter from Collier to Anthony Eden in 1942. Kenney had suggested that the King of Norway should take a tour of military and industrial locations in Britain. The plan was approved and a tour was given, with Kenney being the originator of the idea. Collier's letter interestingly points out that this was "the first tour of its kind and may now be followed by similar tours undertaken by the Heads of other Allied States."⁵⁴³ The tour itinerary, however, shows that Kenney was not present and did not take part in the tour.⁵⁴⁴ Nevertheless, that he spawned this idea of foreign heads of state touring Britain to boost morale is yet more evidence of his nous. The second mention arrives in 1943, in connection with a photograph in the booklet 'War Pictures by British Artists' which was later produced as a postcard with the title changed. In a letter to Christopher Warner of the Foreign Office, Kenney criticised the postcard title as being offensive to the Norwegians and advised it to be changed from 'Norwegian Neutrality' to 'The Norwegian Coast'.⁵⁴⁵ Sir Kenneth Clark, the Director of the National Gallery, subsequently withdrew the postcards from sale.⁵⁴⁶ This, of course, demonstrates Kenney's attention to detail and his ability to achieve propaganda objectives. One other incident from this period is known. In 1942, Kenney was awarded the rank of Knight, First Class, of the Order of St. Olav.⁵⁴⁷ The Norwegian Royal House is unable to give any details as to the reasoning for awarding the distinction,

⁵⁴² Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Christopher Warner*. 15 Oct. 1941. TNA: FO 371/29452, N 6020.

⁵⁴³ Collier, Laurence. *Letter to Sir Anthony Eden*. 16 Apr. 1942. TNA: FO 371/32844, N 2013. p. 1.

⁵⁴⁴ *Tour Itinerary*. TNA: FO 371/32844, N 2013.

⁵⁴⁵ Kenney, Rowland. *Letter to Christopher Warner*. 4 Jan. 1943. TNA: FO 371/36886 N 98.

⁵⁴⁶ Rabagliati. *Letter to Christopher Warner*. 11 Jan. 1943. TNA: FO 371/36886 N 98.

⁵⁴⁷ Tverli, Mette. *Britisk hemmelig agent og St Olavs Orden*. Message to Paul M H Buarv. 20 Feb. 2014. E-Mail.

though from the vantage point of the considered story it seems a reasonable award nonetheless.

To explain the apparent silence from Kenney for the rest of the war one must forfeit to speculation, though obviously not without fairly reliable indications. That the appointment to the Norwegian Government occurred in the immediate wake of the suggestions that Kenney accompany Scandinavian delegations to the United States of America may bear significance. The theory that Kenney spent some time overseas is also strengthened by an index listing in the British National Archives of a '1942 Proposed lecture tour of Canada & US: N5312/5312/30'. The document referenced is unfortunately lost, but it does seemingly supplement the idea of Kenney departing for the United States. Together with the departure of the delegations and the fact that Kenney would turn sixty years old in 1942, this seems to be the most sure bet.

PERSONS OF INTEREST

As with Chapter IV, it is useful to take a quick look at the people close to Kenney in this period. Kenney did not act alone, and cataloguing a few of those around him serves to not only contextualise his work but also his influence and stature. While there are, obviously, a large number of persons who could be included here, only a few have been selected as examples. These give a clear indication of the elevation of Kenney's professional circles.

Colonel Charles Bridge was Kenney's superior at the very start of the war. He was appointed first Secretary-General of the British Council in 1934 and it is highly likely that Kenney knew him from this period.⁵⁴⁸ With the creation of the Ministry of Information at the breakout of war, Colonel Bridge was taken in from

⁵⁴⁸ Fisher, Ali. *A story of engagement: the British Council 1934-2009*. The British Council.

https://britishcouncilschool.es/sites/default/files/u11/a_short_history_of_the_british_council_2009.pdf. Accessed 23 Aug. 2015. p. 19; Swann, Paul. *The British Documentary Film Movement, 1926-1946*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. p. 131.

the British Council to be Deputy Director of the Foreign Publicity Department.⁵⁴⁹ It also appears like he shortly thereafter departed the propaganda field, returned to military duties, and became the Military Attaché to Rome.⁵⁵⁰ Little information remains about this elusive figure, who was undeniably a centrepiece of British cultural and political propaganda for a considerable period of time. Much more is known about the man who replaced him: Edward Hallett Carr. Carr was drafted to the Foreign Office as a Clerk in the summer of 1916. He was soon transferred to the Northern department until he, in 1936, left the Foreign Office entirely. Tensions surrounding the issue of appeasement had put him at odds with Vansittart, which may have had some impact on the appointment of Kenney to Oslo in 1939.⁵⁵¹ Though Carr resigned from the Foreign Office, he still held a firm position as a great thinker of International Politics, “regarded as one of the brightest of his generation.”⁵⁵² Carr re-joined the Foreign Office in 1939, and was quickly taken up by the Ministry of Information, serving under Col. Bridge in the Foreign Publicity Department. Once Col. Bridge left the job in October of 1939, Carr became the Department’s Director, being Kenney’s direct superior throughout most of his stay in Norway. It was to be a short tenure, however, and Carr left the Ministry of Information on the 29th of March 1940.⁵⁵³ During his time as head of the Foreign Publicity Department, Carr faced a highly restrictive budget and appointment policy, so he reportedly “sacked those he did not want in order to recruit those he did.”⁵⁵⁴ Carr’s letter of apology to Kenney denotes a definitive respect and admiration for the man. Carr, being arguably a giant of International Relations theory, valued Kenney highly.

A constant figure in the later documents of the Rowland Kenney Papers, Sir Robert Vansittart, of course, needs no introduction. Like Carr, he is a giant in diplomatic history, and even had an entire special issue of the journal Diplomacy

⁵⁴⁹ Cole, Robert. “The Other ‘Phoney War’: British Propaganda in Neutral Europe, September-December 1939. *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 22, no. 3. Sage Publications, 1987. pp. 455-479. p. 458.

⁵⁵⁰ Donaldson. *The British Council*. p. 82.

⁵⁵¹ Haslam, Johnathan. *The Vices of Integrity: E.H. Carr, 1892-1982*. London: Verso, 1999. p. 17.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

& Statecraft devoted to him.⁵⁵⁵ Between 1930 and 1938, Vansittart was the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He was a staunch and vocal opponent of appeasement, gaining a reputation as a hard and nearly prescient diplomat. In 1938, he became Chief Diplomatic Advisor to the Foreign Secretary, a largely honorific post he departed from in 1941.⁵⁵⁶ Vansittart was evidently a close ally to Kenney and took Kenney's side in internal matters without fail.

Closely related to Vansittart politically were two more of Kenney's confidantes: Reginald 'Rex' Leeper⁵⁵⁷ and Laurence Collier. Leeper had been in the Foreign Office since 1918, with a short stint in the Political Intelligence Department, where he may have run into Kenney. He remained in the Foreign Office in various capacities for the duration of his professional life, and was, together with Kenney, responsible for the foundation of the British Council (see Chapter VI).⁵⁵⁸ Leeper also revived the Political Intelligence Department in 1938, headed the propaganda division of the Special Operations Executive in 1940 and was director at the Political Warfare Executive between 1941 and 1943. Leeper was a talented and entrepreneurial propagandist.⁵⁵⁹ Laurence Collier was a veteran of the Foreign Office, having served in the Northern Department between 1926 and 1941. For the final eight years of this period, Collier was head of the Northern Section. During the Second World War, he was appointed first as envoy (May 1941) and then ambassador (May 1942) to Norway, an office he held until he retired in 1951. Collier had been a divisive figure in the Foreign Office, "his assignment reflected not only his ability but the fact that some of his colleagues preferred him to be in a section away from the mainstream of

⁵⁵⁵ Special Issue: Robert Vansittart and an Unbrave World, 1930-37. *Diplomacy & Statecraft*. Vol. 6, No. 1. Routledge, 1995.

⁵⁵⁶ Rose, Norman. 'Vansittart, Robert Gilbert, Baron Vansittart (1881-1957)'. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press, 2004: online ed. Jan. 2011. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36630>. 2 Aug. 2015; Lundy, Darrel. 'Person Page – 13177'. *The Peerage*. 30 July 2015. <http://thepeerage.com/p13177.htm#i131768>. 31 July 2015.

⁵⁵⁷ Donaldson. *The British Council*. p. 17.

⁵⁵⁸ Kenney, Rowland. *Memorandum to Laurence Collier*. 18 Sep. 1945. Rowland Kenney Papers.

⁵⁵⁹ Drinkwater, Derek. 'Leeper, Sir Reginald Wildig Allen (1888-1968)'. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press, 2004: online edn. Jan. 2011. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/55366>. 2 Aug. 2015.

affairs.”⁵⁶⁰ Vansittart, Leeper and Collier represented a small but vocal faction of the Foreign Office cautioning against appeasement. The fact that all three feature heavily in both the official and personal correspondence with Kenney, indicates that Kenney may have been part of this clique.

Finally, Francis ‘Frank’ Foley was one of the period’s most successful intelligence agents. He had been an agent for the Secret Intelligence Service since the end of the First World War and was the head of station in Berlin for the entire duration of the interwar period. When the Second World War broke out, he left to Oslo in order to keep a hold on his German agents. Upon the invasion of Norway, Foley is said to have been the only link between London and the Norwegian command, a link Kenney may be said to have been an integral part of as well. Kenney’s close cooperation with this legend of British intelligence is remarkable in and of itself.⁵⁶¹

DEVELOPING PRACTICES OF PROPAGANDA

The Second World War represents a period of remarkable development in the field of propaganda. Kenney’s multitude of positions and posts, especially his post as director of the Northern Section, gave him a perfect vantage point from which not only to observe these developments, but also take part in their creation. New communication technologies, new geopolitical realities and ways of thinking about public information both abetted and necessitated the evolution of propaganda into the modern, atomic era. Particularly, propaganda had become more centralised and bureaucratised, becoming more in tune with central wartime policy. This carried with it a new respect for the practice of propaganda as well as the experts who worked in the field. Another particular

⁵⁶⁰ Goldstein. ‘Collier, Sir Laurence’.

⁵⁶¹ Smith, Michael. Foley, Francis Edward (1884-1958). *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press, 2004: online edn. Jan. 2008. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/66068>. 2 Aug. 2015.

development was the creeping of propaganda into various other wartime practices; it began to become a less distinct weapon, absorbed into the work of other departments and institutions. And finally, the Second World War, with its stunning technological innovations, provided the field of propaganda with new and highly effective communication and dissemination methods.

The creation of the Ministry of Information at the start of the war (explained in more detail in Chapter V) illustrates the extent to which the importance of propaganda had been recognised. As discussed, the Ministry had been conceived of before the war and represented a return to the busy machinery of the last years of the First World War.⁵⁶² The effect was a centralised institution (at least in theory), which established a clear-cut and bureaucratic system of propaganda. This is perhaps the most practical way of describing the development of an institutionalised system.

The British Council is a case in point. In a broad definition of propaganda work (see Chapter II), the British Council can be said to be a propaganda organisation. It was engaged, before the war, in a series of tasks ranging from pure cultural propaganda to education and cultural exchange.⁵⁶³ In anticipation of war, with the premeditative organisation of the Ministry of Information, there were lengthy discussions about absorbing the British Council into the Ministry in war. The first agreement reached, in February 1939, was that the British Council should indeed be totally swallowed up by the Ministry in the event of war, with the Ministry assuming “all its functions and responsibility for the salaries of such staff as had contractual rights until these expired”.⁵⁶⁴ This was problematic for some senior officials of the Council, since it created the impression that the Council was *de facto* a propaganda institution, an impression that had to be fought at least in theory, if not in practice. The argument was raised that the British Council would do much better work if it remained under the auspices of the Foreign Office. What followed was a drawn-out debate

⁵⁶² Taylor. *If War Should Come*; McLaine, Ian. *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War II*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979.

⁵⁶³ Donaldson, Frances. *The British Council: The First Fifty Years*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1984.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

between several interests within the sphere of British propaganda. The original proposal was put down, replaced instead by a solution of combination. The Ministry of Information agreed that insofar as the British Council engaged in cultural and educational work, it was outside of the expertise of the Ministry and should continue these tasks undisturbed. However, any activity concerning true propaganda, including all work concerning film, would have to be previously approved by the Ministry, and a liaison position was created for this to work.⁵⁶⁵ This clearly demonstrates the careful consideration given to centralising propaganda efforts and the consolidation of a true system of propaganda. However, it also points out the new concept of propaganda seeping into other state practices.

The spread of propaganda practices into other institutions is an interesting point to investigate. If the reader recalls the decentralised structure of propaganda practiced in the First World War, by such wide and varied bodies as Wellington House, the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Information, as well as bodies of censorship for example, then this argument may sound like a regression into a similar system and not a development at all. But this is not so. The First World War had considered propaganda a valuable weapon, but had different departments working on the same task, often without much coordination. The system arising now did have centralised structures for management, structures well guarded and considered. But also in recognising the importance of propaganda, it acknowledged its utility in nearly any public relations respect. The fact then, that many different institutions began taking part in the broad practice, meant that there existed a view that propaganda did not need to solely be used as a distinct weapon, but also as an enhancement for other weapons and functions of the state. At the very beginning of the war, for example, the Special Operations Executive also began propaganda work as a corollary to their sabotage and military activities. Many overlapping departments did the same, such as the British Council and its soft propaganda

⁵⁶⁵ A full account of the debate and surrounding the British Council and the Ministry of Information can be found in Donaldson's book, chapter 5: Donaldson. *The British Council*. pp. 68-81.

work⁵⁶⁶, the Ministry of Economic Warfare, the Political Intelligence Department and the Foreign Office.⁵⁶⁷ Propaganda became less a consequence of function and more a function in itself.

Finally, the practice of propaganda became more focused and more efficient with the adoption of new communications technologies. As already mentioned, the British Council engaged in film work, which were doubtless propagandistic in nature, and this work was regarded as so effective, that it was one of the main conditions for the Council's cooperation with the Ministry of Information during the war. Indeed, film and radio had become highly valued media for propaganda dissemination before and during the Second World War.⁵⁶⁸ Especially film was novel and effective: "As a communications medium film reached its peak during the second world war."⁵⁶⁹ The adaptation of new technologies in propaganda certainly speaks to the development of techniques and systems.

Kenney must have been aware of the extent to which the practice and theory of propaganda had shifted since his work began in 1916. The institutionalisation and bureaucratisation of propaganda was evident in the establishment of the Ministry of Information, as well as other, more specialised organisations like the British Council, events which he had witnessed and taken part in, first hand. This bureaucratic centralisation also betrayed a paradoxical decentralisation of the concept of soft propaganda, of which Kenney had intimate understanding, especially considering the wide range of roles and positions Kenney occupied. Had propaganda been absolutely centralised, a man of Kenney's abilities would have remained at the Ministry of Information

⁵⁶⁶ Donaldson. *The British Council*.

⁵⁶⁷ Cruickshank, Charles. *The Fourth Arm: Psychological Warfare 1938-1945*. London: Davis-Poynter, 1977.

⁵⁶⁸ An overview of the development of British propaganda, including radio and film propaganda in the interwar period can be found in Philip M. Taylor's chapter in *Film & Radio Propaganda in World War II*. Taylor, Philip M. Propaganda in International Politics, 1919-1939. *Film and Radio Propaganda in World War II*. Ed. K.R.M. Short. London: Croom Helm, 1983. pp. 17-50; see also Taylor, Philip M. *Britain and the Cinema in the Second World War*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1988; Chapter 3 in Balfour, Michael. *Propaganda in War 1939-1945*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979. pp. 53-102.

⁵⁶⁹ Coultass, Clive. British Feature Films and the Second World War. *Journal of Contemporary History*. vol. 19, no. 1. Sage Publications, Jan. 1984. pp. 7-22. p. 7.

throughout the war. His movements between the Foreign Office and the Ministry, as well as his roles within the British Council, in institutions concerned with film propaganda, as well as his embedding with the Norwegian government clearly illustrates the absorption of principles and practices of propaganda in a wide range of official institutions. Finally, his concern before the war with the establishment of a National Films Council or Unit⁵⁷⁰, as well as his work with the BBC broadcasts during the war show him present at the cutting edge of technological innovation. Kenney was not only a highly capable propagandist, but he embodied the very evolution of propaganda principles and techniques from 1916 until (at the very least) 1942.



This chapter has put forth the most complete account of Kenney's Second World War activities available. He had returned to Oslo in order to carry out the same kind of work he had originally begun in 1916, though the bureaucratic machine behind him was not at all the same. In April 1940, following the German invasion of Norway, Kenney assisted the SIS and Frank Foley in high-value intelligence work, as well as continuing an impressive effort to maintain and coordinate British propaganda in Norway under nearly impossible conditions. Upon his eventual escape back to Britain, Kenney was eventually given the post of director of the Northern Section within the Ministry of Information, a position finally befitting his experience and expertise. Continuously disappointed with the conditions within the Ministry, Kenney was finally manoeuvred back into the Foreign Office and seconded as an advisor to the Norwegian government. During this meandering professional period, Kenney was in close contact with a variety of more or less revered political operatives, indicating his own position within a quickly evolving system. In fact, Kenney's work and his network make him an undeniable central character in the evolution of the institution of British propaganda specifically, and the development of principles and practices of propaganda generally.

⁵⁷⁰ Referenced in Chapter V; Kenney, Rowland. *Summary of Memorandum on National Film Publicity*. 14 Apr. 1938. Rowland Kenney Papers.

Without sanctifying the character too much, it remains clear that Kenney was undoubtedly an influential man, despite being waylaid by most, if not all, of documented history. The point of the thesis is of course to demonstrate his role in the creation of lasting propaganda systems. In this respect, legacy becomes an important form of argument. The next chapter, therefore, examines further the evolution and development of propaganda as a state practice after the Second World War in order to show Kenney's lasting, though forgotten, effect on the usage of information and propaganda as a political tool.

CHAPTER VIII

LEGACY

...much of what I have to say is nowadays
banal and much of it already covered by the
present directives.⁵⁷¹

The thesis began by exploring the history and concept of propaganda. The roots of the practice can arguably be traced back further and further as the definition of the word becomes broader, but a general starting-point for organised, proto-modern propaganda could be pinned to the Catholic Church and its rapid expansion in the eleventh century. The printing press is also a major event in the history of propaganda, enabling a uniform distribution of material to the masses. Not to be underestimated, propaganda, in some form or another, has played a role in virtually all conflicts throughout history, but it was at the turn of the nineteenth century that modern propaganda was finally developed and used.

Defining the concept is a surprisingly difficult task. Nearly every academic foray into the subject contains a discussion—and more often than not

⁵⁷¹ Kenney, Rowland. *Memorandum to Laurence Collier*. 18 Sep. 1945. Rowland Kenney Papers, p. 1.

a proposal—of definition, usually coloured by the native field of the academic, ranging from psychology to history with a menagerie of subjects in between. Propaganda is defined in this thesis as a set of techniques employed by a political power against a population in order to persuade the members of that population to accept or internalise specific and intended ideas as truth. The definition centres on the concept of propaganda as technique, but cedes also certain functional characteristics: that it is a political action from a political source, that the message is distributed massively but received individually, and that it seeks to ingrain ideas in the recipient in the form of truths. It is important to note the amorality, or moral neutrality, of propaganda, which is to say that whether or not propaganda is malicious, this rests solely on the intent behind the message. Propaganda also always presents itself as truth, as opposed to a claim or an argument, and historically there has been a concerted effort to only partake in propaganda that is factually true, though it may omit unwanted truths. The practice also relies on the mass media for distribution, demanding some sort of control of the media. This is effective because it encases the propagandistic message in a format that is often sought out willingly by the masses. Finally, propaganda works primarily by proxy, not seeking to directly implant an idea or a fact into the mind of a recipient, but rather sowing the seeds which then grow into a complete ideology.

The First World War was a 'first' in many respects, not least in the unprecedented use of propaganda techniques. Great Britain was keen to maintain its position as a leading nation in the world, and to achieve this aim it was desirable to sway neutral parties over to the British side, in turn creating great incentive for the use of propaganda. Assisting in this endeavour were the British media, who had, on many levels, close ties with the government and its institutions. Especially relevant in the context of the thesis, the enmeshment of the news agencies with their governments—Reuters in the case of Britain—was a very useful one. It is undeniable that Reuters had a political agenda at the start of the war. This was only strengthened by its restructuring in 1916, which brought the firm squarely under the influence of the Foreign Office giving it veto power in Reuters on several issues, most tellingly on issues of public policy. The close cooperation between the agency and the official propaganda machinery

was not diminished by the fact that the agency director, Roderick Jones, also took a position in the Department and later Ministry of Information as the head of the section responsible for cable and wireless propaganda.

The Department of Information rose out of the need to streamline a mesh of different propaganda bureaus operating within different departments of the British government. For the first two years of the war, propaganda was handled by the War Propaganda Bureau, the Foreign Office News Department, the Press Bureau, the censorship office of the Admiralty and of the War Office, and the Home Office Neutral Press Committee, to only name a few. The Foreign Office believed the structure of the machinery would function best were it organised under their department. When Lloyd George became Prime Minister at the close of 1916, he immediately seized upon the lateral structure of the propaganda departments, and decided to create a centralised department housed within the Foreign Office. This new Department of Information absorbed the existing departments and reorganised the entire process of policy, creation and dissemination. The Department remained inadequately powerful within the government, and by January 1918, the decision was made to create in its place a Ministry of Information. Continual struggles for policy-control between the Ministry, the military offices and the Foreign Office created turmoil, and while the machinery of propaganda functioned much more smoothly by the end of the war, there was certainly evidence of political rifts.

The Norwegian position before and during the war informed its relationship to the warring parties considerably. Norway had a long history of mercantilism, operating the fourth largest merchant fleet in the world during the First World War, a fleet which was a great wartime economic asset. This position of trade also left Norway underprotected in terms of military power, as it relied on its economic partners—primarily Great Britain—to come to its rescue were anything to happen. Norway was a very young country by the start of the war, together with Denmark and Sweden, it struck a neutral line which would remain officially in place until the end of the war. The agreed neutrality was a way to ensure that the Scandinavian countries—with differing, and in some cases contradictory positions towards the warring parties—would not fight between themselves.

Norway had a long and rich history of both cultural and economic ties to Great Britain, and naturally tended towards Britain in the war. The newly elected Norwegian royal house had strong connections to the British, but perhaps more significantly, trade involving Norwegian ships was highly concentrated towards Britain and the United States. Norwegian exports also favoured Britain over Germany, and imports vice versa, though the figures were here closer to each other, indicating a strong dependence both on the British and German markets and thus reinforcing the need to remain neutral, guaranteeing continued economic growth in a period of intense industrialisation. While leaning closer to Britain than to Germany, the official position of neutrality was a pragmatic one, made on the basis of arguments of both security and trade.

Norway's significance to the warring parties had a lot to do with the usefulness of its merchant fleet and its trade-networks. However, geopolitical concerns were also of importance to war strategists. Access to the Baltic Sea was a potentially crucial advantage in the event of a major European war, and naval strategists were more than aware that this access could be restricted either by the Scandinavian countries themselves, or by the control of these countries from some outside force. Controlling the Norwegian coastline, or establishing bases there, would afford very useful points of access both to the Baltic Sea and to the Atlantic and was considered a possible scenario demanding counter-planning and stern consideration.

Rowland Kenney joined the war-effort in 1916. He had for quite some time worked as a journalist and then an editor for various radical-leftist publications and had strong ties to the unions. It was his connections with the unions that brought him to the attentions of the Foreign Office. The Foreign Office News Department had for a while been considering the situation in Norway from afar, and concluded it would be wise to send an agent there to observe and report on the steps they could take to ensure Norwegian support. Kenney was subsequently sent in August 1916 and reported on what he thought were the necessary actions to be taken: distributing news-propaganda countering German charges, connecting the British and Norwegian press, and repurposing the Norwegian national news agency.

Kenney obtained a cover as a Reuters correspondent in the Norwegian capital and began to deal with the issues he himself had raised. Primarily, he monitored the Norwegian press, reporting back to the News Department with various developments, reactions and suggestions. He also began to gather a network of Norwegian journalists and editors in order to spread pro-British articles in the Norwegian press. It was clear he was ambitious, suggesting some Norwegian journalists be blacklisted from publishing in British newspapers and even going so far as to suggest there was a chance to depose the Norwegian Foreign Minister who had a tendency to appear anti-British. It quickly became clear that Kenney was the point-man in Norway, not just for the distribution of propaganda material, but also for the creation and execution of British propaganda policy. By the end of the war it can be estimated that Kenney was responsible for over 3000 articles appearing in the Norwegian print-media. Throughout the war, Kenney's success in Norway became evident not only to himself, but also his superiors in the Department and Ministry of Information, and his areas of responsibility were constantly widening. Kenney always seemed to maintain a not insignificant level of autonomy.

Perhaps the most impactful example of Kenney's efficiency is his role in the NTB-Reuters affair. Kenney had noted from the start that the Norwegian national news agency, NTB, should unequivocally be dismantled and replaced by an agency more suited to British propaganda dissemination. The Norwegian agency had since its creation been under the influence of the German bureau, making it a dangerous source of German propaganda, and it had also become near farcical in its inefficiency. Kenney, perfectly placed at the intersection between Reuters, the Foreign Office and the Norwegian press elite began working together with influential Norwegian personalities to create a new agency which could replace or swallow up NTB. Kenney essentially worked behind the scenes to orchestrate the negotiation of a contract between the potential new bureau and Reuters, and making sure this contract would fall into the hands of the suitable people who in turn could fight out the old agency. A series of events which could have been catastrophic to the scheme were deftly navigated by Kenney's handling of his Norwegian contacts, resulting in the new agency being established and purchasing NTB. While it is difficult to ascertain to

what extent Kenney had initiated the entire affair, it is clear he played a crucial role in its successful execution. At the completion of Kenney's stay in Norway in the First World War, he had accomplished a great deal, establishing a system of information control and dissemination that served British interests. His contacts both in Norway and in Britain demonstrate his position in a network of highly successful propagandists and politicians. His accomplishments demonstrate his ability to affect policy.

After the First World War, Kenney returned to the Foreign Office and was asked to travel to Poland to engage in preparations and planning for the Peace Conference. Kenney was slated to begin working for the new Political Intelligence Department, but fell victim to an airplane crash which left him hospitalised and in poor condition for a long period of time. Finally joining the PID in 1920, Kenney became a member of a highly regarded, though short-lived organisation and doubtless made friends with an assortment of highly influential people who would, many of them, become his professional allies. With the dissolution of the PID, Kenney returned to the News Department, where he worked on a variety of tasks he has characterised as propaganda under a different name. Particularly interesting from this period is Kenney's role in the establishment of the British Council. In the News Department, Kenney worked in a tiny section dedicated to British publicity abroad. While the concept of propaganda had been sullied after the war, Kenney found that referring to the work as 'cultural' in nature was beneficial in order to garner support. Working with a shoestring budget, he nonetheless managed to eke out impressive results which soon caught the attention of Rex Leeper, second in command at the News Department. Leeper determined to lift up the section and eventually consolidated it into what became the British Council. Kenney always maintained that the British Council was a propagandistic tool. Nonetheless, Kenney remained a fairly nondescript character in the Foreign Office, never truly climbing the ranks as might have been expected. Partly due to his fairly extreme political views, his lower-class background and the debilitating airplane crash, he remained a somewhat low-ranked civil servant throughout the interwar period.

As it began to become clear that a new European war would soon be unavoidable, it also appeared that Britain was largely unprepared for the event. The position of Britain in the global system had gradually weakened, and the country was overstretched in its commitments, eager to keep at least a foothold in several rapidly diminishing spheres. The policy of appeasement towards Germany had also resulted in war preparations being neglected. Nonetheless, there was a clear understanding that drawing the support of neutral countries would again be a big objective for Britain. Propaganda, being a very suitable method of garnering this support, would need to be revitalised, and it quickly became clear that a return to the late-First World War rendition of the Ministry of Information was preferred. The Ministry was by no account a great success, bureaucratically bloated and stiffened by overeager centralisation.

During the interwar period, Norway had remained relatively closely connected with Britain, mainly through trade, which had been boosted by trade agreements made in 1933. However, Norway was internally more proud and independent than some British policy makers anticipated, which led to a misconception that Norway would not need much attention to remain in the British sphere of influence. With war on the horizon, the Northern Department of the Foreign Office became concerned that Norway might feel left out in the cold, and eventually they convinced the Foreign Secretary to give an assurance of conditional British aid were Norway to be attacked. The significance of Norway rested primarily in its control of a variety of important wartime natural resources. Maintaining access to these resources, or denying access to them for the enemy was a good military strategy. In addition, Norway represented easy German access to Sweden's iron ore, given its year-round open ports. Using Norway as a trade route for iron ore was a massively significant economic objective for Germany, and losing access to the Norwegian coastline would be devastating. Were Norway to be brought into the war, dropping its neutrality, it would be a large gain in terms of the sea-corridor offered, the trade routes controlled and the natural resources claimed. Norway consequently found itself in a precarious position, being a prized target for the warring parties and unable to fully trust any one side.

Kenney's return to Norway was in no way part of a long-term plan. He had, in a letter to his superiors in the Foreign Publicity Department of the Ministry of Information, taken a tough stance on what he felt was his unjust placement in the lower ranks, and had snidely remarked that if nothing was forthcoming in terms of a promotion, then he could just as well be sent to Norway for the same job he had held twenty years prior. He was subsequently sent to Norway, though not without a series of complaints being made by himself and his high-ranking friends. In Norway, he began the propaganda work which was in many ways similar to his tasks in the First World War, though the Ministry now had notably more control over their agents. Kenney fought against the bureaucratisation, and dictated his own course rather than listening to every Ministry directive sent his way. The tone between Kenney and his superiors was surprisingly insubordinate at times.

When the Germans invaded Norway in April 1940, Kenney was forced to flee Oslo to escape capture. Joining a small party including the famed SIS operative, Frank Foley, he made his way to Åndalsnes on the Norwegian coast, where a temporary safe-haven was in place. Working together with Foley, Kenney began to get involved not only in propaganda but also in true intelligence work, becoming a link in the only chain connecting the remaining Norwegian command with the outside world. In spite of the chaos, however, he also managed to work together with the Norwegians to set up an information service under the occupation. One of the Norwegians he came into contact with was Lieutenant Martin Linge, and it is likely that Kenney played a major part in propelling Linge into the hero-status he would occupy not a year later. Kenney managed to escape from Norway by ship and returned to the Ministry of Information to see what could be done.

After a brief spell of being sent back and forth between the Foreign Office and the Ministry, Kenney was offered the position of Director of the Northern Section of the Foreign Division. He reluctantly accepted and began truly shaping policy. Several memoranda from this period reveal Kenney's own thoughts on propaganda as a concept. The work at the Northern Section was of a very heavy load. Extensive reports on the media and propaganda situation in the Scandinavian countries show a remarkable depth of research. By the autumn of

1940, Kenney's section was responsible for the propaganda work in nine European countries. Kenney began to work closely with the BBC's international radio broadcasts, attending weekly meetings and liaising between the BBC, the Ministry of Information as well as Norwegian officials in London. His work higher up in the bureaucracy did not diminish, however, his appreciation for on-the-ground work; he led a large group of international journalists on a tour of Kent and Sussex to demonstrate the lack of effect of the German bombing raids, for example. His time as Director would, nonetheless, be short-lived. He appealed constantly for additions to be made to the staff in order to address the insurmountable amount of work funnelled into his section. These requests were delayed if not outright rejected, though Kenney fought hard for his own. His disappointment and frustration was, by the summer of 1941, unbearable. Through some manoeuvring by Kenney's old friends, Sir Robert Vansittart and Laurence Collier, as well as Kenney himself, he was finally pulled from the Ministry back into the Foreign Office and subsequently seconded as Honorary Adviser to the Norwegian Government. Thus, in the known broad strokes, ended Rowland Kenney's career in the field of propaganda.

What makes Kenney such an interesting figure, and an excellent subject for the purposes of this thesis—aside from his meticulous and well-kept collection—, is his wide range of held positions, his long service, and his role as a practitioner within the field. Kenney was present at the very beginning of the development of truly modern state propaganda, and followed this development nearly until it arrived at the doors of the Cold War. He not only witnessed, but also took part in its spread from newspaper columns and pamphlets to cinema screens and radio waves. He not only distributed material, but also had a role in creating policy. He offers an unparalleled, personal and intimate view of the workings of propaganda from several obscure angles.



Having accounted in detail for Rowland Kenney's work between 1916 and 1942, the thesis has outlined a specified evolution of propaganda as a technique and as an institution during this period. However, the true test of Kenney's significance

to the development of these tools is whether the echoes of his contribution can be heard beyond his direct involvement. The remainder of this chapter therefore seeks to chart the progression of certain aspects of propaganda after the Second World War and then trace these back to Kenney's work. This will show the legacy that Kenney left behind and serve as the central argument that he had a significant effect on a practice that continues to affect the relationships both within and between states to this day.

This 'post-Kenney' development, however, cannot be easily attributed. There is no illusion in the mind of this author that any one propagandist could have a definitive effect on propaganda, as it is such a complicated and multi-faceted practice. As was discussed in Chapter II cultural and ideological context, for example, is naturally a sizeable component of propaganda development. As such, with the emergence of the ideological battle of the Cold War, classic, dichotomising propaganda came into its natural element. "This was a war on the mind, a contest of ideologies, a battle of nerves which, for the next forty years or so, was to divide the planet into a bi-polar competition that was characterized more by a war of words and the threatened use of nuclear weapons rather than their actual use."⁵⁷² In essence, propaganda development is more suitably credited to a great number of elements, from cultural changes to technological advancement to policy shifts. Nevertheless, the thesis maintains that Kenney's work can be seen, at least indirectly, influencing the further development of propaganda and information control.

At a very basic level, Kenney's involvement in the NTB-affair (discussed in Chapter V) as well as his work in establishing the British Council (detailed in Chapter VI) are concrete examples of his legacy. Both of these institutions exist to this day. NTB's early ownership and its ties to Reuters and Havas played no small part in shaping its evolution from 1918 until now. The case of the British Council is even clearer. Kenney's work in the interwar years were not only the inspiration for Rex Leeper's organisation, but also formed the core of its early operations. Kenney found that propaganda had to be rebranded into cultural

⁵⁷² Taylor, Philip M. *Munitions of the Mind: A history of propaganda from the ancient world to the present era*. 3rd ed. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003. p. 250.

diplomacy, an insight which doubtless informed the very foundation of British Council principles. His post-war assertion that the cultural work of the British Council was no different to the propaganda work of the Ministry of Information speaks to his authority on the matter and his close familiarity with the organisation he had helped create. It is of course true that in both of these cases, there is no way of testing the claim that Kenney was instrumental. History does not provide the luxury of isolated variables. Perhaps NTB would have been remade and the British Council would have arisen just as they now are even without Kenney's involvement. The thesis has, however, presented the best, currently available indications to the contrary, that Kenney did indeed significantly influence negotiations and did indeed create the circumstances for their emergence. In a very concrete way, it is possible to strongly suggest that Kenney here has markedly had an impact beyond his own active years on the practice and policies of propaganda.

In a much more indistinct way, it is certainly possible to argue that his work also influenced the creation of policy. The chapters IV and VI in particular, discussing Kenney's general wartime work in relation to Norway, has laid out countless examples of this particular agent creating local policy, enacting his own initiatives and receiving praise for his own ideas and practices. In some cases, there are even requests that Kenney export his method or teach others. An underlying and subconscious premise of the thesis has rested in the idea that policy is rarely whisked out of thin air in governmental meetings, but is often solidified by practices and actions already made. Kenney's mission to Norway in the First World War, for instance, where he was trusted not only to discover the necessary actions but also to enforce these, is an excellent example. He was an untrained low-level agent, who went on to build a highly effective system. It is difficult to imagine that the lessons learned from this system were not taken into account in the creation of defined policy.

It is impossible to determine to what extent Kenney's use of the BBC, for example, during the Second World War, determined the policy that later led to the creation of the covert radio-propaganda institution, the Information

Research Department of the Foreign Office, in 1948.⁵⁷³ Similarly, it is impossible to confirm or deny whether it was Kenney's suggestion to Vansittart in 1940, that an unnamed Norwegian officer should be trained and sent on sabotage missions to Norway, that was the foundation of Lieutenant Linge's important role in the Norwegian resistance movement. It is unknowable whether Kenney's insight that propaganda had become a dirty word and could be replaced with 'cultural exchange' at all influenced the fact that modern propagandists call themselves by "cryptic euphemisms, 'image consultants', 'public relations officers', 'spin doctors', etc."⁵⁷⁴ It is not really a worthwhile pursuit to attempt to assess to what extent Kenney's access to the Norwegian newspapers in the First World War, or his help in establishing the Norwegian centre for information in Åndalsnes in April 1940, or his countless memoranda outlining what should and should not be done, had an effect on propaganda policy and development, because fundamentally, simply, they did. Modern propaganda has become what it is because of the work of thousands upon thousands of propagandists, politicians, spies and journalists. Kenney was one of them. His legacy, like all of their legacies, is evident in its every mutation.

⁵⁷³ Taylor, Philip M. *British Propaganda in the 20th Century*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999. p. 236.

⁵⁷⁴ Taithe, Bertrand, and Tim Thornton. Propaganda: A Misnomer of Rhetoric and Persuasion. *Propaganda: Political Rhetoric and Identity 1300-2000*. Eds. Bertrand Taithe and Tim Thornton. Stroud: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1999. pp. 1-26. p. 2.

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