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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

**The Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) and the development of the Arts Council in Scotland
background, politics, visual art policy 1919-1947**

McArthur, Euan

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Euan McArthur

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THESIS
2005

**The Council for the Encouragement of Music and the
Arts (CEMA) and the Development of the Arts
Council in Scotland**

**Background, Politics, Visual Art Policy
1919-1947**

A thesis submitted to the University of Dundee

for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in the Faculty of Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design

Volume One

Background and Politics

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School of Fine Art

July 2005

The Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA)

and the Development of the Arts Council in Scotland:

Background, Politics and Policy

1919-1947

Volume One

Background and Politics

Volume One

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Declaration

I, Euan C. McArthur, am the sole author of this thesis. Unless otherwise stated, I have personally consulted all references cited herein. The work in this thesis is an accurate record of research carried out by me and has not been previously accepted for a higher degree.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Euan C. McArthur". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent flourish at the end.

Euan C. McArthur

Summary

This work is a history of how the arts council system of public funding of contemporary art developed in Scotland between 1919 and 1947, with a specific focus on the visual arts. It treats that history as belonging, primarily, to the history of education and, through its origins in the voluntary sector, to the history of the emerging welfare state. The thesis explores the significance of philosophical Idealism, both as social theory and aesthetic theory. It argues that Idealism had a profound, if in some respects conflicting, influence on the processes described here, including the seminal importance of *The 1919 Report* and in forming then-contemporary ideas of national cultural identity.

Central to the purpose of the thesis is an account of the political and administrative context within which this development took place, especially in relation to the Scottish Education Department. The thesis presents in effect a case study in the negotiation of administrative devolution, to secure a Scottish dimension while preserving an over-arching British unity. The conclusion is that the success of Scottish demands for devolution in the face of strong resistance in London was crucial to preserving the Arts Council's British identity, but that this was a Pyrrhic victory for those Scots who believed that devolution would be a brief interlude before full independence was achieved under Home Rule.

The third part of the thesis examines visual art policy and activities between 1940 and 1947. As policy is nothing without practice, the thesis presents an

overview of the actual activities that were carried out in these years, as far as imperfect data allow. A picture emerges of a major, and creditable, effort, with limited resources in difficult circumstances, to make visual art more accessible and comprehensible to a much wider public in Scotland than in pre-war years.

He who administers governs.

Matthew Arnold

Part One

Introduction

Chapter 1: Context and Approach

In 1994, the Arts Council of Great Britain (hereafter called the Arts Council), which had presided over funding for contemporary art in Britain for almost fifty years, was finally separated into its national components: arts councils for England, Wales and Scotland.¹ ‘Finally’ because several times in its history in the 1940s, 1960s and 1970s the possibility of separation had at least been broached. The break-up took place in the context of Scottish devolutionary pressure, growing again in the interregnum that followed the failure of the referendum on Scottish devolution in 1979. Peripheral to ‘big politics’, the fragmentation of the Arts Council was a largely symbolic gesture towards devolution, which entailed no political cost. On the other hand, its symbolic value was great because the Arts Council’s job was to intervene in and shape the arts in Britain: highly visible, much argued over, impinging on the lives of ‘opinion formers’, symbols of the open society. The Arts Council was a powerful player within the larger field of culture, within which national identities are formed. The high arts, more than popular culture, are still entangled with ideas of national identity, which they seem to both reflect and, to a degree, produce.

Underlying the Arts Council was the fact that, as Morton (1999) and others have shown, the British state never attempted to construct a homogeneous British society, but left several different civil societies rubbing along beside each other, sometimes harmoniously, sometimes less so. Bridging three of these four entities, it was inevitable that, at least from time to time, the Arts Council would feel the ground shift, and equally inevitable that the locus of friction when it came would often be Scotland. It had always lived with the potential for disaggregation, but once it was no longer politically

desirable to restrain the tendency to pull apart, the end of the Arts Council was inevitable.

The tensions between unity, independence and devolution were older than the Arts Council itself, having been present in the life of its predecessor, the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA). It was from CEMA that the Arts Council inherited the territorial conundrum: how to hold together, in a body that formally renounced 'representation', the cultural life of the civil societies that jostled under its umbrella. It is in the history of CEMA that the origin of the territorial politics of the Arts Council is found, and other ways in which CEMA foreshadowed the Arts Council or imposed something of itself on its offspring can be seen. Above all, the Arts Council inherited from CEMA the social agenda of its Charter, which justified public support for the arts in terms of accessibility, education and participation (however narrowly these terms have been construed at times). This echo of the liberal social conscience of CEMA's founders was indelible, and in turn was passed on in the 1994 charters of the new arts councils which are still the leading agencies of public funding for contemporary art. They remain quintessential products and agents of social democratic values.

Aims of this Study

Two general questions underlie this work: how and why did CEMA emerge and develop in Scotland as it did? More specifically, I ask why the visual arts developed as they did. To answer these questions I cover four general aspects of CEMA and the Arts Council in Scotland, the first three in Volume One, the last in Volume Two. Volume One deals first with the period between 1919 and CEMA's founding in 1939. CEMA

had origins in the politically moderate wing of adult education represented by the British Institute of Adult Education and the Workers' Educational Association, but how that connection was shaped in Scotland has not been described and analysed before. Intimately linked to the educational strand is another arising from social voluntarism, the impetus of individuals to pursue shared interests and the public good, embracing artistic and social welfare aims. I examine in particular the National Council for Social Service and its Scottish offshoots. CEMA was born out of the mingling of these strands on the verge of wartime, an extension of the public welfare system in a period of crisis.

The second part of Volume One is an overview of CEMA in Scotland from its beginnings in 1940 until 1943, when the Scottish Committee was established. CEMA's origin in the field of adult education is discussed, followed by its relationship with the Carnegie UK Trust (the decision of which not to become a partner with CEMA was to be crucial to CEMA's character and hence of later arts policy) and how CEMA's work in Scotland was administered between 1940 and 1943. The last is important to understand Scottish reactions to the more centralising policies pursued under Keynes's chairmanship. A contemporary view of the value of CEMA's work from within the Scottish educational establishment (in the 1943 report *Training for Citizenship*) is then discussed. The section concludes with a review of planning for CEMA's future in 1941 and 1942, and the appointment of Keynes as Chairman.

The third part of Volume One discusses the politics of CEMA in Scotland between 1940 and 1947. In essence it is a study of how a devolved settlement that accommodated the Scottish demand for substantial autonomy was negotiated. I describe this in three phases, the first in 1940 concerned with establishing Scotland's relationship

with and ultimately representation on CEMA. The second part examines the pressures that emerged in Scotland in 1942 that forced CEMA to concede the creation of the Scottish Committee, established in early 1943 but with the scope of its powers remaining an unsettled issue. I then address the protracted struggle, beginning in 1944, to secure a devolved structure for Scotland under the Royal Charter (1946) of the new Arts Council. This phase only concluded with an agreement in February 1947 that underwrote the practical autonomy of the Scottish Committee until the creation of the Scottish Arts Council in 1967. Although much of the discussion deals with the Scottish Committee on the one hand and CEMA and the Arts Council on the other, the role of the Scottish Education Department (SED) and the Scottish Office is in many ways the primary subject of the section. Sometimes mediators and sometimes protagonists of the devolutionary cause, they played a crucial part in achieving the Charter settlement of 1946.

The fourth broad subject, dealt with in Volume Two, concerns the policy of the Scottish Committee (with particular reference to visual art) and the practical activities through which policy was pursued. The fundamental question is whether the Scottish Committee's struggle for autonomy was to resist London-imposed culture and, if successful, whether its values were significantly different. I examine the nature of the tensions between Edinburgh and London to clarify these points. In the end, because policy has to be judged not by intentions but by actions, I attempt a broad synopsis and evaluation of the visual work undertaken in Scotland between 1940 and 1947. Using a quantitative approach to available (imperfect) data I analyse the volume of activity, its geographical reach, some component elements that made up the exhibitions programme, and the place of art galleries and schools as receiving centres for exhibitions. How the

public responded to the exhibitions is addressed indirectly through the reportage of guide lecturers, wherever possible including evidence from visitors themselves. Finally, I attempt to estimate the total number of visits (not visitors) made to exhibitions in Scotland between 1940 and 1946, a fundamental datum for assessing their public impact.

Two themes unify my approach: education and nationalism. The histories of CEMA and the Scottish Committee belong fundamentally to the history of education. In some respects the relationship that I chart was indirect, in others it was close and at several times decisive in influencing the course of development. The SED and the Board (later Ministry) of Education in London provided the link with government (Education having formal responsibility for CEMA until 1945, when the new Arts Council was placed under the Treasury). They provided advice and support, and their relationship with each other at departmental level inflected the politics that surrounded CEMA and the Scottish Committee. I argue that the development of the Scottish Committee and the autonomy it achieved was substantially due to the SED. The theme of nationalism, cultural and political, is inescapable and pervasive. I discuss the tensions between CEMA and the Scottish Committee not only as arising from the sometimes antagonistic cultural perspectives of both (as though the arts were self-contained) but also in the context of the territorial (departmental) politics of education and a (then) rising popular current of political nationalism. These factors at various times acted to reinforce or moderate each other, and together provide the underlying dynamic of the narrative that I seek to give.

I address one other question: was CEMA an alien intrusion when it first appeared in Scotland in 1940? Despite the resistance that it inspired, it and its Scottish Committee,

in addition to representing a familiar administrative form in Scotland (the board of appointees) at a deeper level were cognate with important strands of Scottish social thought. The social ethics of philosophical Idealism provide the connection. The moderate, progressive social ethos shared by the BIAE and NCSS was largely founded on the social theory of Idealism on which the foundations of the welfare state substantially rest, and which was still a powerful force in the inter-war period. Reinforced by the Romantic tendency to cast art as a free realm of the spirit above the partisan struggles of daily life, this moderate liberal outlook helped give CEMA its particular character. Idealism had a powerful centre at Glasgow University in the later 19th and early 20th centuries (Oxford being its southern stronghold). I have attempted to draw out a Scottish contribution to CEMA by tracing social thought from the later eighteenth century into demands for social reform that helped create the modern welfare state. I locate, within that tradition, individuals who directly or indirectly influenced the emergence of CEMA. It is also through the complex of Scottish thought that I address the belief of CEMA's founders that, through engagement with the values of art, an informed and refined citizenry would be created for the mass democracy into which Britain was evolving. I have placed this historical material (drawn largely from secondary sources) in Appendix Five, not to interrupt my core narrative.²

Methods

The approach that I have taken is empirical, based on evidence gathered from archival and other primary sources, and from secondary published sources. I have employed predominantly qualitative methods (traces of other people's thoughts and actions being the substance of my data) although some (simple) quantitative analysis is applied in Volume Two, Part Four. For material dealing directly with CEMA and its origins, its

development in Scotland and its emergence in 1945 as the Arts Council, I have mainly relied on archival sources, supplemented by the published accounts of participants and later authors. As the material dealing with CEMA was written by various actors in various contexts at various times, I have been able to compare them with each other, and against other sources, especially in the wider fields of education and politics. The aim has been to ground my interpretation of events as securely as possible in contemporaneous evidence.

The National Archives at Kew hold important material on CEMA and the Arts Council in Board and Ministry of Education records. The Arts Council of Great Britain archive (in the Archive of Art and Design, Victoria and Albert Museum, London) contains the most substantial record of CEMA, its transition into the Arts Council and developments in Scotland. The full series of CEMA Bulletins held by the Arts Council of England provided information about exhibitions and other elements of CEMA's activities. SED records, held in the National Archives of Scotland, contain much that is specific to Scotland not present in the London archives. The National Library of Scotland also holds some Scottish Arts Council archival records dating from the period I deal with. The records of the BIAE, held by the National Council for Adult and Continuing Education in Leicester, provided relevant information from the 1920s to 1940s. Some traces of the Scottish Branch of the BIAE were located in Glasgow University's Special Collections. The Royal Scottish Academy archive threw some light on its relationship with the Scottish Committee, while the Scottish Film and Television Archive (at Scottish Screen, Glasgow) was valuable for the history of the Scottish Film Council.

Personal papers of several of the major figures in this study have been of special value. Dr. Thomas Jones's papers, held in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, provided important information about the background to CEMA, its emergence and early years. The National Library of Scotland holds the papers of Osborne Mavor ('James Bridie'), T. J. Honeyman and Tom Johnston, while Aberdeen Art Gallery has the papers of A. F. Hyslop. Keynes's papers in King's College, Cambridge, contain his correspondence as Chairman of CEMA and the Arts Council, particularly with R. A. Butler. All these sources have offered opportunities for cross-checking and comparison, and often revealed different perspectives on events among their various authors, which have assisted the interpretations that I offer.

I have supplemented these primary sources with secondary published sources, key texts being discussed in the literature review below. Several are by individuals involved in the events I deal with, while other authors had personal experience of the Arts Council later in its history. I conducted three interviews. Dr. Jean Willison, cousin of Ellen Kemp, provided information about Ellen and Charles Kemp as individuals. The writer and critic Cordelia Oliver also knew Ellen Kemp, having assisted on *The Artist at Work* in 1943 while a student at Glasgow School of Art. My interview with Ronald Mavor, son of Osborne Mavor and Director of the Scottish Arts Council from 1965 to 1972, though focused on the 1960s, also provided me with some greater insight into his father's character and his regard for Keynes, despite their conflicts.

My methods have been aligned with grounded theory; that is, I have worked from the empirical evidence towards plausible explanations and arguments. Such plausibility is tested against the direct and circumstantial evidence of my data, against my judgement

of individual, organisational and political motives and against my knowledge of the surrounding environment in which the subjects of my study developed. I do not approach my material from a particular theoretical standpoint. I believe that a grounded approach is advantageous in bringing the traces of actual, complex, human activity (much of it new) to readers from a variety of disciplines, but it would be a positive outcome if this study facilitated other interpretations or uses of its data.

The organisation of an analytical narrative and the interpretations it offers entail a frame of reference formed by a pre-existing and contemporaneously gathered set of available ideas, political sympathies and personal judgements and experience.³ I do not believe that reality, however elusive, is entirely subjective and created by our conceptual frameworks, and I ascribe to individuals the will and creativity to change their environment. Neither do I believe that actions are determined by structures, although belonging within a structure is likely to condition and guide actions, self-interested or not. While recognising that ‘true’ objectivity is illusory, my subjective feelings, beliefs and prejudices are not given free reign. I share Matthew Arnold’s belief in the power of creative imagination to break through rigid systems or habits of thought. I am generally sympathetic to CEMA’s and the Arts Council’s aims, though in no sense uncritical of them as organisations. However, I do not use the distinction between so-called ‘democratisation of culture’ and ‘cultural democracy’ (as used by Pearson (1982) and the Scottish Cultural Policy Collective in 2004) as I find it too rigid to be of much value in the analysis of policy in this period.⁴ A declaration of personal interest is also required. My approach may be coloured by my sympathy with the devolutionary aspirations of the Scottish Committee and for the wider (and later) campaigns for

political devolution. I have tried to ensure that this does not distort the account that I offer, but the reader must be the judge.

Works by several authors have been especially helpful in forming the analytic framework that I have found most useful. Poggi (1978) analyses the modern state as inherently fractured and prone to conflict, amenable to no single ideological resolution such as Marxism. As politics cannot be reduced to rationalised, technocratic management of resources, Liberalism, he suggests, remains the most adaptive and relevant political philosophy. In his discussion of the ruthless pursuit of self-interest by the state, Poggi draws out the fundamental importance of cultural identity to politics, and their mutual embeddedness in the social sphere. This helps explain why CEMA's formation coincided with a period of national crisis. His description of departmental competition within the organisation of the state, and his insistence that this cannot be separated from the motives of individuals, has influenced my account of CEMA, the Scottish Committee and their departmental contexts. His discussion of the individual in liberal society moving between pursuit of private interest, social activity and public service (with opportune "continuities and congruences" between them) describes precisely the culture which CEMA emerged from and represented.⁵ Finally, his argument that "state and society in the liberal era" were compatible and complementary intersects with Perkin's (1989) history of the rise of professional society. Perkin's special value to me has been for his discussion of the development of the professional ideal of society ("an elitist society run by professional experts"⁶), its self-imposed ethic of public (voluntary) service, its roots in traditional philanthropy and its influence on the welfare policies of New Liberalism. Its "triumph" was secured in the early 20th century through growing command of the state and welfare policy, and, not least, the

development of expert-led quasi-government, of which CEMA is an instance. Perkin's work also connects to the social theory of philosophical Idealism, and helps explain its transmission into the wider culture in the later 19th and early 20th centuries. Harris (1999) demonstrates its prevalence in the voluntary sector between the wars. These authors, then, provide the general political and social framework that I primarily rely on.

In the Scottish context I have been particularly influenced by Morton's (1999) analysis of unionist nationalism in mid-19th century Scotland. Morrison (2003) extends the concept of unionist nationalism in his study of Scottish painting between 1800 and 1920, which links with the period considered here. Though CEMA was founded almost a century after the period that Morton describes, the belief that Scotland would best be served and still remain most distinctly itself within the Union was widely held by 'middle opinion' in Scotland between the wars. This belief, I suggest, underlies the impressive determination of the Scottish Committee to secure a devolved place inside a British body rather than to secede and form an independent Scottish body.

Paterson (1994) has provided me with a framework for locating the Scottish Committee in the politics and administration of 1940's Scotland. He notes that the "key points about Scotland in the 20th century are the growth of the welfare state, and with it a system of managed corporatism". The Scottish Committee is an example of this growth. I have also been influenced by his description of Scotland (prior to 1999) as a "self-regulatory polity" with significant administrative autonomy within the British state, governed by "trustees" located within its administrative apparatus and by formally independent "specialist boards".⁷ I see the contest around CEMA and the establishment

of the Scottish Committee as belonging to that culture of governance. They also provide a case study of how the Scottish Office secured a British system that worked (as it was seen) to Scotland's advantage, balanced against a sufficient measure of autonomy to satisfy (as far as could be seen ahead) the Scottish expectation of autonomy in cultural administration. CEMA began as a quasi-governmental educational and welfare body, and the formation of its Scottish Committee is an instance of the Scottish Office gaining (indirect) leverage over a new element in Scottish administration. Finally, Paterson's comment referring to legislation, "Even where there was no distinctiveness, that was chosen by Scottish politicians, not imposed", could have been said of the Scottish Committee and cultural policy in Scotland.⁸

Literature Review

Turning to literature specific to my field, although little has been written about the Scottish dimension of CEMA and the Arts Council, a substantial literature exists that deals with them in a more general sense, either as histories or as analyses of arts policy. Participants such as W. E. Williams, Mary Glasgow, Ifor Evans and Eric White wrote from direct experience.

Two relatively short texts by Williams (1971) and Glasgow (1975) are important secondary sources. Williams has good claim to be the true instigator of CEMA. In *The Pre-History of the Arts Council* (1971) he describes the Art for the People scheme and its role in shaping the beginnings of CEMA. He then gives a valuable description, somewhat critical of Keynes, of how the scheme developed over the years up to the creation of the Arts Council. Developments in Scotland, however, are not part of his subject. Glasgow's *The Concept of the Arts Council* (1975) describes Tom Jones as

seeing in CEMA an “extension of the social services which had sent music and drama organisers and travelling art exhibitions to relieve the drabness of unemployment in mining areas during the thirties”.⁹ She gives a good account of the transformation of CEMA from his era to Keynes’s, including the latter’s dislike of the BIAE and its ambitions. She alludes to tensions between London and Scotland but without explanation, calling the Scots “often difficult”, evidently still puzzled by their motives.

Evans and Glasgow’s *The Arts in England* (1949) is the most substantial near-contemporary account of CEMA and its transformation into the Arts Council. Their book describes the formation and development of CEMA under Jones, stressing its informal, exploratory character, and pointing out its shift within the first year from support of the amateur to the professional. CEMA’s (pre-Keynes) concern that high artistic standards be maintained is explained as being essential to avoid creating “a passive audience with no standards of its own” – a danger all too present because “war-time audiences were not difficult to please”.¹⁰ The transition of CEMA into the Arts Council in 1945 is described superficially, as are the administrative mechanics of the new body. Thereafter the book considers various aspects of the Arts Council’s work and the roles of local authorities, arts clubs and arts centres. References to Scotland and Wales are very occasional, and (as the authors explain) “there is no attempt to describe the special activities and problems of [either]”.¹¹ As with the others above, the book’s value for my purposes lies in its descriptions of CEMA’s work and development in a broader perspective.

Eric White began his Arts Council career as Assistant Secretary-General to Mary Glasgow in 1946, ending as Literature Director in 1972. His book, *The Arts Council of*

Great Britain (1975), gives an historical overview and describes the Council's organisation, its relationship with government, its finances, policy and territorial dimensions. Whatever his personal stance in earlier years may have been, White understood the importance for Scotland and Wales of a devolved organisational structure, and gives some attention to the territorial dimension of the Arts Council. But, because his objective is to give a general explanation of the Council, like Evans and Glasgow before him, he does not dwell substantially on Scottish issues.

Two more recent authors have written histories of the Arts Council. Andrew Sinclair's official history, *Arts and Cultures* (1995), begins with the formation of CEMA but does not significantly engage with its 'pre-history'. However, he is the only recent writer to note that early ambitions existed for CEMA beyond wartime, as an agent of adult education, though he does not develop the theme. He also correctly notes that the shift toward professionalism began before the arrival of Keynes. He deals with the Arts Enquiry (set up by Dartington College in 1941) which influenced thinking about the creation of the Arts Council but, because the Scottish Office did not grant it authority in Scotland, I leave aside here. Sinclair notes Keynes's cultural chauvinism and irritation with Scotland, but erroneously credits him with initiating the decentralising policy that led to the establishment of the Scottish Committee. Other than that, Scotland does not feature in his account of the war years. Richard Witts's *Artist Unknown* (1998) is both entertainingly irreverent and highly informative, but marred (from an academic point of view) by a lack of precise sources. He gives a particularly useful account of the 1930s, especially developments in the amateur music field, Alfred Wareing's League of Audiences and Music and Drama Bill, and John Christie's plans for a National Music Council. He gives no account of the formation of the Scottish Committee but does

indicate that tensions arose over Keynes's centralism, and gives Mavor's acerbic suggestions for the name for CEMA's successor.¹²

Robert Hewison's *Culture and Consensus* (1995) deals with "England, art and politics" between 1940 and the mid-1990s. It is the most historically informed and reflective analysis of cultural politics and policy in Britain. The premise of the book is that culture is of central, and growing, political significance because it is "not merely an expression of...identity, it is that identity" and hence is "vital to national existence".¹³ This resonates closely with the position of Poggi. Hewison is aware of the complex of national identities within British identity and approaches CEMA as a means by which the latter could be shored up under the threat of invasion in 1940.¹⁴ He makes a direct connection between Gramsci's concept of hegemony and the practice of consensus politics. Both have the same aim: the maintenance of power by winning consent around "key issues" that protect the state from the consequences of radical dissension. Quoting Gramsci, Hewison observes that to achieve consensus, it became necessary to recognise "a cultural front...alongside the merely economic and political ones".¹⁵ Like Hewison I identify 'hegemony' with the processes of consensus-formation, but argue that the long-term consequence, in the visual arts at least, was more progressive than he allows.

Four other authors wrote from personal experience of the Arts Council, though of a later period. All focus largely on policy and politics. Raymond Williams's essay *The Arts Council* (1979) was based on his experience as a member of the Council and the Literature Panel. It analyses the Council's policy and character as a body of appointees, trusted but not commanded by government. He is especially critical of its culture of consensus by co-option and proposes methods for democratisation. Robert Hutchison's

The Politics of the Arts Council (1982) is largely predicated on the claim that the Arts Council was always “a creature of government, a partner with government”. This does not mean (he argues) that it is servile to ministers – it can take action that displeases them – but ultimately it exists by the will of government. Ministers are able to rely on indirect influence on the Council through social and other networks and through any subtle expression of interest that they might make in their ministerial capacity.¹⁶

Nicholas Pearson’s *The State and the Visual Arts* (1982) is concerned to draw out the political nature of the Arts Council and the case for making it and arts policy more democratically accountable. He sees the Arts Council as the agent of elite culture, a “public arbiter of taste”.¹⁷ Its concern with ‘quality’ and ‘standards’ is “symptomatic of a closed culture” because both terms demand “consensus in a culture and society that is varied and diverse”.¹⁸ Pearson asserts that to recognise ‘quality’ as meant by the Arts Council requires formal education of a high level and hence is exclusive, quite different from the informal learning that enables viewers to “decode the sophisticated media of television and cinema”.¹⁹ The evidence that I present contradicts this assessment in several points. Whatever the consensual values assumed by CEMA and the Arts Council their effect in practice was to open the ‘fine arts’ to an increasingly pluralistic society. Pearson also locates the origin of the reactive policy stance (which he sees as a weakness) in Keynes’s romantic ideal of the artist as a wayward spirit that cannot be legislated for. I regard it as a strength, which arose from CEMA’s demand that local interest be demonstrated, from the practice of funding independent organisations and from the determination not to create an official art in Britain.

Roy Shaw’s *The Arts and the People* (1987) is a defence of the Arts Council system by an ex-Secretary General. Thematic in structure, his book deals with general issues that

allow him to offer his philosophy of arts policy and counter then-current criticisms like Hutchison's and Pearson's. He argued that supporting the highest standards was essential to ensure that "the redistribution of cultural goods should be of the real thing, not some cod's head soup cheap substitute", a sentiment CEMA and the Scottish Committee would have endorsed. Shaw also strongly re-asserted the Council's educational responsibilities for the first time since Tom Jones. By interpreting 'political' narrowly, meaning direct ministerial intervention, he tried to protect the Council from accusations of (in Hutchison's terms) being a 'creature' of government, but this simplistic denial of a more subtle reality undermines his case against the politicisation he feared was taking place. He was however deeply aware of the difficulties of making the Arts Council more democratically accountable, and concerned that it should not become a vehicle for professional interests under the guise of 'representation', a theme of some importance to this study.

None of these authors has anything to say in detail about Scotland. Two others do. Aileen Smith devotes a section of her 1998 PhD thesis (*Visual Art and the Construction of Cultural Identity in Scotland, 1918-1945*) to describing the development of CEMA in Scotland between 1940 and 1945. While both of us deal with the relations between CEMA and the Scottish Committee in that period, the substantive difference between our approaches lies in the focus of our analyses. Smith looks mainly to the cultural-artistic background in Scotland between the wars to provide historical context, whereas I discuss the roots in adult education and the voluntary sector, and the tradition of Idealist social thought. Secondly, my interests lie largely in the workings of the political and administrative apparatus within which the Scottish Committee and CEMA were located (and particularly with the role of the education departments north and south of

the border). Smith deals with the conflict between CEMA and the Scottish Committee as a resistance to a London-imposed regime within the field of culture. Her position (in my view) does not distinguish sufficiently between the phases of CEMA's development, and leaves out the politico-administrative processes that reveal more nuances of position and relationship between the protagonists than can emerge without their inclusion. I also differ from her about the nature of CEMA's policy, which I argue was not concerned with creating a unified 'national' culture. However, I acknowledge the value of her work and consider our approaches more often complementary than rivalrous.

Finally, F.M. Leventhal's *The Best for the Most, CEMA and State Sponsorship of the Arts in Wartime, 1939-1945* (1990) provides a detailed historical study of CEMA. My approach, political in emphasis and relying largely on an analysis of official documents and papers, has greater affinity with Leventhal's than any other. Important though his essay is, Leventhal treats CEMA as 'British' in an unproblematic way. Although he misses the territorial strains with the Scottish Committee, his analysis gains special salience for my study when he discusses the reason for the decision in 1945 to transfer the new Arts Council from Education to the Treasury.

¹ Northern Ireland was treated separately. I do not deal with it here, but have written about the emergence of CEMA (Northern Ireland) in *The Cultural Front* in Cullen and Morrison (Eds.), *A Shared Legacy: Essays on Irish and Scottish Art and Visual Culture* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005).

² Some readers may prefer to read Appendix Five before the main text.

³ I served on the Scottish Arts Council's Artists' Awards Panel (1986-87) and Visual Art Committee (1998-2002), and Chaired the Artists' Awards Panel (1997-2001). I also worked for the Council as a temporary Arts Officer in the Visual Art Department (1993-94).

⁴ *Beyond Social Inclusion; Towards Cultural Democracy*, Scotland: Cultural Policy Collective, 2004

⁵ Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State* (London, Hutchinson) p. 117.

⁶ Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society; England since 1880* (London and New York, Routledge, 1989), p.130.

⁷ Paterson, *The Autonomy of Modern Scotland* (Edinburgh University Press, 1994), p. 24 and p. 107.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 24.

⁹ Glasgow, *The Concept of the Arts Council*, in Keynes, M., (Ed.) *Essays on John Maynard Keynes* (Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp.261-262. The drab places referred to would have included the occupational clubs for the unemployed, discussed in Chapter 4.

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- ¹⁰ Evans and Glasgow, *The Arts in England* (London, Falcon, 1949), pp. 46-47.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 18.
- ¹² Witts, *Artist Unknown* (London, Little Brown, 1998), pp. 144-145.
- ¹³ Hewison, *Culture and Consensus* (London, Methuen, 1995), pp. xiii-xiv.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 10.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 12.
- ¹⁶ Hutchison, *The Politics of the Arts Council* (London, Sinclair Browne, 1982), p. 17.
- ¹⁷ Pearson, *The State and the Visual Arts* (London, Open University, 1982), p. 100
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 103.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 100-102.

Part Two

Background:

Adult Education and the Voluntary Sector

1919-1939

Chapter 2: The Origins of CEMA

The beginnings of the arts council system can be traced to the response of the Board of Education in London to problems caused by evacuation at the outbreak of the Second World War. The process was triggered by a memorandum sent in the summer of 1939 to the Board by W. E. Williams, General Secretary of the British Institute of Adult Education (BIAE) which argued the case for intervention on behalf of voluntary organisations engaged in informal cultural education.¹ Williams's idea gained the backing of Lord de la Warr, President of the Board, and in December 1939 a grant of £25,000 was awarded by the Pilgrim Trust. The nucleus of CEMA held its first meeting on the 19th of December and soon expanded to form a committee that began to distribute grants from January 1940 onwards. In April 1940 the Treasury agreed a one-off grant of £50,000 and CEMA was upgraded from an informal committee (identified with the Pilgrim Trust), to a council emanating (as it was put) from the Board of Education. As beginnings go it was modest, but it heralded a permanent change in state policy towards contemporary art.² It is no accident that its roots lay in adult education and the voluntary sector, both of which were imbued with influences from the social theory of philosophical Idealism.³

Along with Williams, the early history of CEMA revolves around one pivotal figure, Dr. Thomas Jones (1870-1955), Secretary of the Pilgrim Trust. He appears at almost every turn of the story as a participant or, at least as often, a presence in the background, seemingly connected to everyone and consulted by everyone. Without him, Williams's efforts would hardly have borne fruit.

Tom Jones: A Short Biography

Known as T. J. in Whitehall, Tom Jones has been described as being, with Lloyd George and Aneurin Bevan, one of the three most important Welshmen in British public life in the 20th century. Yet in his own day he was an elusive figure, with (as Ellis puts it) a “passion for anonymity”.⁴ B. B. Thomas, Warden of Coleg Harlech, credited him with being able to see round corners. Churchill said of him in 1926 that he was “the thyroid gland of the Cabinet, supplying the organism with secretions not otherwise provided by the Central office or party machinery”.⁵ He exemplifies Lloyd George’s dictum: “Close and constant access to two or three chief ministers gives a man far more power than much more conspicuous posts...the “influence” is at work all the time.”⁶

Tom Jones was born in South Wales into a lower-middle class Calvinistic Methodist family. He attributed his politics to his religious roots, seeing an accord (as he later wrote) between “Victorian Christian Liberalism and the prevailing Protestant theology”.⁷ As a student at Glasgow University between 1895 and 1900 he fell under the influence of the Idealist philosopher Sir Henry Jones and his “practical creed” of active social service. The Glasgow variety of Idealism advanced by Edward Caird and after him Henry Jones confirmed Jones in a commitment to evolutionary social change. He devoted himself early to social reform, living and working at the Glasgow University Settlement in Possil and for the rest of his life was a tireless worker for social improvement. It was later written of him that “his industry was immense, his use of time remorseless”.⁸ Within weeks of arriving in Glasgow he had joined the Fabian Society and the ILP, inspired too by the idealistic nationalism of Mazzini. He was equally interested in Christian Socialism and the University Settlement movement, pioneered by Arnold Toynbee and Samuel Barnett. Despite his early attraction to

socialism, his politics were essentially centre-left and he remained anxious throughout his life about the dangers of class antagonism.

As an economist not susceptible to utopian procrastination, much of Jones's effort in educational and social work was aimed at ameliorating the effects of the poverty that drove the politics of class conflict. He graduated in economics and philosophy in 1900 but was already lecturing with the economist William Smart. When Smart was appointed to the Poor Law Commission (1906-1909) Jones became the commission's special investigator in Scotland. He continued to work with Smart until 1909 when he left Glasgow to take up the new chair of economics at Queen's University, Belfast, where he stayed for less than a year before moving to Wales to lead the campaign against tuberculosis. In 1912 he joined the civil service as Secretary of the National Health Insurance Commission in Wales. Henry Jones had more than once pressed his merits on Lloyd George (first in 1906) and in 1916, when Lloyd George became Prime Minister, Jones entered the Cabinet Office as First Assistant Secretary, later becoming Deputy Secretary. He remained in the Cabinet Office until he retired in 1930, serving Bonar Law, Baldwin and Macdonald after Lloyd George. After retiring he continued to advise Baldwin and Chamberlain, and remained close to Lloyd George (whom he accompanied to Germany in 1936 to meet Hitler). His greatest political mistake (as he admitted) was to support appeasement, and he did not fully accept the danger Hitler posed until 1938. Even so, he hoped that Lloyd George might succeed Chamberlain in 1940, and with Churchill's premiership his influence at the centre of politics was quickly extinguished.

Jones was formidably well connected beyond Whitehall. He moved in high society (counting the Astors among his closest friends) and had an extensive professional network that provided him with information about promising people whose careers he could help. He made unembarrassed use of his contacts to raise money for favourite projects. His success earned him Violet Markham's tribute "the Midas of his age", but he never sought any benefit himself.⁹ On retiring in 1930 he became Secretary of the Pilgrim Trust, newly founded with an endowment of £2,000,000 by Edward Harkness, an American of Scottish descent who owned the Standard Oil Company.¹⁰ The Pilgrim Trust enabled him to fund causes close to his heart. In 1934 he became Chairman of the York Trust, set up by David Astor, which was also used to support educational work.

Jones had a serious interest in visual art inspired by Ruskin, Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement. While still in Glasgow he began to collect handcrafted furniture and later recorded seeing exhibitions in London by Edward Wadsworth, Frank Dobson, Jacob Epstein, Ivan Mestrovic and Graham Sutherland. He seems to have met some of them, and referred to them as "choice spirits".¹¹ Jones was also closely associated with the National Music Council for Wales. He viewed art in an idealist sense, as a spiritual force that had the power to transcend mundane reality and reconcile the divisions of social inequality. As a man of the Celtic periphery he was a life-long Welsh cultural nationalist although he became increasingly hostile to political nationalism and opposed devolution for Wales. For Jones his Welshness was part of his essence and Welsh culture was not a fading anachronism. In 1923 he helped to found the Gregynog Press. Until its closure in 1940 Jones was largely responsible for the selection of projects and negotiating with writers and publishers. It was through him that the Scottish artists William McCance and Agnes Miller Parker went to Gregynog to take charge of

publication design in 1930.¹² Jones deprecated his knowledge of music and visual art but it is clear from his diaries and letters that he derived great pleasure from both, although the attractions of theatre seem to have escaped him.¹³

Jones's enthusiasm for the arts extended to the subject of his greatest interest, adult education, and quite early in his career he had argued for the better integration of music and aesthetics into the education system.¹⁴ Ellis suggests that as Jones's early religiosity declined its place was increasingly taken by faith in education, particularly of adults upon whose understanding of civics, in his view, the future of British democracy depended. The crises of the First World War, the General Strike, the Depression, the threat of class conflict and finally the Second World War must be seen as the context for Jones's conviction of the high seriousness of adult education as the incubator of democratic values in a hostile world. Coleg Harlech, which he founded in 1927 as a residential adult education college, was motivated by the ambition to use education to harmonise class interests, reflecting a similar moderate left ethos to the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) with which Jones had a long involvement. This meliorative position was severely tested by the increasingly radical working-class politics of the 1930s but Jones remained committed to his belief, rooted in the teaching of Henry Jones, in the necessity of class reconciliation and social integration. In Ellis's words, Jones:

...was convinced...that without proper educational provision for the people at large, a democratic system...simply could not work, popular politics would become a dangerous fraud. Education, especially that of adults, thus became for him a moral and political agency, an elixir that alone held out the hope of a

Good, perhaps even a Great Society. ...adult education was the holy grail which he pursued relentlessly for most of his life.¹⁵

The Emergence of CEMA

Leventhal describes the idea of state funding of national cultural life as having been widely regarded as objectionable before the war, an attitude strengthened by the example of the state-dominated systems of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany.¹⁶ Yet state funding of the arts and more broadly the state's responsibility for the cultural life of Britain were increasingly discussed, actively pursued and once even taken up by government in the decade before 1940.¹⁷ The advent of the war created circumstances in which the assumption by the State of some degree of responsibility for 'the living arts' was legitimised in political and popular perception. No single linear development led inevitably to the creation of CEMA. In the years before the war (in part stimulated by the Depression) campaigns were mounted by Alfred Wareing's League of Audiences for an Art Commission for music and drama, and by John Christie who lobbied government to establish a National Music Council.¹⁸ Both efforts failed, but both contributed something to CEMA as it developed between 1940 and 1945. They are discussed by Isaac, Blunt and Witts, and do not need development here. More directly important to the origin of CEMA were the interests (expressed by Williams) of voluntary organisations, many working under the aegis of the NCSS, engaged in music, drama, visual art and crafts. CEMA was set up with social and educational aims primarily in mind. It was, in effect, an extension of the welfare system, and at its inception it was in many respects complementary to the National Youth Committee (NYC), a contemporaneous innovation also sponsored by the Board of Education.¹⁹

CEMA, like the NYC, was a child of war. Many voluntary organisations were in difficulty following the withdrawal of government grants administered by the NCSS, as the Treasury imposed stringent economies on public spending. Uncertainty about the future of grants from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust (hereafter called the Carnegie UK Trust) and the Pilgrim Trust, two of the largest funders of the voluntary sector, compounded the sense of crisis.²⁰ Organisations were losing members to national service and opportunities to perform were restricted by the blackout. The Board of Education's immediate motive for intervention was provided by the third phase of the evacuation process, providing for the educational and social needs of mothers and schoolchildren.²¹ Concerns existed about the impact of an influx of strangers on small communities, and about the need to provide for the welfare, education and entertainment of those involved. Titmuss notes that evacuated mothers would have found themselves in rural areas with few of the welfare and charitable services available in the towns.²² He also sees the push to provide welfare services for evacuees as intended to help dissuade families from moving back again to the cities.²³ Less overt was a moral scare about the behaviour of people left with too much time on their hands during long, blacked-out evenings.²⁴ These motives were common to the founding of CEMA and the NYC. Secondary motives in CEMA's case were to render assistance to professional artists whose livelihoods were at risk and to help maintain standards of performance during the emergency, but the protection and encouragement of amateur, participatory arts activity, in substantial part to support civilian morale, was the first objective.

That CEMA was called into being to defend civil society and its cultural values was made explicit in the application for Treasury funding of March 1940. De la Warr was

quoted on the importance of protecting “cultural activities and interests which are part of our national tradition”, and that “It should be part of the policy of the Government when fighting for civilization to prove its active concern for the highest human values”.²⁵ The paper concludes with a vision of:

...a valuable national work engaging central and local effort like the cogs of a great machine and directly affecting a multitude of individuals at the point where their interests and sympathies are most easily aroused. The influence of such a work on the morale of the nation would...be incalculable. ...it should show beyond peradventure that the soul and culture of the nation are not quelled by the stress of war and that the Government realises the part which these spiritual values must play.²⁶

CEMA, then, had broader ambitions than solely to lift battered spirits and provide popular education in the arts. Rather, through them something more fundamental was being attempted. If CEMA conceived of itself as protecting the life of civil society and providing for the cultural welfare of citizens, it necessarily concerned itself both with the conditions in which active, engaged citizenship could be realised and with the creation of adequate citizens for that society. CEMA, in the eyes of its initiators (as I will discuss) would contribute to the growth of democratic society and citizens by diffusing opportunities for personal development more widely among the people.

Political motives had a deeper dimension too. The Board had its own political interests in taking up the idea that Williams had brought to it. The difficulties of evacuation and the variety of problems raised by the drift back to the evacuated areas (where schools

had been closed) had led to widespread criticism of the Board.²⁷ At the same time the government was being criticised for over-reaction in imposing the blackout and closing places of entertainment, when the expected bombing failed to materialise.²⁸ De la Warr supported Williams's initiative to help win back public goodwill for the government and his own department. There was more. Almost all commentaries on CEMA accept that it was called into being to fulfil short-term, wartime purposes, but this was not the whole story. The enthusiasm of de la Warr for CEMA rested on the chance that it might strengthen the Board's status in the longer term. He privately hoped that CEMA would become a permanent ancillary of the Board, hopes he shared with Williams and Jones but was careful to conceal from the Treasury.²⁹ He was in effect making a departmental claim on (in Poggi's terminology) 'a new societal interest' - the informal, voluntary arts sector of adult education - which previously the Board had disdained.³⁰

Only Glasgow and Evans (1948) and Sinclair (1995) record that such ambitions existed, but do not explore the implications. CEMA certainly needed no strategic plan when it began, de la Warr and Jones knowing that its future depended on success in the short term. But neither, in imagining its future, envisaged a body of the sort that emerged at the end of the war. Their thoughts were of an organisation, functioning under the aegis of the Board of Education, which would take the lead in developing an already-established but marginal area of cultural-educational voluntary work, detached from its 1930s association with unemployment and located more firmly in an expanded field of adult education.

The Board acted with short- and long-term ambitions in mind. If the former were urgent and existential, however, what were the latter? In the absence of explicit evidence,

speculation is necessary. Although war had just commenced there was a feeling of opportunity in the Board of Education. Gosden writes that out of the confusion of the first few weeks came a wider recognition that education in England and Wales had been under-funded, and with it a will to make amends.³¹ Simon states that as early as the autumn of 1939 “discussions on educational reform were widespread”.³² In November 1939 Kenneth Lindsay, the Under Secretary for Education, informed the Commons that “the last ten weeks have revealed a situation which has awakened the minds of many people to the real value of our system of education”.³³ The Board’s hope that CEMA might become permanent must be attributed to this renewed current for educational reform and to the general belief that a more centrally planned society was required. This interpretation is strengthened, I suggest, by the interest that R. A. Butler, as Minister for Education, took in CEMA from 1941 onwards, including his unsuccessful effort to preserve the direct association between his ministry and the Arts Council in 1945.

CEMA was established as an intermediate body, close to government but not ‘of’ it. There were several reasons for this. The idea of a Ministry of Culture, though occasionally put forward in the 1930s and 1940s, was alien to the British political tradition. As Minihan describes, although the state’s care for national museums and galleries was well established and a source of national pride, it had been reluctantly assumed and was limited and piecemeal, with responsibilities scattered across several ministries.³⁴ The state shouldered no responsibility for the performing arts or contemporary visual art. In the context of a war being waged against states in which culture was used as a political tool, no such development would have been seriously contemplated. As CEMA grew from the complex of adult education and voluntary associations, de la Warr was clear that it should not be too closely identified with the

Board, so that the Board could not be accused of compromising the freedom of the bodies it aimed to assist. He also feared that close association would lead people to expect larger grants than were actually to be available, and that the Board's bureaucracy would inhibit the quick action that the emergency demanded. Equally, CEMA involved a partnership of private and public funding, not something which could be assimilated into the Board's departmental structure. The Board could not itself run an initiative like CEMA, and even more fundamentally, it did not have the expertise.³⁵ Finally, there was every reason for the Board to insulate itself from responsibility for actual funding decisions.

As an intermediate body, CEMA enabled the government to demonstrate support in principle and financially, but not to be itself involved in day-to-day affairs or be accountable for particular decisions. Monitoring arrangements linked the organisation to the minister but intervention would tend only to occur if serious public controversy arose which, given the closely woven culture of the British political and social elite, was a small risk. There was nothing novel in this arrangement. The ultimate model for CEMA was the University Grants Committee (founded in 1919) which served a similar function in respect of university funding, that of distributing public money while keeping government at arm's length.³⁶ There was another precedent, however, in the channelling of government funding through the NCSS to recipient organisations that were not themselves in direct communication with government.

The 1919 Report

That CEMA's origins lay in adult education is well known but not explained beyond discussion of the Art for the People scheme. Its voluntary sector origins are even less

known. In this section and the following two chapters I wish to show how CEMA arose from the confluence of the two in the months before and after September 1939, when British society was being mobilised for war. I also wish to demonstrate that CEMA was neither foreign to Scottish practice nor lacking Scottish contributions, although the haste with which it was set up eventually led to tensions that were not to be settled for many years.

To understand why CEMA emerged under the wing of the Board of Education it is necessary to return to *The Report of the Adult Education Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction of 1919* (called *The 1919 Report*) and to the foundation of the BIAE and the NCSS. Together they helped define an area of voluntary activity that encroached into the field of adult education, which in early 1939 still remained peripheral to the work of the Board of Education and the SED.

The aspiration at the end of the First World War to create a land fit for heroes reflected society's gratitude towards returned servicemen and the general belief that government had an obligation to pursue social justice. Lloyd George's government was also concerned to secure political order and stability. Layburn describes the setting up of the Ministry of Reconstruction in 1917 as motivated by alarm at the growth of the Labour Party and trades union power and the reports that it commissioned as efforts to protect the liberal ascendancy from the threat of socialism.³⁷ The Ministry grew out of the ineffective Reconstruction Committee set up by Asquith early in 1916 that Lloyd George revived when he became Prime Minister in December. In November, at Lloyd George's request, several academics and administrators, including Tom Jones and R. H. Tawney, had submitted a memorandum urging that if the peace were to be won, "the

labour movement would need to be won over by greater state intervention and a genuine commitment to social reform”.³⁸ Ellis calls it “a high-toned document” which demanded that the government “live up to the genuinely lofty ideals which it had entered the war to defend”.³⁹ In practice, insofar as this could be achieved in the two turbulent decades ahead, it was by a further extension of the franchise, educational reform, the extension of welfare services and development of the voluntary sector, and by the breaking of the General Strike. Two initiatives have a particular bearing on the creation of CEMA twenty years later, the formation of the NCSS in 1919 and of the BIAE in 1921. The origin of CEMA, however, is ultimately to be found in *The 1919 Report*.

Early in 1917 Tom Jones became a member of the Reconstruction Committee’s Education Panel.⁴⁰ When the Ministry of Reconstruction was established in July a new education panel was appointed which in due course became the Adult Education Committee, chaired by A. L. Smith, the Master of Balliol, and charged to report on the future of adult education in Britain.⁴¹ Though Jones was not now a member, he was certainly a force in consolidating the focus on adult education within the ministry.⁴² The leading members were all proponents of adult education, including Sir Henry Jones, Tom Jones’s mentor and friend. Their thought was permeated with the social ethics of philosophical Idealism, which had led the University Extension and Settlement movements, the creation of the WEA and its subsequent partnerships with the universities and education authorities in joint committees for adult education.⁴³ Though limited by its remit to report on non-vocational education only, the emphasis placed on voluntary organisations, which were seen as leading a rising demand for education among working people, rested on the conviction that voluntary action is the foundation of democratic citizenship.

The significance of *The 1919 Report* lies in the broad vision of adult education that it offered and in the influence it had among those active in the field. The strength of demand for adult education and its variety were grounded (the report argued) in the desire of individuals for self-expression and fulfilment, and in democratic aspirations to build a better society (as the report summed up, in “the twin principles of personal development and social service”).⁴⁴ The report set out a vision of the individual united with society through education motivated by civic ideals. Knowing, however, that the tutorial class system of adult education was dominated by the study of history, politics and economics, the report concluded that the movement should be conceived of more broadly, to include other activities of educational worth.⁴⁵ The scope of adult education ought to encompass the arts, for which (it was argued) there was a large, unfulfilled demand.⁴⁶ As a means of achieving this, the report proposed an extension of “the...less systematic educational activities of voluntary bodies”, which the committee’s interim report of 1918 had called “valuable auxiliaries to adult education” (a phrase later adapted by the BIAE for an influential pamphlet published in 1934).⁴⁷ The report’s many references to the arts and crafts are evidence of the importance it assigned to them among the informal modes of education. Arguing for the importance of craftsmanship, music and literature, the report stated that:

The natural bridge between the discipline of the mind and practical activities is to be found in the Arts, which unite thought with emotion and action.⁴⁸

The essence of art lies in practice; it is made by doing, conjoining thought, feeling and action. As Wiltshire puts it, for the report:

...the study of arts and crafts unequivocally involved their practice: the performance of music and plays, the making of things. There is no suggestion at all that adult education in these subjects should be restricted to their cognitive aspects, to their history and appreciation...⁴⁹

The committee's intention was not to undermine the core of taught, cognitive subjects when proposing a more inclusive definition of adult education, but it was confident that a periphery existed that could engage the interests of more people than were attracted by tutorial class teaching. It constituted an arena in which education and 'self-improvement' merged into leisure activity, a fringe of adult education that increasingly formed common ground with the expanding voluntary sector.

The emphasis of the report's discussion of the arts lay on the vitality that practice and understanding together bring to a dynamic popular culture. Reflecting the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement, the report argued that craftsmanship and the arts had been almost wholly neglected by adult education.⁵⁰ The report dwelt on drama, in the neglect of which it saw a litmus test of the educational standards of the nation.⁵¹ Of particular interest is the report's sensitivity towards cultural differences within Britain (sensitivity not readily matched by CEMA or the Arts Council). In the committee's vision, cultural differences were essential to a genuine popular culture:

It is one of the misfortunes of our national life that, outside Wales and Ireland, Great Britain is unduly influenced by the culture of London, and a very insignificant fraction of London at that. As far as the mass of the people are concerned it has...the appearance of a shop-made article, which is manufactured

for them by clever professionals and which has no intimate relation to their own lives... But the provincial culture of England, Wales and Scotland, whether it be rural or industrial, is as nourishing a food for poetry as the Irish peasant life portrayed by Synge.⁵²

The report offered a view of culture as arising from the activities of individuals in communities and being of equal worth despite the dominance of a metropolitan elite. The partial exception of Wales may have been intended to reflect the popular strength of its musical traditions and language, leaving Scotland and the regions of England most fully under the influence of London. The success of a native, modern, Irish literature is used to underscore the point. In advocating a continuum of high and popular culture (on a non- or even anti-metropolitan basis), the report makes a point of fundamental importance. It dissents from the claims of metropolitan modernism to special significance, while its explicit assertion of the creative capacities of modern rural and industrial communities marks a strikingly democratic concept of culture. Indeed, the report as a whole has been called “a signpost pointing the way to a clearer conception of the meaning of democracy” – and the arts were assigned a part.⁵³ The authors of the report implicitly endorsed local production and self-management of cultural life, a concept that CEMA and the Arts Council were to struggle to come to terms with.

The report’s desire to tackle the decline of rural communities complemented its vision of vigorous, local cultural life. It envisaged the creation of village educational institutes that would organise year-round programmes of educational activities, among which would be exhibitions.⁵⁴ Although the system as advocated by the report never fully materialised, the work of the Carnegie UK Trust and NCSS (alongside local authorities

and government) in funding and developing village and community halls and institutes, enabled a broadly similar range of social-educational activities to flourish, if unevenly and with less success in Scotland.⁵⁵

The 1919 Report provided a foundation on which art, in its practical aspects, could base a claim to a serious place in adult education. It provided an appealing instrumental justification: that modern society demanded an educated citizenry, that without concern for aesthetic expression the education of the individual would be sterile, and that no genuinely popular (by which was meant locally generated) culture could thrive. The place of the arts in formal adult education also developed during the 1920s and 1930s, mainly in tutorial classes in the history and appreciation of the various arts.⁵⁶ By 1939 the voluntary organisations' practical arts activities, however, still lay outside the adult education regulations in England and Scotland, but the step then taken to foster them under the aegis of CEMA was not, in the circumstances of a national emergency, a very large one.

¹ I have not found a copy of the memorandum. Tom Jones (though he never saw it himself) regarded it as the crucial first step (Jones to Glasgow, 8 January 1945, VA EL 2/9). Williams thanked Jones for crediting him with the initiating role in a (lost) letter to Jones's daughter Eirene (Williams to Jones, 13 December 1945, NLW TJ Class M, Vol. 4, No. 4/127). In 1946 the Minister of Education, Ellen Wilkinson, inviting Williams to join the Arts Council, referred to his "inspiration" of CEMA (Wilkinson to Williams, 18 January 1946, VA EL 5/60).

² In 2003 terms, £25,000 was equivalent to over £885,000 and £50,000 to £1,770,000. CEMA therefore had well over £2.5 million (Appendix Three)

³ See Appendix Five.

⁴ Ellis, *T. J.: A Life of Dr. Thomas Jones* (Cardiff, University of Wales, 1993), p. 266.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 293.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 180.

⁷ Jones, *Leeks and Daffodils* (Newtown, Welsh Outlook Press, 1942), p. 69.

⁸ From *The Dictionary of National Biography*.

⁹ Among the people he met in Glasgow was Patrick Geddes. He walked around the 1901 International Exhibition with Geddes, watching (as he recalled) "the coruscations of his genius weave themselves, like the fireworks around us, into enchanting patterns... You suspected that no one could talk so much and talk sense all the time". Jones must already have known of Geddes's work for the Edinburgh Social Union and his wider ideas (see Appendix Five). After Geddes died in 1932 his widow asked Jones to advise her on the finances of the International College in Montpellier but he could not get any financial information from her (Jones, *Welsh Broth*, London, Griffiths, 1950, pp. 68-69). Given Jones's record as a fundraiser, this was surely a missed opportunity.

¹⁰ The first trustees were Lord Macmillan, John Buchan, Sir James Irvine (all Scots), Stanley Baldwin and Sir Josiah Stamp.

¹¹ Jones, *Welsh Broth*, op. cit. p. 62.

¹² Ellis, op. cit. p. 266 and NLW TJ Class L, Vol. 5 No. 84 and others. Normand (*The Modern Scot; Modernism and Nationalism in Scottish Art, 1928-1955*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2000, p. 68) attributes the McCances' move chiefly to Blair Hughes Stanton, who presumably brought them to the attention of Jones.

¹³ Ellis, op. cit., p. 165; pp. 278-280; p. 316.

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 165.

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 534.

¹⁶ Leventhal, *The Best for the Most: CEMA and State Sponsorship of the Arts in Wartime, 1939-1945* (*Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 1 No. 3, 1990), p. 289.

¹⁷ The Labour Government introduced a scheme to fund the Covent Garden Opera Syndicate in 1930. It was controversial and was terminated in 1932 as the Depression deepened (Minihan, *The Nationalisation of Culture* (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1977), pp. 194-196).

¹⁸ Wareing had founded the first Glasgow Citizens' Theatre in 1912. Christie was the founder of Glyndebourne Opera. Witts (op. cit. pp. 50-53) gives a colourful account suggesting Jones subverted Christie's ideas in 1938-39. He describes the animosity of Christie and Keynes, and Keynes's part in denying Christie government support. Blunt (*John Christie of Glyndebourne*, London, Geoffrey Bles, 1968) also provides evidence of Christie's frustration with the official response and his suspicion of Keynes. According to Witts (op. cit. p. 11) Keynes described the Arts Council as "a message to Christie".

¹⁹ Often referred to as the Youth Welfare Committee.

²⁰ The Carnegie UK Trust was approaching a new quinquennial period in 1940 and was reviewing its policies when war broke out. The Pilgrim Trust suspended its activities but quickly reversed the decision as wartime needs became evident.

²¹ Calder, *The People's War* (London, Pimlico, 1969), pp. 35-50, gives an excellent overview of the scale and confusion of evacuation. He describes the education system in late 1939 and early 1940 as "the consummation of chaos" (p. 47). Evacuation took place between June and the end of the first week of September. Approximately 3.5 to 3.75 million people were moved. In Scotland about 180,000 people were moved in early September. The three stages of evacuation were: 1) to encourage people to go; 2) to re-locate them; and 3) to provide for them in their new homes (Calder, op. cit. p. 37).

²² Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy* (London, HMSO, 1950), pp. 217-218.

²³ Ibid. p. 386. If this was the case, it was not a great success. By December 1939 more than 75% of evacuees had returned home.

²⁴ Davidson, the Board's war diarist, amended Glasgow's departmental history of CEMA to include this concern (NA ED 138/14).

²⁵ Memorandum to the Treasury, 6 March 1940, p. 1, NAS GD 281/51/1.

²⁶ Ibid. p. 8.

²⁷ Gosden, *Education in the Second World War* (London, Methuen, 1976), p. 3. To educate children in the evacuation areas required schools to be re-opened, but if schools were re-opened the evacuation scheme as a whole would collapse. The Board was forced to re-open the schools in November. Gosden describes many of the problems facing the Board at the time (pp. 7-31). De la Warr defended the Board's record on evacuation at a teachers' meeting in Leeds in December. Refusing to apologise, he reminded his listeners that everyone had expected immediate bombing (*The Times*, 18 December 1939, quoted by Gosden, Note 74, p. 454). This very detailed study of the Board during the war makes no mention of CEMA. Titmuss (op. cit. p. 148) provides an account of the problems, mentioning CEMA as one element of the Board's response.

²⁸ Gosden, op. cit., p. 35.

²⁹ *The Times* of 4 January 1940 contained the first public article about CEMA, and hinted at its potential for permanence. The story was the result of a leak for which Williams was strongly suspected to be responsible. The Board was enraged by the gaffe, fearful that it would arouse the suspicions of the Treasury.

³⁰ Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State* (London, Hutchinson, 1978), p. 136.

³¹ Ibid. p. 3. A similar recognition had occurred in Scotland under the Education (Scotland) Act of 1918.

³² Simon, *Education and the Social Order 1940-1990* (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1991), p. 58.

³³ Gosden, op. cit. p. 3.

³⁴ Minihan, op. cit. p. 154.

³⁵ By October 1939 one quarter of its staff had been transferred to other departments (Titmuss, op. cit. p. 145).

³⁶ Undated draft paper, probably by Mary Glasgow, attached to her departmental history of CEMA (NA ED 138/14).

³⁷ Layburn, *The Evolution of British Social Policy and the Welfare State* (Keele University Press, 1995), p. 187.

³⁸ Lewis, *Leaders and Teachers: Adult Education and the Challenge of Labour in South Wales, 1906-1945* (Cardiff, University of Wales, 1993), p. 139; Ellis, op. cit. pp. 180-181.

³⁹ Ellis, op. cit. p. 181.

⁴⁰ Taylor, J., *The Making of The 1919 Report*, in *The 1919 Report: The Final and Interim Reports of the Adult Education Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction 1918-1919*, reprinted with introductory essays by Harold Wiltshire et al, University of Nottingham, 1980, p. 28. Other members included Beatrice Webb and Seebohm Rowntree.

⁴¹ The members of the Committee included Albert Mansbridge, founder of the Workers' Educational Association; R. H. Tawney, who wrote much of the final report; Henry Miers, Vice-Chancellor of Manchester University, who was to write an important report on British museums and galleries for the Carnegie UK Trust in 1928; and Henry Jones, for thirty years Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow University. The two Scottish members were Robert Climie, a Kilmarnock councillor and trades union organiser, who became a Labour MP in 1923, and James Morton, an industrial chemist and textiles manufacturer. Several of the members were personal friends of Tom Jones's (including Smith, Miers, Jones, Mansbridge, Tawney and Morton).

⁴² Tawney, then advising the Board of Education on what became the 1918 Education Act for England and Wales, was particularly influential in steering the Ministry away from conflict with the Board by separating technical and vocational education from the remit of the committee.

⁴³ See Appendix Five for the connections between these movements and philosophical Idealism.

⁴⁴ *The Final Report*, in *The 1919 Report*, op. cit. p. 168, paras. 329-330.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p. 169, para. 332.

⁴⁶ Music and drama are discussed in the report, but 'art' is not. The explanation is that it was wrapped up in the term 'craft', which the report uses frequently.

⁴⁷ *The Final Report*, in *The 1919 Report* (op. cit.) p. 171, para. 335.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p. 86, para. 153. This statement of aesthetic philosophy, primarily derived from Kant, is evidence of the report's roots in philosophical Idealism. Gilbert and Kuhn point out that Kant's location of imagination as a middle term between reason and sense perception was anticipated by Hutcheson, Kames and Shaftesbury (p. 322).

⁴⁹ Wiltshire, *A General Introduction to the Report*, in *The 1919 Report*, op. cit. p. 14. He adds that those restrictions were introduced by the Board of Education's 1924 Adult Education Regulations. Practical classes could not be funded under the regulations, hence were predominantly found in the informal fringe of adult education.

⁵⁰ *The Final Report*, in *The 1919 Report*, op. cit. p. 89, paras. 159 and 160.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* pp. 90-91, paras. 162-164.

⁵² *Ibid.* p. 90, para. 161.

⁵³ Peers, *Adult Education, A Comparative Study* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 86.

⁵⁴ *The Final Report*, in *The 1919 Report*, op. cit. pp. 173-174, Para. 339 (g).

⁵⁵ Robertson, *Welfare in Trust 1930-1963* (London, Constable, 1964), pp. 80-81.

⁵⁶ This was true of Scotland as well as England and Wales. Continuation course records in Scotland in 1930-31 show that a number of arts subjects were fairly common: visual art appreciation, various literature courses, stagecraft, the study of drama, and music appreciation (NAS ED 27/204).

Chapter 3: The British Institute of Adult Education (BIAE)

The influence of *The 1919 Report* was felt across adult education, for example, in the founding of the World Association for Adult Education in 1919 by Albert Mansbridge, and the BIAE (initially a branch of the World Association) in 1921, by Mansbridge and R. B. Haldane.¹ The World Association campaigned for the recommendations of *The 1919 Report* as did the BIAE, which became an autonomous body in 1925. Although predominantly concerned with tutorial class education, the BIAE was to press the importance of informal work. Haldane's ambition for the BIAE was that it should become the national, authoritative body for adult education in Britain.² It was to stimulate discussion, research issues, advocate courses of action and lobby government on behalf of its members. It was not conceived as a service provider but as an instrument that might induce others to take action as circumstances and opportunities arose. It sought a relationship with adult education similar to that which the NCSS pursued with the voluntary sector.

Although by the late 1930s it could claim a significant place, it had not become the authoritative body that Haldane had hoped for. Such a goal proved impossible given the insurmountable ideological differences that divided adult education. The BIAE belonged, with the WEA, to the liberal tradition, as opposed to the independent working class education movement (which had emerged in the early 19th century, gaining later momentum from Marxism) and which aimed at "assisting the organized working class to overthrow capitalism".³ In 1908 the state began to fund the WEA in England and Wales, a fact that demonstrated, to its Marxist critics, that it was an instrument of their class enemies.⁴ The BIAE's founding coincided with the formation of the National Council of Labour Colleges. A brief period of success for the Marxist education

movement followed which ended in the wake of the General Strike, the advantage returning then to the liberal wing. The qualified dominance of the liberal tradition during the 1930s depended in part on the increasing motivation among students to pursue study for reasons of personal development rather than for political, social and economic enlightenment. As Simon says, the universities and WEA “now overlapped in the provision of general cultural courses for general audiences”.⁵ The BIAE’s cultural-educational initiatives in the period after the General Strike were aligned with these developments. But throughout the 1930s the constitutional parties feared the double threat of fascism and Marxism, both fuelled by the Depression that further destabilised class relationships already strained by the aftermath of the First World War and the disappointed hopes of the 1920s.

Tom Jones was unequivocal in regarding adult education as the greatest hope of a fragile democracy. Similar motives were present in Scotland. Jones’s beliefs were shared by his friend Hector Hetherington, professor of moral philosophy at Glasgow University, who argued that “democracy could only succeed in an enlightened community and that the Adult Education movement was one of its surest safeguards”.⁶ In the period between the wars adult education was less developed in Scotland than in England and Wales. The primary reason cited is that Scottish universities were traditionally more accessible to all classes than their English counterparts in consequence of which there was less demand for extra-mural education.⁷ Growth was also inhibited because responsibility for funding adult education lay with education authorities, without help from central government. Griffin suggests that popular education had been so long established that there was less need or space for voluntary work by bodies like the WEA. An integrated system had been much slower to emerge in

England, which reflected the strength of, and created opportunities for, the voluntary sector there. Adult education therefore appeared as an essentially English construct, of limited relevance to Scotland.⁸

The WEA emerged from the University Extension movement, which was always weaker in Scotland than in England and Wales. The earliest branch appeared in Springburn in 1905 but had collapsed by 1909. Branches appeared in Edinburgh and Aberdeen before the First World War and in Glasgow and Dundee during it. Development of formal adult education was slow and uneven (though Aberdeen was clearly a relatively strong centre) but *The 1919 Report* concluded “It would be wise to assume...that non-vocational adult education of an organised character is at present non-existent in Scotland”.⁹ By 1934 the picture was brighter. A survey of that year found twelve WEA branches with 32 affiliated societies operating in Scotland, in addition to the work of the university settlements in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee, the universities’ extra-mural work, and the work of the Labour Colleges. New Scottish regulations were introduced by the SED in 1934 under which education authorities acquired grant-giving powers, but as in England and Wales the cultural activities of the voluntary organisations remained outside the new framework.¹⁰

Griffin noted that one factor which perhaps limited the development of adult education in Scotland was the lack of a national body. An attempt was made to fill the gap by the BIAE. In the autumn of 1926, Hector Hetherington was instrumental in organising a BIAE conference of adult educators in Scotland.¹¹ The conference was held at Dunblane in May 1927 and agreed to establish a committee to pursue similar objectives to the parent body.¹² The Scottish Committee was set up in 1928 at Moray House under the

chairmanship of Sir James Irvine, Principal of St. Andrews University.¹³ Within a year (as J. T. Mitchell, Secretary of the Carnegie UK Trust, reported) a sub-committee had completed a survey of all non-vocational adult educational work in Scotland. Mitchell recommended that the relationship of the Scottish Committee, the universities and the BIAE be reviewed after two years. In 1931 the Scottish Committee was reconstituted as the Scottish Branch of the BIAE, with greater autonomy than before.¹⁴ The Scottish Branch, which remained a small body throughout its existence, did not attain the leadership role which was hoped for and had little revenue. It did at least provide a national forum for debate and research and contributed a Scottish voice to wider BIAE debates, which ultimately gave it a leading role in the development and management of CEMA in Scotland. From the rather fragmentary evidence, it is clear that the limited resources of the Scottish Branch inhibited the range of its activities, but that it had an interest in the informal side of adult education is certain.

Returning to England, in the eyes of the Board's Inspectorate the ideological divisions in adult education undermined the BIAE's claim to speak for the sector, but a further factor increased their scepticism towards it: its interest in the informal fringe. This interest, which was present in the 1920s but which really developed in the 1930s under Williams's leadership can be traced back to the ethos of *The 1919 Report* and was also linked to the growth of general cultural education.¹⁵ The BIAE's interest was first signalled to the Board (in regard to music) as early as 1922.¹⁶ Partnerships with the NCSS, the Carnegie UK Trust and Pilgrim Trust continued the trend.

In 1934 the BIAE published a pamphlet *The Auxiliaries of Adult Education*, written by W. E. Williams, that gave renewed currency to the term used in 1918. In essence

Williams repeated the argument that the value of informal education should be recognised by the mainstream movement. He had in mind voluntary organisations and some of the BIAE's own work. It had, for example, promoted educational broadcasting in partnership with the BBC (Harold Laski opened discussions with John Reith in 1923) and conducted an investigation into the educational potential of cinema, producing a report, *The Film in National Life*, in 1932. The report recommended that a national institute be founded to improve the quality of popular cinema in Britain. Out of this the British Film Institute (BFI) emerged in late 1933, and the Scottish Film Council a year later. Williams also had in mind various schemes to ameliorate the experience of unemployment (in some of which the BIAE partnered the Carnegie UK Trust, the NCSS and the Pilgrim Trust).¹⁷ In the Annual Report for 1936-37 he wrote, somewhat defensively:

We reassert here the belief that the backbone of Adult Education is the work of the class-providing bodies, voluntary and statutory...[but] we are unregenerately proud of the part the Institute has played since its inception in the development of less formal modes of adult learning. It has had a share in the emergence of wireless talks, film standards, art and design exhibitions and so on and while it recognises that these are only the auxiliaries of a larger educational purpose it is not disposed to see them rated as merely bright toys to catch a restless popular fancy.¹⁸

Hetherington was expressing similar views in Scotland. In 1936 he became Chairman of the Scottish Branch. In the same year he was arguing that the distinction between work and leisure should be revised, and in consequence (he wrote) "We shall have to get rid

of the bogus distinction between vocational and cultural education". He urged on the education community, and above all on the universities, a "larger view" of the purposes of education. The vocation of education, as he put it, was for living.¹⁹ These sentiments echo the spirit of *The 1919 Report* and complement arguments presented to the BIAE's Annual Conferences in 1937 and 1938, to the disquiet of the Board of Education.²⁰ At the 1938 Annual Conference of the Scottish Branch, Hetherington proposed that a survey should be undertaken of adult education activity in Scotland to include the "informal side".²¹ A survey was carried out over 1938-39, but not published until 1944. It shows that on the eve of war, of 271 classes in Scotland run by the universities, the WEA and the education authorities, 100 (37%) were held in Glasgow and surrounding burghs and counties. Many areas, most notably the Highlands, had little or no activity. The arts (music, visual art and drama) accounted for 30 (11%) of all classes.²² Despite Hetherington's proposal, these figures do not include the informal educational work of voluntary associations whose activities could not be funded under adult education regulations: the bodies, in other words, which CEMA set out to assist in 1939.

Art for the People

Writing in retrospect, Williams considered that in the early 1930s the climate for experiments in the arts in adult education was improving, not least because the BBC had helped to create a large new audience for music, drama, poetry and fine art.²³ Pushed by Williams's personal interest in visual art, in 1934 the BIAE agreed to set up the Art for the People scheme. In 1971 he recalled:

Most of the provincial art galleries in this country are modest collections, and thirty five years ago they were decidedly poorer than they are today - for most of

the population outside London there were very few opportunities to see painting or sculpture of merit or significance. In 1934 the Institute decided upon an experiment which, it was hoped, would show the practicability of a system of touring art exhibitions.²⁴

The scheme, for circulating exhibitions of 19th and 20th century painting to towns that lacked art galleries, normally with a resident 'guide lecturer' (commonly a locally recruited art teacher) was the foundation on which CEMA's visual work was to be built.²⁵ It is discussed by Williams (1971) and Borzello (1987) among others. Little elaboration is needed here, beyond noting that it emerged from the same liberal tradition as the BIAE itself. Williams's model was Samuel Barnett's annual Pictures for the Poor exhibitions in Whitechapel, which ran from 1881 until 1913.²⁶ I comment only to add that four other factors were relevant to the new scheme. Firstly, *The 1919 Report* had envisaged a network of rural and small town institutions acting as educational and cultural centres for their areas. By the 1930s town and village community halls and educational centres did exist, which could be expected to take exhibitions if they were made available. These were the venues to which Art for the People exhibitions were sent. Secondly, *The Miers Report* (1928), commissioned by the Carnegie UK Trust to examine the condition of museums and art galleries (other than national institutions), had revealed a near-moribund state of under-funding and neglect, and large areas of Britain lacking any museum or gallery.²⁷ Williams and his colleagues would have seen two pressing needs arising from Miers, firstly to provide exhibitions for places where no galleries existed and secondly, to make exhibitions which were explicitly pedagogical in nature. Thirdly, local touring schemes existed (for example, in Oxfordshire) and, more speculatively, Williams would probably have known of a similar scheme in the USA,

reported in *The Studio* in November 1932.²⁸ Certainly Tom Jones remarked that what was notable about Art for the People was not its novelty, but that Williams had made a common idea into a reality.²⁹

The fourth factor was the debate at the BIAE's Annual Conference in 1933. This was motivated by the then widespread elite fear of cultural decline caused by film, radio broadcasting and the mass media generally, formulated in the concept of 'substitute living' in Leavis and Thomson's recently published *Culture and Environment*. The theme for the conference was finalised, tellingly, as 'Culture and Anarchy', and was to be:

...a reconsideration of Matthew Arnold's famous phrase... Our civilisation has become mechanistic and urbanised, and we are today faced with grave problems arising from the general level of ignorance due to "substitute living", that is, the acquisition of information, tastes and judgement secondhand and the tendency of thought to become "passive" instead of "active". The Conference will consider some of the specific ways in which our outlook is modified today, as for example, by the misuse of leisure, by advertisement, the popular Press, fiction, mechanised music, standardised speech, and the invasion of the countryside by urban influences. It will explore the possibilities of fresh advances in adult education through whose agency a dynamic and creative culture may be developed³⁰

I have found no report of the actual conference, but if it were intended to stimulate meaningful activity, the Art for the People scheme would (from both conservative and

progressive positions) have appeared a fitting outcome. It promised to increase the public for modern visual art by making original works more widely accessible. It would create opportunities for first-hand experience upon which people could found opinions and judgements of their own. It would promote critical understanding, and potentially encourage and improve standards of practice. Here can be seen the elements which CEMA's policy was to reproduce. Developing the individual's capacity to make aesthetic judgements was complementary to raising political, economic and civic awareness, and (as *The 1919 Report* had argued) could be regarded as integral to the creation of the well-rounded, engaged, progressive-minded citizen. Yet *Art for the People* marked a departure from normal practice for the BIAE. Mansbridge had written in the 1920s that:

Even if research should suggest to the Institute the need for some experiment, it will seek to induce the proper body to undertake the business of instruction.³¹

The BIAE would have seen that no existing body had the national remit or resources to undertake the task and so of necessity it became the direct provider of an educational service.³² Williams's comments in the Annual Report for 1936-37 reveal that the scheme had not been thought of as a long-term commitment but depended on the speculation that another body would emerge to take up the work. The BIAE had also insisted that funds were raised from external sources to minimise its risk. Williams turned to familiar sources for help. The Carnegie UK Trust granted £100 in 1935 towards a pilot programme of three exhibitions, the remainder being raised from individual donors.³³ In 1936 the Board of Education recognised the scheme, enabling local education authorities to pay one third of the costs of exhibitions within their

jurisdiction.³⁴ The York Trust, the chairman of which was Tom Jones, was next to add its support (with a grant of £300), and it continued to fund Art for the People until CEMA took over in 1940.³⁵ In 1936 a parallel but lower-cost scheme was begun, which was to become a mainstay of canteen and factory exhibitions during the war. Responding to appeals from occupational clubs, residential colleges, public libraries, local authority evening institutes and WEA branches for educational exhibitions, a collection of 70 coloured reproductions of Old Master and modern paintings was made available (as Williams grandly but inaccurately declared) to “the furthest confines of the country”.³⁶ Williams envisaged a permanent network of ‘receiving institutions’ among smaller towns and in rural areas emerging from the Art for the People experiment. They would receive regular touring exhibitions from organisations persuaded to act or called into being by the example of the BIAE. The solution which Williams put forward in the 1936 and 1937 Annual Reports was a Popular Arts Trust, founded with a moderate endowment to take over the work and expand it as far as possible. The idea of the trust suggests the influence of the League of Audiences’ contemporary proposals for an Art Commission, which the BIAE was also supporting. The Art Commission was to concern itself with music and drama, Williams’s trust with the visual arts. Both were conceived of as authoritative, grant-giving, national bodies that together would consolidate the fragmented approach and different policies of various private, voluntary and public agencies.

Neither the Art Commission nor the Art Trust came to pass. Perhaps in anticipation, in 1937 Williams was required to prepare a ten-year plan as an alternative.³⁷ I have found no direct evidence that he did so, but a change of direction in 1938 may reflect a response to the BIAE Council’s demand. The belief that centralised planning for

contemporary art had become a necessity would have been strengthened with the publication that year of *The Markham Report* (a sequel to *The Miers Report*) which found the situation of museums and galleries little changed from a decade before.³⁸ Touring exhibitions were sporadic and of variable quality, and too often aimed simply at selling work.³⁹ Williams's new thinking emerges in a conference called to discuss "the Co-ordination of Facilities for Art Education" held in June 1938.⁴⁰ In his invitation to potential members, Williams described the success of Art for the People and specifically emphasised the need for a national system of touring exhibitions.⁴¹ He invited several "authoritative persons" to form an Art Group to consider the issues without being bound by BIAE policy. He, though, had the BFI in mind as a model.⁴² His invitees were Professor Alan Boase, Director of the Courtauld Institute; John Rothenstein, Director of the Tate Gallery; Philip Hendy, Slade Professor at Oxford; P. H. Jowett, Principal of the Royal College of Art; Sir Kenneth Clark, Director of the National Gallery; Robert Lyon, Master of Painting at King's College, Newcastle; James Laver, Curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum; the art critic Eric Newton and (inevitably) Tom Jones. The presence of two Scottish representatives, Hubert Wellington, Principal of Edinburgh College of Art and Charles Kemp, Honorary Secretary of the Scottish Branch of the BIAE and lecturer in politics and economics at Newbattle Abbey, shows that Williams envisaged some form of co-ordination extending throughout Great Britain. He hoped that the Art Group would recommend that a new, permanent visual arts body should be established.⁴³

The Scottish Connection

The opening of Newbattle Abbey in January 1937 as a residential college marked a major development in Scottish adult education. In 1931, when Lord Lothian had first

considered creating a college at Newbattle it was natural that he should turn for advice to the founder of Coleg Harlech, his friend Tom Jones.⁴⁴ From then on Jones acted as the indispensable advisor and lobbyist for the project, drawing in the Carnegie UK Trust among others.⁴⁵ Jones also renewed his contacts with the Scottish educational establishment in an effort to persuade the generally cautious, if not sceptical, universities and SED to support the project.⁴⁶ By late 1935 when the warden was beginning to consider staffing, Jones wrote to recommend Charles Kemp for a lecturing post, pointing out that he was well-connected in the Scottish labour movement.⁴⁷ Like Williams, Kemp was a protégé of Jones's. An Aberdonian who had worked as a house painter in Edinburgh, Kemp studied at Ruskin College, Oxford in the late 1920s and graduated from Wadham College (in economics and politics) in 1932. He had worked in educational settlements in South Wales and it was presumably while there that he was brought to the attention of Jones, whose extensive network of contacts kept him informed about promising individuals. Kemp was an assistant to Grace Drysdale at the Edinburgh University Settlement at Kirk o' Field when Jones recommended him for the Newbattle post. By the middle of 1936 his appointment had been confirmed.⁴⁸

Kemp became Honorary Secretary of the Scottish Branch in 1937, and came into contact with Williams for the first time shortly afterwards at the BIAE Annual Conference.⁴⁹ When Williams set up the Art Group in 1938 Kemp was invited because he already had a connection to Art for the People. The York Trust, which contributed funds to the scheme, had been set up anonymously by David Astor in 1933 (taking its name from the London address of the Pilgrim Trust). Its three Trustees were Astor himself, Tom Jones and Charles Kemp. It was presumably Jones who gave Kemp this entrée to the upper echelons of British society, and who drew him to Williams's

notice.⁵⁰ Williams's invitation to Kemp to join the Art Group may not only have been motivated by his support for Art for the People or for his BIAE connection. Kemp did not have a background in the visual arts, but Williams is likely to have been aware that his wife Ellen did, thus making Kemp an even more useful Scottish ally in his plans for a British Art Institute. Ellen M. Willison had entered Edinburgh College of Art in 1929 to study drawing and painting, and graduated in 1933. She completed a teaching qualification the next year at Moray House and by 1938 was assisting Charles Kemp with his work for the Scottish Branch. She eventually succeeded him in 1941 when he was called up for national service.

The British Art Institute

The Art Group submitted a first report early in 1939.⁵¹ That report, seemingly not extant, was discussed at the BIAE's Annual General Meeting in March, from which a minute shows that its recommendation had been "the creation of an Art Institute on the lines of and parallel to the British Film Institute".⁵² This was what Williams had hoped for. By May the Art Group had finalised its recommendations (again they are not extant) and the Executive Committee authorised Williams to make preliminary approaches for financial support to the Carnegie UK Trust and the Pilgrim Trust. What was envisaged was evidently a triumvirate of cultural-educational bodies shaping arts policy across Britain: the Art Commission for music and drama (now gathering the parliamentary support that culminated in the 1939 Music and Drama Bill), the BFI for film and a British Art Institute for visual art.

The BIAE had helped create the BFI. It was a compromise body in which commercial cinema interests had succeeded in gaining representation, ensuring that its remit was

confined to educational and cultural film, leaving the industry free from interference.⁵³ The Scottish Branch had pushed the idea of a similar institute for Scotland. Its biggest challenge had been to find common ground between those who wanted a separate national body and those who favoured affiliation to the BFI.⁵⁴ Between 1932 and 1934 a series of meetings (the lead ultimately being assumed by Glasgow Education Authority) led to an agreement not to pursue independence but to establish a Scottish National Film Council as “an integral part of the British Film Institute”. Recognising the particular Scottish dimension, however, it was given relatively great autonomy.⁵⁵ As with the BFI, the trade was given equal weighting in the organisation and was able to ensure that its work was confined to co-ordination and information, and to the education sector. The Scottish Film Council (SFC) held its first meeting in September 1934.⁵⁶ The significance of the BFI and the SFC to the history of CEMA and the Arts Council in Scotland is indirect. Williams apparently imagined a British Art Institute structured along similar lines to the BFI (and the BIAE itself), that is, with a devolved Scottish branch. The SFC, for example, had the right to appoint its own chairman and council members, and to appoint one governor as a Scottish representative on the BFI’s Board.⁵⁷ In 1938 its powers were increased.⁵⁸ CEMA was not set up with a devolved structure, but from 1942 onwards as demands for devolution grew, the BFI/SFC relationship stood as an obvious example to CEMA’s Scottish members. It provided a model that was gradually approximated by CEMA and the Arts Council.

The pace of events in the summer of 1939 would have quickly rendered the idea of the Art Institute unattainable. Parliamentary time and government backing could not be hoped for. Throughout this period, however, events suggest that Williams kept in touch with Jones (in Wales, recuperating from illness for most of the year). Jones had not only

channelled York Trust funds to Art for the People and knew of the project for the British Art Institute, but was to be Williams's main ally in his effort to persuade the Board of Education to take the voluntary sector arts under its wing during wartime.

Another strand that was to contribute to the conception of CEMA emerged in June 1938 when Williams was authorised to investigate "the possibility of starting a scheme analogous to 'Art for the People' to be called 'Music for the People'".⁵⁹ I have found no other trace of this idea, which reveals more sympathy in the BIAE for Williams's work than had existed in 1934 (confirmed by its determination to keep Art for the People going in wartime). A Scottish scheme for musical education suggests a possible source for the BIAE's interest. Between 1935 and 1938 the Educational Institute for Scotland (EIS) had partnered the Scottish Orchestra (under John Barbirolli) in presenting programmes of educational 'lecture-concerts' for audiences of adults and children. Performing the same role as the guide lecturers at exhibitions, teachers (and occasionally Barbirolli himself) provided commentaries on the music. It proved very successful and continued, without the EIS, into the war years.⁶⁰ However, given the personal closeness of Williams and Jones, a more likely primary source was the example of the National Music Council of Wales, a body with which Jones was intimately connected through its director, Sir Walford Davies. Davies had set up a programme of 'music travellers', itinerant musicians whose job was to encourage music making and improve standards in the small towns and villages of Wales. Davis was to become one of the first CEMA Council members, bringing the idea of the music travellers with him. It would seem that the two ideas for visual art and music were brought together in 1939 and needed only the addition of drama to define the basic premise of CEMA.

Throughout 1939 discussions were pursued between the Board and the main providers of adult education in England and Wales about the needs of adult education in wartime.⁶¹ The debate was concerned with tutorial class teaching, lectures and residential study and not with the informal sector. However, the Board revised its regulations (for application after April 1940), relaxing certain conditions to provide greater flexibility for the WEA and others to cope with the uncertainties of demand and the effects of national service. By the summer Williams was trying to rouse the Board to take on the informal cultural work of the voluntary sector and presumably of Art for the People and perhaps the nascent Music for the People. The implication would seem to be that with war rapidly approaching the idea of the British Art Institute was transmuted into something more achievable and related to the needs of wartime. The Music and Drama Bill, the fruit of the League of Audience's campaign for an Art Commission, was abandoned at the outbreak of war. At the beginning of September, the role that the arts might play in wartime was vague. Planning for the third phase of evacuation (the welfare of evacuees) gave Williams his opportunity.

¹ Haldane's mother Elizabeth had helped Patrick Geddes found the Edinburgh Social Union.

² Quoted in Fieldhouse, *A History of Modern British Adult Education* (Leicester, National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education, 1996), pp. 29-30.

³ Simon, *The Struggle for Hegemony, 1920 -1926*, in Simon, (Ed.), *The Search for Enlightenment: the Working Class and Adult Education in the Twentieth Century* (Leicester, National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education, 1990), pp. 16-18. The quote is from *Plebs*, November 1922 (Simon, op. cit. p. 61).

⁴ Mansbridge's ideal of education as impartial and resting on universal values was intended to foster reconciliation between the classes (Harrop, *Oxford and Working-class Education*, University of Nottingham, 1987), pp. 2-6. Rose demonstrates that WEA classes did not quash working class politics but in important ways they stimulated radical, independent thinking (Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 256-297.

⁵ Simon, op. cit. p. 51.

⁶ Illingworth, *University Statesman: Sir Hector Hetherington* (Glasgow, George Outram, 1971), p. 116.

⁷ *Adult Education: The Challenge of Change* (The Alexander Committee Report; HMSO, 1975), p. 3.

⁸ Griffin, *A Study of the Development of Adult Education in Scotland* (unpublished PhD Thesis, St. Andrews University, 1953), p. 305.

⁹ Quoted in Griffin, op. cit. p. 175.

¹⁰ *Adult Education: The Challenge of Change*, op. cit. p. 4. Alexander noted that the Education (Scotland) Act of 1945 "developed the concept of an informal further education service" which included provision for "voluntary leisure-time occupation, in such organised cultural training and recreative activities as are suited to their requirements, for persons over school age" (ibid. p. 5).

¹¹ BIAE Executive Committee Minute Book, 24 September 1926, NIACE Library. The possibility of a group of Scottish committees was discussed in October 1921 and sporadically thereafter. In 1926,

following the urging of A. D. Lindsay, L. F. Ellis, BIAE Committee member and Secretary of the NCSS, was requested to pursue the matter with Hetherington (BIAE Executive Committee Minute Book, 28 October 1921 and *passim*). Hetherington left Glasgow shortly afterwards to become Vice-Chancellor of Liverpool University.

¹² *Ibid.* (8 December 1926.) Sir Donald MacAllister, Principal of Glasgow University, was invited to chair a group to determine the constitution of the committee. He reported in March 1928 and the Scottish Committee was formed shortly afterwards. The first committee was: Lord Haldane (President); Sir Donald MacAllister (Scottish Vice-President); Sir James Irvine (Chairman); Bertram Talbot, Professor Norman Kemp Smith, J. E. Highton (Vice-Chairmen, and Secretary of the WEA's Scottish Council) and J. Henderson (Honorary Treasurer). Other members in 1928 included Sir Alfred Ewing (Principal of Edinburgh University), Sir George Adam Smith (Vice Chancellor of Aberdeen University), Prof. R. S. Rait (Glasgow University), Dr. Henry Hamilton (Aberdeen University Extra-Mural Committee), Dr. D. MacGillivray (Glasgow University Extra-Mural Committee), Dr. J. R. Peddie (Secretary of the National Council for the Training of Teachers and BBC Adult Education Committee), W. H. Marwick (Tutor-Organiser for WETU Committee), C. W. Mace (lecturer and Extra-Mural tutor, St Andrews University and Dundee University College), Sir Robert Bruce (Editor of the Glasgow Herald), Lt. Col. J. T. Mitchell (Secretary, Carnegie UK Trust), William Elger (STUC) and Miss MacLarty (President of the EIS). The need for "someone to represent the SED if this can be arranged" was minuted. Thirty other members are named including various Directors of Education, Chairmen of Education Authorities and the Director of the BBC's Northern Area. J. R. Peddie joined CEMA's Scottish Committee in 1943.

¹³ *Ibid.* 4 May 1928 and GU DC 8/1114.

¹⁴ BIAE Annual General Meetings Report Book, 16 May 1931, and General Council Minute Book, 16 May 1931, NIACE Library. The latter records that the Scottish Branch would elect its own executive and office bearers and have power to form committees and sub-committees. Finances were to continue to be administered for another year by the BIAE. After that time the Scottish Branch appears to have taken responsibility, but to have remitted some portion of its income to the BIAE. The Secretary of the Carnegie UK Trust continued as a member.

¹⁵ He was appointed General Secretary in December 1933 and took up the post in May 1934. In 1933 he was already editor of the BIAE's journal, *Highway*.

¹⁶ BIAE Executive Committee Minute Book, May 1922, NIACE Library

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 17 January and 17 October 1923, mentions Laski's work. The issue of cinema is raised in BIAE Research Committee Minute Book, 19 April 1929, NIACE Library. *Sight and Sound*, the BFI's journal, began as the journal of the BIAE's Mechanical Aids to Learning Committee, the first issue being published in 1932.

¹⁸ *The Sixteenth Year, the Annual Report of the British Institute of Adult Education, 1936-37*, p. 7

¹⁹ Illingworth, *op. cit.* p. 116.

²⁰ As Chairman of the Scottish Branch Hetherington would normally have attended the conferences of the parent body, as their chairman or secretary attended the Scottish conference. At the 1938 BIAE conference, a Board of Education Inspector noted that a very wide definition of the term 'adult education' was accepted by several speakers and by the BIAE organisers. So confident was one speaker that he asserted "in view of the sympathetic treatment that the Board of Education has always shown to adult education, we may expect that official regulations will be modified so as to include all that makes for human welfare". This was not at all the view taken by the Board at the time (W.S. Dann, 27 September 1938, NA ED 80/22).

²¹ Minutes of Scottish Branch AGM, 24 April 1938 (NAS ED 27/204). This document also notes their representation on the Scottish Film Council.

²² *Further Education, A Report by the Advisory Council on Education in Scotland*, Cmnd 8454 (Edinburgh, HMSO, 1952), p. 62. The report uses the term 'aesthetics' to cover music, visual art and drama, plus elocution and public speaking. Griffin (*op. cit.* pp. 192-193) gives the more detailed breakdown that I use here.

²³ Williams, W.E., *The Pre-History of the Arts Council*, in Hutchinson (Ed.), *Aim & Action in Adult Education, 1921-1971*, (London, National Institute of Adult Education, 1971), p. 18.

²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 19.

²⁵ The scheme was managed by a committee chaired by Professor W. G. Constable, Director of the Courtauld Institute (BIAE General Council Minute book, 21 September 1934). Constable had been a lecturer in the early university extension class movement. (Williams, *op. cit.* p. 19). Sir Kenneth Clark was an early lender of pictures.

²⁶ Canon Barnett was the founder of Toynbee Hall, the first of the University Settlements. Borzello (*Civilising Caliban*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987) gives a detailed account of Pictures for the Poor and Art for the People.

²⁷ Miers, *A Report on The Public Museums of the British Isles (other than the National Museums)*. Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, 1928). The report listed 112 towns of over 20,000 inhabitants that had no museum or gallery (99 in England, nine in Wales and five in Scotland). Miers had been a member of the committee that produced *The 1919 Report*.

²⁸ *The Studio*, Vol. 104, November 1932. The article, entitled *The Travelling Exhibition in America*, reported on the current activity of a scheme established by the American Federation of Arts in 1908. The report stated "It is abundantly evident that these exhibitions minister to a definite need among schools, libraries, clubs, and similar institutions, especially in rural or suburban areas where a very real native interest in art would remain unfed without these facilities".

²⁹ Jones, Art and the People, BBC radio, June 1936; reprinted in *Leeks and Daffodils*, op. cit. pp. 204-209.

³⁰ BIAE Conference Committee Minute Book, 9 March 1933, NIACE Library.

³¹ Quoted in Hutchinson, *From British Institute to National Institute, 1921-1971*, in Hutchinson (Ed.), *Aim and Action in Adult Education, 1921-1971*, (op. cit.).

³² W. E. Williams wrote that while his "preoccupation" with art education was not discouraged by the BIAE's Council it was not particularly encouraged either (op. cit. p. 18).

³³ Ibid. p. 18. £100 = £4,500 (in 2003 values)

³⁴ *The Sixteenth Year*, op. cit. p. 15. This applied to England and Wales only.

³⁵ BIAE Finance Committee Minute Book, 10 October 1935 and 5 March 1937, NIACE Library. Witts and others wrongly attribute the funding to the Pilgrim Trust, probably because Williams wrote to Jones at the Pilgrim Trust. As there was no upcoming trustees' meeting, Jones helpfully referred Williams to himself at the York Trust. The 1935 exhibitions went to Swindon, Barnsley and Silver End (near Braintree in Essex). In 1936 exhibitions were presented at Sawston Village College in Cambridgeshire, a drill-hall in Kendal, Coleg Harlech in Wales, and an unidentified location in Canterbury. Exhibitions continued in 1937 at Accrington, Blackburn and Newcastle; in 1938 at Ulverston and Wigan; and in 1939 at Morecambe, St. Helens, Southampton and, in October (after the outbreak of war) in the City Literary Institute, London. Jones recorded in his diary visiting Coleg Harlech in the summer of 1936 to see the exhibition (*A Diary with Letters*, June 6, 1936). The 1939 exhibition at the City Literary Institute (where Williams had lectured before joining the BIAE) was opened by Sir Kenneth Clark. Williams noted that "the [BIAE] was widely praised for its determination to continue Art for the People in war-time".

³⁶ A grant of £30 was given by the NCSS in 1937 to fund new reproductions and in 1938 the York Trust gave another £75 for the same purpose (BIAE Executive Committee Minute Book, 15 December 1937 and 1 July 1938, NIACE Library). There is no evidence of the scheme being promoted by the Scottish Branch. A hire fee of £5 included two-way transport (equivalent to about £200 in 2003).

³⁷ BIAE Executive Committee Minute Book, 24 May 1937, NIACE Library.

³⁸ Markham, *A Report on the Museums and Art Galleries of the British Isles (other than the National Museums)*, Edinburgh, Constable, 1938. Markham found that in municipal museums budgets and salaries had generally been cut during the early 1930s and by 1938 were barely back to 1928 levels.

³⁹ Ibid. pp. 95-97.

⁴⁰ BIAE Executive Committee Minute Book, 1 July 1938, NIACE Library.

⁴¹ Williams to Jones, 30 May 1938, NLW TJ Class D, Vol. 5, No. 30.

⁴² Report of BIAE Annual General Meeting, March 17 1939, BIAE Annual Reports Book, NIACE Library.

⁴³ BIAE Executive Committee Minute Book, 1 July 1938, NIACE Library.

⁴⁴ Ellis, op. cit. pp. 299-309. Jones raised the finance for Coleg Harlech entirely from private sources, including Waldorf Astor, the Misses Davies of Gregynog, the Cassells Trust and the Carnegie UK Trust. His knowledge was invaluable to Lord Lothian (NLW TJ Class D.) Jones had known Lothian from the time of Lloyd George's 'Garden Suburb' group of unofficial advisors in 1916-17 (Ellis, op. cit. p. 189).

⁴⁵ Newbattle Abbey marked one of Jones's few failures to persuade the Pilgrim Trustees to support a favoured project of his. The application was rejected because the Scottish members, Lord Macmillan, John Buchan and (notably) James Irvine agreed that there was no need for it because "everyone in Scotland is educated already" (Jones to Lady Grigg, NLW TJ White MSS). Ellis, op. cit. p. 347.

⁴⁶ Sir William McKechnie, Secretary of the SED, was supportive. The lack of enthusiasm among the universities (except Edinburgh) was noted by Irvine and by Charles Kemp ("it looks as though the Principals are waiting to see how the cat jumps."). Jones also came into contact with J. R. Peddie who offered helpful support (NLW TJ Class D, Vol. 7).

⁴⁷ Jones to Fraser, 22 November 1935 (and subsequent correspondence), NLW TJ Class D, Vol. 7, No. 162, (1936). Kemp was at Ruskin when it was struggling to survive the decline in union funding following the General Strike and when more people in the labour movement decided that co-operation with employers rather than confrontation was the only viable way forward. At Wadham he would have been a contemporary of Michael Foot. His WEA connections suggest that he was aligned with the centre-left, which would have opened the way for him to receive Jones's patronage. In 1938 Jones called Kemp "one of the best men" at Newbattle (NLW TJ, D, 7/124) and on other occasions did what he could to promote his career.

⁴⁸ Fraser, to Jones, 22 June 1936, NLW TJ Class D, Vol. 7.

⁴⁹ Initially Kemp served with Peddie who resigned shortly afterwards (NAS ED 27/204). Writing in August 1937, Kemp told Jones that he was to speak at the BIAE Annual Conference in September and was "looking forward to meeting WEW for the first time." (NLW TJ Class D, Vol. 7, No. 118).

⁵⁰ The trustees used the York Trust to help each other's projects. As early as 1935 Jones was encouraging Kemp to pursue a York Trust grant for Newbattle's Bursary Scheme (Jones to Kemp, undated, 1935 NLW TJ Class D, Vol. 7, No. 93). In 1939 and 1940 Kemp sought (and received) York Trust assistance for his summer schools projects (undated document, 1940, "WEA North East Pioneering Scheme: Work in Progress", NLW TJ Class D, Vol. 7). Kemp wrote to Jones in August 1937 to say he and David Astor had agreed "it was time the York Trust did something more for Coleg Harlech or any other scheme you have in mind" (NLW TJ Class D, Vol. 7, No. 118).

⁵¹ BIAE Executive Committee Minute Book, 16 February 1939, NIACE Library.

⁵² BIAE Annual General Meeting Report Book, 17 March 1939, NIACE Library.

⁵³ Low (*The History of British Film*, Vol. V, London, Routledge, 1997) gives a detailed history of the BFI and shows how the film industry gained an unwonted influence over it. Three Scottish MPs were instrumental in this. The Conservative, John Buchan (a Pilgrim Trustee) recommended that the new institute be financed by a percentage levy on Sunday cinema opening, which immediately made it dependent on the trade. Representation of the Kinematograph Renters' Society and the Cinematographic Exhibitors' Association (CEA) also had to be conceded. This (as Low puts it) enabled the trade to "infiltrate the new body and neutralise it, turning it from a powerful enemy which would revolutionise the tawdry side of commercial production, into an ineffective, well-meaning educational body largely under the trade's influence." (Low, op. cit., p. 186). Two Scottish Labour MPs, James Welsh and Thomas Ormiston, both members of the CEA, actively pursued the trade's interests. Ormiston, according to Low, was originally hostile to the very idea of an institute. Although not mentioned by Low, Welsh's role in steering the Bill to establish the BFI through Parliament is described by Oakley. The owner of a chain of cinemas around Glasgow, Welsh later became President of the CEA. In 1946 he was to succeed Osborne Mavor as Chairman of the Scottish Committee of the Arts Council.

⁵⁴ The nationalist position is expressed by Oakley (*21 Years of the Scottish Film Council*, Glasgow, Scottish Film Council, 1955, p. 7). See also Allardyce to Fergusson, 12 June 1934, SFTA 1/1/237. A letter to Allardyce from J. T. Mitchell reveals strong opposition to an independent body (Mitchell to Allardyce, 26 May 1934, SFTA 1/1/237). Mitchell added that he had discussed the issue with his "colleague Hyslop". This was A. F. Hyslop, who sat on the Carnegie UK Trust's Joint Committee for Music and Drama, and who played an important part in the early phase of CEMA in Scotland.

⁵⁵ Allardyce to Brown (BFI) 25 June 1934, SFTA 1/1/237).

⁵⁶ Welsh was among the first members. He maintained his link with the SFC until 1967.

⁵⁷ John Buchan, the first Scottish Chairman of the SFC, provided this role until 1937.

⁵⁸ SCF Minute Book, 26 January 1938, SFTA 1/1/250.

⁵⁹ BIAE Executive Committee Minute Book, 1 July 1938, NIACE Library.

⁶⁰ The parallels with Art for the People are striking. The first lecture-concerts were given in Falkirk, Kilmarnock and Hamilton. In 1935-36 they were held in Coatbridge, Alloa, Paisley, Kilmarnock, Greenock and Dundee. More than 10,000 attended. In 1936-37 a total of thirteen lecture-concerts were given, in Montrose, Fraserburgh, Inverness, Elgin, Galashiels, Dumfries, Stirling, Motherwell, Aberdeen, Paisley, Kilmarnock, Dundee and Greenock. Over 20,000 school pupils attended these concerts. In 1937-38 there were seven lecture-concerts, in Hawick, Paisley, Hamilton, Perth, Inverness, Elgin and Fraserburgh, with audiences of 8,500 children. In early 1938 the original EIS Lecture-Concerts Committee was taken over by the Central Music Committee. In 1938-39, only two more lecture-concerts were added, in Kilmarnock and Greenock. Many of the places visited were not on the orchestra's normal itinerary. The scheme continued after the withdrawal of the EIS and survived on an irregular basis throughout the war (Belford, *Centenary Handbook of the Educational Institute of Scotland*, Edinburgh, Educational Institute of Scotland, 1946, pp. 250-254).

⁶¹ Records can be found in NA ED 80/22.

Chapter 4: The National Council for Social Service (NCSS)

Almost contemporaneous with *The 1919 Report* was the formation of the NCSS in March 1919. The First World War had produced an extension of statutory social services and had seen the appearance of new charities with many new voluntary workers. The NCSS was formed as a representative body to promote the co-ordination and expansion of voluntary social service, particularly through the creation of local Councils of Social Service, with the aim of eliminating confusion and duplication, and to encourage partnerships with the statutory sector.¹ The origin of the NCSS lay in the work that voluntary organisations had provided during the war, which had supplemented the limited relief provided by the state. In 1915 a ‘Conference on War Relief and Personal Service’, of around 600 delegates, met to discuss the co-ordination of the local activities of voluntary organisations at a national level.² A joint committee of the principal bodies was established, and the co-ordinating work that it did led directly to the creation of the NCSS.³

Although I have no evidence that Tom Jones was involved, the NCSS would have been a cause close to his heart, as was the BIAE. Both emerged from the same liberal stable. It is inconceivable that in his position and with his contacts he was not fully aware of its genesis. He was certainly in contact with it from 1921, when he wrote privately to its Secretary to say that government economic policy would ensure that there was plenty for it to do.⁴ Thereafter he played a substantial role in its development. Like the BIAE, the NCSS was viewed with some hostility by the left. The principle of voluntary social service was regarded with suspicion by the labour movement, which saw it as essentially paternalistic rather than leading a radical attack on the causes of poverty, a suspicion which deepened during the 1930s as the NCSS grew closer to government.⁵

In 1938 the SED observed that the NCSS had been less active in Scotland than in England and Wales.⁶ In some ways its experience in Scotland anticipated that of CEMA. Throughout the 1920s the NCSS was a unitary body attempting to apply its initiatives across the whole of Britain. One of its earliest endeavours was the creation, with the assistance of the Carnegie UK Trust, of a network of Rural Community Councils to co-ordinate voluntary activities within their areas. The movement was so much less successful in Scotland than in England and Wales that in 1933 the NCSS asked the Carnegie UK Trust to take over responsibility for the Scottish movement.⁷ It did so, but finding that public finances, particularly for adult education, were less accessible than in the south, soon chose to work with voluntary bodies already in the field, and the movement gradually faded out. J. T. Mitchell, the Carnegie UK Trust Secretary, also attributed the difficulties of the policy in Scotland to a resistance to external ideas, especially those that emanated from London. Both CEMA and the Arts Council encountered similar resistance when they came to be seen as external agencies of a London-controlled cultural elite with little knowledge of Scottish conditions or regard for Scottish claims for self-management.

NCSS activities were diverse, but among its earliest (shared with the BIAE) was the ‘proper’ use of increased leisure time following the reduction in working hours from their wartime high.⁸ This brought it into early association with arts organisations. In late 1919 a committee was formed to advise the NCSS on policy for leisure. Included among the members were representatives of the British Music Society and the British Drama League.⁹ Brasnett identifies the significance of this as being evidence that the NCSS regarded social service as going beyond the relief of hardship to open the way “to a lively partnership with many bodies whose aims were educational and cultural”.¹⁰

The NCSS espoused a view of voluntary service that complemented *The 1919 Report's* vision of the inclusiveness of adult education. The new conception of social service emphasised the quality of life in communities as a whole, including their cultural life.¹¹ The NCSS encouraged the membership of organisations already operating on the fringe of formal education and subsequently sought actively to develop new opportunities for cultural-educational work in partnership with other bodies, in particular the Carnegie UK Trust on rural development and, later, the BIAE on unemployment.

A development of particular significance to the history of CEMA began in response to the coal crisis of 1928. The NCSS helped establish the Coalfields Distress Committee, with Tom Jones as chairman and a grant from the Carnegie UK Trust.¹² The Committee encouraged the creation of a network of occupational clubs for unemployed miners (at first in Wales, Durham and Northumberland) which provided occupational work for their members but also educational activities including tutorial classes.¹³ The clubs attempted to soften the harshness of day-to-day life for the unemployed and to offer some, albeit limited, training, education and cultural activity. With the Carnegie grant, the NCSS was able to co-ordinate programmes of music and drama that many thousands attended.¹⁴ This aspect of the clubs' work was recognised by the Ministry of Labour as a useful (and economical) palliative.¹⁵

As the economic crisis deepened in the early 1930s the NCSS devoted an increasing share of its attention to the needs of the unemployed.¹⁶ A closer relationship between the state and the voluntary sector grew up during the Depression, the voluntary organisations increasingly acting as agents of government policy and less as independent charitable bodies. G. D. H. Cole observed the change in the period between

the wars, noting that the voluntary organisations “changed their work to meet specialised needs rather than to provide an alternative sort of service”.¹⁷ In 1932, the Prince of Wales appealed for voluntary action to tackle the problem of unemployment, and the result was a wave of volunteers and 700 new schemes to be co-ordinated.¹⁸ With unemployment still mounting and such strong evidence of popular concern, the National Government asked the NCSS to take on the role of central advisory body for voluntary organisations engaged in unemployment relief. One element of the NCSS’s response was to set up a National Advisory Committee in collaboration with the BIAE to develop educational opportunities for the unemployed, which Tom Jones himself joined.¹⁹ The Scottish Branch of the BIAE responded by setting up a committee with similar objectives, which circulated a memorandum entitled *An Appeal for Service* to private and public bodies in Scotland.²⁰ As Secretary of the Pilgrim Trust, one of Jones’s first actions in 1930 had been to prompt, and then fund, the NCSS to expand the occupational clubs beyond their heartlands in south Wales and the north east of England. Thereafter the Pilgrim Trust passed to the NCSS many of the applications it would previously have handled itself. Grants continued to be given to occupational clubs and, with the aim of keeping in closer touch with them, the NCSS created a regional structure, which included setting up a Scottish Committee for Community Service (SCCS).²¹

Experience showed that the clubs did not for long confine themselves to utilitarian handicrafts but (as had happened during the coal crisis), discovering the broader interests of their members, soon added to their programmes music and drama, discussion groups, tutorial classes, physical training and other activities.²² Clubs formed their own arts groups while voluntary bodies, orchestras and theatre groups brought in

visiting performers. By 1934 there were 2,300 clubs in Britain with over 250,000 members.²³ Finance was complex. Ministry of Labour grants were given only for work with the unemployed, which excluded dependants. On the other hand, grants from the Office of the Special Areas Commissioner and the Unemployment Assistance Board (UAB) of which Tom Jones was a member, could be used to assist households, and hence for more general community purposes.²⁴

The NCSS had more success in Scotland in its work with the unemployed than in its rural work.²⁵ With the assistance of the Pilgrim Trust, from 1932 onwards the occupational club movement, including clubs for women, boys and girls, began to spread into the Scottish Distressed Areas (later called the Special Areas).²⁶ The earliest example of a Pilgrim Trust-funded residential settlement (opened in October 1930 with 145 members) was in Bellshill, Lanarkshire, where the programme included classes in photography, drawing, cut paper design and “modern poetry, drama and similar subjects”.²⁷ Similarly supported was the Pearce Institute in Govan where several clubs for children and adults (with a combined membership of over 900) were accommodated.²⁸ In the same year the Pilgrim Trust gave grants to the University Settlements in Glasgow and Edinburgh. As the expansion of the clubs began, a grant (for example) of £700 was awarded to a club in Clydebank run by the Clydebank Mutual Services Association which became very large with 600 members, its own drama group (the Mutual Service Players) and a theatre (the Little Theatre).²⁹ Tom Jones considered this “a model and an incentive to other places” which would have included, as he noted, “other clubs in adjoining areas” which had between 1,200 and 1,500 members.³⁰ The Pilgrim Trust went on to fund other social and educational bodies in Scotland, among them two that later hosted BIAE travelling exhibitions for CEMA,

Grey Lodge (the University Settlement) in Dundee and St. Katherine's Club in Aberdeen.³¹ The planned expansion of the occupational clubs had brought the first step towards decentralisation of the NCSS. This included the SCCS, the functions of which were to encourage the formation of local social service committees and maintain close contact with the Scottish occupational clubs movement. In September 1939 its functions were assumed by the NCSS's newly-founded Scottish Advisory Committee. This was to be CEMA's partner in Scotland until 1943, providing administrative support and a central meeting point for CEMA organisers.

In 1935 Jones noted the plan of the Commissioner for the Special Areas in Scotland, Sir Arthur Rose, to channel direct state support into the construction and programmes of a new generation of superior occupational clubs.³² The plan was to appoint four or five full-time organisers to lead the construction and running of 16 'model occupational centres' in the Special Areas. The ambition was to lift the horizons of the club movement by taking them out of their usual shoddy wooden huts or other makeshift accommodation, and give them attractive, properly equipped and well managed premises that would attract a larger number of members. To administer the scheme, Rose proposed to establish a joint committee with the SCCS.³³ Scotland was now leading the way towards the community-based future that Jones envisaged for the club movement.³⁴

Jones's position was unique in its scope for influencing social policy. Ellis's estimation that he was, throughout the 1930s, "a pivotal figure, perhaps the key man, in the response of the voluntary organisations to the scourge of mass unemployment" is justified.³⁵ Over the two decades from 1919 a patchwork of social and cultural services

evolved under the aegis of the NCSS and its affiliated bodies, including informal educational activities, funded and promoted through partnerships with the Carnegie UK Trust, the Pilgrim Trust and the BIAE. An increasing financial commitment from government came from the Ministry of Labour, the UAB and the Special Areas Commissioners. By the mid-30s this complexity had begun to raise problems. The desire to assert a broader vision for the voluntary services led to an invitation to Tom Jones, in March 1935, to join an advisory group which would assist the NCSS address the issues.³⁶ One of the motivations was the fear that, despite their good work, the effect of the occupational clubs was to isolate the unemployed from the rest of society. As early as 1933 the Secretary of the NCSS had commented on the importance of “not separating the employed and the unemployed into two distinct camps or classes”, an independent movement among clubs in England and Wales seeming to have encouraged this line of thinking.³⁷

Tom Jones responded to the invitation by proposing that the clubs be redefined to serve the social, cultural and welfare needs of communities as a whole rather than continuing as a response specifically to unemployment. A broader vision of the clubs as community centres, which included arts activities, was forming. Writing to the Office of the Special Areas Commissioner (for England and Wales) in April 1937, after visiting clubs in the north of England, Jones criticised the financial and administrative relationship between the NCSS and the government as too complex. However, he also complemented the “much wider range of sensible activities that the clubs are undertaking”, adding (approvingly) “I am not sure that all those activities are ‘occupational’”.³⁸ Among these would have been various arts activities and performances. He attributed this broadening largely to the effect of Special Areas

grants, but raised the question of what would happen if and when grants were withdrawn, as was happening in places where unemployment was easing:

All of these considerations lead up to the general question whether the club movement should base itself upon the unemployed and run itself as part of the emergency created by the situation of 1931 or whether it ought consciously to develop gradually to a community movement broader based in the personnel it attracts... For your confidential information, the policy to which I am working is to make permanent this voluntary club movement on the basis of turning it into a community movement. It is possible that somewhat later in the summer we shall have some form of interdepartmental enquiry in to the relations between the National Council and the various government departments, with a view to reducing the channels through which the National Council receives grant aid... As I think you have probably heard, some people in the National Council think that the time has come to relate their work to the welfare policy of the Board and not to continue it as part of the unemployment preoccupations of the Ministry of Labour.³⁹ You are setting the pace for this... For example, I believe that in Scotland substantial premises are being built for the clubs by the commissioner. I think it may well be that that is a contribution from public funds of some sort which will be necessary if the club movement is to take root... My personal impression has been growing that the work that the National Council started in 1931 as a result of unemployment is among the finest and most decent things that have been done since that time, and I should certainly regard it as a tragic result if it came to an end.⁴⁰

Jones was now lobbying for a more inclusive conception of the work of the clubs, and specifically for their transformation into community centres. He believed that this new vision of clubs at the heart of community life, encompassing cultural activities, would require substantial public investment if it were to succeed. He was convinced that Miners' Institutes and the early adult education movement had failed to provide for the wider cultural and artistic interests and talents of their members.⁴¹ It is clear that the new generation of clubs proposed in Scotland contributed to his thoughts about the potential of the movement. Following Jones's lead, in 1937 the NCSS requested that the Ministry of Labour review its funding, on the grounds that the majority of its work now fell outside the Ministry's responsibilities.⁴² It argued that although the worst of the Depression appeared to be over, long-term unemployment would continue to be a problem into the foreseeable future, leaving in the various clubs "a young, adaptable organisation" which should be developed.⁴³ It appealed for a single government department to take responsibility for its work for the unemployed, but there remained the more general, community activities upon which the NCSS and Jones set high store. Looking for the appropriate department to take over these responsibilities, the NCSS proposed the Board of Education.⁴⁴ What it was suggesting was novel, as most of the activities of the clubs were not covered by the adult education regulations. Education, though, lay at the heart of the NCSS's mission to proselytise for a new conception of social life in communities across the country. No other department could expand its role in this area with the legitimacy that the Board of Education, if it chose, could claim.

In January 1938 the Treasury called an inter-departmental meeting to discuss the NCSS's memorandum.⁴⁵ The departments and bodies attending give an idea of the knot that the NCSS wished to cut through. Present were representatives of the Board of

Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour, the Scottish Office, the Commissioner for the Special Areas in England and Wales; the same for Scotland; the Grants Committee of the National Fitness Council and the Unemployment Assistance Board. The SED was not represented because it did not fund the adult educational activities of voluntary organisations in Scotland. As it was too late to make changes for the 1938-39 financial estimates, it was agreed that the year ahead would be transitional, the status quo being maintained until a final scheme could be introduced in 1939-40. Questioned about the extent to which voluntary activities might be taken up by the Board of Education, its representative, G. G. Williams, was markedly reserved.⁴⁶ Should the Board acquire the powers to assist the NCSS (he suggested) there was a danger that other voluntary bodies would apply for grants, while it would also be awkward to distinguish between the Special Areas and others to which the grants would not apply.⁴⁷ The meeting was inconclusive. No department was anxious to take up responsibility for the cultural-educational work of the voluntary bodies. At a meeting later in the month with the Minister for Labour, Ernest Brown, a deputation from the NCSS urged that the partnership that had developed since 1932 should be accepted as permanent, arguing that it “should no longer be related closely to the incidence of unemployment”.⁴⁸ This last point was to be echoed in 1939 by the Board of Education itself in discussions about the scope of CEMA’s activities.

The Standing Committee for Voluntary Organisations in Wartime (SCVOW)

The intention that a new system be put in place in 1939 was derailed by the growing threat of war. As the summer of 1938 progressed, thoughts within the NCSS were increasingly occupied with the organisation of the voluntary sector in the event of hostilities. Following the Munich crisis in September, the urgent need for a truly

comprehensive representative body to co-ordinate all voluntary agencies was beyond dispute. This led to the formation, in early December, of the SCVOW with a remit to keep a running review of the voluntary sector's response under the National Service campaign. The membership of the SCVOW numbered around 100 organisations, among them the BIAE, with the NCSS a member-organisation providing the secretariat.⁴⁹ The conference appointed an advisory committee as its executive.⁵⁰ The main concern of the committee was social work, including youth work, but in a submission to the Lord Privy Seal, in January 1939, the Secretary of the NCSS added:

...there are services rendered by voluntary organizations for adults and local communities generally covering a wide range of educational and welfare activities, the continuance of which, in some form, would be an essential contribution to national life in war-time, and in particular to the maintenance of the morale of the people.⁵¹

The context of this argument included preparations for the third phase of evacuation, the education and welfare of evacuees. In October 1939 the advisory committee proposed that a 'Central Grants Committee' for voluntary social work (modelled on the University Grants Committee) should be established under Royal Charter.⁵² Although ultimately rejected by the government, Sir Alan Barlow, replying for the Treasury in November, assured the committee that the government accepted that it should provide financial aid for work that it asked them to do, or for work:

...which can be shown to be of vital national importance but is in real danger of being stopped or seriously curtailed if help is not given.⁵³

The NCSS reluctantly accepted Barlow's comments, but took care to record that the government was sympathetic to the financial needs of societies "whose work made an important contribution to social well-being". Equally, it noted that the grants procedure to be put in place would provide for "societies whose needs did not appear to fall within the ambit of any one Government Department".⁵⁴ Although by now having diverged from the path that led to CEMA, this correspondence shows that by November 1939 an assurance had been given that wartime grants to voluntary organisations for welfare purposes would not be restricted by the terms that had limited departmental responsibilities in the past. Williams and Jones were well informed about the SCVOW's discussions. The government was beginning to respond to pressures to fund voluntary social work, but was now also being pressed to act for two sub-sets of the wider voluntary sector, youth welfare and cultural activities. The evidence of the summer and autumn of 1939 suggests that Williams and Jones saw a case for treating the cultural work of voluntary organisations separately from the social services with which the SCVOW was principally concerned. It was an opportunity that enabled them to pursue, though in a different form, the ideas they had been incubating since 1938.

The National Youth Committee

Parallel to, but in advance of, the discussion triggered by Williams's memorandum, the Board was dealing with the question of young people in wartime. Hitherto the province of the voluntary sector, wartime conditions gave the problems of youth welfare an urgency that demanded a new role for government. The disruption of family life by national service and evacuation, the closure of schools and recreational facilities and the blackout, gave rise to fears for the educational, physical and moral welfare of the young.⁵⁵ A small inter-departmental committee was set up which, at its second meeting

in mid-September, accepted a paper by Kenneth Lindsay proposing the creation of a National Youth Committee of departmental representatives, voluntary organisations, local authorities and trades unions. Its field of action would be young people between the ages of 14 and 18.⁵⁶ The first meeting of the NYC was held a month after the first discussion, under Lindsay's chairmanship. The Ministry of Labour, the Board of Education, the SED and the Ministry of Labour were represented, as was the NCSS.⁵⁷

Titmuss confirms that CEMA and the NYC both emerged from the complex of social, educational and welfare concerns of 1939.⁵⁸ Some parallels emphasise the closeness of conception between the NYC and CEMA. Gosden writes of the NYC:

The existing youth organisations had been hit by the call-up of youth leaders and workers, by the drastic commandeering of premises, by the running down of the income of voluntary organisations and by the wholesale closure of youth clubs as an air raid precaution in evacuation areas. In practice the committee was to begin by helping youth organisations to overcome these difficulties.⁵⁹

Similar comments were made about arts organisations and facilities when CEMA was under discussion. A Board of Education circular of November states that the NYC had been set up for "the maintenance and development of facilities" for young people.⁶⁰ At this time the nascent CEMA was being referred to either as the 'Committee on Cultural Facilities in War-Time' or as the 'Advisory Committee on the Maintenance of Cultural Activities in War-Time'. On two other counts, the sibling relationship of the NYC and CEMA can be demonstrated. One is the general cultural argument, advanced in the Board's November circular on the NYC, which asserted that:

A community which has allowed whole townships to grow up with no social amenities or which permits the movement of young workers to areas totally unprepared to receive them can no longer escape its responsibilities.⁶¹

This contains an echo of *The Markham Report* of 1938, which had condemned the scarcity of museums and galleries in large parts of Britain. The comment certainly anticipates Jones's quip that CEMA's purpose was to send orchestras to "the dreary Dagenhams" of Britain.⁶² Both CEMA and the NYC were also seen, at least by some, as protectors of public morality. Davidson, the Board's Accountant General and war diarist, added an opening sentence to Mary Glasgow's draft departmental history of CEMA which makes this explicit:

The novel conditions of the autumn of 1939 and especially the black-out aroused misgivings as to the employment of such leisure time as was available to the general public and to the maintenance of its morale.⁶³

Both were conceived as serving educational purposes, the NYC focused on adolescents and CEMA on adults. The Board's Circular 1516, *The Challenge of Youth*, states that "Youth Welfare must take its place as a recognised province of education, side by side with Elementary, Secondary and Further Education". It also noted, in terms that could have applied to CEMA, that "There could be no state monopoly of activity; it was for the state to lead and to supplement the resources of the voluntary organisations without impairing their independence...".⁶⁴ Finally, both were intended to be permanent innovations; in the case of the NYC, however, this was explicit, while with CEMA it was covert.

Welfare and Cultural Education

While discussions about the voluntary sector and the NYC were continuing, the Board called a conference on the 20th of October, in response to Williams's memorandum, which set in motion the events that led to the creation of CEMA. Tom Jones, at Coleg Harlech, noted the event:

Kenneth Lindsay has called a group together for next Friday to discuss 'cultural activities during the war'...⁶⁵

Slow progress was made during November and early December so far as to agree that a committee should be set up.⁶⁶ The Treasury would not commit itself without proof of public demand and evidence of a "concrete and businesslike scheme".⁶⁷ To enable the work to commence, Davidson (well aware of the connection with Tom Jones) had suggested that the Pilgrim Trust should be approached for a grant, and that the Treasury should consider matching it pound for pound.⁶⁸ Over the next week events unfolded rapidly, described by others and requiring little detail here. The Pilgrim Trust committed a grant of £25,000 and agreed that a small committee, to be called the Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, should be established in partnership with the Board, to manage the scheme. The grant gave the Board the opportunity to persuade the Treasury that the cultural activities of the voluntary organisations should be treated as a normal part of its work. De la Warr meanwhile set out the moral and political case for state funding for the new committee, arguing that:

It is not cynical but rather realistic in the true sense of the word to say that while the actual encouragement of music and the arts and even the preservation of the

people's morale in war time might be left to individual initiative and be paid for out of trust funds, it is essential to the whole idea of the Committee which the President has called into being that it should be a government concern. It is of practical importance to show publicly and unmistakably that the Government cares about the cultural life of the country. This country is supposed to be fighting for civilisation and democracy and if these things mean anything they mean a way of life where people have liberty and opportunity to pursue the things of peace. It should be part of a national war policy to show that the government is actively interested. Such an assurance needs to be given equally for the sake of our own people and for the sake of British prestige abroad.⁶⁹

This text provides the immediate political justifications for action most associated with CEMA, including the imperative to protect the values of a free society. However, a memorandum prepared for an 'informal conference' chaired by Tom Jones on the 18th of December more fully exposes de la Warr's thinking. Behind the short-term benefits to be gained from demonstrating that the government was addressing problems caused by the war, a more fundamental aim emerges. The time had arrived, the memorandum proposed, for a closer definition of the "quality and quantity" of practical arts activity that had, to date, been supported by the voluntary sector, funded by trusts and the NCSS. "A sharp separation" of this work from its association with unemployment was needed (repeating NCSS and SCVOW arguments), while a closer association with the voluntary bodies in "a partnership of popular and national culture" should be constructed. The partnership with the Pilgrim Trust would lay the foundations "for a significant extension of cultural education, the influence of which will quickly be felt in the schools and municipal life". This desire to lay the foundation for an extension of

cultural education only makes sense given the longer-term aims, which commentators on CEMA either fail to note or explore. That the Board saw CEMA primarily as an organ of adult education can be seen in the following comment:

Its purpose was...the encouragement of musical, artistic and other cultural activities outside the larger and more prosperous organisations. Thus, in bringing concerts and dramatic performances of high quality and exhibitions of fine art to the masses, CEMA introduced into this country the germ of a new form of adult education.⁷⁰

Following an agreement that the best way to proceed was by trial and error rather than to lose time drawing up a detailed organisational plan, Mary Glasgow's minutes conclude:

...the President suggested that if anything effective were done the Board would wish to consider the whole matter as more far reaching and of more lasting importance than a war-time emergency.⁷¹

What exactly de la Warr had in mind is not explained. Tom Jones gave a hint later, in gently ribbing style:

He had Venetian visions of a post-war Lord Mayor's show on the Thames in which the Board of Education led the Arts in triumph from Whitehall to Greenwich in magnificent barges and gorgeous gondolas, orchestras, madrigal singers, Shakespeare from the Old Vic, ballet from Sadlers Wells, shining

canvases from the Royal Academy, folk dancing from village greens - in fact, Merrie England.⁷²

De la Warr himself wrote more soberly in 1945:

January 1st 1945, for CEMA, marks the end of a Five Year Plan. Not that we thought of it as such, when Lord Macmillan, Dr. Thomas Jones and I met to discuss possibilities in December 1939. There were dreams, certainly; Dr. Jones described them when he wrote...of Venetian visions... But our immediate task was salvage...⁷³

The nucleus of CEMA (Jones, Williams and Sir Kenneth Clark) met on the 19th of December, with Mary Glasgow, a Schools Inspector seconded as CEMA's Secretary. Letters were sent to organisations across Britain informing them of the scheme and soliciting applications for grants. The organisations approached in Scotland were the Carnegie UK Trust, the NCSS, the Scottish Community Drama Association (SCDA) and the Scottish Branch of the BIAE. By early January 1940, with a fuller committee, CEMA was beginning to spend the Trust's money.

¹ Beveridge, *Voluntary Action, A Report on Methods of Social Advance* (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1948), p. 150.

² Finlayson, *Citizen, State and Social Welfare in Britain, 1830-1990* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 239. The conference was co-sponsored by the Charity Organisation Society, which I discuss in Appendix Five.

³ Beveridge, *The Evidence for Voluntary Action* (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1949), p. 250.

⁴ Ellis, op. cit. p. 242.

⁵ Brasnett, *Voluntary Social Action, a History of the National Council of Social Service 1919-1969* (London, National Council of Social Service, 1969), pp. 52-53, and Davis Smith, *The Voluntary Tradition, Philanthropy and Self-Help in Britain 1500-1945*, in Davis Smith, Rochester and Hedley (Eds.), *An Introduction to the Voluntary Sector* (London, Routledge, 1995), p. 26.

⁶ NAS EL 39/1 Note on Social Service Developments in Scotland.

⁷ Robertson, op. cit. pp. 76-77. Only one Rural Community Council existed in Scotland in 1934, in Angus (Griffin, op. cit. p. 177).

⁸ Paternalist anxiety about how workers spent their leisure time was common among social and cultural organisations at the time. Some were motivated by fear of 'mechanised entertainment', that is, radio,

recorded music and above all cinema (which by 1932 accounted for one quarter of national expenditure on entertainment). Elements in the BIAE shared this view, although Mansbridge regarded such concerns as “impertinent” (Stephen G. Jones, *The British Labour Movement and Film, 1918-1939* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987, p. 49).

⁹ Brasnett, op. cit. p. 27.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Baynes and Marks, *Adult Education and Informal Learning*, in Fieldhouse, op. cit. p. 309.

¹² Brasnett, op. cit. pp. 52-53 and NA ED 80/11. Other members were J. T Mitchell, Percy Watkins, Secretary of the Welsh Department of the Board of Education and Sir Walford Davies, all close to Jones.

¹³ The occupational clubs were self-help centres where the unemployed were encouraged to share and learn crafts and trades to provide services for each other on a voluntary basis. The common skills were boot-making and repair, furniture making and repair, hair-cutting and the like. Outdoor work for the benefit of communities was added. The rationale was the importance of keeping skills alive, to learn new ones to increase employability, and to keep up morale (Pilgrim Trust, *Second Annual Report, 1932-33*).

¹⁴ Brasnett, op.cit., pp. 59-60. Sir Walford Davies was a stalwart activist, conducting many concerts especially in Wales.

¹⁵ J. A. Barlow, 4 June 1931, NA ED 80/11. Barlow was to be involved for the Treasury in the discussions regarding CEMA in 1939.

¹⁶ By September 1931 there were 2,804,000 registered unemployed. One in six families had no income (Brasnett, op.cit., p. 68).

¹⁷ Quoted by Davis Smith, op. cit. p. 25.

¹⁸ His speech was written by Tom Jones (NLW TJ Class O, Vol. 3 No. 14).

¹⁹ Fieldhouse, op. cit. p. 54. The committee was chaired by Lord Eustace Percy (BIAE General Council Minute Book, 15 September 1933, NIACE Library). As early as November 1931 the BIAE had planned a conference on adult education and unemployment, to which Jones was to be invited. It is clear, then, that discussions with the NCSS preceded the government initiative. To what extent Jones had a hand in guiding both is impossible to say but some influence is likely (BIAE Conference Committee Minute Book, 12 November 1931, NIACE Library).

²⁰ BIAE General Minute Book, 23 September 1932, NIACE.

²¹ Its full title was ‘Scottish Committee for Community Service during Unemployment’.

²² Documented in NAS EL 39/1.

²³ Brasnett, op. cit. p. 71. This represents something like one in ten of the unemployed at the time.

²⁴ The NCSS had found a strong demand from the wives of unemployed men for the sorts of social support which the clubs could offer. This demand was at first accommodated within the men’s clubs on one afternoon per week but, from 1933, it led to the rapid development of a network of independent women’s clubs, strongly rooted in council housing estates, and with a national governing body, the National Association of Women’s Clubs. A grant from the Special Areas Fund supported these clubs. Like the men’s clubs, they included music, drama, art and crafts in their programmes, supplemented by lectures, film shows and tutorial classes (Baynes and Marks, in Fieldhouse, op. cit. p. 320).

²⁵ Note on Social Service Developments in Scotland, NAS EL 39/1

²⁶ The term ‘social service clubs’, also in use at the time, expresses the broadening character of the movement. Beveridge (*The Evidence for Voluntary Action*, op. cit. p. 255) says that in 1948 there were over 1,400 social service clubs in Britain, calling them “a legacy from the days of unemployment”.

²⁷ The settlement was called Harkness House, after the Pilgrim Trust’s benefactor. Four members are recorded as getting scholarships from the local education authority to attend Glasgow School of Art (Pilgrim Trust, *First Annual Report, 1930-31* and *Second Annual Report, 1931-32*).

²⁸ Pilgrim Trust, *First Annual Report, 1930-31*. The clubs at the Pearce Institute were directed by the Rev. George Macleod, later Lord Macleod of Fuinary and a member of the Scottish Committee in the 1950s.

²⁹ £700 in 1930 equates to about £29,000 in 2003 values.

³⁰ Pilgrim Trust, *Second Annual Report (1931-32)*, *Third Annual Report (1932-33)* and *Fifth Annual Report (1934-35)*

³¹ Grey Lodge Settlement in Hilltown, Dundee, was founded in 1903. It grew out of the Dundee Social Union, which had been set up in 1888 by D’Arcy Thomson and others from University College, Dundee. Thomson kept up his interest in the Union and Grey Lodge until his death in 1948. Grey Lodge’s real initiator, however, was Mary Lily Walker (1863-1913) an ex-student of the college who had worked in the Women’s University Settlement in Southwark under Octavia Hill, subsequently spending a year in the Grey Ladies religious house in Blackheath. Miss Walker was very much in the mould of the educated middle-class philanthropist, and carried out a number of significant surveys of social conditions in Dundee up to the time of her death. She was Superintendent of the Social Union’s Housing Scheme, a

Parish Councillor and a member of Dundee Insurance Committee. She purchased and named Grey Lodge in 1903, and it quickly became a centre for voluntary social work and informal education. After the First World War it pioneered a short-lived School of Social Study and Training, associated with St. Andrew's University. The W.E.A. used Grey Lodge from the 1920s, and boys and girls clubs, and clubs for the unemployed were already functioning in the same decade. The unemployed were encouraged to be self-sufficient through fundraising and running their own committee. With the arrival of the Depression, a 'mutual services' club was formed in 1932 to provide the cobbling and carpentry services which were a feature of the new 'movement'. Through the connections with University College a Sociological Club was set up, and an unsuccessful effort made to establish a Council for Social Services in Dundee, which strongly suggests contact with the NCSS. Grey Lodge encouraged music, choral singing, dance and drama groups. By the mid-1930s it was hosting over twenty recreational and educational clubs, with a membership of over 500. With this social service and adult educational background it is unsurprising that Grey Lodge should have hosted one of the BIAE's first exhibitions of reproductions in Scotland, circulated for CEMA in early 1940. More surprisingly it does not appear to have done so again, but the probable explanation is that in 1942 the Ministry of Defence requisitioned Victoria Road School. The pupils were displaced to Grey Lodge, and so it became unsuitable for CEMA's purposes, aligned as it was with adult education (Faulkner, *Grey Lodge 1888-1988, a Century of Care and Concern*, Dundee, Grey Lodge, 1988, and Baillie, *The Grey Lady: Mary Lily Walker*, in Miskell et al, *Victorian Dundee; Image and Realities* (East Linton, Tuckwell Press, 2002). The Pilgrim Trust gave £250 a year (Pilgrim Trust *Seventh Annual Report, 1936-37*) St. Katherine's Club in Aberdeen had been founded in 1917 as a 'Blue Triangle Club'. Jones called the club "a veritable family centre" and "an oasis in a desert of slums" and the Trust gave a grant in 1937-38 for a new hall, St. Katherine's Halls (Pilgrim Trust *Eighth Annual Report, 1937-38*).

³² Jones to Tribe, NLW TJ Class C, Vol. 16, No. 47.

³³ NA AST 10/9, 13 February 1935. £2,000 was for the organisers' salaries, £1,000 for each club and £2,000 for contingencies. Harkness House is identified as the one existing model. Others were planned for Kilwinning, Kilbirnie, Galston, Port Glasgow, Greenock, Paisley, Barrhead, Alexandria, Kirkintilloch, Airdrie and Coatbridge, Motherwell, Hamilton, Wishaw, Cambuslang and Bathgate. Rose's letter to the Under-Secretary of State was copied to the UAB, hence Jones, who would have known about the move through the NCSS, had a second track on it.

³⁴ Ibid. This would have been the case even though Rose's concern was with the needs of the unemployed. That he had initiated a scheme funded by central government, though managed by a joint body, was seen by Jones as a step towards gaining government recognition of the value of their community work.

³⁵ Ellis, op. cit. p. 334.

³⁶ Ellis to Jones, NLW TJ Class W, Vol. 5, no. 150.

³⁷ Pilgrim Trust, *Third Annual Report, 1932-33*, p.7. The movement called itself the '33 Club Group' and consisted initially of three clubs, in Birkenhead, the Garw Valley and Deeside (England). They did not restrict membership to the unemployed and were intended to become permanent social/leisure centres for their communities. Nor was membership restricted to the working class.

³⁸ Jones to Tribe, NLW TJ Class C, Vol. 16, No. 47.

³⁹ "the Board" refers to the Unemployment Assistance Board.

⁴⁰ Jones to Tribe, NLW TJ Class C, Vol. 16, No. 47.

⁴¹ Jones, *Workmen's Libraries*, in *Leeks and Daffodils*, op. cit. pp. 139-140. He wrote: "The pioneers of 1884 did not make enough allowance for the play instinct in man, for the place of entertainment in the scheme of things. They left it out of their calculations. But man is neither mere spirit nor mere mind, and education of the feelings and through the feelings is now seen to be of great importance. The native drama has made some headway in fifty years. A few young eyes have glimpsed the rich stuff of comedy and tragedy which is at our doors, in the common, immortal lives of butchers and bakers, in the interplay of characters which range all the way from savage to saint. You see the change...in the flourishing of dramatic societies [and] in the prevalence of the cinema. "Let me make the people's films," wrote some one, "and I care not who makes their laws." You meet people on the level of their interests. That interest may be low and depraved; the mental effort involved in looking at the picture may be infinitesimal. But you begin there because interest, curiosity is awakened, and curiosity is the key to knowledge... The education of the feelings, the emotions, is going on all around us all day through sight and sound... The education of the feelings is as important as the education of the mind". Jones misquotes Fletcher of Saltoun's famous line on the Union of the Parliaments, "I knew a very wise man that believed that...if a man were permitted to write all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation".

⁴² Undated copy in NAS EL 39/1. The SED response to it in the same file is dated 8 January 1938, hence I assume a date in late 1937, possibly December.

⁴³ In December 1940 the NCSS estimated that there were 533 men's clubs and 666 women's clubs in Great Britain. The men's clubs had 34,147 members of whom 16,104 (47%) were unemployed; the women's clubs had 30,770 members of whom 9,417 (30%) were unemployed. In Scotland there were 114 men's clubs with 7,000 members of whom 3,000 (43%) were unemployed and 60 women's clubs with 2,500 members of whom 400 (16%) were unemployed. Another 1,500 members were estimated in S, E and SW England. Total club membership had therefore declined to 66,417, with 9,500 in Scotland (NA ED 80/23).

⁴⁴ NAS EL 39/1.

⁴⁵ Chaired by Barlow, now Joint Second Secretary at the Treasury.

⁴⁶ Principal Assistant Secretary, Secondary Branch, 1940-1946. He was the Board's liaison with the public schools. Butler described him as a traditionalist (Simon, p. 326).

⁴⁷ In October 1939, when the possibility of taking over responsibility for precisely these sort of activities was being discussed by the Board, G. G. Williams defined the area of need as the "fringe" of adult education (Mary Glasgow, *The History of CEMA from December 1939*, NA ED 138/14).

⁴⁸ The deputation included William Elger, General Secretary of the STUC.

⁴⁹ Brasnett, *op. cit.* p. 91.

⁵⁰ NLW TJ Class M, Vol. 3, No. 1.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.* and Vol. 3, No. 8. The presence of this documentation in Jones's papers proves that he was kept informed of developments although he was not directly involved.

⁵³ NLW TJ Class M, Vol. 3, No. 8.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* No. 12. and Class T, Vol. 7, No. 12 (letter to Violet Markham, 21 January 1940). In preference to the Central Grants Committee the government set up another advisory committee to co-ordinate the work of government departments and the voluntary agencies. The committee met under the chairmanship of Lord Rushcliffe (Chairman of the UAB), and became known as the Rushcliffe Committee.

⁵⁵ Gosden, *op. cit.* p. 211. As an example of these concerns, Lord Eustace Percy, the Rector of Durham University (and ex-President of the Board of Education) wrote to de la Warr in October arguing that adult education was much less important in wartime than the morale of young people. He wrote "Frankly, the effect on morale of the new generation...of evacuation and the black-out comes between me and my sleep, and in comparison with that, the continuance of tutorial classes, and the sort of pleasant Sunday afternoon which goes by the name of a University Extension lecture, seems to me of trifling importance" (Percy to de la Warr, 4 October 1939 (NA ED 80/23)).

⁵⁶ Gosden (*op. cit.* p. 219) gives a figure of approximately 1,500,000 boys and girls in this age group who were not involved in "any social or recreative or educational activity"; and another 1,500,000 who were in either full or part-time education.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 212.

⁵⁸ Titmuss, *op. cit.* p. 148.

⁵⁹ Gosden, *op. cit.* p. 212.

⁶⁰ Circular 1486 (Gosden, *op. cit.* p. 214).

⁶¹ *Ibid.* (Gosden, *op. cit.* p. 216).

⁶² Jones to Violet Markham, 21 January 1940, NLW TJ Class T, Vol. 7, No. 12.

⁶³ Mary Glasgow, *The History of CEMA from December 1939* (NA ED 138/14).

⁶⁴ Gosden, *op. cit.* p. 215.

⁶⁵ Jones to Violet Markham, 17 October 1939 (NLW TJ Class T, Vol. 7, No. 6). Jones did not attend, but B. B. Thomas, the Warden of Coleg Harlech did. Jones, then, must have been informed of the meeting. It seems likely that W. E. Williams would have been there.

⁶⁶ D. du B Davidson to de la Warr, 11 December 1939, NA ED 136/188 B and undated memorandum, NA ED 136/188B.

⁶⁷ NLW TJ Class M, Vol. 3, No. 36.

⁶⁸ Davidson to de la Warr, 11 December 1939, NA ED 136/188.

⁶⁹ Undated draft memorandum (after 22nd December) VA EL 2/1.

⁷⁰ Historical Survey of Adult Education (undated draft, 1948), NA ED 138/7.

⁷¹ Minute of Informal Conference, 18 December 1939, NAS GD 581/52/1

⁷² *The Origin of CEMA, CEMA Annual Report, 1942-43.*

⁷³ *CEMA Bulletin No. 57*, January 1945, ACE library.

Part Three

Overview: CEMA and the Arts Council,

1940-43

Chapter 5: CEMA in Scotland, 1940-43

The monthly reports of A. M. Struthers, the NCSS's officer for Scotland, give some insight into the problems faced by voluntary organisations in the autumn of 1939. In September he listed some of the pressing issues. How could voluntary organisations help householders with evacuated children? How might evacuated mothers be helped to join women's groups? How could under-fives be given the best chance of a happy time? What could be done for the man whose wife had been evacuated with the children? How could the drift back to the evacuation areas be stemmed?¹ Reported under the heading of 'adult education', Struthers noted some early responses by arts bodies to the war. In October the SCDA was promoting a scheme for drama in the neutral and evacuation areas and the SFC was taking film shows to rural areas. Formal adult education had also entered an uncertain time. In July and August, with colleagues from Newbattle and the WEA, Charles Kemp had organised an ambitious summer school at Newbattle, with York Trust funding.² It was the largest adult educational summer school to have been held in Scotland up to that time.³ In September, Newbattle was requisitioned for use by the army. With the college closed, the tutors drew up a new scheme to be carried out from October to December, mainly in the north-east (a WEA Scottish stronghold, where Kemp presumably had many contacts).⁴ The Newbattle tutors, in fact, regarded the war as an opportunity to experiment with a new approach to adult education.⁵ Struthers recorded the preamble to their scheme of September 1939:

War is a powerful stimulant to deep and serious thinking, and men and women may be expected to seek for educational guidance who have never done so in quieter times.⁶

The response to their work was good, proving, Struthers wrote, that “in war time there is a demand for adult education of an informal and flexible kind”.⁷ A second scheme for Aberdeenshire, Kincardineshire and the city of Aberdeen was planned to begin in January 1940. The arts played no part in the earlier schemes of 1939, but it was to Charles Kemp that Williams and Jones turned for help in establishing CEMA’s work in Scotland. Kemp (and John Mack) responded immediately by revising the plan to include drama and visual art. For visual art they gave Williams what he wished to hear: an extension of Art for the People to Scotland, with some additions:

To develop a popular interest in Art, by organising art-exhibitions especially in the county towns but also in Aberdeen. The exhibitions would be both of reproductions and original work. To provide lectures and classes on the understanding of art, and practical classes in art for adults. No work of this kind has been done on any scale at all in this area. We require a full-time organising and lecturing tutor for this work. ... The Art Tutor would not be an isolated person, but part of a team of tutors, already well known in the area. To carry on the pioneer work in Art...£400 would be required, partly for salary and partly for general expenses... We shall do work in Art but on a small scale if we don’t raise this extra £400.⁸

This was clearly an opportunistic response to the call from CEMA. With a potential new source of funding opening before them, Kemp and Mack would surely have felt justified in adapting a scheme which was not, after all, solely dependent upon their expertise.⁹ By January 1940 Struthers was able to review the impact of the war in the first four months at an SED conference on adult education.¹⁰ He found that many

voluntary bodies had at first abandoned or postponed their winter programmes as members took up national service, premises were requisitioned for war use and the effects of the blackout and difficulties of transport were felt. By October, however, demand (he thought) was back nearly to pre-war levels, while the voluntary bodies had begun to adapt to the new situation. Griffin (writing in 1953) gives a rather different picture. He finds a definite slump in 1940, then a gradual rise, which only overtook the 1939 figures in 1945.¹¹ Struthers's impression, though, was of quick revival. Among the activities, the SCDA, for example, was encouraging local drama societies to work together and to plan entertainment for troops. Although in most urban social clubs membership declined it was not catastrophic and some, like St. Katherine's Club in Aberdeen, even recorded increasing membership (possibly recruited from incoming service personnel). Choirs, on the other hand, were facing difficulties with reduced membership that was not easily replaced. A comment by Struthers reveals again the ethos that placed active participation above passive consumption. Noting that the best of the choirs were "real live centres of musical excellence" while the poorest were at least providing some entertainment, he added;

They are important in another respect altogether, that they form the only considerable body we have in music which is really doing music among the people. There is an entirely erroneous idea in communities, the idea that by buying music (orchestras, operas, etc.) we are somehow making ourselves musical.¹²

Participation was the benchmark from the social-educational perspective, a perspective which CEMA shared but which it had to balance with its complementary role as

promoter of professional standards. The participatory, educational commitment of CEMA was derived directly from the ethos and experience of the voluntary and adult educational bodies; and that ethos was strong in Scotland, as elsewhere in Britain. By the time the report was presented Struthers (an early contact) had noted the appearance of CEMA, though under the name of the Pilgrim Trust.¹³ CEMA gave its first grants for music and drama in Scotland in January 1940.¹⁴ It disentangled what it wanted to support in Kemp and Mack's application, deciding not to fund tutors' salaries or classes for which grants could be got through other channels, nor the drama component, since it duplicated the work of the SCDA. But the proposal for the exhibitions was accepted, and £250 was agreed in January.¹⁵ Charles and Ellen Kemp then went ahead and organised the first BIAE exhibitions for CEMA in Scotland, shown in Inverurie, Aberdeen Art Gallery and in Stonehaven, in the spring and summer of 1940.

Relations with the Carnegie UK Trust

Between December 1939 and June 1940 a determined effort was made by CEMA and the Board to draw the Carnegie UK Trust into the partnership. Although ultimately unsuccessful, the effort is evidence of the early importance to the project placed on the relationship. This was in part financial. CEMA hoped that the Carnegie UK Trust would add to, or match, the Pilgrim Trust's grant of £25,000, most of which had been spent by the end of January with no promise of anything from the Treasury. When the Treasury granted £50,000 in March it was on condition that it be matched, and the Carnegie UK Trust was the obvious source of the outstanding £25,000. Beneath this was another reason. Tom Jones hoped for a new configuration of the old partners of 1930s unemployment relief, in partnership for the first time with the Board of Education and, as he and others had argued, disengaged from unemployment. He envisaged CEMA

moving towards a national policy that would embrace both amateur and professional sectors. It was ironic, then, that he failed because the Carnegie UK Trust in the end believed that the policy differences between them were too wide to bridge. CEMA's strength and weakness was that it had not yet formulated any policy beyond that of getting immediate assistance to where it was most needed. It was content that longer-term policy would evolve if it proved successful in the short term. The Carnegie UK Trust, by contrast, favoured sustained engagement over considerable periods and feared that the giving of one-off grants without consideration of longer-term needs could be worse than giving nothing, in that organisations would be encouraged only to be let down.

The Carnegie trustees's decision, in June 1940, not to join CEMA unless it drew up a written policy and established a series of specialist committees (terms that neither the Board nor CEMA could accept) meant that the unity Jones had aimed at could not be forged between amateur and professional interests. CEMA's move towards the professional sector, usually associated with Keynes's policy from 1942 onwards, in fact began earlier, in 1940.

Administration, 1940-1943

The Scottish Advisory Committee of the NCSS and the Scottish Branch of the BIAE were to be the main agents for CEMA in Scotland in its early phase. They were natural partners given their collaborations of the 1930s. The Scottish Advisory Committee had been formed in October 1939, supplanting the Scottish Committee for Community Service (SCCS) as its main committee in Scotland. Among its members were Grace Drysdale, Warden of the Edinburgh University Settlement, William Elger, General

Secretary of the STUC, Lord Home, Lord Wark, Lord Elgin, Sir Hector Hetherington and James Wilkie (the last three making a strong Carnegie UK Trust presence). The SCCS had, by the late 1930s, come to regard itself as effectively autonomous, the NCSS taking little direct part in Scottish affairs. Had the war not intervened an independent Scottish Council for Social Service would have been established in 1939, but this was delayed until 1943 when it was set up with Hetherington as the first Chairman. CEMA recognised that an administrative outpost was required to assist the work it was funding in Scotland. In 1940 its grants supported three Scottish art-form organisers (David Yacamini for music, Dickson Brown, later G. Paterson Whyte, for drama and Charles Kemp for visual art). The Scottish Advisory Committee took direct responsibility as Yacamini's employer and it administered CEMA's concert guarantee fund. Struthers provided general administrative services and liaison with CEMA in London, the SED, the British Council in Scotland, the Ministry of Labour and Civil Defence authorities, whose welfare officers assisted in promoting CEMA events in their areas.¹⁶ To Scottish eyes, CEMA was almost invisible behind the agents it worked through. It did not at this stage challenge any vested Scottish institutional interests or rouse public fears about 'London control'.

Little documentation survives concerning relations between CEMA and the Scottish Advisory Committee at this time, suggesting a period of little or no friction between them. In February 1940 Wilkie had held a meeting of representatives of the Scottish music and drama organisations soon to be funded by CEMA, to discuss the new scheme. No record of the meeting survives, but that it took place strongly suggests that Wilkie, more aware than CEMA of the Scottish context, wanted to ensure that their pre-war connections remained alive. The meeting indicates that a Scottish forum in which

experience could be shared and plans co-ordinated was always a likely development and, had the Carnegie UK Trust joined CEMA, it would have been natural if his gathering of February had initiated a regular art organisers' meeting. As this did not happen, and given the sparse documentary record, it is not certain when the organisers began to hold informal meetings. The first documented reference occurs in the autumn of 1941, but it is clear that they had begun earlier, perhaps even during 1940. Struthers, for example, may have used them to gather the information that he sent to CEMA for its monthly bulletins.

That the Scottish Advisory Committee provided services for CEMA did not entail any formal devolution of authority, but despite this a Scottish administrative structure had come into being. It does not contradict the fact that CEMA was London-centred and confident of its fitness to decide which applications from Scotland merited support that a struggle over policy did not arise. CEMA was officially an emergency body, operating a rather ad-hoc policy with limited ambitions and not much money. The experience of 1940-41 from the organisers' perspective was of operating at a distance from London. When Keynes began to impose a more centralised command structure on CEMA in 1942 Scotland had enjoyed relative freedom for two years. Its art-form organisers had considerable autonomy, while Struthers provided the administrative support. CEMA's relations with the Scottish Advisory Committee of the NCSS by then were strained by its failure to attribute arts activities to CEMA or to spend more than a fraction of the publicity budget that CEMA had provided. Parker noted the problem: that as the CEMA music grant was paid to the NCSS and as the organisers met under its auspices "CEMA activities tend to be presented...as activities of the NCSS".¹⁷ Keynes's antipathy to devolution may have been bolstered by such failures.

Training for Citizenship

The declared purpose of CEMA was to protect Britain's cultural life in wartime, especially its voluntary sector, through which cultural identity was created and renewed, and which gave concrete value to the abstract ideal of active citizenship. It would look after the artistic interests of the people in wartime and perhaps beyond. Its educational value lay in the enrichment of experience through aesthetic pleasure and the development of critical discrimination, in circumstances in which they would otherwise be neglected with damaging consequences for society as a whole. Emerging from the debates of 1938-39 about the wider framework of civic voluntarism, CEMA was intended to help protect the foundations of democratic citizenship and the fabric of civil society.

The 1943 report *Training for Citizenship*, produced by the Sixth Advisory Council on Education in Scotland, provides a contemporary view of CEMA's supposed contribution to good citizenship.¹⁸ It demonstrates that the spirit of Henry Jones' Idealism was not yet spent in Scottish educational thinking. The teaching of citizenship was the only subject that Tom Johnston explicitly remitted to the Advisory Council, and by his own testimony he placed a high significance on it, calling it "the first necessity of all education".¹⁹ His passion for the subject was certainly present in his student days at Glasgow University.²⁰ His enrolment in 1908 as a non-graduating student of moral philosophy and political economy would have exposed him to the teaching of Henry Jones, the Ruskin-inspired economist William Smart and possibly Tom Jones. Though politically distant from him, they may well have fanned his interest in the subject of citizenship.²¹

J. J. Robertson, one of its members, recalled that the Council tried “to think sustainedly of education as nothing less than the totality of what a liberal democracy will seek to do in the nurture of all its young”.²² In the report’s usage, citizenship meant more than an understanding of the system of government, of rights and obligations, and the principle of democratic participation. It rests on the individual’s ethical development, through informed accommodation with the external requirements of social life and through the self-discipline and concern for others made possible by introspection and self-knowledge. Aesthetic education had its part to play in the making of an able citizen. The Council, in explicitly referring to active citizenship, makes it clear that its ideal is the intellectual, affective and practical engagement of the individual in the interlocking spheres of private, civil and public life. The report follows the statement of the foundations of social ethics by J. H. Muirhead and Hector Hetherington (both prominent Scottish Idealists) in their 1918 volume, *Social Purpose*.²³ The child must first learn the basics of personal conduct, then the meaning of obligations, rights, duties and responsibilities, and finally the nature and functions of the democratic process and its institutions. Complementing this would be the development of the moral self by a process of reflection and growth through creative activity. By these means a rounded sense of reciprocal social relationships would be established. Art education in the report is not treated as an end in itself (though that value is not denied) but rather as leading, through self-development, to the creation of a truly social being. In this, an affinity with the thinking of two other Scottish Idealists, A. K. White and Alexander MacBeath in *The Moral Self: Its Nature and Development* (1923) is also evident.²⁴ In the words of the report, the “appeal of beauty plays an important part in the building up of the ideal citizen”. The paragraph concludes:

Opportunities of special value arise in small towns and villages for co-operation with the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (C.E.M.A.) and the British Institute of Adult Education (B.I.A.E.) in their presentation of good music, drama and art exhibits. It must not be forgotten that in normal times, and especially in later life, gainful labour does not occupy all the hours of the day. The proper use of leisure can make all the difference between boredom and intense happiness. The elementary aesthetic training in childhood may ultimately, for many, be the solution of the problem of leisure. We know that aesthetic training is by no means neglected in our Scottish schools, but we feel it offers ample scope for fresh development.²⁵

In retrospect Johnston had to admit that the report was a “bad flop”. He was obviously dissatisfied with the neglect of citizenship as a subject before the war, but presumably the hope of a more just post-war society compelled him to act with a sense of urgency. Democratic values had to be inculcated if they were to be defended in the long term. His aim was the preparation of citizens for the more egalitarian Scottish society to come once the war was won. The Advisory Council’s references to CEMA and the BIAE stand out in a short report that makes no other reference to particular organisations. By 1943 both had achieved some recognition within the Scottish educational establishment, and their mention suggests that their work was believed to be having some effect. By the time of the report, the Pilgrim Trust had withdrawn and Keynes was Chairman, but what the Council knew was the CEMA of 1940 to 1943, as it had operated in Scotland. The organisation had changed during that time, but it was still understood to be a vehicle for popular aesthetic education. From the point of view of the Advisory Council, CEMA was highly relevant to the theme of citizenship in schools. Though nowhere elaborated in the report, it is evident that the value of the work of CEMA and

the BIAE was seen to lie not only in their contribution to the development of individual potential but to the social fabric within which active citizenship could flourish. The report laid some stress upon the school as a community within a community, and the use of school halls for exhibitions, concerts and plays was presumably seen as a practical example by which the bonds between school and locality could be strengthened.

The report argued that ‘aesthetic training’ has an underlying ethical effect and hence lends support to the development of the values of democratic citizenship and public culture. The belief depended upon the idea that through knowing ourselves better we come to understand others; that in becoming aware of our own creative capacities we realise that others too possess them; and hence we enter into a fuller association with others while securing the ethical bases of social life. Introspective understanding issues in practical actions, in the making and enjoyment of creative work, and in refining our attitudes towards our fellows. Introspection was therefore presumed to be essential to make sense of the external system of rules and institutions by which society was regulated and which comprised another part of the education of the future.²⁶

¹ NCSS Regional Officer’s Report, September 1939, NAS ED 39/11.

² NLW TJ Class W, Vol. 12, No. 76. Mack was Deputy Warden of Newbattle. He wrote a 1938 pamphlet for the BIAE entitled *Newbattle Abbey and what it is Accomplishing*. Later he held the Stevenson Chair in Citizenship at Glasgow University.

³ NAS GD 281/51/1/8.

⁴ Courses of eight lectures each were held in Aberdeen, Turriff, Kemnay, Inverurie, Peterculter, Fraserburgh and Peterhead. Subjects included Thinking Clearly, Economics, Literature and Problems of Today. Attendance was good. The strength of the partnership in the north-east is evident: Aberdeen Education Authority, Aberdeen University, Aberdeen Training College, the Aberdeenshire Education Trust and the Aberdeen Branch of the WEA all co-operated (NCSS Regional Officer’s Report, 1-15 November 1939, NAS ED 39/11).

⁵ NCSS Scottish Advisory Committee Report, 22nd January 1940, p. 1 (NAS ED 39/11).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ NCSS Regional Officer’s Reports, September and 1-15 November 1939 (NAS ED 39/11).

⁸ Application to CEMA, 1st January 1940 (NAS GD 281/51/1/8).

⁹ Kemp added “Mack and I desire to organise the work in such a way that we can begin work in another area and leave the bulk of the work to be carried out by the localities themselves”.

¹⁰ Report on Adult Education in Time of War, 22 January 1940, NAS ED 39/11. The report was prepared for a conference on 22nd January, chaired by Sir William McKechnie and summed up by J. R. Peddie. Among the bodies invited were the WEA, BIAE, EIS, Scottish Film Council, WRI, Townswomen's Guilds, SCDA, SYHA, YMCA, YWCA, Scottish Area of Group Listening and the Scottish Young Farmers Clubs.

¹¹ Griffin, op. cit. p. 194. He records 110 centres and 9,300 students in 1939; and 74 centres and 4,696 students in 1940. By 1946 there were 107 centres and 10,126 students. These figures should be taken with caution. Many of the courses would have been regarded by the SED as leisure activities, not educational courses.

¹² Report on Adult Education in Time of War, NAS ED 39/11.

¹³ NCSS Regional Officer's Report, 15-31 January 1940, NAS ED 39/11.

¹⁴ CEMA Progress Report, 25 January 1940, NAS GD 281/51/1/1.

¹⁵ Minute of the Second Meeting of CEMA, 18 January 1940, NAS GD 281/51/1/1. £250 equates to about £8,850 in 2003 terms.

¹⁶ The British Council worked with the armed forces, which included servicemen from many nations. The contact appears to have been H. Harvey Wood, a graduate of Edinburgh College of Art and contemporary of William MacTaggart and W. G. Gillies. Edwin Muir, who worked for the British Council at this time, is also recorded as attending at least one meeting of the organisers' committee.

¹⁷ Parker, Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, 12 August 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

¹⁸ *Training for Citizenship, a Report by the Sixth Advisory Council on Education* (Scottish Education Department, 1944, Cmnd. 6495). The report was presented to Tom Johnston in December 1943 but not published until 1944. The report founded itself on statements in Scottish education codes going back to 1875. Contained in an appendix, the excerpts show that the codes in force between 1875 and 1923 were restricted to basics of good manners, cleanliness, punctuality, respect for others and "cheerful obedience to duty". A somewhat broader view was put forward in a memorandum of 1899, which recommended to Higher Grade schools study of European civilisation, the historical evolution of present-day institutions, the inculcation of patriotism and the rights and duties of a citizen ("controversial topics being avoided"). The Day Schools code of 1923 introduced an ethos similar to that of the 1943 report, in that it brought together moral, aesthetic and physical self-development. The Secondary School regulations of the same year imposed similar responsibilities on them. Finally, the Day Schools code of 1939, in force in 1943, put in place the fullest statement of schools' responsibilities, again beginning at the infant level and progressing through primary and secondary stages, and including instruction in norms and rules, and opportunities for self-development. This pattern of development reflects a response to the needs of emerging mass democracy, and closely parallels thinking in the sphere of adult education.

¹⁹ Johnston, *Memories* (London, Collins, 1952), p. 153.

²⁰ Galbraith, *Without Quarter: a Biography of Tom Johnston, 'The Uncrowned King of Scotland'* (Edinburgh, Mainstream, 1995), p.25.

²¹ Johnston probably had the liberal reformers in mind when he wrote of "old women in trousers" and "farthing reformers" in the first issue of *Forward*, in October 1906 (Galbraith, op. cit., p. 17). Davie thought that Johnston's interest in citizenship stemmed from Henry Jones (interview with me, 27 November 2000).

²² McPherson and Raab, *Governing Education, A Sociology of Policy Since 1945* (Edinburgh University Press, 1988), pp. 78-79.

²³ See Appendix Five.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ *Training for Citizenship*, op. cit., para. 31.

²⁶ Introspection as the foundation of moral understanding, essential to prospects for social transformation, is discussed in Appendix Five as an enduring strand of Scottish social theory.

Chapter 6: Planning CEMA's Future

In February 1941 the Treasury committed a further £45,000 for the year ahead, and CEMA renewed the grants administered by the Scottish Advisory Committee.¹ At the same time the Pilgrim Trust's assets were taken over by the government. This spelled the beginning of the end of its ascendancy. In May, R. A. Butler was appointed President of the Board and proposals to elaborate CEMA's organisation were under consideration by the summer.² The discussion of CEMA's future took place within the continuing current of planning for educational reform.³ The Board's long-standing doubts about the effectiveness of the BIAE surfaced again in 1941. F. R. G. Duckworth, HMSCI for England and Wales, reflected the views of Art Inspectors when questioning Mary Glasgow about why CEMA's visual art grant was channelled through the BIAE, pointing out that W. E. Williams was not an art expert. The Art Inspectors had also questioned the quality and range of Art for the People exhibitions.⁴ It is evident that Glasgow and Duckworth were anticipating an opportunity for change.⁵ Without the knowledge of Tom Jones, Glasgow sketched for the Board (and the new President) the organisational form that CEMA might take.⁶ She suggested that Jones ("who has done all the work") should become Chairman, that Maynard Keynes should be invited to join the Council and that CEMA should divest itself of amateur drama.⁷ Her view of CEMA was changing but she was poised between loyalty to Jones and a wish to see CEMA grow in directions she believed he would not care for. She advised setting up three art-form committees (as the Carnegie UK Trust had wanted in 1940) that would provide advice to "a small distinguished general council". CEMA was sufficiently important for Butler to meet with the Council in September, when he pronounced his "strong interest" in its future. After this meeting planning for CEMA's longer term became more detailed and decisive.

If Glasgow's affection for Jones accounts for the sentimental hope that he might be retained as Chairman after the withdrawal of the Pilgrim Trust, no such feeling clouded the view of Ifor Evans. He believed that CEMA had reached a turning point with the impending (and to him welcome) withdrawal of the Pilgrim Trust, but foresaw the collapse of CEMA unless the Board asserted its authority and strengthened the Council. Evans used the model of the British Council's relationship with the Foreign Office to underpin his vision:

I can see CEMA as a body, possibly incorporated under Charter, working directly as an agency of the Board of Education, and maintained by a grant under its vote.⁸

This matched closely the Board's thinking.⁹ Consideration of CEMA's future had been prompted to some extent by John Christie's renewed but always-unsuccessful efforts to drum up support for his National Music Council. By December the Treasury had decided not to favour Christie with any financial aid. In late September Wood was able to write to Jones outlining the Board's ideas.¹⁰ This important letter is worth giving in some detail as it sets out the path along which CEMA was to develop into the Arts Council. Writing of possible permanent arrangements, Wood commented that while the Treasury grant was given on an emergency basis only:

I believe that some provision of this sort has come to stay as a permanent feature of the public educational service and that the Exchequer will, in fact, have to continue to support this sort of effort ... While I should hope that ENSA's efforts are transient, CEMA has a very different mission to fulfil and a very different value, and its continuance in some form or other will...be looked for and, indeed,

demanded. I think that it is right that music should not be dealt with separately but that we should maintain the present trilogy...¹¹

He suggested that while it was right that CEMA should remain outside “the purely Departmental machine”, it should be more firmly associated with the Board which would answer for it in Parliament, a relationship that might best be recognised by “some form of incorporation or Charter”. Acknowledging that CEMA was already concentrating increasingly on the professional side he offered the view that its peacetime function should be to:

...concentrate on and confine itself to the maintaining of the highest standards; on the fostering of the very best in Music, Drama and Art; and in securing that it has as wide a distribution as possible or, at least, a much wider circulation than it would otherwise have.¹²

The Board under Butler was now imagining a different sort of body from that which de la Warr had envisaged in 1939. Leventhal has interpreted this as a reproof to Jones that may have prompted the withdrawal of the Pilgrim Trust.¹³ Against this is the fact that CEMA’s policy had evolved considerably in little more than a year. Involvement with professional performers had been in view as long as CEMA had dreams of leading a ‘national’ policy. CEMA may have been pushed further and faster in the direction of the professionals than Jones would have preferred, but that journey had begun in 1940. Equally, the withdrawal of the Pilgrim Trust occurred in 1942 not least because the government had commandeered its assets. Education remained CEMA’s *raison d’être*. As Wood’s letter shows, the future CEMA was to promote public education in the arts

by supporting and encouraging the diffusion of ‘the best’, which was already CEMA’s stated policy. While it would work more exclusively with professionals the educational injunction remained, to work in parallel (or co-operation) with the amateur sector. Wood in fact referred to the amateur sector (with Butler’s approval) to say that it should not be ignored, rather that the Board might support amateur activity “as a form of voluntary further education”.¹⁴

The Board was not signalling that CEMA should become a patron of the arts in a narrow sense. The division of labour between CEMA and the reviving amateur sector had an obvious logic and did not preclude co-operation between them, but Jones’s almost religious faith in education was soon to be eclipsed. There is no evidence, though, that he foresaw this when he replied to Wood to say that although direct, popular, participation was the basis of the “understanding” with the Treasury, he agreed with the direction the Board was taking.¹⁵ But CEMA was already slipping beyond his control. As he told Wood, he was at odds with Glasgow over regional development. In the spring of 1941 CEMA had been authorised to provide the arts to Civil Defence personnel in addition to the general public.¹⁶ The outcome was a decision to open a series of regional offices based on the Civil Defence map, Scotland eventually becoming ‘Region 11’.¹⁷ With his anti-bureaucratic sentiments and preference for unencumbered action, Jones was not in sympathy with this elaboration, arguing that CEMA’s “permanent policy” (i.e. the Board’s plans for CEMA) should be established first.¹⁸ But he and Macmillan (by now returned from Scotland, following the disappearing German bombers southwards) were no longer in a position to determine events.¹⁹

The growth of a regional structure was the second major phase of CEMA's development following that of increasing its London-based staff to manage direct provision of concerts and theatre tours. It enabled CEMA to extend its control of activities independently of agents like the NCSS. CEMA began to establish a concrete identity through the presence on the ground of regional personnel. Its activities, at least potentially, could henceforward be more readily examined from the perspective of 'regional' interests. It is clear from Evans and Glasgow's account (written in 1948-49) and from contemporary documents that CEMA did not anticipate that this process might unfold differently in Scotland from elsewhere. But as CEMA began to emerge as a body with far-reaching potential it became a focus for conflict with Scottish interests, suspicious of a London-based body that made decisions affecting Scottish artistic life. Nevertheless, by November 1941 CEMA was able to look backwards to chart the evolution of its policy from the 'salvage' work of early 1940, and forward, anticipating its continuance into peacetime under the sole funding of the Treasury. Developing the suggestions contained in Wood's letter of September, the Council speculated that a successor body "might have the status of the University Grants Committee, administering a Treasury fund, and...answerable to Parliament through the Board of Education". It would "preserve a small, active group" at the centre, and avoid "representation" by appointing members as individuals. The three art forms might be represented by three experts, changing yearly, who would:

...combine with certain members of general distinction to administer the central fund. Behind each expert would be a panel of specialists and this would be as large and catholic as possible. It would also be elastic and would constantly form and re-form in to ad hoc committees designed to carry out particular pieces of

work... The experts on the Council would be responsible for spending the sums allocated to their own branches and would report to the Council on the work of their panels.²⁰

A system was envisaged of grants to arts organisations and local authorities, guarantees against loss and occasional direct payments to artists, but “the budget of the future” raised many questions, including whether music should retain its “preponderant” place or art (i.e. visual art) get an increased share.²¹ The paper is important because it predates the involvement of Keynes and draws a fairly accurate picture of the Arts Council to be, including its constitution under Royal Charter. CEMA’s new blueprint was in keeping with the belief in the post-war planned society. Here lay a strong gravitational force towards centralisation, following the demanding logic of planning and policy control for ‘national’ social and cultural reconstruction that ran counter to the (soon to emerge) pressures from the periphery for greater autonomy. As CEMA elaborated its organisation with London as the sole centre of policy-making, it increased its power relative to what it called ‘the provinces’. The Treasury, however, still had to be persuaded that CEMA should continue after the war, and it was not until December that Barlow agreed to sound out the Chancellor.²² Butler and Barlow briefly considered and rejected a Ministry of Popular Culture, but Butler learned that even so the Treasury might prefer to place all funding for the arts under one ministry, possibly the Ministry of Labour. Determined not to lose CEMA, Butler warned Wood that they had to “be on to this”.²³ Butler’s next move was to persuade Keynes to take on the chairmanship, and steer CEMA through to post-war permanence.²⁴

Keynes as Chairman

Keynes had probably been in Butler's sights for some time. He had an active interest in the visual arts, and especially in opera and ballet, and had already made plain his belief that CEMA had been much too concerned with amateurs.²⁵ Equally valuable, his standing with the Treasury was impeccable and Butler must have calculated that he would be a decisive asset in negotiations over CEMA's future. In his invitation to Keynes, Butler enclosed a summary of CEMA's development and added:

The response...has been almost overwhelming, and I am becoming increasingly hardened in my conviction that the right way to interest people in the Arts is to maintain a high standard in the Arts, while at the same time making them readily accessible to all those who can appreciate them... The function of CEMA is still an emergency one, designed for wartime conditions; but I think it may not be unreasonable for me to suggest that the council, in some points, may find a permanent future in peace.²⁶

Keynes expressed cautious interest, qualified by the "limited sympathy" he felt for CEMA.²⁷ Through Butler, he relayed to CEMA his conviction that it should concern itself with high standards and not with "the dissipation of any sort of music and drama".²⁸ The offer of a peerage may have helped win him over.²⁹ After speaking to Clark, Keynes formally accepted the chairmanship in January 1942, commenting "it is after the war that the big opportunities will come".³⁰ Keynes's general philosophy is a matter of disagreement and conflicting interpretation. Elements of idealism and intuitionism as well as utilitarianism have been identified in his writing. He was most deeply influenced by the 'ideal utilitarianism' of G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica*, which

held that that there are goods other than pleasure, mental states that are to be valued for themselves. That such states of mind were good was to be grasped by intuition alone. This attitude led Keynes and his youthful contemporaries to deprecate material pleasures and social action: passionate contemplation was the highest condition. Writing in *Art and the State* (1936) he deplored vulgar utilitarianism, the ‘Benthamite calculus’:

This view was the utilitarian and economic - one might almost say financial - ideal, as the sole, respectable purpose of the community as a whole; the most dreadful heresy, perhaps, that has ever gained the ear of a civilised people. Bread and nothing but bread, and not even bread, and bread accumulating at compound interest until it has turned into a stone.³¹

Fitzgibbons argues that Keynes’s philosophical position “has been enigmatic and elusive for so long because it emanated from the fluid and rational spirituality that he described as a neo-Platonic religion”.³² Fitzgibbons also suggests that these early beliefs played an important part in forming an elitist outlook, that he remained an elitist all his life and that this infused his later thinking about economic and social life. He also describes Keynes as a meritocrat, believing that the leadership of the few would deliver a better world for all: he “envisaged a politics of virtue which transcended class interests”.³³ In this respect he shared fully the professional confidence in the rule of experts and the liberal hope of class reconciliation. Keynes’s vision of the future was imbued with an optimistic evolutionism. O’Donnell places him with Proudhon, Marx, Ruskin, Morris and Hobhouse “whose minds were inspired by a future ideal”, noting

that at his memorial service in 1946, Blake's *Jerusalem* was sung. Keynes's new society would be known by its virtues:

Its great goodness would be evident in the widespread existence of intrinsic goods, predominantly the mental states associated with personal affection, love and friendship, and the aesthetic appreciation of all forms of beauty. The arts would flourish...and be enjoyed by all.³⁴

His attitude to art reflects the long-lasting influence of Moore: art was to be valued for producing a fervent but disinterested mental state (which Clive Bell called the aesthetic attitude).³⁵ In *My Early Beliefs* (1938) Keynes claimed to have found "no reason to shift from the fundamental intuitions of Principia Ethica":

Nothing mattered except states of mind, our own and other people's...but chiefly our own. These states of mind were not associated with actions...or consequences. They consisted in timeless passionate states of contemplation and communion, largely unattached to 'before' and 'after'. Their value depended, in accordance with the principles of organic unity, on the state of affairs as a whole which could not be usefully analysed into parts. ...though I myself was always an advocate of a principle of organic unity through time, which still seems to me only sensible. The appropriate subjects of passionate contemplation and communion were a beloved person, beauty and truth.³⁶

Skidelsky accepts this, saying of his love of art that "the homage" went back to Moore and to his membership of the Bloomsbury circle.³⁷ O'Donnell is explicit that Keynes's

enthusiasm for the arts and architecture was for their power to “stimulate some of the mental states which alone were intrinsically good”.³⁸ Keynes envisaged a time when “the theatre and the concert-hall and the gallery will be a living element in everyone’s upbringing, and regular attendance at the theatre and at concerts a part of organised education”.³⁹ This is the context in which Keynes’s views of art, and his vision for CEMA, must be placed. His dismissive attitude to the BIAE’s guide lecturer scheme stemmed from his belief that the meaning of art was to be intuited through direct and unmediated encounters which guide lecturers could only inhibit. He believed that CEMA faced a choice: spread the arts widely and accept lower standards; or concentrate on the best in a few limited centres. But this outlook, and his drive to house the arts, will be misunderstood if his confidence that the problem of economic organisation had been solved is not also understood:

The day is not far off when the Economic Problem will take the back seat where it belongs, and the arena of the heart and the head will be occupied, or reoccupied, by our real problems – the problems of life and of human relations, of creation and behaviour and religion.⁴⁰

Applying his own principle of public investment to stimulate recovery and increase demand, and given the necessary material infrastructure, the arts would soon be liberated from state subsidy and would flourish across Britain, standards rising inevitably in the process. The Arts Council was a means to that end and within a decade would work itself into redundancy.

That there was a more gradual evolution of the original ‘social service’ CEMA into the later Arts Council than over-simplified contrasts between Jones and Keynes allow, is clear. Keynes brought a dominating personality to CEMA which inspired great admiration and loyalty, but which ultimately obscured the continuities that I argue for here. He was chosen to give substance to decisions taken during Jones’s time, as thinking about CEMA’s future took firmer shape. Keynes of course did much more than steer through a set of prior decisions, nor did his sympathies match Jones’s. He stamped his vision and prejudices on the ‘later’ CEMA and on the Arts Council, decided priorities and methods, consolidated the move towards the professional sector and re-defined the meaning of ‘national’ in CEMA’s vocabulary. Where once it denoted geographical range, henceforward, increasingly, it denoted status. Ironically with less success, he also created the financial basis on which the Arts Council was to operate.

¹ Minutes of the Eighth Meeting of Council, 25 February 1941, VA EL 1/6. Equivalent to about £1,593,200 in 2003.

² Glasgow to Duckworth, 26 July 1941, VA EL 2/9.

³ Gosden, *op. cit.* pp. 239-240.

⁴ Glasgow to Duckworth, 22 July 1941, VA EL 2/9. Glasgow’s response was that the criticisms were pertinent but that the arrangement had been “quick, effective and economical”. She acknowledged that questions had arisen about Art for the People “inside and outside the Board”.

⁵ Glasgow wrote to Duckworth that 1942 “would be the appropriate time to deal with the matter” (i.e. after the exit of the Pilgrim Trust).

⁶ Glasgow to Wood, 6 August 1941, NA ED 136/188B. She offered the comments as “notes in case the President decides to reconstruct CEMA”, suggesting that Butler was already taking an interest in CEMA.

⁷ Glasgow had been sent by Jones to speak to Keynes in May 1940 after he had challenged CEMA’s drama policy, and had found him charming and formidable. She left his flat “bloodied”, feeling she had been “in the presence of a great man”. She quoted him as saying “I think it is time your Council began thinking more seriously about the professional arts, you’ve been giving far too much time and money to the amateurs, come off it.” (Witts, *op. cit.* p. 87).

⁸ Evans to Wood, 19 September 1941, NA ED 136/188B.

⁹ Wood to Evans, 22 September 1941, NA ED 136/188B.

¹⁰ Wood to Jones, 27 September 1941, VA EL 2/9.

¹¹ *Ibid.* His reference to keeping the trilogy of music, drama and art followed a mention of the National Music Council, showing again the Board’s hostility to Christie’s scheme.

¹² *Ibid.* His point about concentrating on quality implies further disengagement from the amateur sector.

¹³ Leventhal, *op. cit.* p. 304.

¹⁴ Wood to Jones, 27 September 1941, VA EL 2/9.

¹⁵ Jones to Wood, 29 September 1941, VA EL 2/9.

¹⁶ Glasgow to Struthers, 11 April 1941, VA EL 3/91.

¹⁷ Minutes of the 11th Meeting of Council, 16 September 1941, VA EL 1/6.

¹⁸ Jones to Wood, 29 September 1941, VA EL 2/9. The tone of his comments suggest not implacable hostility or disaffection but a measured objection.

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- ¹⁹ Jones was the first choice for Chairman of the proposed Welsh Advisory Committee (he declined). This again suggests that Keynes and Butler did not regard their differences with him as so very great.
- ²⁰ Council Paper CXI, CEMA Survey, 19 November 1941, VA EL 2/11.
- ²¹ Practice proved that the answers were 'Yes' and 'No' respectively.
- ²² Butler to Wood, 2 December 1941, VA EL 2/9.
- ²³ Ibid. The Ministry of Labour may have been suggested because issues of employment were involved.
- ²⁴ Butler's father-in-law Samuel Courtauld may have suggested Keynes (Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes, Fighting for Britain 1937-1946*, London, Macmillan, 2000, p. 170).
- ²⁵ Witts (op. cit., p. 89) notes that in October 1941 Keynes had become a trustee of the National Gallery.
- ²⁶ Butler to Keynes, 17 December 1941, VA EL 2/11.
- ²⁷ Keynes to Butler, 24 December 1941, VA EL 2/11.
- ²⁸ Butler to Wood, Glasgow and Brown, 7 January 1942, VA EL 2/11.
- ²⁹ Hewison, op. cit. p. 39.
- ³⁰ Keynes to Butler, 14 January 1942, VA EL 2/11.
- ³¹ Keynes, J. M., *Art and the State* (1936), in *Collected Writings, Vol. XXVIII* (London, Macmillan) 1989.
- ³² Fitzgibbons, *The Significance of Keynes's Idealism*, in Bateman and Davis, *Keynes and Philosophy; Essays on the Origin of Keynes's Thought* (Aldershot, Edward Elgar, 1991), p. 129.
- ³³ Fitzgibbons, *Keynes's Vision* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1988), p. 176
- ³⁴ O'Donnell, *Keynes: Philosophy, Economics & Politics* (London, Macmillan, 1989), p. 290.
- ³⁵ Skidelsky (op. cit., p. 287) calls Keynes's attitude to art "worshipful".
- ³⁶ Keynes, J. M., *My Early Beliefs*, in *Collected Writings, Vol. X, Essays in Biography* (London, Macmillan, 1989). This outlook could help explain Keynes's impatience with Scottish nationalism (cultural and political), which may have seemed an irrational and anachronistic obstacle to achieving what he would have considered a superior 'state of mind' or understanding.
- ³⁷ Skidelsky, op. cit., p. 287.
- ³⁸ O'Donnell, op. cit., p. 116.
- ³⁹ Keynes, J. M., *The Arts Council: Its Policies and Its Hopes*, in *Collected Writings, Vol. XXVIII* (London, Macmillan, 1989), p. 371.
- ⁴⁰ Glasgow, in Keynes, M., op. cit. pp. 268-269

Part Four

Politics: CEMA and the Arts Council in Scotland

1940-1947

Chapter 7: Why CEMA was a Threat

In this section I explore the political development of CEMA and the Arts Council in Scotland between 1940 and 1947. Beginning as a cultural ancillary of adult education CEMA evolved into the state's prime agency for the contemporary professional arts. At the same time a devolved organisational structure emerged which saw the creation first of a Scottish and then a Welsh Committee. There were three waves of political pressure from Scotland before devolution was fully secure. The first occurred in 1940, focused on Scotland's place in relation to CEMA and on representation on its Council. The next came in 1942-43, and culminated in the establishment of the Scottish Committee. Then finally came a sustained period from 1944 to 1947, during which the Scottish Committee first gained formal recognition under the Arts Council's Charter and then settled the terms of its practical autonomy. Each succeeding wave was stronger than its predecessor. CEMA offers an example of how Scottish interests were secured within a British body. More particularly, it demonstrates the role of the SED in negotiating the Britishness of a body that drew its legitimacy from the distinct civil cultures of England, Wales and Scotland.

The first phase in 1940 was essentially an inter-departmental affair between the SED and the Scottish Office on the one hand and the Board of Education and CEMA on the other. Brief though it was it saw fundamental decisions taken that decided Scotland's relationship to CEMA. The second phase was triggered when CEMA emerged as a threat to the National Galleries of Scotland in 1942, thereby drawing into the frame wider visual art and cultural interests (and passions) in Scotland that CEMA ultimately had to accommodate. Here it encountered the strength of Scottish cultural nationalism, in the demand to manage Scottish cultural affairs in Scotland. Home Rule sympathies

were to some extent in play in 1942-43, but in the final phase from 1944 the groundswell of expectation that Home Rule would be achieved at the end of the war influenced the position taken by the Scottish Committee.

The pivotal issue is the degree to which CEMA presented a threat to Scottish cultural autonomy, what sort of threat it was and by what means it might be neutralised. CEMA's work was dispersed around Britain by the funding of independent bodies that controlled their own programmes, and indeed London itself was initially excluded from CEMA's ambit. Nonetheless, it was a unitary body with the power to choose what it would and would not fund. Its artistic policy, drawn up in general terms, was not the subject of dispute, which centred on the right to interpret, develop and implement policy. But although CEMA in 1940 did not seek to impose a centralised regime across Britain, as a London-based body operating in Scotland it had the potential to undermine Scottish interests.

The Autonomy of Scottish Art Institutions

By 1942 CEMA was emerging from behind the proxy organisations it had worked through as a power in its own right.¹ It was also now equipped with a substantial annual Treasury grant and beginning to show signs of permanence. By this time, with Keynes as Chairman, CEMA was driven by a different vision from that of Tom Jones, more exclusively concerned with professionalism and high standards and animated by Keynes's metropolitan elitism (as Skidelsky puts it, by his "strong but limited sympathies").² It was now that Scottish resistance to 'London control' was roused.

Behind this resistance lay almost 200 years of Scottish institutional development, which had been especially strong during the 19th century when (as Morton and Morrison both describe) unionist nationalist sentiments animated campaigns for Scottish political rights and cultural identity within the union. The growth of arts institutions and societies from local to national level between the 1820s and 1900 reflected these currents. Similar developments were taking place in London, with the objective not only of encouraging artists and collectors and educating ‘good taste’ but of demonstrating (or calling into being) an English national tradition in the visual arts.³ The Scots were on the same path. Schools of art and design dated from the 18th century, the Foulis Academy opening in Glasgow in 1753 and the Trustees’ Academy in Edinburgh in 1760. The latter was the first arts organisation in the UK to receive state funding and eventually evolved into Edinburgh College of Art.⁴ Other art schools were established in Glasgow (1840), Aberdeen (1885), Dundee (1892), and Arbroath (Hospitalfield House, 1901). Several attempts were made to set up a Scottish academy of the arts before the Royal Scottish Academy (RSA) was founded in 1826 (receiving its Royal Charter in 1838).⁵ The Museum of Antiquities of Scotland became a ‘national’ in 1851, and the Royal Scottish Museum dates from 1854. Proposed in parliament in 1852, the National Gallery of Scotland opened in 1859.⁶ The Scottish National Portrait Gallery followed in 1889. The MacLellan Galleries in Glasgow opened in 1856. Art galleries were opened in Paisley (1871), Dundee (1873), Stirling (1874), Aberdeen (1885), Glasgow (Kelvingrove, 1901), Kilmarnock (1901), Perth (1902) and Kirkcaldy (1925).

Artists’ societies grew out of the civic culture of clubs and associations. A Society of Artists appeared in Edinburgh in 1808, a nucleus of its members forming ‘The Institution’ in 1819, out of which the Royal Institution and the RSA emerged.⁷ In

Glasgow, the work of the Dilettanti Society was superseded by a short-lived West of Scotland Academy and then by the Institute of the Fine Arts (1861), now the Royal Glasgow Institute.⁸ The Royal Society of Scottish Painters in Watercolour was founded in 1878, and the Society of Scottish Artists (SSA) in 1891. Local art societies sprang up in towns and cities all over Scotland throughout the 19th century.⁹ Prestigious art clubs were established in Glasgow (1867) and Edinburgh (1873). The hugely successful Art Union movement was active in Scotland.¹⁰ In 1833 the Association for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Scotland was founded to purchase works by promising young artists (the first of its kind in Britain according to Caw). Declining after the collapse of the City of Glasgow Bank in 1879 it wound up in 1897 (its collection then gifted to the National Galleries). However, the Scottish Modern Art Association, founded in 1907 with similar objectives, continued the work. This entrenched institutional power was not matched in any other art form in Scotland. Equally, the persistent under-funding of the Scottish national institutions was a long-standing source of grievance.¹¹

Scottish visual art interests played an important part in the politics of CEMA from 1942 onwards, butting against the opposition of Keynes for whom they were an impediment to be overcome. There is no reason to believe that Keynes took Scottish nationalism seriously as a political force.¹² His impatience with Scottish demands on CEMA reflected on the one hand his determination that its post-war future should not be compromised and on the other a decided disdain for Scottish culture. With Mary Glasgow in support, they posed a formidable block to Scottish aspirations for self-management yet, faced with a Scottish Office that backed the creation of a Scottish Committee, Keynes was forced to concede. His intransigence (supported by Glasgow) came close to provoking a rupture with the Scottish Committee in 1945-46, jeopardising

his objective of a unitary British body. Once again, despite prolonged resistance, Keynes was forced by Scottish Office pressure to back down, though privately remaining convinced he had conceded nothing that mattered. The degree of autonomy enjoyed by the Scottish Committee had to be established in practice. This was finally settled after Keynes's death by an agreement in February 1947 that held until the Scottish Arts Council was set up under the Charter of 1967.

CEMA and Scottish Nationalism

The question arises of the extent to which nationalism, political and cultural, played a part in the Scottish relationship with CEMA. Morton has analysed the complex of unionist politics and cultural nationalism in mid-19th century Scotland, out of which Scotland's national museums and galleries were born. Their creation was part of a wider movement to define national cultural identity (described by Morrison) in which Romantic and Idealist philosophies played a part. Integral to these processes was the construction of national traditions in the visual arts. The new cultural organisations active in Scotland in the 1930s were motivated by a fear of the loss of national identity. Cultural nationalist feelings were expressed consistently by Scottish Committee members, but although sometimes linked to political aspirations, the Committee's determination to secure its ambitions, if at all possible, within a British structure is striking. Separation was only contemplated under the direst pressure. Hostility within CEMA's Council to Scottish nationalism was marked by a general failure to distinguish between its political and cultural aspects. This may have reached a febrile pitch because of the war. The Nazi radio station Radio Caledonia was broadcasting in 1940, hoping to foment unrest in Scotland. Hence, any expression of Scottish difference could suggest disunity or even treachery.

The case of the Saltire Society is indicative. In April 1940 CEMA received an application from the Society to set up a gallery to show work by younger Scottish artists. SED correspondence reveals that CEMA then questioned its political character. Despite assurances about its cultural purposes (from HMI and noted painter J. D. MacGregor, John W. Parker, Second Secretary of the SED, and Wilkie), in May the application was refused on the grounds of its being outside the purposes of CEMA's grant. In reality, Glasgow later let slip to Parker that this and another application from the Saltire Society were refused because:

They are, I believe, a definitely nationalist Society...we should be clear from the start, I think, that no money will be available for them.¹³

CEMA's Council could hardly have been anything other than a unionist consensus but these, the only indisputably political funding decisions taken by it, have to be placed in their wartime context, when nationalism was viewed with particular suspicion.¹⁴ Tom Jones must have been convinced that the Saltire Society had a disguised political agenda. Mistaken though he was, it would be wrong to find in this decision evidence of wider anti-Scottish sentiment. He was not hostile to expressions of Scottish cultural identity but he was a fierce enemy of political nationalism who opposed devolution for Wales. Later, the position under Keynes was to be different. Keynes displayed impatience with Scottish affairs that strongly suggests contempt, but there were others on the Council of more balanced opinion. However, if the whiff of political nationalism affronted CEMA, there was to be no escaping the departmental variety expressed by the Scottish Office.

If the history of CEMA and the Arts Council in Scotland cannot be isolated from the political context, to a great degree that was refracted through the departmental nexus that surrounded CEMA. The account that follows traces the parts played by the SED and the Board (later Ministry) of Education at various points in CEMA's evolution. CEMA was established under the wing of education but without informing the SED. As I discuss in the next section, this aroused suspicions that there was an ulterior motive to exclude the SED, but the evidence shows that no premeditated plan existed. However, once the SED began to press for its (and Scotland's) rights of representation it encountered a familiar argument, that the Council had to be kept small for the sake of efficiency. This was seen by the SED as a cover for London control, and it continued to press its claims vigorously.

Although this first phase of Scottish pressure concluded in what might be best described as a draw, over the next five years the SED proved very successful in securing Scottish interests within CEMA and the Arts Council. It avoided confrontation and worked for the resolution through compromise of those conflicts that did arise. But its influence on CEMA's development was more decisive than this might suggest. It was J. W. Parker of the SED who, in the phrase "to advise and assist", formulated a remit for the Scottish Committee that provided the foundation for the resolution of the devolution problem. The phrase was ambiguous and contested, but Parker was preparing the ground for a gradualist approach to the devolution of power to Scotland. He was clear that independence might or might not be the ultimate result, but regarded that as a decision for the future that should be neither rushed nor ruled out.

¹ Wilkie described CEMA's evolution in similar terms (Wilkie to Allan, 1 June 1943, NAS GD 281/51.2.

² Skidelsky, *op. cit.* p. 287. Skidelsky paraphrases Clive Bell on Keynes viewing everything "from the white cliffs of Dover, or, to be more exact, from Whitehall or King's combination room" (*Ibid.*, p. 289)

³ Minihan says there was no strong sense of a national English tradition in painting in the early 19th century, and suggests that the successful conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars was the necessary stimulus for the growth of a range of English national institutions and museums (Minihan, op. cit. pp. 16-19).

⁴ The funding came from the annuity paid to compensate Scotland for the Darien Scheme and for assuming a share of the English national debt under the Treaty of Union. The Board of Manufactures received money from the annuity, and later used it to fund the new academy (Minihan, op. cit. pp. 8-9)

⁵ Caw, *Scottish Painting, 1680-1908* (Bath, Kingsmead, 1975), p. 61.

⁶ Minihan, op. cit. p. 123.

⁷ Caw, op. cit. pp. 61-65.

⁸ Ibid. p. 67.

⁹ Ibid. pp. 212-213.

¹⁰ Art Unions were lotteries with art works as prizes (Minihan, op. cit. p. 61).

¹¹ Caw, op. cit. p. 215.

¹² Keynes was motivated by an ideal of society that would transcend Communism and Capitalism (O'Donnell, op. cit. pp. 174-176 and pp. 292-293).

¹³ Glasgow to Parker, 21 December 1942, VA EL 2/80.

¹⁴ There is evidence of political vetting around this time, though none that affected a Council decision. Sir John McEwen, the right-wing Under Secretary of State for Scotland, took an interest in CEMA, questioning the political leanings of the SCDA and enquiring whether David Yacamini, CEMA's Scottish music organiser, should not be interned as an alien on the basis of his name. He was reassured by the SED that Yacamini's family had been resident in Scotland for several generations (Parker to Mackay Thomson, 23 April 1940, NAS ED 61/27).

Chapter 8: First Reactions to CEMA in Scotland

The Government's involvement in CEMA was made public in a parliamentary statement by Herwald Ramsbotham, the new President of the Board of Education, on the tenth of April 1940.¹ A grant-in-aid of up to £50,000 would be made, to be matched from other sources, by which was meant the Pilgrim Trust and the Carnegie UK Trust, the latter confidently expected to contribute up to £25,000 from 1941. CEMA would be reconstituted as a Council which "emanated from the Board of Education", chaired by the Pilgrim Trust's Chairman, the Scottish judge Lord Macmillan, with Tom Jones as alternate.² The membership of the new Council was given, including the Carnegie UK Trust representative James Wilkie, who had been an administrator with the Board for 18 years up to 1939. Wilkie was expected to join after confirmation of the Carnegie's grant. Two Board of Education assessors would attend Council meetings.³ Unpaid Honorary Directors would lead three specialist art form panels.

Ramsbotham's statement was the first intimation that the SED had of the true significance of the 'Pilgrim Trust scheme', although it had been reported in the press, and even mentioned by Struthers at the SED conference on adult education in January. Struthers, however, had attributed the scheme to the Pilgrim Trust and the Carnegie UK Trust, and did not name CEMA or the Board of Education.⁴ This inadvertence presumably led the SED to assume that the new scheme had no significance for Scottish education or public administration. The revelation produced a burst of correspondence between the SED, the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Board of Education and the Treasury.⁵ An immediate question was posed: was Scotland included in the scheme? Depending on the answer, other questions arose: if included, what was the financial basis, and how would Scottish interests be represented on the new Council? If not

included, what would the best course of action be? The first of these questions was not formally answered until the 18th of April. On the 11th the recently appointed SED Secretary, John Mackay Thomson, sought information from Wilkie, pointing out that if Scotland were not included the SED would press for its due share.⁶ J. W. Parker, based at Dover House, London, made simultaneous enquiries through the Scottish Secretary, John Colville. Writing to Ramsbotham, Colville took the line that as the grant was presumably only for England and Wales, this was not a tenable situation. An additional grant should be made for Scotland and “arrangements...made to administer it” (implying the creation of a specifically Scottish organisation for that purpose) or else Scotland should be allocated a share of the £50,000 and given representation on CEMA.⁷ Colville warned the Chancellor, Sir John Simon, that he could expect to be asked for an additional grant for Scotland “unless a share of the £50,000 comes to us!”⁸

The correspondence marks an immediate assertion of Scottish interests by the SED and the Scottish Office. No time was spent debating the merits of the new scheme (about which very little was known) for it was after all already government policy. The question of Scotland’s position turned on whether or not an additional sum would be required for Scotland. Upon the answer depended the appropriate form of administration and the SED’s role. Mackay Thomson’s letter to Wilkie reveals how fluid the situation was in the minds of the SED’s senior administrators while they waited for clarification, and how determined they were to have the scheme extended to Scotland should it prove that it had been forgotten. Despite SED suspicions, Scotland had not been forgotten by CEMA as its early grants record shows, but had been by the Board which, overlooking its constitutional position, had unthinkingly incorporated Scotland into the scheme. This failure was compounded by the mischance of Struthers’

reference to the Pilgrim Trust scheme in January. This evidence makes it clear that there was no policy to conceal CEMA from the SED or Scottish Office. CEMA's application to the Treasury of March 1940, though nowhere mentioning Scotland specifically, used phrases such as "a nation-wide programme" and "a valuable national work". Considering the grants given up to April, Treasury officials would have readily concluded that the scheme included Scotland, compounding the Board's omission in the eyes of the SED.

The correspondence between Mackay Thomson and Parker shows that for several days an independently administered Scottish scheme was seriously considered. There was even a theoretical financial advantage to an autonomous scheme. Correspondence between Mackay Thomson and Parker gives a clear insight into their thoughts about the financial implications of incorporation or autonomy.⁹ He calculated on the basis of the Goschen formula, under which Scotland received 11/91sts of expenditure on new government programmes.¹⁰ If Scotland were excluded from the scheme, the £50,000 Treasury grant would equal 80/91sts. An additional grant for Scotland would then amount to almost £7,000. If on the other hand the £50,000 included Scotland's share (being the total 91 parts) then the Scottish share would be barely over £6,000. Parker suggested that, if a separate scheme were pursued, the SED should ask the Carnegie UK Trust for a grant of £6,000 or £7,000. In his calculation, if Scotland got an integral share of the projected total of £100,000 it would amount to just over £12,000. Under an independent scheme, with an additional sum given to Scotland, the total could be as high as £14,000. This was a substantial difference, amounting to over £70,000 in 2003 terms.¹¹

In reaction to having been denied an opportunity to contribute to the formation of CEMA, an autonomous Scottish body under its wing must have held some attractions for the SED. Despite this, incorporation into CEMA was probably always considered the more likely outcome. Colville certainly did not push the idea of a separate Scottish grant, as his personal addition to the letter to Simon (“Unless a share of the £50,000 comes to us!”) shows. This made it plain that a decision in favour of incorporation would not be contentious, but until the Treasury communicated its decision, it was not a foregone conclusion. The Scottish dimension had been so completely unconsidered that Ramsbotham, when pressed by Colville, was unsure what Scotland’s position was.¹² He thought that the Treasury grant would probably cover Scotland, and this would (he said) go without saying if the Carnegie UK Trust were to get involved. His confusion was not lost on Mackay Thomson. By the 16th the SED was almost certain that Scotland would be included.¹³ On the same day, Parker informed Mackay Thomson that he was to meet Mary Glasgow for a full briefing.¹⁴ On the 17th, Wilkie sent Mackay Thomson a copy of the report on which his trustees had voted by a large majority to grant £25,000 to CEMA in 1941, adding that he expected that the vote would be ratified in June. In the event the decision was reversed, but to Mackay Thomson the Carnegie UK Trust’s involvement must have seemed all but certain. Parker met Glasgow in London and received a set of CEMA minutes and papers, which he forwarded to Mackay Thomson. Parker was able to tell him that although CEMA had made grants to Scottish organisations, Scottish needs had not been considered systematically. Of £18,140 spent in total, Scotland had received £1,950, “rather less than the usual proportion”.¹⁵

The Treasury finally confirmed on the 18th that Scotland was included in the scheme. However, this did not preclude devolved financial arrangements being made. Before

receiving the Treasury's decision the SED had already begun to consider whether, under a unified scheme, it should insist on receiving its Goschen formula allocation on its own Parliamentary vote or allow the money to go through on the Board's vote. There were precedents for the former, especially the Youth Welfare scheme, run by the NYC. Parker sought the opinion of Charles Cunningham at the Scottish Home Department (SHD).¹⁶ Cunningham's reply (received on the same day as the Treasury decision) advised against dividing the grant on the Goschen formula, which would entail that there would also be a strict apportionment of Trust funds. The effect would be to ensure that Scotland received only the minimum share of the money available. On the other hand, if the money were left undivided on the Board's vote and Scottish interests (as Cunningham put it) were "strongly and actively represented...it is possible that we may fare even better".¹⁷ Reginald Hawkins, SED Assistant Secretary, supported Cunningham on the grounds that only where schemes depended upon Local Government for implementation, as the Youth Welfare scheme did, was there a good case for separate arrangements.¹⁸ Parker came round to Cunningham's opinion on the grounds that the inclusion of Trust funding would make it more difficult to allocate a separate grant for Scotland, an argument that Treasury officials themselves used shortly afterwards.

No final view was settled before the first meeting of the re-formed Council on the 23rd of April, which Parker attended as SED assessor. Davidson, the Board's accountant, assumed that Scotland's Goschen formula share, about £6,000, would probably be carried on the SED vote.¹⁹ Parker seems not to have spoken to this, and so uncontroversial was the assumption that the minutes do not record any discussion. It is clear that there would have been no resistance from the Board or CEMA to a devolved

financial arrangement if the SED had demanded it. In the days following, Parker pursued the matter with the Treasury, informing Mackay Thomson that he had:

...discussed with Mr. Hale of the Treasury whether the Exchequer grant...should all be borne on the B of E Vote, or whether part of it should appear on our Vote. He tells me that the Treasury Accounts Division feel that an attempt to separate the money into two parts might lead to serious technical difficulties, the exact nature of which was not stated. Mr. Hale does not take such a serious view of the technical difficulties, but he is quite ready to agree that the money should be borne on the Board's vote.²⁰

Hale suggested that the supposed difficulty of separating Trust and public money was not decisive, but because the Treasury did not offer a definitive line, the decision was left to the Scottish Office where Cunningham's argument had won the day. As it was ultimately a political decision, the issue was submitted to Colville and the Under-Secretary of State, Sir John McEwen, with the recommendation that the allocation be carried entirely on the Board's vote with a note that the Goschen formula be "borne in mind" in determining Scotland's share.²¹ Colville agreed and Parker informed the Treasury that "the usual formula will be kept in mind in deciding how much of the money shall be spent in Scotland."²² It was the Scottish Office, then, that chose an integrated financial system, calculating that it was in Scotland's best interests.

Persuasive though Cunningham's argument was, in practice it did not work. It depended on effective representation and a sustained flow of excellent applications from Scotland. By introducing the Goschen formula even in the softened form of a guideline the SED

played safe. In seeking the protection of the formula, that is, to remove the risk that in some years Scotland might get little, the chance that Scotland might, at other times, gain much more, was given away. The arrangement became a rule of thumb that ensured that if Scotland did not get exactly a Goschen formula share, what it got would be as near to it as mattered. Indeed the SED used it as a yardstick to measure CEMA's annual Scottish expenditure.²³ During the war years and for some time afterwards budgets suggest that CEMA and the Arts Council stuck closely to the Goschen formula.²⁴ Figures after 1953, when the formula was set aside, show that Scotland did far less well, its share having declined by 1965 to about half of what the formula would have delivered: strong evidence of the flaw in Cunningham's concept. Under pressure from Scotland the share gradually grew again back towards the Goschen norm.²⁵ The SED, then, was wise to hedge its bets in 1940 and in hindsight may have been better to have taken a separate Scottish allocation on its own vote.²⁶

Scottish Representation 1 (April-May 1940)

The issue of Scottish representation arose as a consequence of CEMA's remit to act throughout Britain. CEMA had been announced in parliament as a body that "emanated" from the Board of Education, with a Council appointed by its President. Although the Board had sole formal authority, CEMA had no separate legal status, no constitution and no remit other than what it gave itself. As the grants applied to Scotland where the Board had no authority, the remedy pursued by the SED was to have appointments made to the Council by the Scottish Secretary to look after Scottish interests. The Scottish Office argued that Scotland was entitled to proportionate representation on all such bodies, but the aim was to make it clear to CEMA and no less to the Scottish public that a Scottish share of control was entrenched in the organisation.

That Scotland ought to be represented was not in question, but a difference of interpretation emerged between the Scottish Office on the one hand and the Board of Education and CEMA on the other. At bottom it was a disagreement about what 'representation' meant. The point emerges in a memorandum of Cunningham's:

The Board of Education, I understand, take the view that Scotland is already adequately represented by Lord Macmillan, Lord Crawford and Mr. Wilkie, all of whom happen to be Scotsmen; but they have not been appointed to represent Scottish interests, and I think that the Secretary of State would be justified in pressing for direct representation.²⁷

Although on several occasions in 1940 the SED acknowledged that Scotland had not been unfairly treated, it nevertheless continued to press for 'true' representation. When CEMA had been formed it was understood that members did not represent specific interests but were present, as de la Warr's correspondence makes plain, as respected professionals in their own fields.²⁸ In 1949, Evans and Glasgow, describing CEMA's Council, wrote:

All these members...were chosen as individuals for their proven interest in the wider distribution of the arts and because they were immediately available in London. It was in no sense a representative or carefully planned Committee...²⁹

This was a founding principle, and created a problem when it was confronted by the demand for direct Scottish representation.³⁰ CEMA's intention was to insulate its decision-making from the danger of nepotism. Desirable though this was, it was

fundamentally different in nature from the issue that Scottish involvement raised, that of territorial representation. CEMA was unwilling to differentiate between a member who might misuse their position to further their professional interests and a member appointed to ensure that Scottish interests were not ignored by a body partly funded by Scottish taxpayers. Macmillan and Jones argued that members who happened to be Scots (one of them being the Chairman himself) would ensure that Scotland was fairly treated. Although dating from later, Parker's explanation to Osborne Mavor as to why Keynes would not consent to his being referred to as a 'Scottish representative' articulates the Council's feelings in 1940:

If you were regarded as a "representative" of Scotland there might be a demand for a "representative" of Wales and possibly of other regions and interests, and these demands could not be satisfied without making the Council unwieldy.³¹

The ambiguity between representation in a professional sense and representation in a territorial sense was not disentangled when it came to Scottish membership of CEMA. A Scottish member would bring his or her special knowledge to the Council, and simultaneously keep an eye open for Scotland's interests. When in April 1940 Parker writes that there should be at least one member, if not two, appointed by the Scottish Secretary for "the express purpose of representing Scottish interests" he means that they will be expected to do this. It is clear from the SED's nominations that accountability was conceived as a larger issue than the financial monitoring which was one of Parker's duties. It had a public dimension that an internal civil service arrangement did not express. Representation entailed accountability, both horizontal (to the public and the arts community) and, though more obscurely in the circumstances, vertical (to the

Scottish Secretary). CEMA never conceded that Scottish members could report separately to the Scottish Secretary because it was strictly accountable to the President of the Board (later the Minister of Education) and through him to Parliament. Yet in less formal fashion, had the SED seen that a Scottish member was not measuring up, it would not have supported their continuing beyond the minimum term. In a somewhat fuzzy sense, then, accountability to the SED and Scottish Office did function. In the long run the creation of Scottish and Welsh Committees legitimated the presence of territorial representation, but neither Jones nor Keynes accepted the principle though they had to accept the practice.

Glasgow had put it to Parker when they met that the Council should be kept as small as possible, offering Macmillan as the Scottish representative. She had also pointed out that Sir Kenneth Clark's membership would soon be confirmed, to draw Parker's attention to Clark's Scottish roots. Davidson had also suggested that if Parker were appointed SED assessor Scottish interests would be adequately protected.³² Glasgow and Davidson were following the wishes of CEMA and the Board to have Council members conveniently at hand in London. To achieve this, a few days after Ramsbotham's statement, the Board accepted Clark's nomination of his close friend the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres. As a visual art connoisseur, resident in London and holder of a Scottish title, Crawford's nomination would have been attractive to CEMA, which clearly hoped to seize the initiative by appointing a 'London Scot'. It may not be too cynical to suggest that Crawford was proposed in the knowledge that his would be an ethereal presence. He resigned in July 1941 without having attended a single meeting.³³

Despite being appointed SED assessor, Parker was not swayed by the ‘small council’ argument. While accepting Crawford’s appointment as a *fait accompli* he thought the Council still short of two more Scottish representatives. As an SED man, Parker (though English himself) was regarded in London as a Scottish representative along with Macmillan, Crawford and (it was anticipated) Wilkie. He did not accept this interpretation: he was a non-voting observer with no right to contribute to debate unless invited to provide information or a departmental opinion. Wilkie’s membership was not (and never was) confirmed. Macmillan on the other hand saw himself as the protector of Scottish interests, but this could not amount to representation in the sense that the Scottish Office intended. Crawford could not fulfil the role either. Suspicious of the argument for a small Council, Mackay Thomson noted in the margin of Parker’s memorandum of the 18th of April: “This is the “Youth Committee” attitude once again” and in his reply expanded:

With the example of the Youth Committee before us, we should lose no time in getting our two men appointed: it is ominous that the Board of Education are already starting their old game of trying to crowd us out with their “Keep the Committee small” argument. If the Board of Education are properly penitent, they should raise no objection to the S. of S. making two appointments to a Committee of twelve. You will note that as in the case of the Youth Committee, although anxious to keep the Committee small they are themselves adding to its number.³⁴

Scotland had three formal representatives on the National Youth Committee, one being Sir John McEwen. They also acted as an informal Scottish sub-committee. In October 1939, deciding he wished to add “two more industrialists and perhaps a couple of

women” to the committee, de la Warr proposed to Colville that the Scots should meet formally under McEwen’s chairmanship, he to remain the sole Scottish representative on the main committee.³⁵ A similar arrangement was proposed for Wales. Without waiting for a response, de la Warr appointed four new members, all representing English interests. His action was not well received in the SHD, where it was seen as sidelining Scotland, involving a loss of prestige that would set a dangerous precedent.³⁶ Colville duly insisted that Scottish representation must stay on the same basis as before.³⁷ The SED was therefore alert to a similar process happening with CEMA. The weakness of Crawford’s credentials is evident in the lukewarm comment of Cunningham (whom Parker had asked for an opinion) that Stanley Cursiter, Director of the National Galleries of Scotland, could act as his advisor.³⁸ Cursiter, in other words, might provide the substantial knowledge of Scottish issues. There remained the question of music and drama. Cunningham suggested two names:

Sir Donald Tovey and Dr. O. S. Mavor (James Bridie) should be invited to serve. Sir Donald Tovey has, I should think, done more than anyone else in Scotland to encourage public interest in music and is, of course, himself one of the most distinguished authorities on music of the day. Dr. Mavor is the outstanding Scottish dramatist and has taken a keen and active interest in the encouragement of repertory and popular drama.³⁹

Parker accepted the suggestions.⁴⁰ Then the situation changed. Ramsbotham had already invited the Scottish Office to put forward a Scottish representative (without demur concerning the term).⁴¹ Late on the 18th Mackay Thomson was informed by telephone that Colville had agreed with Ramsbotham not to demand two more Scottish

representatives “as such”.⁴² Several factors were probably involved in the compromise: Crawford’s appointment, the expected confirmation of Clark’s appointment, the presumption that Wilkie would soon join and that Parker would be SED assessor. This would have been a persuasive case, but it was only a partial victory for CEMA as it still had to accept a Scottish Office nominee. The SED investigated Tovey and Mavor.⁴³ It appears that their names were arrived at within the Scottish Office rather than through external consultation. Both were figures of international stature that would be welcome in London. Harvie attributes Mavor’s eventual appointment to the Chairmanship of CEMA’s Scottish Committee (in December 1942) to his friend Walter Elliot.⁴⁴ Elliot was certainly not involved in 1940. Mavor at the time was on active service with the RAMC, aboard a troopship at Andalsness in Norway, a fact that would have been known to his friends.⁴⁵ Cunningham and Parker were unaware of this and, with the mistaken middle initial ‘S’ (instead of ‘H’) given by Cunningham and repeated by Parker, it seems certain that the suggestion was their own. Tovey was soon eliminated on the grounds of poor health and being a “bad committee man” and Mavor’s absence was discovered. Alternatives had to be found. Parker’s interest had been stirred by a suggestion of Wilkie’s: Katherine, Duchess of Atholl.⁴⁶ He sounded out Colville, McEwen and Cunningham and reported to Mackay Thomson that the response was favourable, and that Holmes at the Board of Education agreed. Only Cunningham added a caveat that she might be politically contentious.⁴⁷

The Duchess had been a Unionist MP and Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education (1924-29). A vociferous critic of appeasement and of the Non-Intervention Pact on Spain, she had resigned the Tory whip in April 1938 over the German invasion of Czechoslovakia, her sympathies earning her the nickname ‘the Red Duchess’.⁴⁸ By

1937 she had many enemies in the Conservative Party, one of her most persistent persecutors being Sir John McEwen who had hoped for a negotiated settlement with Hitler. Her unpopularity with the right increased in December 1938 when, standing as an Independent, she narrowly lost a by-election in Kinross and West Perthshire to the Conservative candidate, to the relief of the government. She also had claims to a role in Scotland's cultural life. She had been a signatory of the submission led by Lord Macmillan in 1935 to establish the National Library of Scotland and was a trained singer who had been intent on a professional career before her marriage into the Atholl family.⁴⁹ Colville accepted the SED's recommendation and Ramsbotham agreed on the following day. But the invitation to the Duchess was never sent. Later correspondence between Mackay Thomson and Parker shows that the apparent alacrity to agree her nomination was deceptive. Colville and MacEwen had perhaps calculated that she would be better occupied with CEMA than with criticising the government, but some powerful resistance must have been stirred in London. Whatever that was, the process was now derailed by the fall of Chamberlain.⁵⁰ Churchill became Prime Minister on the tenth of May. Colville was replaced by Ernest Brown, McEwen by Joseph Westwood. The Duchess, who had been intending to stand again as an Independent immediately rejoined the Conservatives, welcomed back by Churchill.⁵¹

The energy appears to have gone out of the SED campaign at this point, perhaps given the change of government and the absence of an obvious alternative to the Duchess. On the 18th of May Hawkins briefed Ernest Brown on the background to CEMA, recommending that the question of Scottish representation be left to rest.⁵² Brown took the advice. The only Englishman to be Scottish Secretary, Brown evinced no great interest in the cultural life of Scotland.⁵³ He informed Ramsbotham that he accepted

that CEMA was large enough, especially as there had been no public criticism in Scotland, but made it clear that the matter was not closed, simply in abeyance.⁵⁴ He held in reserve the right to re-open the issue if circumstances changed.

Scottish Representation 2 (June-August 1940)

There was not long to wait. On the 17th of June the Carnegie UK Trust's relations with CEMA broke down and Wilkie ceased to attend meetings. At almost the same time an incident occurred that suggested CEMA's grant might be attracting some popular resentment. Thomas Hunter, MP for Perth, forwarded to Westwood a complaint from a constituent, expressing outrage that while exhorting people to save for the war effort the government had given money to a cause like CEMA.⁵⁵ The correspondence was passed to the SED. The action Parker and Mackay Thomson took is further evidence that the SED valued CEMA. Parker's concern was that it might now attract unsympathetic political attention. He believed that Westwood was inclined to agree that wartime expenditure on the arts was hard to justify and, hoping to change his opinion, put it to Mackay Thomson that the question of Scottish representation on CEMA should be re-opened. With Wilkie gone and Crawford's non-attendance becoming apparent, the only representative of Scottish interests was Macmillan, supported by Parker himself.⁵⁶ Although confident that Scotland had not in practice suffered, he was not happy about the way the Council was run:

...as you know I am not particularly happy about the way the business of the Council is managed. It is almost entirely in the hands of Dr. Thomas Jones of the Pilgrim Trust, and it does not seem to me that there is any effective representation of the interests of the Exchequer, which finds half the money.⁵⁷

Tom Jones's domination of the Council had to be curtailed. Parker's solution was radical, perhaps influenced by McEwen's role on the NYC. He proposed that Westwood become the Scottish representative, saying he understood him to be "very ready to look after Scottish interests in any connection." Mackay Thomson then put the idea to Westwood persuasively enough to get him to agree to consider it or appoint another representative.⁵⁸ Two weeks later Westwood had decided he should not take CEMA on, anticipating that if he did others would demand party political representation.⁵⁹ In total he thought the matter not especially urgent. Parker now concluded that after all, perhaps, they had to settle for the status quo.⁶⁰ Mackay Thomson however persisted, suggesting another politician, George Morrison, University MP for Glasgow who had an interest in music and was (as Mackay Thomson put it) "not a strong Party man". If not him, he continued:

You will remember that at a previous stage we considered inviting the Duchess of Atholl to serve on this Committee, and that the Board of Education did not welcome the suggestion. I rather think that Mr. Westwood is more sympathetic to the idea, and he may care to make another attempt to secure her appointment.⁶¹

Failing her, he suggested Lady Findlay, widow of the late proprietor of *The Scotsman*, Sir John Findlay, through whose munificence the Scottish National Portrait Gallery had been founded. Parker pursued these suggestions with Westwood and found him inclined to prefer the Duchess, though still open to taking it up himself "if things slacken up a bit". A final decision, however, would be led by events at the Council meeting in August.⁶² On the day after the meeting, Parker reported that there had been no problems and on this basis there was no immediate need to strengthen Scottish representation.

Mackay Thomson agreed and Parker recorded that Westwood was content to let the matter rest. Despite Macmillan's departure for Scotland in October 1940, which effectively left all responsibility for Scottish interests in the hands of Parker alone, the issue of Scottish representation went into abeyance until 1942.

¹ *Hansard*, 10th April 1940. Ramsbotham succeeded de la Warr at the beginning of the month.

² Macmillan had practised at the English Bar since the 1920s.

³ Council members are given in Appendix One.

⁴ Report on Adult Education in Time of War, 22 January 1940, NAS ED 39/11. A Scottish Home Department (Public Relations Department) Progress Report also records the information Struthers gave to the SED conference (3 February 1940, NAS HH 50/20).

⁵ In 1940 the four departments (Agriculture, Education, Health, Home) of the Scottish Office exercised great independence, the Gilmour Committee on Scottish Administration having rejected a greater degree of unified control. But the departments did consult with each other. In the case of CEMA, the SED commonly sought views from the Scottish Home Department (SHD) and the support of the Secretary of State.

⁶ Mackay Thomson to Wilkie, 11 April 1940, NAS ED 61/27.

⁷ Colville to Ramsbotham, 11 April 1940, VA EL 2/80 and NAS ED 61/27. The letter was drafted by Parker (Parker to Mackay Thomson, 12 April 1940, NAS ED 61/27).

⁸ Colville to Simon, 13 April 1940, NAS ED 61/27. Parker informed Mackay Thomson that "The last paragraph of the letter to Ramsbotham and the last few words of the letter to Simon were added by the S. of S. in his own hand". A copy exists in NAS ED 61/27, in which Colville's comment has been added to the bottom in distinctly sharper type than the main body of the letter. The final sentence of his letter to Simon in the SED archive is an identical, sharper addition.

⁹ Parker to Mackay Thomson, 13 April 1940, NAS ED 61/27.

¹⁰ The Goschen formula and the principle of linking Scottish expenditure as a proportion of that in England and Wales is discussed by Levitt, *The Scottish Secretary, the Treasury and the Scottish Grant Equivalent, 1888-1970*, in *Scottish Affairs*, No. 28, summer 1999. By 1940 the formula had come to represent Scottish status or success within the Union, and it was politically important to insist on it. The application of the formula was complex in practice, but (as Levitt notes) it became "the benchmark to judge whether or not the Government's policy adequately addressed the Scottish issue".

¹¹ See Appendix Three.

¹² Ramsbotham to Colville, 15 April 1940, NAS ED 61/27.

¹³ Mackay Thomson to Parker, 16 April 1940, NAS ED 61/27.

¹⁴ Parker to Mackay Thomson, 16 April 1940, NAS ED 61/27.

¹⁵ Parker to Mackay Thomson, 18 April 1940, NAS ED 61/27. In 2003 terms, of about £642,200 spent Scotland had received £69,000.

¹⁶ Later Sir Charles Cunningham, Secretary of the SHD (1948-1957).

¹⁷ Cunningham to Parker, 18 April 1940, NAS ED 61/27.

¹⁸ Hawkins to Parker, hand-written note on Parker's memorandum, 19 April 1940, NAS ED 61/27.

¹⁹ Minutes of the First Meeting of CEMA, 23 April 1940, VA EL 1/6.

²⁰ Parker to Mackay Thomson, 27 April 1940, NAS ED 61/27.

²¹ Mackay Thomson to Colville, 29 April 1940, NAS ED 25/4.

²² Parker to Hale, 2 May 1940, NAS ED 61/27.

²³ Parker periodically checked with Mary Glasgow to monitor expenditure in Scotland.

²⁴ Appendix Three. The data is imperfect and Scotland was probably under-funded in 1940 and 1941.

²⁵ The Goschen formula faded out of general use after the war, lingering longest in education (until 1958). The Arts Council and the Scottish Committee agreed in 1953 to suspend the Goschen formula, but reinstated it as a guideline from 1965 until the Barnett formula was introduced in 1978.

²⁶ This would have worked provided capital funding was satisfactorily dealt with.

²⁷ Cunningham to Milne, 18th April, 1940, NAS ED 39/18. Wilkie had been born in Manchester of Scottish parents. He considered himself a Scot (Carnegie UK Trust obituary by Margaret Ovens) and was accepted as such.

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- ²⁸ Parker recorded that it was difficult to think of a Scottish representative for drama “who would not be connected to potential beneficiaries” (Parker to Mackay Thomson, 23 April 1940, NAS ED 61/27).
- ²⁹ Evans and Glasgow, *op. cit.* p.36.
- ³⁰ CEMA did not permit Council members to represent it on other bodies, nor accept representatives of other bodies on its Council. This was made clear by Glasgow to Mavor and Fox in relation to the RSA (VA EL 2/80) and to Fox when advising against affiliation to the newly-formed Scottish Council of Social Service (VA EL 3/92).
- ³¹ Parker to Mavor, 14 January 1943, NAS ED 39/18.
- ³² Parker to Mackay Thomson, 18 April 1940, NAS ED 61/27.
- ³³ He was replaced by the Londoner Ifor Evans, which rather undermines CEMA’s case.
- ³⁴ Mackay Thomson to Parker, 19 April 1940, NAS ED 61/27. The figure of twelve is hard to substantiate. Mackay Thomson may have counted the three Honorary Directors to get his figure.
- ³⁵ De la Warr to Colville, 17 October 1939, NAS ED 39/16.
- ³⁶ Cunningham to Milne, 18 October 1939, NAS ED 39/16.
- ³⁷ Colville to de la Warr, 24 November 1939, NAS ED 39/16.
- ³⁸ Cunningham to Parker, 18 April 1940, NAS ED 61/27.
- ³⁹ Cunningham to Parker, 18 April 1940, NAS ED 61/27.
- ⁴⁰ Parker to Mackay Thomson, 18 April 1940, NAS ED 61/27.
- ⁴¹ Ramsbotham to Colville, 15th April 1940, NAS ED 61/27.
- ⁴² Noted at end memorandum, Mackay Thomson to Parker, 18 April 1940, NAS ED 61/27.
- ⁴³ Mackay Thomson to Parker, 19 April 1940, NAS ED 61/27.
- ⁴⁴ Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes: Twentieth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p. 137.
- ⁴⁵ Mavor, *Dr. Mavor and Mr. Bridie-Memoirs of James Bridie* (Edinburgh, Canongate and National Library of Scotland, 1988), p. 105.
- ⁴⁶ Parker to Mackay Thomson, 23 April 1940, NAS ED 61/27.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁸ Hetherington, S., *Katherine Atholl 1874-1960: Against the Tide* (Aberdeen University Press, 1991), p. 189. The Duchess published two books with Penguin, *Searchlight on Spain* and *Europe and Czechoslovakia* in 1938.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 9-12.
- ⁵⁰ Mackay Thomson to Ernest Brown, 17th June 1940 (NAS ED 25/4) and to Parker, 17th July 1940 (NAS ED 61/27).
- ⁵¹ Hetherington, *op. cit.* p. 219.
- ⁵² Hawkins to Brown, 18 May 1940, NAS ED 61/27.
- ⁵³ Pottinger, *The Secretaries of State for Scotland* (Edinburgh University Press, 1978), p. 84.
- ⁵⁴ Brown to Ramsbotham, 23 May 1940, VA EL 2/80.
- ⁵⁵ Hunter to Westwood, 19 June 1940, NAS ED 61/27.
- ⁵⁶ Parker to Mackay Thomson, 27 June 1940, NAS ED 61/27.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁸ Mackay Thomson to Parker, 28 June 1940, NAS ED 61/27.
- ⁵⁹ Cazalet’s membership was presumably not so sensitive as she was a backbencher.
- ⁶⁰ Parker to Mackay Thomson, 11 July 1940, NAS ED 61/27.
- ⁶¹ Mackay Thomson to Parker, 17 July 1940, NAS ED 61/27.
- ⁶² Parker to Mackay Thomson, 19 July 1940, NAS ED 61/27.

Chapter 9: The Emergence of the Scottish Committee, 1941-42

By late 1941 it was evident that Scotland was not receiving its share of CEMA's activities. In November Ivor Brown, sent to Scotland to investigate, submitted a blunt report. The quantity of work was lower than it ought to be and, although there had been no public comment, he had encountered "murmurings" against CEMA. Brown concluded that if a question were asked in the Commons about Scotland's share, "a satisfactory answer might be hard to give".¹ Faced with this, and considering the plan to create a network of regional offices, Mary Glasgow saw an opportunity for restructuring the Scottish organisers' informal group as a co-ordinating committee for Scotland. She was also reacting to the semi-formal character that the organisers' group had taken on without CEMA's sanction.² Her intention was to reduce CEMA's dependency on the NCSS in Scotland. In late January 1942 she visited Edinburgh to discuss the issue, meeting with Mackay Thomson, Parker, HMSCI A. Lang and HMI Archibald Hyslop, the SED's music specialist.³ A little over a week later she invited Hyslop to chair a re-formed, Scottish Co-ordinating Committee.

The choice of Hyslop was well considered. Under pseudonyms such as 'Rae Elrick' and 'Forbes Hazelwood' (hinting at his Aberdonian origins) Hyslop wrote comic plays for BBC radio and songs for Harry Gordon.⁴ With the income from this parallel occupation he began, in the early 1930s, to build a collection of contemporary Scottish painting guided by Tom Honeyman, then an art dealer in London. By 1940 he was an important Scottish collector. Hyslop also had a close connection with the Carnegie UK Trust.⁵ Parker had kept Hyslop informed of CEMA's affairs throughout 1940 and 1941 and through Parker, he knew, for example, of Brown's report.⁶ In 1940 Honeyman, now Director of Glasgow Art Gallery, had introduced Hyslop to Hetherington.⁷ It appears

that Mary Glasgow, thinking about a Chairman for the new committee, had consulted Hetherington who proposed Hyslop.⁸ There is little trace of the Co-ordinating Committee's activities. By July its members included the three art form organisers, Yacamini, Paterson Whyte and Ellen Kemp (now secretary of the Scottish Branch of the BIAE), H. Harvey Wood of the British Council, Grace Drysdale of the NCSS, Mollie Francis of the Pilgrim Players and Struthers acting as secretary.⁹ By the end of the year the painter William MacTaggart had joined, as had the Civil Defence Recreation Officer for Scotland.¹⁰

In reforming the organisers' committee, CEMA intended no delegation of authority from London.¹¹ It did not anticipate that the new committee might become a focus for such claims, but there was inherently room for conflict because no final distinction is possible between policy-making and its implementation. Precisely what level or type of decision-making belongs to each is difficult to determine consistently, and to hold to in practice. In CEMA's case the issue was complicated because while some elements of practical work were organised at local level others (for example, tours by major orchestras, theatre companies and many exhibitions) were organised in London. Local offices sometimes knew nothing about projects planned by 'headquarters'. Over time uncertainty bred frustration and a demand for a more transparent system which entrusted more to the local level. Hard on the heels of the formation of the Co-ordinating Committee, the earliest examples of this tension began to appear, feeding a belief in Scotland that a more authoritative body was required. Hyslop's committee was, strictly speaking, powerless, without even a formal advisory role. The immediate trigger was twofold and almost simultaneous – CEMA's decision to buy work by living artists to form a collection for touring, and the decision to create its own art department to

supplement the work of the BIAE. In the autumn of 1941 Philip James, Williams's deputy at CEMA (and deputy to Mary Glasgow), made a case that visual artists had not benefited from CEMA as had musicians and actors, and that purchasing original work was the remedy.¹² A second reason was to provide opportunities for artists who had not received commissions as War Artists.¹³ In December the Council agreed.¹⁴ By the end of the year it was also apparent that the Art for the People scheme was caught between rising demand, increasingly from larger towns with art galleries, and diminishing supply from lenders. Williams urged CEMA to complement the BIAE's work by providing exhibitions for regional art galleries.¹⁵ In June an agreement on these lines was reached.¹⁶

Parker was alert to the implications for Scotland of a CEMA collection. Stanley Cursiter, who had reopened his campaign for a Gallery of Modern Art in 1941, pressed the question about who on CEMA was looking after the interests of artists resident in Scotland.¹⁷ As all the parties in Scotland would have been aware, there had been great dissatisfaction with the War Artists' scheme under which very few commissions had gone to Scottish artists. Clark, recalling his roots and ignoring the evidence of his War Artists' commissions, said that as a Scotsman "he was not likely to overlook the claims of Scottish artists".¹⁸ But although agreeing that there was a distinction to be made between Scottish artists resident in London and those who were not, he was not prepared to take his sub-committee to Scotland to see for themselves.¹⁹ It is hard to calculate the effect of one decision, but Clark's unwillingness made a bad impression. The "murmurings" which Ivor Brown had heard began to grow. Clark's attitude was taken as more evidence of indifference. Cursiter's question was potent.

Trouble with Cursiter (May-August 1942)

When James wrote a friendly letter to Cursiter in May explaining CEMA's intention to create a more ambitious exhibition programme to complement the BIAE's, and offering an exhibition of the Tate's recent acquisitions, he could not have guessed the consequences.²⁰ To Cursiter the letter underscored the failure to take up his scheme for a Gallery of Modern Art. It informed him that exhibitions of museum standard were in preparation and would be offered to Scottish regional galleries, at which his scheme also aimed. Cursiter copied James's letter to David Milne, Secretary of the SHD, his anger unconcealed. Saying "here is the sequel" to the neglect of Scottish artists, he complained about "the ease with which funds are made available in England" and the "complete lack of corresponding activities in Scotland. CEMA is under the Board of Education - again, what is the SED doing?" He concluded "May I offer this as fresh evidence that in matters of art the SED is fast asleep".²¹ Mackay Thomson took Cursiter's complaint that resident Scottish artists were not being purchased as a criticism of the SED. However, he had to accept that the facts were awkward: of 35 works bought to date, only one was by a Scot, Robert Colquhoun, who lived in London. As he could not rebut Cursiter's argument Mackay Thomson urged Parker to press CEMA to do something about it.

Hyslop had also begun to fear "some Scottish retaliation" for the lack of spending on Scottish artists and the lack of information about CEMA's new exhibitions.²² The reaction of Ellen Kemp to CEMA's new stream of exhibitions alarmed him.²³ She regarded CEMA's new role as an infringement of the Scottish Branch's capacity to organise its own exhibitions and as an encroachment by the Board into Scottish affairs. Though not mentioned, she was also protesting at a personal loss of status.²⁴ The stricter

delimitation of BIAE and CEMA responsibilities threatened to prevent her working with the major Scottish galleries, which the Scottish Branch had always done.²⁵ Struthers too had complained that James ought to have approached Cursiter through the Scottish Co-ordinating Committee.

Different views about the status of the Co-ordinating Committee had evidently appeared quickly. Parker, now the sole voice for Scotland on CEMA, was obliged to mediate between the two camps, explaining to Hyslop that as the new division of labour in exhibitions had been amicably agreed, Kemp could not portray it as an imposition. Parker rejected Struthers' position, stating the Co-ordinating Committee did not have the authority to stand between James and Cursiter, though it had the right to be kept informed. Ellen Kemp exercised him rather more. Her position, characteristically, was plainly stated, as paraphrased by Parker:

We do not want (at least I imagine we don't) to have London produce foisted upon us with no regard to local conditions.²⁶

Parker rejected this: Scottish galleries were free to do as they wished, though he personally thought it would be a mistake not to take CEMA's exhibitions. There were no good grounds for denying the Scottish public the opportunity to see works by artists living outside Scotland. But he did not directly address the underlying question posed by Kemp, which complemented Cursiter's: if CEMA were circulating exhibitions organised in London where there was little knowledge of Scottish art, how could Scottish artists be properly served by CEMA? On the issue of Scottish representation he was guarded, saying it was "on the whole reasonably satisfactory", an endorsement not

so far from declaring it entirely unsatisfactory. But Parker was unable (and unwilling) to defend CEMA on the issue of the purchase of work. Hyslop now put to Parker an idea of Cursiter's, which Kemp had relayed to him: that a collection of Scottish pictures should be formed for touring in England. Parker believed this was precisely the sort of proposal that CEMA was almost bound to support.²⁷ Hyslop was equally enthusiastic:

Scotland rightly regards itself as a nation and sometimes suspects that London treats it as a distant and not very important province! There may be just the hint of grounds for that suspicion in the apparent unwillingness of CEMA's art authorities to visit Scotland to consider purchases. Historically, the Scottish artist who has lived in London has nearly always acquired a greater reputation, and all that goes with that, than his colleague who has remained in Scotland, with the result that many of us interested in Scottish art...feel that England has never formed a fair idea of Scotland's admittedly limited artistic riches. Unfortunately, the Burlington House Exhibition of Scottish Art in 1939 was so poorly chosen as rather to foster the impression of negligibility than otherwise. CEMA, by organising a small, select show of painting by Scotsmen still living or very recently dead to be circulated in England could perform a very great service to Scottish art. I imagine something of that nature is in Cursiter's mind.²⁸

Meanwhile Cursiter had been finding spurious reasons for not taking the Tate exhibition, and had discovered from Struthers that the Treasury had granted CEMA £100,000 for the year ahead.²⁹ With this money CEMA, hitherto essentially a marginal player, emerged as a threat to Cursiter's plans. The need to overcome Cursiter's opposition was now the driving priority in Scotland. Everything began to revolve

around him as the SED, SHD and CEMA sought to persuade him that CEMA was not a danger.

At a press conference on the 18th of June, Butler announced publicly, for the first time, his hope that CEMA would continue into the post-war period. When asked by Butler to add his comments Parker made what he called “a calculated indiscretion”.³⁰ *The Glasgow Herald* reported it as “an interesting development – the getting together of a collection of Scottish paintings by modern Scottish artists to be circulated in the South...”.³¹ His aim was to signal to Cursiter that CEMA was responsive to Scottish claims. That he made public what was still only an idea was an effort to bind CEMA to it. James was by now aware that without Cursiter’s support CEMA might not prosper in Scotland, and Parker’s unscripted announcement raised no hackles. But before Parker’s comment was reported, Cursiter made a bid to take over responsibility for CEMA’s work in Scotland. In so doing he set in train the events which led to the establishment of the Scottish Committee.

The importance of Cursiter to the formation of the Scottish Committee of CEMA would be difficult to exaggerate. The dynamic of organisational growth within CEMA, which produced the re-formed Scottish Co-ordinating Committee early in 1942, was not in itself enough to lead to greater devolution. An external force was required to produce the next step and Cursiter provided that force. The national museums and galleries in Scotland had been transformed by the war, permanent collections having been removed for safe storage. The National Gallery continued to function with a sparse selection from its permanent collection and temporary exhibitions of various kinds. Cursiter regarded these as experiments exploring “lines of development for the future” (i.e.

leading towards the Gallery of Modern Art). In fact, the cessation of normal activities at the National Galleries had given him a breathing space in which to consider the future and to return to his campaign.³² This time, however, he produced a scheme that was more concrete and more ambitious than his ideas of the 1930s.

Cursiter initially regarded the work of CEMA and the BIAE as strengthening his case for the reform of Scotland's national museums and galleries when he revived the Gallery of Modern Art campaign in 1941. A lengthy memorandum to Tom Johnston laid out his argument, which was based not only upon the need for new and better spaces for the collections, but upon defining a new educational role for the Galleries as the dynamo of a unified national art education service:

Art education from nursery schools to technical colleges, art schools and universities can be envisaged as a single process in which a general knowledge is developed in the period of school age and carried to a more specialised stage in higher education, on the side of philosophy, aesthetics and the history of Art at the Universities, on the side of technical accomplishment at the colleges of Art, and the more limited application to particular processes or industrial needs at the Technical schools. The Museums and Galleries should possess the illustrative material or examples for education at all stages.³³

Lacking the range of separate institutions that London possessed (he argued), Scotland required an integrated solution in which the National Galleries would take a leading educational role. He wanted effective co-ordination of Scottish museums and galleries, with the National Galleries organising circulating exhibitions (no doubt modelled on the

Victoria and Albert Museum's scheme) to serve Scotland.³⁴ The overriding need, however, was for a Gallery of Modern Art which would become "a radiating centre of cultural influence", an image which Cursiter repeated on several occasions. Its displays would mix fine art, design and craft to present a cross-section of current art. Not only would it display work in traditional media, the Gallery would show educational and documentary films, while "music, certain elements of drama and the related art of choreography should be provided for". Teaching would be a significant part of the Gallery's work, while "closer collaboration with the smaller galleries in other centres would allow these, in turn, to become centres of influence in their own districts". Adult education bodies, the WRI and others would all draw inspiration from the new gallery.³⁵ The idea that the new gallery would encompass visual art, film, music, drama and dance was new. Two factors suggest that Cursiter had drawn on the example of CEMA. Firstly, the surprising claim that a Gallery of Modern Art should provide facilities for music, drama and dance. Facilities for showing films had obvious logic, but the argument for bringing the performing arts under the same roof was much more tenuous. The second factor is the explicit, but rather tagged-on, mention of adult education and the voluntary sector. Cursiter was offering a vision of a comprehensive institution very different from the 19th century ideal embodied in the National Galleries. Although CEMA controlled no buildings it provided the only example of a body under which diverse arts had been gathered, to provide a service for the whole of Britain. In adding music, drama and dance to his scheme, Cursiter was attempting to strengthen his argument for a distinctively Scottish solution, devised and controlled in Scotland.³⁶ The SHD expressed diplomatic interest but finance remained the fatal difficulty.³⁷ In August Cursiter took up the issue with Mackay Thomson, who was well aware that the scheme had implications for the Royal Scottish Museum (under its charge), CEMA and other

arts bodies.³⁸ Cursiter, however, did not help his own case with the SED. An article in *The Scottish Educational Journal* in October 1941 commented on a speech given by him at the opening of an Art for the People exhibition at the National Gallery.³⁹ Cursiter had again claimed that the Gallery of Modern Art should provide for music, drama and ballet as well as visual art, design and film. After publicly criticising the art examination for the Leaving Certificate and suggesting a closer relationship between the SED and the art colleges, Cursiter went on to ask for closer links between galleries, universities and art colleges, and between art and industry.⁴⁰ The speech prompted a correspondence in *The Scotsman* to which Cursiter contributed in November, citing the response to the Art for the People scheme and suggesting that

The question arises whether a centre is not necessary where such interests could be developed, linked with many other activities in the arts that have at present no home or focal point.⁴¹

Over the autumn and winter months he concentrated on building support.⁴² Cursiter presumably thought he was in a relatively strong position although the problem of finance remained to be solved. The resources that would be available for post-war reconstruction were unquantifiable, but the fact that reconstruction would take place, that planning for a more equitable society was widely accepted and that educational reform was being discussed, must have given him some confidence. Cursiter, then, felt he was making progress when he began to see a potential rival in CEMA. If it were to be successful in creating a Britain-wide network for touring exhibitions with a general educational responsibility, his proposals risked being thrust aside. Not only that, if through those exhibitions more contemporary work were made available to Scottish

galleries the case for even a conventional Gallery of Modern Art, in the struggle for post-war resources, might be seriously weakened.⁴³

In July 1942 Cursiter provided the SHD with revised plans.⁴⁴ He wished to acquire property to accommodate a print room, educational activities and a base for his touring exhibitions, arguing that they could gain experience before a new gallery was built. Once that was functioning, it would co-ordinate local educational work, and on the national scale would be linked to the SED and would circulate “art reference material” to local education authorities. From its collection, it would organise temporary exhibitions for “the lesser centres” with “the purpose of spreading the influence of the Gallery on the widest possible national basis”.⁴⁵ Cursiter was clear that this function would either take over from or at least articulate with the work of the BIAE and CEMA.⁴⁶ That he really wished to assume responsibility for CEMA’s work in Scotland is stated in a memorandum of June 1942, written a week after submitting the revised plan (on the day after Butler’s press conference):

If you like to bring into existence an organisation to run both the affairs of CEMA and Art for the People, I shall undertake to supervise and administer the whole show. ... Let CEMA set up the organisation and put it into my hands as a unit - I shall keep it wound up - and eventually it will be a part of my Modern Art Gallery, in a semi-independent relationship if necessary, but as part of the general focus of art activities.⁴⁷

Although Hyslop had by now made progress with the Scottish exhibition (and had drawn Honeyman into the discussion) the substance of Cursiter’s challenge to CEMA

was not answerable in these terms.⁴⁸ Hyslop now chaired a meeting with the National Galleries' trustees at which, according to Cursiter, agreement was reached that "nothing could be done until a Scottish CEMA Committee has been appointed" (not something in Hyslop's gift). This was essential for Cursiter to realise his post-war plans, and a critical decision was required.⁴⁹ CEMA of course would not consent to handing its affairs over to an effectively independent Scottish body. The SED and SHD worked to secure a compromise. Parker suggested three steps (as Glasgow recorded) to settle the matter.⁵⁰ The first was to appoint a Scottish representative to the Council and the second to appoint a Regional Officer for Scotland. The third step, agreed reluctantly by Glasgow (noting "if the Secretary of State would really like it"), was to "appoint a more authoritative committee" for Scotland. The preferred choice for representative on CEMA, and logically for Chairman of the new committee, was Hector Hetherington. Glasgow agreed to put the matter privately to Keynes.⁵¹

Glasgow's note is of some interest. It seems that Parker must have told Glasgow that if Tom Johnston were involved he would demand a strong Scottish committee. It also hints that Johnston may already have expressed an interest.⁵² Glasgow had no choice but to put it to Keynes. There were good reasons why CEMA should concede. The blockade against its exhibitions laid down by Cursiter had to be lifted. There could also be no denying that the issue of Scottish representation had been handled badly from the start. CEMA was belatedly discovering that the senior figures of the art establishment in Scotland would not consent to decisions being made without representation and without a satisfactory degree of devolved authority in Scotland, if not full autonomy. And CEMA could not afford to make an enemy of the uniquely powerful Tom Johnston. This was already a sensitive moment. Butler had only recently offered his public

endorsement and CEMA as yet had no Treasury guarantee of survival. The risk was that it might lose its functions in Scotland and cease to have Britain-wide authority, and perhaps with that lose its footing entirely. The possibility of CEMA being dismembered had to be countered, and Keynes therefore came reluctantly to accept Parker's proposals. In the case of a new Scottish committee, however, he was prepared to offer only the minimum to achieve peace and quiet. He was to be immediately disappointed.

James arrived in Edinburgh in mid-August and conducted some rapid shuttle diplomacy, between Cursiter and Honeyman (acting in unison) on the one hand, and the SHD and SED on the other. He found the former pressing "for an autonomous, all embracing organisation under their control, or on the running of which they could have a great deal to say".⁵³ Cursiter would neither take CEMA touring exhibitions nor set up his own unless he had a guarantee that they would continue under the development scheme he had submitted to the SHD. But should an organisation be set up under his control, he would collaborate with CEMA. James then visited the SHD.⁵⁴ He proposed that Cursiter should join the new stronger committee and, if an art sub-committee were formed, should be its Chairman.⁵⁵ He hoped that this would satisfy Cursiter and Honeyman that they had the organisation they were asking for. Milne, who had been preparing Cursiter for a compromise and had certainly discussed the form it might take with Parker, was confident that this would resolve the impasse. James now returned to Cursiter and Honeyman and presented this to them. They became (as he remarked) "far more ready to play", so ready indeed that Cursiter provisionally agreed to take the Tate exhibition and Honeyman booked it for Glasgow.⁵⁶ Their speedy agreement was based on a misunderstanding. Cursiter appears to have believed that his argument that CEMA's activities in Scotland should be co-ordinated by him as an element within his

overall plan for the National Galleries had been accepted. This was the key misapprehension that caused the later breakdown. Assuming they were on common ground, he wrote to Milne:

If we are to take part in this scheme, I shall have to get a lead from you. The S of S might indicate that he is interested in these developments and commend them to the attention of the Board [of the National Galleries] - or something of that kind. You will remember that I have already submitted the scheme to the Board at their last meeting and they turned it down - flat. Certain members of the Board have only one idea - that the National Gallery should return exactly to its pre-war condition as quickly as possible. They avoid as far as they can any participation in the activities I have carried on during recent months...⁵⁷

To Milne this implied only that he should write to the National Galleries' trustees expressing the Scottish Secretary's endorsement of CEMA to win over the conservative elements on Cursiter's Board for the deal which he (and James) thought had been struck. It did not mean to him, as Cursiter intended it should, that in return for taking CEMA exhibitions, the Scottish Office should endorse his development plan, to persuade his more reluctant trustees to back it. Both Cursiter and Honeyman felt that they had been offered a major concession, but whether or not James had implied more than he ought, CEMA was to place a very different interpretation upon the 'agreement'.

Parker provides a direct insight into the reasons why, in his view, a separate Scottish organisation should not be sought except "in the last resort if the question becomes a political issue".⁵⁸ He reflected (not wholly accurately) that the primary reason why a

separate Scottish CEMA had not been set up in 1940 had been that the Pilgrim Trust money raised a technical difficulty. Now that the Treasury provided all the funding he conceded that there was no insuperable problem with a separate allocation for Scotland and hence his arguments against it were pragmatic, though nonetheless substantial. CEMA had negotiated a complicated series of agreements with various ministries which (for example) gave it access to factories, a supply of petrol coupons and helped release artists from National Service. All these would have to be negotiated again by a new Scottish organisation. Secondly, he argued separate administrations would be less efficient than a unified one, potentially inhibiting the “free exchange of artistic activities” between the two countries. Finally it would mean “the ability and acquired experience of the existing CEMA staff” in London would be lost to Scotland. Though these were hardly watertight arguments, Parker believed that separation was not desirable.

He mooted three possible Scottish representatives for the Council: Hetherington, Sir James Irvine and Osborne Mavor. The other step he described as being to establish “a strong Scottish Committee to plan CEMA activities in Scotland in accordance with the general policy laid down by the Council in London”.⁵⁹ Parker saw two potential difficulties. In superseding the Co-ordinating Committee he feared the new committee might inherit a residue of bad feeling. More seriously he feared conflict between the Scottish Committee and CEMA on questions of policy. There could be no question of creating a body so strong that it could break CEMA apart, but yet it had to be strong enough to rally Scottish support: a delicate balance to hit. The Scottish Office had to manage Scottish expectations along a moderate track that, though its ultimate destination might be obscure, at least gave the promise that the centre would hold for

the foreseeable future. Hyslop agreed that a separate Scottish organisation was not the solution. What was needed was an organisation that “would form a sort of Scottish branch of the main firm capable of advising London on our special conditions in Scotland”. Hyslop’s vision of an organisation empowered to offer advice though not to make policy was perhaps the closest of the Scottish interpretations to Keynes’s. On the issue of the new Chairman he strongly favoured Hetherington, while Irvine’s position as a Pilgrim Trustee argued against him. Of Mavor he wrote:

Bridie I have met. He is, by the way, a skilful amateur artist and has a healthy interest in modern Scottish painting. About music I am not so certain, though I shall be surprised if he were not competent there, too. But he is rather a shy man and, I understand, not a very practical one. He might be the ideal Scottish representative, but I ha’e my doots.⁶⁰

Trouble with Cursiter (August-December 1942)

By the middle of August, then, a compromise seemed to have been reached. A stronger Scottish Committee would be formed, possibly chaired by Hetherington, on which Cursiter would be a member. An art sub-committee would be formed, chaired by Cursiter with Honeyman as a likely member. Other art form committees would probably follow. A month later the ‘agreement’ had collapsed. Still thinking in terms of his grand design, Cursiter suggested to the SHD that the additional funding the scheme required would be best made in the form of a substantial grant to the National Galleries to cover all the expenses of new activities.⁶¹ Milne’s office asked Cursiter for an estimate of the costs for working with CEMA.⁶² Saying that perhaps he hadn’t made

himself clear in his earlier letter, Cursiter replied that his participation in CEMA's scheme was dependent on his trustees having the Scottish Secretary's support for:

...the general art policy of this Gallery, in which the CEMA scheme could only form a part. My impression is that the Board would be unwilling to reconsider the CEMA scheme unless as either an independent scheme for Scotland - which I understand has been ruled out - or as part of the general policy of development for the Scottish National Galleries which we still have under discussion.⁶³

He concluded that he could only pursue the issue of working with CEMA if it was understood to be "a contribution to the development schemes we have been discussing." Two days later he sent an abrupt note to say that he had encountered "unexpected resistance" among his trustees and that he had perhaps gone further than his Board would agree.⁶⁴ The crisis was enough to persuade Parker to travel to Edinburgh.⁶⁵ He no doubt discussed the situation with Keynes, who raised the matter with Butler, sharing the concern that a breakaway Scottish organisation might emerge. Butler commented:

...in this matter I think we must walk with real caution. I can see serious political difficulties ahead unless the situation is adequately handled.⁶⁶

He clearly feared that Johnston might back a breakaway Scottish organisation if the wrangling were prolonged.⁶⁷ Parker too believed that any drift towards a separate Scottish solution had to be contained. In Edinburgh he met Mackay Thomson and Hyslop to discuss "Cursiter's games".⁶⁸ They believed that Cursiter was reneging on the understanding he had given James. Patience having run thin, they agreed that if a letter

stating that the Scottish Secretary was represented on CEMA was not sufficient to produce a change of heart, CEMA should offer its exhibitions to the RSA. Hetherington should be invited to become the Scottish representative, and any further discussion about a new Scottish committee should wait until he had been appointed.

Despite deep suspicion of Cursiter in London, CEMA agreed to placate him by inviting him to chair the selection committee for the Scottish exhibition. Parker now advised Milne that with this olive branch the moment had come to recommend CEMA's exhibitions. Milne emphasised to Cursiter that co-operation was in his long-term interest, that working with CEMA might actually further his plans rather than prejudice them.⁶⁹ It was insufficient. Cursiter's conviction that CEMA would undermine his vision was a fixed obstacle to co-operation. At the next trustees' meeting it was reaffirmed that the National Galleries would not co-operate in the absence of a commitment to Cursiter's development plan.⁷⁰ The SED attributed the difficulties primarily to Cursiter rather than his trustees.⁷¹ Cursiter duly refused to join the exhibition selection committee.⁷² Honeyman joined shortly afterwards, and CEMA now agreed to offer its exhibitions to the RSA.

Osborne Mavor becomes Scottish Chairman

By early October Hetherington had declined the invitation to join CEMA.⁷³ Osborne Mavor, first considered in 1940 and not now on active service, was suggested next. He was an obvious but astute choice, the first Scottish playwright and the only contemporary one to achieve an international reputation. He had begun to write before the First World War with the encouragement of Alfred Wareing, and by the early 1930s no living Scottish artist in any medium had comparable status. Under no illusions about

how success could be sustained Mavor had most of his mature work premiered in London. Though written with the larger English audience in mind his work was rooted in the middle-class Scottish culture in which he had grown up, and in the English that was his native tongue. One of his plays, *Holy Isle*, was to open in London in December 1942 and another, *Mr. Bolfry*, followed in August 1943.⁷⁴ Mavor was interested in music and visual art, moderately traditional in his own tastes but impeccably liberal in outlook. Edwin Morgan describes him as a:

...moderate-minded, non-religious, ironical, middle-class Lowland Scot who discovers his talent for writing plays during a period of renascent Scottish nationalism, and also in a period of violently clashing ideologies...but finds it hard to commit himself to any of them.⁷⁵

Mavor's sceptical realism immunised him against excesses of political passion.⁷⁶ Walter Elliot was his closest personal friend and Mavor himself was if anything a Tory, describing himself (somewhat later) as "an old-fashioned liberal and Humanist".⁷⁷

The SED's deliberations were forestalled by Glasgow who, without consulting the Scottish Office, suggested to Butler that the Earl of Selkirk, Lord George Nigel Douglas Hamilton, would be suitable.⁷⁸ He had been Commissioner for the Special Areas in Scotland and Chairman of the Scottish Film Council. Butler had welcomed the idea.⁷⁹ The suggestion seemingly originated with Wilkie, one of Glasgow's confidantes in Scotland, but it is possible that Hetherington (who had connections with the Scottish Film Council and the Carnegie UK Trust) had suggested the Earl as an alternative to himself. Mavor was dropped and Mackay Thomson put the Earl's name to Johnston.⁸⁰

Only now (repeating the contre-temps over Mavor in 1940) was it discovered that he was on active service with the RAF.⁸¹ A week later Johnston submitted two names to Butler, proposing that both be appointed. In another reversion to the summer of 1940 the names were the Duchess of Atholl and Mavor. Butler pointed out that as a new Scottish Committee was to be formed, only one appointment was required. He concluded:

...as you tell me the names of those you have in mind to nominate, may I take the opportunity of saying that I think that Dr. O. H. Mavor would be a most welcome addition to the Council and on the whole we here would put him before my Aunt Kitty Atholl!⁸²

Butler's preference was hardly surprising: unlike the aunt the nephew had supported appeasement. Significantly, Johnston insisted that, for the sake of Scottish opinion, the appointment must be announced as having been made by him "after consultation" with Butler.⁸³ The Scottish Secretary henceforward had a definite role in appointments to CEMA and the Arts Council.

¹ Report to Council, November 1941, NA ED 136/190.

² Wilkie to Glasgow, 13 March 1942, VA EL 3/91.

³ He was well regarded in the SED. In April 1942 he was appointed to a panel to review infant and primary school education and in September was appointed to fill William Arbuckle's post for the duration of his secondment to the SHD.

⁴ Smith (op. cit.) discusses the 'dialectical disparity' between Hyslop's self-conception as a supporter of contemporary art and his conservative tastes. She notes also the disparity with his comic Kailyardery.

⁵ In May 1940 Wilkie involved him in the discussion about the relationship of the Carnegie UK Trust to CEMA.

⁶ Hyslop's hand-written reply to Parker commenting on Brown's report shows that he thought that leadership was needed to encourage Britain "to express itself musically in its own traditional songs" not in modern popular songs. Giving an unintentionally heartless example he wrote that he had been "shocked to read that the little evacuees, when their ship was torpedoed in the Atlantic, had nothing better to sing than "Roll Out the Barrell" – a vulgar tune". His reference is to the sinking of the *City of Benares* on 17 September 1940 in which 73 children drowned.

⁷ Hyslop papers, AAG.

⁸ Parker, memorandum Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, p. 4, 12 August 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

⁹ Glasgow to Parker, 29 July 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

¹⁰ Minutes of the Co-ordinating Committee, 3 December 1942, VA EL 2/80. On one occasion at least Edwin Muir is recorded as attending for the British Council.

¹¹ Glasgow to Hyslop, 4 February 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

¹² CEMA Committee Paper CXII, September 1941, ED 136/190.

¹³ *CEMA Bulletin No. 30*, October 1942, ACE.

¹⁴ Minutes of CEMA Council, 3 December 1941, VA EL 1/6.

¹⁵ Williams to Glasgow, 3 December 1941, NA ED 136/190.

¹⁶ Note of meeting, 5 June 1942, NA ED 136/190.

¹⁷ Parker to W.A. Williams, 13 February 1942; Williams to Parker, undated note appended to Parker's memorandum, NAS ED 61/27. The origin of the campaign for a Gallery of Modern Art lay in the acceptance by the Royal Commission on National Museums and Galleries in 1929 that Scotland had no gallery corresponding to the Tate Gallery in London. The major problem was the Commission's decision that no public finance should be made available, but that a new gallery should be funded by public-spirited citizens. In 1932 Cursiter submitted a memorandum to the Standing Commission on Museums and Galleries dealing with issues such as lack of space, inadequate facilities, the need for better educational provision, a Department of Prints and a Gallery of Modern Art. The Commission, however, could go no further than the Royal Commission, hoping only that private sponsors would fund the needed buildings. The convening of the Gilmour Committee on Scottish Administration prompted Cursiter to take up the issue again in December 1936. This time he began to define the sort of institution at which he was aiming. He objected to what he saw as a tendency to treat museums as static "super still-life" groups dislocated from the life of the communities they existed to serve. Considering museums in Holland and the USA, he found they did two things their British counterparts did not. In Holland excellent collections were often housed in relatively minor towns, making the collections revolve around "the convenience of the visitor"; while in the USA museums were "closely linked with the educational system." Cursiter proposed that the work of the Scottish National Galleries should be more fully integrated with the educational system, working closely with the universities and art colleges and building on the work of schools. It should not (he argued) be placed under the SED: it must avoid at all costs the atmosphere of an educational institution. His ideal was a gallery which would place works of art in an environment with "furniture, textiles and accessories of contemporary life, composed to stimulate and create a higher appreciation". In the event the issue was not considered relevant to the Gilmour Committee's remit and the Scottish Office, thinking Cursiter's ideas "too nebulous", let the matter rest. Cursiter returned to the battle again in 1938, only to be told once more that the Royal Commission's terms remained an insurmountable obstacle. Despite this, he proselytised for the Gallery of Modern Art among Scottish institutions and artists, and promoted the idea to the public in newspaper articles and in *The Studio*. By 1939 Cursiter had a clear idea of what his new national institution should be like. Its defining characteristics were that it would be more actively educational (with study and lecture rooms), would still encourage contemplative study and would not be overly didactic in its displays. It would bring fine and applied art, industrial design and crafts together as a means of developing a whole understanding of visual quality rather than (as in a conventional gallery) separating them from one another (NAS ED 3/41). This was the position when, in 1941, he returned to the campaign.

¹⁸ Quoted in Parker to Hyslop, 10 June 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

¹⁹ Parker to Donnelly, 18 February 1942, NAS ED 61/27. Parker had raised both issues at the Council meeting on the 17th (VA EL 1/6).

²⁰ James to Cursiter, 14 May 1942, NAS ED 39/18.

²¹ Cursiter to Milne, 18 May 1942, NAS ED 39/18.

²² Hyslop to Parker, 6 June 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

²³ The letter is not preserved but Parker's reply to Hyslop quoted from it and replied to it in detail.

²⁴ Parker to Hyslop, 10 June 1942, NAS ED 61/27. He had explained to Kemp that under the new arrangements "she must expect to deal only with the BIAE 'pioneer' work". Later, in November, Kemp visited Mackay Thomson seemingly on her own initiative to request the SED to issue a circular to encourage Education Authorities to contribute to the expenses of CEMA exhibitions. Her presumption irritated him, but she also accused CEMA of dealing tactlessly with Cursiter. Mackay Thomson "had none of this" (he told Parker) but she appeared to believe that if the request to co-operate with CEMA had come from her, Cursiter would have agreed. According to Mackay Thomson "she seemed to think his refusal to play quite reasonable when the request came from an English body", quoting her as saying "After all, some respect must be paid to Scottish Nationalist feelings in matters such as this". He concluded "I do not like Mrs. Kemp much. I should think she needs watching, and her whole attitude throughout the interview gave me some idea of the trouble you must be having with CEMA...." Her

cousin Jean Willison, who knew her best after 1948, said (in an interview with me at her home in Edinburgh, April 2000) that she was not a Scottish Nationalist. It seems that she was motivated by cultural feelings and a partial knowledge of the circumstances of the dispute with Cursiter. From interviews with her cousin and Cordelia Oliver (who met her in 1944) and from surviving correspondence, it is evident that Ellen Kemp was a forthright person and this did not make her popular. She was regarded as 'difficult' and was critical of her colleagues at least in later years. Hyslop and James did not regard her as suitable to become the Scottish Regional Officer, Hyslop noting that she was not "universally persona grata" (Hyslop to Parker, after 13 August 1942, NAS ED 39/18).

²⁵ Hyslop to Parker, 14 June 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

²⁶ Parker to Hyslop, 10 June 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

²⁷ Parker to Hyslop, 10 June 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

²⁸ Hyslop to Parker, 14 June 1942, NAS ED 61/27. Smith (op. cit.) attributes the idea of a Scottish exhibition touring in England to Hyslop, but it seems from this exchange that it was Cursiter's idea. Hyslop went on to ask Parker's permission to copy his letter to Hetherington (shortly to become his brother in law) because Kemp had written to him too, and he was "keenly interested in the whole question". This is one of the few direct references to Hetherington's background role, which was considerable at different times.

²⁹ Struthers to James, 17 June 1942, NAS ED 61/27 and Cursiter to Milne, 19 June 1942, NAS ED 39/18. This was equivalent to almost £3 million in 2003 terms.

³⁰ Parker to Hyslop, 20 June 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

³¹ *The Glasgow Herald*, 25 June 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

³² Cursiter to Milne, undated memorandum (reply to memorandum of 20 November 1941), NAS ED 3/41.

³³ Memorandum to the Secretary of State for Scotland, February 1941, NAS ED 3/41.

³⁴ Cursiter offered as examples a local scheme run by Edinburgh Education Authority and a similar scheme in Derbyshire which had been sponsored by the Carnegie UK Trust for a number of years.

³⁵ Memorandum to the Secretary of State for Scotland, February 1941, NAS ED 3/41.

³⁶ Perhaps the clearest statement of this was made later: "New factors have emerged in the situation. The Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts has entered upon an extended programme including the circulation of Art Exhibitions. The general outline of the CEMA scheme agrees closely, in parts, with the proposals put forward by the Board of Trustees, with this difference, the Board's proposals are on a wider basis and designed to meet the particular needs of Scotland and to link with existing Scottish art institutions. In the view of the Board if a Gallery of Modern Art, such as they have suggested, was already in existence such a gallery would form the ideal centre through which the CEMA scheme, as proposed, could function - indeed, the CEMA scheme would form a very necessary part of the scheme put forward by the board, but, in itself, the CEMA scheme is insufficient for Scotland's needs." (Unsigned, undated paper, NAS ED 3/41).

³⁷ Milne, SHD note, 28 March 1941, NAS ED 3/41.

³⁸ Mackay Thomson to McQueen Walker, undated, NAS ED 3/41.

³⁹ The speech was given on 17 October 1941 and reported in *The Scottish Educational Journal*, 24 October 1941, NLS Acc. 5451/18. It was also reported in *The Times Educational Supplement* (25 October 1941, NAS ED 3/41).

⁴⁰ This brought a sharp rebuke from Mackay Thomson to Milne: "Would you, or your Establishment Officer, be so good as to bring him to book for this misconduct, and tell him that if he dislikes the policy of the SED this is not the most promising means of inducing us to alter it?" Mackay Thomson objected to Cursiter's "interfering in matters which are not his concern" (Mackay Thomson to Milne, 25 February 1942). He later described Cursiter's plans as "hare-brained". Mackay Thomson had little enthusiasm for the convening of the Sixth Advisory Committee. He believed that despite the war there were no grounds for significant educational reform, in particular to the Leaving Certificate, which Cursiter had publicly criticised. He requested that Milne "remind" Johnston that the Scottish Committee of the Council for Art and Industry (of which Cursiter was a member) had considered much of this agenda a few years previously, arguing there was no need to cover the same ground again. He agreed that if the SHD wished to review the functions of the National Galleries, some clarification of the role of the Royal Scottish Museum (for which the SED was responsible) would be reasonable. But he would not concede that an enquiry should be so general "as to embrace "art training in schools" or "modifications of the qualifying course for Art Teachers" and the like. There are other and more important educational questions to consider when S of S thinks fit." Cursiter was not deterred from trying to get art education on to the agenda of the Sixth Advisory Council. In the autumn of 1942 he informed Milne that Honeyman had independently reached the same conclusions about art education in Scotland. Honeyman had been seeking closer relations between Glasgow Art Galleries, Glasgow University and Glasgow School of Art.

He had prepared a memorandum for Sir Hector Hetherington and circulated it to Cursiter, who had asked him to send it to Johnston (Cursiter to Milne, 31 October 1942). Honeyman did so in November calling it a "sketchy outline" for further discussion with "informative and interested friends". The memo begins with the case for better education to enable people to deepen their understanding of art. Teaching in primary and kindergarten was excellent and in secondary schools attempts were being made to make a larger place for art. This had led to a paper on Art History and Appreciation in the Higher Leaving Certificate, but it was not uniformly successful. In art schools, evidence showed that prospective art teachers made a prior choice for teaching and were not choosing it because they were not sufficiently talented to practice as artists. They spent four years working for a Diploma "but no time is devoted to the study of aesthetics or complementary subjects" and the status of art teachers was lower than other specialist teachers in day schools. He was sceptical that the training at Teacher Training Colleges (a 6-month course) was adequate. It was at universities that the problems should be tackled first, and MA courses in Fine Art should be established (Honeyman to Johnston, 5 November 1942). At the time of this correspondence in early 1942, the issue of Dartington Hall's 'Art Enquiry' also arose. It was understood to be a fact-finding survey into the state of the arts, of which the visual arts would form one report, covering the whole of Great Britain. The Scottish Office was prepared to support the enquiry so long as it was limited to a factual remit and would not make recommendations. The organiser of the enquiry, Christopher Martin, was put in touch with Cursiter who expected to be invited to join the enquiry as a Scottish representative. Martin died suddenly in 1942 and the Art Enquiry was not in the end extended to Scotland. Perhaps because of this, in November Johnston assured Sir Steven Bilsland, Chairman of the Scottish Committee on Art and Industry, that he would place the issue of art and design education before the Sixth Advisory Council. Cursiter was arguing his case for the Gallery of Modern Art within the Committee on Art and Industry, and the Committee's submission to the Sixth Advisory Council (in May 1943) included it within its general argument (all references NAS ED 3/41.)

⁴¹ *The Scotsman*, 22 November 1941, NAS ED 3/41.

⁴² Notes of meetings, 12 and 19 November 1941, NAS ED 3/41.

⁴³ This is an interesting question. Did the success of the Arts Council help postpone the establishment of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art? Whatever the answer, Cursiter's anxiety was not irrational.

⁴⁴ Cursiter to Milne, 14 July 1942, NAS ED 3/41 (File Two).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* That CEMA was an example is shown by Cursiter's statement that if an item were selected for inclusion in a circulating show, the artist, craftsman or manufacturer should be paid a rental for the hire "as is done in the case of circulating exhibitions under CEMA".

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Cursiter to Milne, 19 June 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

⁴⁸ Hyslop to Parker, 20 June 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

⁴⁹ Cursiter to Milne, 24 July 1942, NAS ED 39/18.

⁵⁰ Glasgow to Parker, 29 July 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Parker sent a memorandum about CEMA to Milne on 7 August. It was intended as a briefing paper for Johnston if it was required (Parker to Mackay Thomson, 7 August 1942, NAS ED 61/27).

⁵³ CEMA Art Activities in Scotland. Report on a Visit to Edinburgh, 13-15 August 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

⁵⁴ He met Milne, Cunningham, Mackay Thomson and McQueen Walker (note of the meeting by Cunningham, copied to Mackay Thomson and Parker, 13 August 1942, NAS ED 39/18).

⁵⁵ Cunningham to Mackay Thomson and Parker, 1 August 1942, NAS ED 39/18.

⁵⁶ CEMA Art Activities in Scotland. Report on a Visit to Edinburgh, 13-15 August 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

⁵⁷ Cursiter to Milne, 15 August 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

⁵⁸ Parker to Milne (memorandum) 7 August, 1942, NAS ED 61/27, p. 3.

⁵⁹ This description is interesting because it may reflect the terms in which Parker had discussed the committee with Glasgow, and hence the terms in which James discussed it with Cursiter and Honeyman. The power to "plan...in accordance with...general policy" suggest more than the advisory role which CEMA insisted, with great persistence, was its true function. If so, it would explain why Cursiter and Honeyman were content with the outcome of the meeting.

⁶⁰ Hyslop to Parker, after 13 August 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

⁶¹ Cursiter to Milne, 15 August 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

⁶² Macdonald to Cursiter, 5 September 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

⁶³ Cursiter to Milne, 8 September 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

⁶⁴ Cursiter to Milne, 10 September 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

⁶⁵ Parker to Hyslop, 11 September 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

⁶⁶ Butler to Keynes, 22 September 1942, KCC PP 84/1/119. On the same day he made a speech at the National Gallery in London in which he said CEMA "was a war-time development which might grow to something valuable after the war" (NA ED 138/14).

⁶⁷ A letter from Butler to Keynes in September shows not only that they wanted to secure an unnamed favoured candidate for Scottish representative (presumably Hetherington) but that Butler had already agreed with Tom Johnston that they would consult on the appointment (Butler to Keynes, 26 September 1942, KCC PP 84/1/122).

⁶⁸ Parker to Milne, 26 September 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

⁶⁹ Milne to Cursiter, 8 October 1942, NAS ED 39/18.

⁷⁰ Mackay Thomson to Milne, 9 November 1942, NAS ED 3/41. Cursiter later suggested that Honeyman should take his place on the new Scottish Committee if he felt unable to join. Given their closeness throughout this period it seems likely that they were in agreement about Honeyman's chairing the selection committee.

⁷¹ Parker thought Cursiter had "washed his hands of CEMA altogether" (Parker to Hyslop, 28 October 1942, NAS ED 61/27). Hyslop wrote that "I had not realised that Cursiter declines to have any part in us - I thought he was boggling merely at the Chairmanship. Well, well! I like Cursiter, and hope I am not misjudging him in thinking his conduct slightly adolescent in this matter" (Hyslop to Parker, 30 October 1942, NAS ED 61/27).

⁷² Cursiter to Milne, 20 October 1942, NAS ED 39/18.

⁷³ In 1943 he became the first Chairman of the Scottish Council for Social Service.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p. 90 and p. 88.

⁷⁵ Morgan, *Crossing the Border; essays on Scottish Literature* (Manchester, Carcanet, 1990), p. 161

⁷⁶ He professed to be "one of those who think the only proper functions of a Government are to protect its nationals from War, Famine and Pestilence; but I, and those who think as I do, have no chance against the tide" (*The State and the Arts*, undated draft (1944), NLS Acc. 11309/35). This is not to be taken literally: he fully supported state intervention in the arts. On another occasion he stated he was "a Realist of the Scottish schools", which is probably a more accurate description (*A Note on Escapism*, undated draft, NLS Acc. 11309/36).

⁷⁷ Bridie and McLaren, *A Small Stir: Letters on the English* (London, Hollis and Carter, 1949), p. 101.

⁷⁸ It was ostensibly to meet the Earl's brother the Duke of Hamilton that Rudolph Hess had flown to Scotland in May 1941.

⁷⁹ Parker to Hyslop, 2 October 1942, NAS ED 61/27. Hyslop informed Parker that Lady Hetherington (by now his sister in law) thought highly of the Earl who was "interested in the arts and has "drive without push" i.e. drive of the right kind without an admixture of the wrong" (Hyslop to Parker, 10 October 1942, NAS ED 61/27). The suggestion that he would not rock any boats seems accurate. In 1937, he replaced John Buchan as Chairman of the SFC. The right of the SFC to nominate a Scottish governor on the BFI had just been raised and in the end the Scottish Office made the nomination without reference to the SFC. The Earl "thought the SFC should not press its claims to a greater part in future nominations than had been done in this case" (SFTA 1/1/250).

⁸⁰ Mackay Thomson to Johnston, 10 November 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

⁸¹ SFTA 1/1/251.

⁸² Butler to Johnston, 20 November 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

⁸³ Johnston to Butler, 25 November 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

Chapter 10: Creating the Scottish Committee

In his invitation to Mavor to become Chairman of the new Scottish Committee, Johnston said of CEMA that:

...owing to changes in its membership it no longer includes anybody who is entitled to represent Scottish interests except an officer of the Scottish Education Department who attends the meetings as departmental assessor.¹

Johnston seems to charge Mavor with the representative function that CEMA opposed. Mavor certainly believed this was his role, and even that he should report directly to Johnston. That he had already been thinking about CEMA and its inadequate Scottish representation emerges from his letter of acceptance, in which he commented “for a long time now I have been etting to badger you about getting a Scottish representative on the Board [sic]...a non-departmental one, I mean”.² This is a reminder that he and Johnston knew one another, dating from Glasgow University days. Mavor’s thoughts about CEMA were not entirely disinterested. He had been involved in talks about creating a civic theatre in Glasgow, which led to the opening, in October 1943, of the Citizens’ Theatre, with a guarantee against loss from CEMA.

The Council of State recorded Mavor’s appointment on the first of December.³ It was preceded by that of Mary Fox, an employee of the Scottish Health Department, as National Officer for Scotland.⁴ The SED provided CEMA with its first office in Scotland, at the Royal Scottish Museum, with a typewriter borrowed from the NCSS. The museum library became the meeting place for the new Scottish Committee.⁵ Shortly afterwards Fox met Mavor whom she already knew (though not closely) and

together they thought to move CEMA's office from Edinburgh to Glasgow, where both lived. As she explained to Mary Glasgow, CEMA would find more support there and it had the virtue of being a much less "obvious" choice than Edinburgh.⁶ If Mary Glasgow thought this was a bad sign, worse was to come. CEMA was contemplating a simple organisation in Scotland comprising the new, somewhat stronger, Scottish Committee and an art sub-committee. Fox would chair a separate meeting of art-form organisers. CEMA's determination to limit the Scottish Committee's powers is shown by Glasgow's preference that its grant for music in Scotland should continue to be paid to the NCSS's Scottish Advisory Committee despite the problems they had had. She also proposed several members.⁷ The motive is clear: to minimise the power of the Scottish Committee and reduce the opportunities for fellow travellers of Cursiter by placing on it as many safe hands as possible. With the NCSS retaining its role, music and drama tours organised from London, amateur drama soon to be dropped, visual art under the control of the BIAE and CEMA, the Scottish Committee would be little more than a talking shop.

Mavor met with Johnston and Parker on the eighth of December and was asked by Johnston to make "proposals for reconstituting and strengthening the Scottish Advisory Committee [sic] to guide CEMA policy in Scotland".⁸ This was Johnston's formulation, for in mentioning policy it went further than CEMA would have wished. Within a week Mavor had attended his first Council meeting.⁹ The events of the final two weeks of December show that Mavor understood Johnston to want a body with substantial control of policy in Scotland. His idea was for a near-autonomous Scottish CEMA, he to be its link to London. On the 23rd he wrote to Keynes, beginning in characteristic style by saying that the Scots were "an orgulous race" and that he had been

“pitchforked” on to the Council by Johnston, who envisaged a committee that would “look after the purely national aspect of CEMA’s work”.¹⁰ What (he wanted to know) was Keynes’s view of its powers? Mavor revealed his own opinion by warning Keynes that the word ‘advisory’ would put off some potential members “as they have had some experience of the BBC and its polite manner of ignoring its advisers”.¹¹ He then asked if the committee might have some independence:

It would of course be responsible to the Council; but I am very clear in my mind that some measure of devolution is necessary if CEMA is to be popular in Scotland. If you can give me some sort of assurance on these points, I think I can collect a Committee that would be pleasing both to the Council and to the Scottish public.¹²

Keynes’s reply, written on New Year’s Day, informed Mavor that authority resided unambiguously with the Board of Education and was not shared with the Scottish Office, whatever role it might have in making nominations.¹³ He stated his opposition to the Scottish Committee having, or needing, much power: CEMA and its organisation must be kept small.

We have taken a big step forward, we hope, in acquiring your services on the Council - even now we don't want to call you a Scottish “representative” because the President has invited you to join the Council for yourself, not simply because you are a Scotsman. At the same time we have appointed a full-time salaried officer in Scotland. I am convinced that too much official support would merely hamper you and her in your activities.

...the present informal Committee...should develop into something rather more authoritative under your Chairmanship, but...its function should not differ greatly from that of the present body. It should be a means of centralising information about CEMA activities in Scotland and of collecting suggestions and appeals for help. I don't see how, in the last resort, we can avoid the word "advisory". ...I feel nothing should be done in a hurry, and I hope that the Secretary of State will not wish to press this point...¹⁴

The Scottish Three Arts Council

Before receiving this minatory message Mavor had gone ahead and drafted a plan for Johnston. He was certain that much of its effectiveness would depend upon the people who joined, and that in turn depended on its powers. Outlining his ideas to Parker, he asked whether Cursiter's Gallery of Modern Art (which he noted was "also designed as a cultural centre for music and drama...the sort of thing with which CEMA appears to concern itself") would fall under its scope. Cursiter, he informed him, would join the Committee if it did. He also enquired whether it might report to the Scottish Secretary as well as to CEMA.¹⁵

It is a question of status. A simple-sub-Committee of CEMA is not likely to prove attractive to the kind of man we want. If, on the other hand, the Committee has some of the authority of the Forestry Commission applied to the Arts, it would be very attractive indeed.¹⁶

The word 'advisory' should be avoided, as should a title that suggested that it would be a sub-committee of "an English organisation".¹⁷ He proposed that it be called The

Scottish Three Arts Council, adding (probably innocently) “I think Lord Keynes would approve of this”.¹⁸ He presumably anticipated Johnston’s approval too. The plan surprised Parker and Mackay Thomson but appalled Keynes and Glasgow. Encouraged by Johnston’s instruction, what Mavor was thrusting towards them was effectively the autonomous Scottish body they had been resisting for months. The very word ‘council’ revealed the scale of Mavor’s ambition.

A representative nominated by the Scottish Secretary would sit on CEMA’s Council. A direct line of accountability would run to the Scottish Office from the Three Arts Council as well as to CEMA. The Three Arts Council itself would have seven members. Beneath this, a middle tier would be composed of three Direction Committees. One would consist of the directors of six Regional Sub-Committees that would cover the whole of Scotland. The second would be composed of four Arts Directors of art form panels. The third would be a body of 11 or more representatives of bodies relevant to the Council’s work. Beneath these, the bottom tier of Regional Sub-Committees sat for Midlothian and Borders; West of Scotland; Northern Midlands; Northern; Highlands and Islands; and Dumfries and Galloway. The art form Panels would be responsible for music, art, drama and amateur drama (hence three arts). The existing bodies to be represented included the four Scottish universities, the four art schools, the Royal Scottish Academy of Music, orchestras, repertory theatres, the BIAE, the NCSS, the SCDA, the Scottish Council for Art and Industry and the Scottish Development Council. With these representatives would sit the three chairmen of the Direction Committees, Mary Fox, representatives of the SED and the Ministry of Information, and finally a liaison officer from the British Council. Mavor concluded that the re-organisation should be done rapidly and requested a quick response.¹⁹

Overly complicated and unwieldy though this plan was, it was driven by a concept of wide involvement, geographical inclusiveness, representative arrangements and consensual policy-making. The evidence, then, shows that Mavor initially favoured a Scottish body with considerable devolved powers, short of complete autonomy in a formal sense but effectively separate in practice. This could be seen, from Johnston's perspective, as an extension into the cultural field of his general policy of creating Scottish organisations to strengthen the economic and social infrastructure to equip Scotland for Home Rule at some future date. From Mavor's point of view, developing Home Rule sympathies and deeply interested in the future of Scottish culture, it was essential that it flourish under Scottish command.²⁰ Glasgow and Keynes were already sharing their thoughts about the fractious situation in Scotland and how it might be pacified. Keynes must have shared with Glasgow his vexation at the turn of events. Feeling the hand of Johnston behind the trouble, she replied "I agree with every word you say about Scotland. Is it Bridie himself who is being militant, or is the Secretary of State pushing him?"²¹ The idea of the Three Arts Council, which Parker telephoned to her on the second of January, left her aghast, sensing a Scottish insurrection ahead. The condescension towards Scottish interests that had marked CEMA's attitude now broke out into expressions of hostility. Glasgow pointed out to Keynes that Mavor wanted his committee to review Cursiter's plans and make recommendations to Johnston. Fearing (as with the Saltire Society in 1940) that a nationalist agenda was afoot, she continued:

The curator, Mr. Cursiter, is you know a violent nationalist and is the leader of the opposition to the CEMA exhibitions visiting Scotland, if not of the whole opposition. Bridie has proposed that the Scottish Committee study the ideas and report straight to the Secretary of State. He also outlines his suggested

organisation for CEMA in Scotland and it has not only a committee (of 7), but to have four "parallel sub-sections" for art, music, professional drama and amateur drama. And he thinks that whatever is done must be done at once. I think something will have to happen at once.

Mr. Parker by the way is absolutely sound on all this. He is sending me a draft of his proposed reply to Bridie... It will include a categorical 'No' to direct reporting to the Secretary of State. I am of course keeping Mr. Butler informed.²²

Parker was rather less sound than Glasgow thought. He was opposed to a separate Scottish CEMA now but not in principle forever.²³ He believed (a belief Mavor came to share) that Scotland would lose too much by an early separation from London. For the meantime the Scottish Committee had to report to CEMA and would not have the power to report directly to the Scottish Secretary though, as he noted, there was nothing to stop Johnston asking for an opinion of Cursiter's plans.²⁴ In the days before the New Year Mavor and Fox had drawn up a list of possible members. Fox 'five-starred' Ernest Bullock, Professor of Music at Glasgow University, Sir William McKechnie, ex-Secretary of the SED, Sir William Hamilton Fyfe, ex-Principal of Aberdeen University, Lord Glentanar, the Rev. George MacLeod, Eric Linklater (or failing him Compton Mackenzie), Cursiter and Peddie.²⁵ Mavor, who did not wait for permission to approach people, replied buoyantly that McKechnie and Bullock had agreed to join, as had Cursiter subject to his conditions being met. Hyslop had agreed to chair a Direction Committee and be its representative on the Three Arts Council (which shows that there was no unified SED position at this time).²⁶ Mavor wished the men he had named to meet as soon as possible to fill two remaining vacancies, and continued:

As we march to the banner of CEMA, I think any flag-wagging should be done with the Scottish Saltire. We can do the real work under and in co-operation with CEMA and be, in fact, its vicereagents in Scotland; but our local popularity will be inversely as we are regarded as a branch of a London concern. Scottish art is so sick as to be hypersensitive.²⁷

The imperial metaphor represents Mavor's typical irony, a comment on CEMA's view of Scotland's provincial status. Mavor next received Johnston's reply, drafted by Parker, to his letter of the 16th of December, which confirmed that the Scottish Committee would not be independent of CEMA. The letter concludes "All this looks rather cautious but I really think you would be better to get backing from the new Scottish committee before taking major decisions".²⁸ Johnston had evidently been persuaded that substantial autonomy could not be quickly achieved. If he had been quick to charge, Mavor was also quick to retreat. By now aware of the reaction in London, Mavor accepted Johnston's advice and agreed that it would be "better to go slowly for a little".²⁹ What caused this rapid volte-face is not explicit in the documents. The telling point is that Johnston accepted Parker's advice, Mavor being bound to follow his lead. Perhaps Keynes drew in Butler, and Johnston concluded that a major fight would ensue if he pushed any harder. But this is speculation.

Mavor's longer-term aim of greater autonomy was not given up, but he concluded his reply to Johnston by saying that he had assured Keynes that there would be "no attempt to rush the Council".³⁰ In fact, he had climbed down with an apologetic disclaimer that Johnston had ever attempted to influence CEMA's organisation.³¹ Concentrating now on revising his plans, he offered Johnston some names for a stronger "Executive

Committee” including (as alternatives to Cursiter) Honeyman and D. M. Sutherland, Principal of Gray’s School of Art in Aberdeen.

To Advise and Assist

Mavor now received Parker’s thoughts about how best to proceed.³² He advised against the Three Arts Council, which he politely called “rather too elaborate at the present stage”. Expressing a principle which Mavor himself came to hold he advised that the form of the organisation should develop as needs demanded, and that for the time being it should be “fluid”:

It may be that eventually it would take very much the form that you indicate, indeed it would be useful to have some such scheme of organisation in mind; but I am not sure of the wisdom of creating the whole organisation at once until we know that there will be work for it to do, and that this particular organisation will be the one most suited for the job. Get the committee established and then it can think of the organisation.³³

Parker showed that some distance existed between Keynes’s Scottish talking-shop and his idea, in which he sought to preserve the unity of CEMA while creating the potential for a process of evolution towards greater independence.³⁴ The committee (he wrote) would advise CEMA on its policy in Scotland but would also “assist in all possible ways in the carrying out of that policy”. The core of Parker’s concept was that in having the authority to assist as well as to advise, the Scottish Committee would possess an executive potential which could be used to justify the delegation of further powers in the future. Parker henceforward consistently advocated a gradualist, organic

development the result of which might or might not be independence. Of course, Parker's phrase was deliberately and necessarily ambiguous enough to pass the scrutiny of Glasgow and Keynes, who preferred to interpret 'assist' as simply a reference to day-to-day practical activities. Keynes, on one point, had baffled Mavor:

By the way, Lord Keynes has reminded me in graceful and flattering terms that I am not to be regarded as a Scottish representative on the Council. I hardly know what to make of that!³⁵

Notwithstanding Keynes's effort to finesse his position into line with CEMA's preferences, Mavor was not in any real doubt about his function. Parker explained the Scottish Office view that CEMA required the advice of someone who could "present the Scottish point of view, to keep the Council informed of Scottish needs, and share in the moulding of policy". At the same time it had been agreed to re-organise and strengthen the Scottish organisation. The involvement of Johnston in his appointment to CEMA and to chair the Scottish Committee gave the new committee the authority to both advise and assist the Council.³⁶

While I have attempted to define the status and functions of the Committee, I do not regard what I have said as the complete and final Gospel. CEMA is a developing body, not hampered by any formal constitution or even by any restrictions other than those implied in its title or imposed by the fact that it is administering an Exchequer grant. It is free to initiate and to experiment, and it is this freedom which makes it so exhilarating an experience to be associated with it. It seems important to preserve this fluidity and power of adaptation...and for that

reason I suggest that it will be wise to avoid any precise or rigid definition of the status and function of the Scottish Committee.³⁷

As regards the question of representation, Parker explained that the members of CEMA's Council were indeed appointed as individuals. Had Mavor been publicly announced as the Scottish representative, demands from Wales and perhaps other interests would have followed which could not be satisfied without unwonted changes to CEMA. Despite this, he continued, "The Secretary of State contemplates, and so does CEMA, that your voice in the discussions of the Council will be the voice of Scotland". Thus a distinction without a difference preserved the appearance of consistency for both CEMA and, later, the Arts Council. In reality Scotland, and from 1945 Wales, had representative voices on the Council. That a rational distinction could be drawn between national rights of representation and artistic interests that ought not to have direct representation on their funding body seems not to have been explicitly made now or later. Preparing for a visit to Scotland to meet Mavor and Fox, Glasgow asked for Keynes's instructions.³⁸ Keynes had been soothed by Mavor's latest communication:

Dr. Mavor's letter is very gentle and friendly. It looks as if he would be a help in civilising the barbarians. We must keep Scotland well in mind and hope we shall be able to content them. If you can find out on your visit what increase of activities would really please them, that would help.³⁹

Keynes and Glasgow shared the view that their strategy must be to reconcile the unruly elements in Scotland to London rule, but from their correspondence here and later an antipathy towards the Scots emerges which goes beyond immediate causes. In their

unguarded correspondence condescension and even contempt are mingled and the ideological content of their cultural outlook can be glimpsed. In Scotland, Glasgow found Mavor “charming and reasonable” but still advocating “appeasement” of the nationalist enemy, Cursiter. She wrote to Keynes after meeting Cursiter:

He is afraid that by accepting CEMA now he may prejudice his own particular plans for the future. Bridie is in favour of appeasement and thinks that if you write to Cursiter asking him personally to join the Committee he would do it. I feel strongly against appeasement. I know Cursiter a little and had some further talk with him at the week-end, and am sure that the right policy is to go straight ahead with our own plans leaving him on one side. If he will not...have CEMA exhibitions, then let us a) send them to Glasgow first, and/or b) hold them in other Edinburgh buildings.⁴⁰

Shortly afterwards she informed Fox that she, Keynes and Parker were agreed that Cursiter was not to be propitiated.⁴¹ Mavor was still hoping for an accommodation, convinced that the Scottish Committee would have policy-making powers.⁴² Cursiter was now offering to take the *Tate Gallery Wartime Acquisitions* exhibition in August on condition that CEMA paid all expenses, and offering a meeting between his trustees and CEMA to discuss collaboration.⁴³ In London, this was seen as more manoeuvring (not least because, as James pointed out, Cursiter knew the exhibition had to be back in London by August).⁴⁴ Fox thought that there was no point in any meeting that did not include Johnston.⁴⁵ CEMA had had enough of being held up, believing that the new committee should be formed and Cursiter left to join later if he would. Discussion was now punctuated by the first public challenge to CEMA in Scotland. At a press

conference on the 18th of January Glasgow had stated that CEMA “was in the ideal position of having state funding without state control”. Two days later *The Scotsman* carried a letter from a correspondent identified only as ‘Thistle’. It was precisely the sort of questioning which Parker had feared might break out in the autumn. ‘Thistle’ wanted to know if CEMA:

...is one of those mysterious London organisations which behind a mask of initials, run Scottish affairs? ... I would like to know if the Scottish Education Department receives eleven eightieths of CEMA’s money, as it does in ordinary education, and then uses it for “Scottish” art, music, and drama? Also what Scottish organisations work with CEMA, and have they any independence? Or does CEMA, working from London, direct our education in the arts, and decide what Scotland's share of the money will be? ...are the National Gallery and Education Committees, consulted, and have they any financial powers? Is Scotland fully represented on the Council?⁴⁶

The letter seemed so obviously from an insider that Parker was sure that it was by, or inspired by, Cursiter.⁴⁷ Cursiter felt the finger of suspicion so strongly that he wrote immediately to the Scottish Office to disclaim any part in it.⁴⁸ Through the midst of this the discussion about his membership continued but time was running out rapidly on a deal. A last ditch meeting with Cursiter and his trustees was scheduled for the 11th of February.⁴⁹ On the fifth Mavor submitted his final list of names, with the proviso that Cursiter, who had now agreed to take the Tate exhibition in May, might still choose to join.⁵⁰ The seven were Sir George Pirie (President of the RSA), McKechnie, Bullock, Honeyman, Hyslop, Peddie and himself.⁵¹ Honeyman had been Cursiter’s suggestion,

but as he was not an artist Pirie had been included.⁵² Mavor was still maintaining his belief that the committee had executive powers:

I understand from Miss Glasgow that it is agreeable to Lord Keynes that the above should act as a General Policy Committee and that the present co-ordinating committee should continue to function as it has in the past. The General Policy Committee and the Co-ordinating Committee combined would constitute the Scottish Committee of CEMA.⁵³

This was wishful thinking. His assertion that the Scottish Committee's decisions would have the force of Council decisions was denied by Glasgow, though with an air of weariness: they did not have the same force, the committee was an advisory one, "and this was made clear to Dr. Mavor...".⁵⁴ If the tangled story of the Scottish Committee reveals anything it is that no definitive description of its powers had been settled between London and Scotland before it was brought into being. Different views were held, the minimalist in London and the maximalist in Edinburgh. Parker's subtle formula, "to advise and assist", attempted to bridge the gap and had encouraged Mavor's interpretation.

The meeting with Cursiter and his trustees produced no change and the next day Mavor's list of members for the Scottish Committee was passed to Johnston.⁵⁵ Glasgow now made a final effort to have it formally restricted to an advisory remit. The establishment of an independent CEMA Northern Ireland under the authority of the Stormont Parliament was the stimulus. Its creation had been noted by CEMA earlier in March.⁵⁶ She referred to it in a memorandum to Parker, who was drafting the text for

the public announcement of the formation of the Scottish Committee, suggesting that the word “advisory” should be used.⁵⁷ She was not successful. At the March Council meeting it had also been noted that the NCSS’s Scottish Advisory Committee (soon to become the Scottish Council for Social Service) had submitted an application for a large increase in funding for 1943-44. This was untenable in the light of the new situation in Scotland.⁵⁸ Again Glasgow was forced to give ground, leaving a larger CEMA grant to be administered by the Scottish Committee for all art forms – precisely what she had wished to forestall in December. The creation of the Scottish Committee was announced on the 31st of March 1943 but it had already begun work. Mavor’s direct approach to potential members without official sanction meant that the well-primed invitees were able to hold their first meeting on the 19th of March. He was relatively satisfied with what had been achieved. As he later wrote to Honeyman:

...at the very outset the ground had been prepared for a considerable degree of autonomy for the Scottish Committee, to some extent against the judgement of the man to whose mind CEMA owed its existence.⁵⁹

The underlying disagreement between Edinburgh and London was papered over until 1945 when discussion of the terms of the Arts Council’s Charter made it inescapable.

¹ Johnston to Mavor, 25 November 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

² Mavor to Johnston, 28 November 1942, NAS ED 61/27.

³ Extract from the draft Minutes of the 11th meeting of the Council of State, 1 December 1942, NAS ED 39/18. Walter Elliot suggested that the Rev. George MacLeod should be borne in mind for appointment to any committees concerned with youth work. MacLeod (Later Lord MacLeod of Fuinary) had run a club in Govan in the 1930s to which the Pilgrim Trust had given money. He was to become a member of the Scottish Committee of the Arts Council in the 1950s. Mavor briefly considered him for the first committee.

⁴ Hyslop to Parker, 10 October 1942, NAS Ed 61/27.

⁵ Hyslop to Hawkins, 28 November 1942, NAS ED 61/27 and Fox to Glasgow, 2 December 1942, VA EL 3/91.

⁶ Fox to Glasgow, 26 December 1942, VA EL 3/91. She may have meant that Tom Honeyman was now better disposed than he had been in the summer.

- ⁷ Parker to Hyslop, 11 December 1942, NAS ED 61/27. Her suggestions were Harvey Wood, Grace Drysdale and J. R. Peddie.
- ⁸ Johnston to Mackay Thomson, 9 December 1942, NAS ED 61/27. The title of the committee was corrected in the margin to 'Scottish Committee' for reasons we will see.
- ⁹ Mavor to Johnston, 16 December 1942, NAS ED 61/27.
- ¹⁰ Mavor to Keynes, 23 December 1942, NAS ED 61/27.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Keynes to Mavor, 1 January 1943, NAS ED 61/27.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Mavor to Parker, 29 December 1942, NAS ED 61/27. Mackay Thomson jotted "NO" in the margin beside this point.
- ¹⁶ Ibid. The Forestry Commission had been set up after the First World War as a unitary British body despite objections from the Scottish Office. Under Tom Johnston, however, a Scottish branch of the Forestry Commission had been created. This was also an allusion to Wareing's Art Commission, which had been modelled on the Forestry Commission.
- ¹⁷ Mackay Thomson jotted "But it is" beside this, which suggests that CEMA's origins still rankled.
- ¹⁸ This odd name was in quite common use around Britain. When CEMA started it encouraged amateur self-help bodies. Some of these called themselves CEMA Committees, a name CEMA tried to discourage in favour of Three Arts Committees.
- ¹⁹ Mavor to Parker, 29 December 1942, NAS ED 61/27. Having met Hyslop's Co-ordinating Committee he concluded that some work was going well but that "friction has already appeared and is likely to grow until a more definitely Scottish organisation is in being".
- ²⁰ He was an early member of the Saltire Society and subscribed to its 1938 MacLellan Galleries exhibition.
- ²¹ Glasgow to Keynes, 1 January 1943, VA EL 2/38. Pottinger (op. cit. p. 92) notes that Johnston had a reputation as a "little Scotlander" in Whitehall. Glasgow also shared her suspicion of Johnston with Tom Jones, saying that "the Lord" (i.e. Keynes) was "inclined to say ... [missing text] ... 11/91 and go" (Glasgow to Jones, 15 January 1943, NLW TJ Class WW, Vol. 11/29).
- ²² Glasgow to Keynes, 2 January 1943, VA EL 2/38.
- ²³ He wrote "I am afraid he is trying to move too far too quickly. What he has in mind is evidently that Scotland shall have its own CEMA Fund and shall cut itself very largely adrift from the main CEMA organisation. I think this would be a mistake - at the present stage at all events." (Parker to Milne, 1 January 1943, NAS ED 39/18).
- ²⁴ Parker to Milne, 2 January 1943, NAS ED 61/27.
- ²⁵ Fox to Mavor, 31 December 1942, VA EL 2/83.
- ²⁶ Mavor to Fox, 1 January 1943, VA EL 2/83.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ Johnstone to Mavor, 4 January 1943, NLS Acc. 11039/5.
- ²⁹ Mavor to Johnston, 8 January 1943, NAS ED 61/27.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Mavor to Keynes, 8 January 1943, KCC JMK 84/1/141.
- ³² Parker to Mavor, 8 January 1943, NAS ED 61/27.
- ³³ Ibid. As regards the Scottish Committee reviewing Cursiter's plans for the Gallery of Modern Art he added "It would... be appropriate that the proposal should be examined by the committee, though so long as the Committee forms a part of the CEMA organisation I am afraid there would be technical obstacles in the way of the suggestion that it could report formally to the Secretary of State as well as to CEMA." But the Secretary of State could be made aware of any conclusions which it and CEMA had reached, "and I have no doubt that ways and means could be found of achieving this end without infringing the constitutional proprieties"
- ³⁴ The difference was not lost on Mavor, who drew Parker's attention to it. Parker replied that although he and Keynes expressed themselves differently there was little underlying difference. This was a characteristically diplomatic reply, and Parker was in close contact with Keynes, but reassuring though it may have been to Mavor it was not the strict truth. The matter irritated Parker, who deprecated (to Mackay Thomson) Mavor's habit of corresponding separately with Keynes, himself and Hyslop on the same subject. Another irritant was Mavor's hasty invitation to several people to join the committee. In particular Parker noted that he was "not sure what functions Sir William McKechnie would serve on the Committee", but that as he and Bullock had accepted Mavor's invitation it would be awkward now to pass them over. McKechnie had provided a commentary for a Films of Scotland short film on Scottish

education in 1938 and had taken an interest in Art for the People exhibitions, opening one at the Dick Institute, Kilmarnock, in October 1942.

³⁵ Mavor to Parker, 9 January 1943, NAS ED 61/27.

³⁶ Parker was trying here to bridge the gap between the positions he and Keynes had previously, separately, offered to Mavor.

³⁷ Parker to Mavor, 14 January 1943, NAS ED 61/27.

³⁸ Glasgow to Keynes, 11 January 1943, VA EL 2/38.

³⁹ Keynes to Glasgow, 13 January 1943, VA EL 2/38.

⁴⁰ Glasgow to Keynes, 19 January 1943, VA EL 2/38.

⁴¹ Glasgow to Fox, 21 January 1943, VA EL 3/92.

⁴² Mavor to Parker, 20 January 1943, NAS ED 39/18.

⁴³ Cursiter to Fox, 19 January; Cursiter to Milne, 21 January 1943, NAS ED 61/27. Cursiter blamed his trustees for the problem. They had been "so sticky and their attitude to CEMA activities so surrounded by suspicion that it seemed impossible for me to take any active part in CEMA affairs...".

⁴⁴ Parker to Milne, 27 January 1943, NAS ED 61/27.

⁴⁵ Fox to Glasgow and Fox to Mavor, 22 January 1943, VA EL 3/92.

⁴⁶ *The Scotsman*, 21 January 1943. Cutting in NAS ED 61/27.

⁴⁷ Note by Parker written on the cutting.

⁴⁸ Note by Cursiter, 21 January 1943, NAS ED 61/27.

⁴⁹ Parker to Milne, 28 January 1943, NAS ED 61/27.

⁵⁰ Parker to Milne, 5 February 1943, NAS ED 39/18.

⁵¹ Hyslop was now gravely ill with a brain tumour, but it was agreed to let his name stand. He died soon afterwards.

⁵² Mavor to Parker, 5 February 1943, NAS ED 61/27. He already had ideas about establishing a permanent Scottish national orchestra and a "dramatic pool" of some sort for Scottish repertory theatres to be based in Glasgow or Edinburgh. Together with his interest in the Gallery of Modern Art scheme it can be seen that Mavor in this respect was closer to Keynes than to Jones, his first interest being in creating permanent (Scottish) national institutions.

⁵³ Mavor to Johnston, 5 February 1943, NAS ED 61/27.

⁵⁴ Glasgow to Fox, 9 February 1943, VA EL 3/92.

⁵⁵ Cursiter continued his public campaign for the Gallery of Modern Art, displaying the model of Alan Reiach's design for the new gallery at a conference organised by the Saltire Society in June 1943 (report in CEMA Bulletin, June 1943). He was still arguing that it should include film and drama, but made no specific reference to music. *The Scotsman* and *The Observer* supported his proposals in September, and in October he received the endorsement "of all of Scotland's art institutions" at the opening of the annual Society of Scottish Artists' exhibition. On 23 December 1943 Milne informed the Ministry of Works that Johnston would give his support for the refurbishing of temporary accommodation at the end of the war for a Gallery of Modern Art, to include "applied art". From the point of view of the Standing Commission on Museums and Galleries, the completion of the Scottish National Library had priority, but it too was supportive. The issue dragged on through 1944 into 1945. Eventually the additional (supposedly temporary) space in the west end was acquired, but the Queen Street site was not made available, and no new building was ever built. In the meantime, partly as a result of the work of the Council for Art and Industry and its Scottish Committee, the Council for Industrial Design (the Design Council) was created in 1945, which Cursiter was invited to join. This, with the continuation of CEMA as the Arts Council finally persuaded Cursiter that his plans had been superseded. In September 1945 he wrote to Milne to withdraw his proposals, to leave his Trustees with a clean sheet to begin the post war period. Milne replied that the Arts Council and the Design Council "are but different aspects of the same policy for which responsibility has been assumed by the government". If Cursiter's scheme had been unrealistic in depending upon radical educational change, he had sought to forge closer connections between art and design practice and study, which the structure that was created did little to further (all references NAS ED 3/41).

⁵⁶ Minutes of 21st Meeting of Council, 3 March 1943, VA EL 1/7.

⁵⁷ Glasgow to Parker, 15 March 1943, VA EL 2/80. As she put it, its remit should be "to advise the Council in matters of Scottish policy and needs".

⁵⁸ The office at 29 Queen Street was opened on 1 April 1943.

⁵⁹ Mavor to Honeyman, 4 July 1945, NLS Acc. 9787/271. It is interesting to note how quickly Jones had been forgotten, Keynes having had no part whatsoever in CEMA's origin.

Chapter 11: Relations with London, 1943-44

The tensions of 1942 had only seemingly been solved, while the settlement that Parker had brokered was still essentially cosmetic. The issue of policy-making powers had not been negotiated to finality, while there was for the first time a definite locus where Scottish issues, aspirations and grievances could be aired. So long as CEMA was engaged in making direct arrangements (in all the art forms) in Scotland without the involvement of the Scottish Committee (and often without its knowledge) the Committee's claim to influence would always be partial at best. Troubles came almost immediately and continued through 1944 which, though in themselves often relatively minor, soured relations with CEMA. By the time the future of CEMA came to be debated in 1945, the Scottish Committee was determined to secure a more powerful position for itself. Faced with Keynes's opposition, it was brought to the brink of separation.

The visual arts continued to be the epicentre of dispute. As Smith has discussed some of these incidents, I confine myself to brief comments. Showing an astonishing indifference to Scottish opinion, CEMA had placed the exhibition of its collection (which had sparked Cursiter's revolt because of its lack of Scottish work) in Dundee. An Edinburgh venue had been booked to coincide with the opening of the Scottish Committee's new offices, both without informing Mavor or Fox.¹ Fox peremptorily cancelled the Edinburgh booking, without telling James, and warned him that to proceed would be "a serious strategic mistake".² An exhibition of 75 works in which only two Scottish artists (Robert Colquhoun and John Maxwell) were represented would only provide ammunition to CEMA's critics in the RSA and the National Galleries. Next, the exhibition of Scottish artists for touring in England had, by March

1943, taken shape as a collection of 70 paintings under the title *Twenty-Six Scottish Artists*.³ James demanded it be cut to 50 works. Informing Mackay Thomson of the latest fracas, Parker gave James' reasons as the lower quality of the work compared to English standards.⁴ A particular bone of contention was the symbolist painter John Duncan, whose two paintings James believed "would have made the collection a laughing stock." The selection committee insisted that Duncan be represented, but conceded that the two works would be replaced. MacTaggart revisited Duncan's studio and returned with three works. The selection committee aimed at a representative overview of modern Scottish painting, to inform an English public and to prove to the Scottish art establishment that it did not favour one artistic tendency over another. James on the other hand interpreted the purpose of the exhibition as being to present the contemporary face of Scottish painting. Duncan's work, rooted in Celtic Revival symbolism, was to him an anachronism. His sympathies, as Parker put it, lay in "the Left Wing in Art", that is, with modernism.⁵ In his foreword for the exhibition catalogue Pirie, the deeply conservative President of the RSA, had deplored the influence of Cézanne on contemporary painting. James deleted the comment without Pirie's consent. When Pirie saw the published catalogue, his reaction (as described by Mavor) was:

...that the "London Clique" is out to stamp out the memory of Raeburn and Ramsay and Guthrie and MacTaggart, exalt the banner of heresy, subsidise Quislings and God knows what.⁶

Despite Mavor's protests, Glasgow held the Council's bullish line that it had a right of censorship.⁷ The fight left CEMA damaged again in professional Scottish circles.⁸ Fox noted that the affair had "assumed the proportions of an international incident. The old

arguments about London domination of Scottish affairs are, of course, being refurbished".⁹ She did not fail to let James know that the whole problem had arisen because of "divided control of a purely Scottish exhibition".¹⁰ The incident exasperated Mavor who had been persuaded that CEMA's future depended upon Keynes's guidance and had to be more centralised than he had first appreciated, while hoping to persuade the Council to trust his Committee:

...I should like 9 Belgrave Square to give me a chance. ... I am only concerned to make CEMA respected and popular in Scotland and to make Scotland respected (if not popular) in CEMA... If Mrs Fox and I are allowed a little discretion, I think I can guarantee that not a stirring of the Nor' -Easter will ever blow across the border.¹¹

The next squall was already on its way. CEMA had collaborated with the Royal Institute of British Architects to produce an exhibition of urban planning and reconstruction, entitled *Rebuilding Britain*. It was intended to raise public interest in post-war social change, and had been officially opened in London by Sir William Beveridge. His report, *Social Insurance and Allied Services*, had been published in November 1942, and the exhibition was (he said) a "visual appendix" to it:

For the past two and a half centuries the artist has not worked for the community; and even private patronage has dwindled to such an extent that artists are now working in the void. ...Now let us hope we are on the threshold of an era in which art will again be universal in the service of man's newly-acquired social consciousness and will thereby regain its own social relevance.¹²

Rebuilding Britain was important politically for CEMA, which would be seen to be involved in promoting the case for reform and reconstruction, thereby improving its chances of moving into the post-war era on that current. For this reason Honeyman dismissed it as propaganda that should have been toured by the Ministry of Information. Despite the title the exhibition was wholly based on English urban design, architecture and materials, which had little place in Scottish cities. The Scottish Committee objected that to promote the exhibition in Scotland would overturn a precedent, agreed with the BIAE, that planning exhibitions should be locally relevant. Indeed, the Scottish Branch had recently circulated a small exhibition entitled *Plan Scotland Now*, and local planning exhibitions were already scheduled for the summer in Edinburgh and Glasgow.¹³ Perhaps a spirit of moderation motivated both sides to avoid more damaging wrangling. CEMA agreed to replace a section on the rebuilding of London with one relevant to Scotland, while the Scottish Committee agreed to take the amended exhibition. The Scottish Committee certainly wanted to establish better relations with London but also to secure the confidence of professional opinion in Scotland. It decided that the RSA and the Society of Scottish Artists should be invited to make selections from their 1943 annual exhibitions to be toured by CEMA.¹⁴ CEMA was already touring a selection from the Royal Academy exhibition of 1942 and was planning the same again for 1943, but refused the Scottish Committee on the grounds that the exhibition budget had already been allocated.¹⁵ Meanwhile, James arranged for the Royal Academy exhibition to go to Dundee. The Scottish Committee was outflanked, Mavor able only to write to James to say it would not stand in the way (it could not) and hoping the Art Panel would reconsider its decision.¹⁶ It did not.

The Art Advisory Committee

This sequence of inadvertence and insensitivity strengthened the conviction of those who believed that CEMA was the agent of an assertive London outlook that was negligent towards the Scottish tradition or even contemptuous of it. It must not, however, be assumed that the Scottish Committee was now motivated by anti-English sentiment or sought to block exhibitions of English art coming to Scotland. In the summer of 1943 Ellen Kemp, for example, organised an exhibition of the London Group (with which Keynes had had a long association) and tried unsuccessfully to bring to Scotland exhibitions of the Camden Town group and of that most English of painters, Hogarth.¹⁷ Its concern was to secure what it considered adequate recognition for Scottish art by CEMA. The Scottish Committee now determined that the only hope of recovering the position was to transform the exhibition selection committee chaired by Honeyman into a permanent Art Advisory Committee which would guide visual art in Scotland. It held its first meeting in July, the members being Honeyman, MacTaggart, Pirie, Hugh Adam Crawford, D. M. Sutherland and Adam Bruce Thomson.¹⁸ Founding the first of the art form panels in Scotland was also the first autonomous action that the Scottish Committee took to develop its own organisation and it did so in direct response to CEMA's actions. It drew in more of the professional expertise that (in its view) had a right to contribute to Scottish artistic affairs. Although its functions were advisory and practical, it inevitably focused issues and made decisions that had a direct bearing on the interpretation and implementation of policy. CEMA, then, provoked what it did not want, a spontaneous strengthening of the Scottish organisation, while the visual arts, the arena of sharpest conflict, achieved a particularly strong position.

Scottish Ambitions; London Resistance

Mavor linked the formation of the Art Advisory Committee to further organisational development. Arguing that Scotland was not simply another region, he began to press for the appointment of an Exhibitions Officer. In rebutting a claim by Ellen Kemp that CEMA was planning to set up a separate Scottish organisation, Glasgow gave Fox her reply to Mavor.

My Council has no change of mind, but means to run Scotland like other Regions with the addition of an authoritative Committee to advise the Central Council.¹⁹

The relationship with Scotland was again sinking, Glasgow opining to Keynes later in August, “I think it quite possible that this volcano may erupt at short notice.”²⁰ The Scottish Committee continued to build the pressure on London during the autumn. The CEMA Bulletin for November was designated a Scottish issue.²¹ Glasgow took the opportunity to yet again refer to ‘the Scottish Advisory Committee’, but in an article entitled *The Condition of Scotland* Mavor left no doubt about the journey which Scotland was embarked upon. His nationalist feelings, definitely political in character, are evident. Tom Johnston believed that Mavor’s Home Rule sympathies were provoked by his experience of CEMA, and the evidence bears that out.²² Mavor laid the blame for Scottish cultural decline squarely at the door of the Scots themselves while locating the hope of recovery in “native genius”. If CEMA did not pursue a policy of ‘Englishing’ Scotland it would be a powerful instrument in that revival. It would, however, require a temporary concession of independence by Scotland to enable it to fulfil its potential. His article ends with the unambiguous message that Scotland, in due

course, would control its own artistic policy. This was a strong declaration to make in CEMA's own publication, a statement of belief by the Scottish Committee, and should be borne in mind in assessing Mavor's strategy and achievement as Chairman.

By the end of 1943, as an alarmed Glasgow informed Keynes, proposals were "pouring in" from Scotland.²³ The first requests were for an Exhibition Organiser and a separate visual art budget, under Scottish control. The heavy dependence in Scotland on the BIAE argued for a more unified approach to exhibition production in Scotland than was necessary in England and Wales.²⁴ In Scotland, BIAE exhibitions had, from the start, been presented in art galleries as well as in schools and halls. The Scottish Committee was also determined to create a stream of specifically Scottish exhibitions that London could not provide. Glasgow conceded that there was a case for this, although current budgets and the Treasury's ceiling on staff prevented immediate action. The poor relationship between CEMA and the BIAE perhaps made Keynes more amenable to the appointment of an exhibitions organiser in Scotland who would belong to CEMA. Parker lent his support, writing to the Treasury:

The Scottish criticism of CEMA was largely concerned with its Art activities. The feeling was that there was insufficient recognition of the existence of a distinctive Scottish tradition in this field, and it has been found that there was a certain reluctance on the part of Art galleries in Scotland to accept the collection of pictures circulated by CEMA. Arrangements are now being made which will give the Scottish CEMA committee a freer hand in arranging Art exhibitions, and it is hoped that in this way CEMA's Art activities will be made more

acceptable to Scottish opinion. If this arrangement is to be carried out effectively, there will need to be an Art organiser for Scotland.²⁵

Mavor also sought a way past the Treasury block on new appointments, approaching the SED for help to appoint an Art Director. Clark, he noted, supported him and he imagined that James would be less hostile to the idea than in the past.²⁶ It seems that he was aiming for a Scottish Art Director, an Exhibitions Officer and perhaps an assistant, with a budget under their control: no less than the creation of a Scottish art department. Mavor presented the proposal to the Art Panel in London which, although (in Glasgow's words) "supremely uninterested" in what he had to say, agreed in principle. Glasgow informed Keynes that although the Treasury was not likely to agree to the appointments:

Dr. Mavor was not a bit worried by that. He said he knew the Council would turn it all down but he had got what he wanted put on record.²⁷

The apparent indifference of the Art Panel to Mavor's proposal, and his determination to make his point, suggests that relations were chilly. Even in 1975 Glasgow ostensibly still seemed unable to understand the legitimacy of the "territorial struggles" which had made the Scots "often difficult" and Mavor show "a cantankerous behaviour curiously at odds with his benign and generous nature".²⁸ In the event an amicable if imperfect solution was found. In January 1944, the Council (with Clark supporting Mavor) approved the appointment of an Art Assistant (i.e. Exhibitions Organiser) and a secretary. The term 'Art Director' is not minuted, which suggests that Mavor had perhaps used the well-tried tactic of making an impossible demand to smooth the way

for a lesser which was always the real aim. The Council however stipulated that the salaries must be paid from the visual art budget already submitted to the Treasury.²⁹ Although a Goschen-based share of the total visual art budget would have produced over £2,000 for Scotland, the Art Panel (on which there were no Scottish representatives) allocated a grant of £1,000.³⁰ With only half what it expected, the Scottish Committee would still have to cover the same costs.³¹ Mavor presumably accepted because it was the only deal available. In late March he sent a multiple-page report on CEMA to Johnston (copying it to Glasgow), which appears not to survive. In it he certainly criticised the arrangements for Scotland and must have asserted again that the Scottish Committee had policy-making status.³² He must also have requested that an SED assessor be appointed to the Scottish Committee, to parallel Parker's role on the Council. As this was technically impossible, it was agreed that William Arbuckle, later Mackay Thomson's successor as Secretary of the SED, would act as liaison officer.³³ In June, Arbuckle rejected a request for more administrative assistance and there is no evidence that he played an active role thereafter.³⁴

The employment of the Exhibition Organiser had by now become an active issue. By the end of May it had been agreed to offer the post to Ellen Kemp for the duration of the war.³⁵ The position was part-time, which would enable her to continue her role for the BIAE. There were, however, strong reservations about her appointment, felt both in Edinburgh and London. Her personality was combative and critical. Her outspokenness had left a question about her loyalty to CEMA and uncertainty about her judgement. After much confidential discussion, Kemp was finally appointed in June on a year-by-year contract. This was the last substantial Scottish issue before discussion of CEMA's future began in earnest in late 1944.³⁶

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- ¹ Smith (op. cit.) discusses this incident as paradigmatic of the ideological tensions between the Scottish Committee and CEMA
- ² Fox to James, 19 February 1943, NAS ED 61/27.
- ³ Hyslop had been succeeded as Chairman by Honeyman. The other members were William MacTaggart, D.M. Sutherland and Hugh Adam Crawford. Philip James was a member but did not attend.
- ⁴ Parker to Mackay Thomson, 30 March 1943, NAS ED 61/27.
- ⁵ Ironically, when the exhibition reached the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle the curator preferred Duncan's work to the rest.
- ⁶ Mavor to Parker, 13 April 1943, NAS ED 61/27.
- ⁷ Glasgow to Mavor, 16 April, 1943, NAS ED 61/27.
- ⁸ Mavor informed Keynes that David Foggie, Secretary of the RSA, "had some idea of making it a *casus belli* against the Sassenach" (Mavor to Keynes, 29 April 1943, KCC PP 84/2/5).
- ⁹ Fox to Parker, 12 April 1943, NAS ED 61/27.
- ¹⁰ Fox to James, 3 May 1943, NAS ED 61/27.
- ¹¹ Mavor to Parker, 13 April 1943, NAS ED 61/27.
- ¹² Quoted in *CEMA Bulletin No. 36*, April 1943, ACE.
- ¹³ Minutes of Scottish Co-ordinating Committee.
- ¹⁴ Minutes of Second Meeting of the Scottish Committee, 24 April 1943, VA EL 2/80.
- ¹⁵ Minutes of Third Meeting of the Scottish Committee, 19 July 1943, NLS Acc. 9787/270.
- ¹⁶ Mavor to James, 20 July 1943, NLS Acc. 11309/5.
- ¹⁷ Minutes of the Art Advisory Committee, 28 July 1943, NLS Acc. 11309/5.
- ¹⁸ Minutes of Third Meeting of the Scottish Committee, 19 July 1943, NLS Acc. 9787/270.
- ¹⁹ Glasgow to Fox, 4 August 1943, VA EL 3/92.
- ²⁰ Glasgow to Keynes, 26 August 1943, VA EL 2/38.
- ²¹ *CEMA Bulletin No. 43*, November 1943, ACE.
- ²² Johnston, op. cit. p.243.
- ²³ Glasgow to Keynes, 30 December 1943, VA EL 2/38.
- ²⁴ Fox to Glasgow, 23 December 1943, VA EL 3/92.
- ²⁵ Parker to Hale, 1 January 1944, VA EL 2/80.
- ²⁶ Mavor to Glasgow, 13 January 1944, VA EL 2/83. His correspondence with the SED is not extant. The minutes of the sixth meeting of the Scottish Committee record that "his suggestion that the SED be asked to assist with premises and resources had been approved in general terms". The SED was being asked to find the extra accommodation which CEMA would not permit the Scottish Committee to rent, and to provide additional administrative assistance (the Scottish Office typing pool was already helping out). Parker noted to Glasgow on 31 January (NAS ED 61/28) that if the Treasury agreed to the extra assistance the Scottish office would not need to provide it. It is not clear how Mavor envisaged the SED helping financially. That he was looking to it for money as well as practical help is shown by Keynes's note that Parker's role in the matter was to "help persuade the Treasury to raise the ceiling on staffing, not to get money from the SED" (Keynes to Glasgow, 28 January 1944, VA EL 2/39) and Parker's that "it would be against all Treasury principles for the SED to provide money out of its vote when the entire CEMA grant is on the Board of Education vote" (Parker to Hawkins, 12 April 1944, NAS ED 61/27).
- ²⁷ Glasgow to Keynes, 20 January 1944, VA EL 2/39.
- ²⁸ Glasgow, in Keynes, M., op. cit. p. 267.
- ²⁹ Minutes of 25th Meeting of Council, 25 January 1944, VA EL 1/7.
- ³⁰ The difference was between approx. £56,000 and £28,000 in 2003 terms.
- ³¹ Fox to Honeyman, 7 March 1944, NLS Acc. 9787/250.
- ³² Glasgow to Keynes, 28 March 1944, VA EL 2/39. She sent Keynes a copy, adding "You have insisted that the Scottish Committee shall be only advisory, and certainly no one has indicated a change in status!"
- ³³ Parker to Hawkins, 12 April 1944, NAS ED 61/28.
- ³⁴ Arbuckle to Fox, 20 June 1944, VA EL 3/93.
- ³⁵ Chairman's note of Meeting of the Scottish Committee, 30 May 1944, VA EL 2/80.
- ³⁶ Three practical issues did arise in 1944, one concerning an exhibition entitled *Recording Britain*, a Pilgrim Trust project which, for various reasons, had excluded Scotland. Aileen Smith deals with this in some detail. The second was the commissioning of a series of lithographic prints by contemporary artists by CEMA which took some work to get a Scottish artist (William Gillies) included in. The third issue concerned an exhibition of the Glasgow Boys organised by Honeyman, about which a clash of dates arose over its showings in Cambridge and Edinburgh. CEMA insisted that it go to Cambridge, which pushed Mavor to offer his resignation, but in the end he did not do so. I consider this and other instances of Mavor offering his resignation in my conclusions (Volume Two).

Chapter 12: Keynes's Plans for CEMA's Future

Butler had persuaded Keynes to accept the Chairmanship of CEMA because he saw in him the best person to turn the general ideas about its future into reality, and the man to persuade the Treasury. Keynes had the will and personal authority to realise Butler's hopes, which Mavor quickly came to see and respect when he joined the Council. CEMA's best hope of persuading the government that it had a place in post-war Britain was to build a tightly run organisation with a unified purpose, and ambitious but practical policies. Scotland presented perhaps the single largest challenge to his project with its demands for devolved powers. Butler was circumspect during 1942 in his public statements of support for CEMA but he and Keynes were thinking ahead. Even as the Scottish Committee was being set up Keynes was imagining a body called the Royal Council for the Arts as CEMA's successor.¹

Between November 1942 and May 1943 Butler came under pressure from Sir William Jowitt, the Paymaster-General, who, considering post-war reconstruction, had agreed with Sir Stafford Cripps that Keynes should be invited to chair a committee to examine arrangements for the arts.² Butler fended Jowitt off, but was compelled to ask CEMA for its plans. Glasgow replied insouciantly that there was "some scheme" for new buildings for the arts, a plan for support "of some kind" for provincial galleries and artists, "a plan" for national orchestras, and finally "some plan" for linking professional art with amateur art and education. Hardly, it must be said, a blueprint.³ Keynes did not want to commit himself.⁴ CEMA was not yet, as he put it "a going concern" and required considerable re-organisation.⁵ However, Butler recorded Keynes's intention to curtail the powers of the art-form panels and that he wanted to ensure that he held the power in his own hands.⁶

Progress was very slow between July 1943 and September 1944. During 1943-46, Keynes made six visits to the United States, working on post-war international finance, each lasting for some months. At the end of March 1944 Evans sent him an outline of the plan Keynes was to submit to Butler later in the year.⁷ It included the general policy statement that CEMA would have two objectives, to improve the standard of the arts and to increase their distribution and audience. It should be established by Royal Charter and funded on the Education vote. Specialist panels, led by salaried directors, would cover the art forms. Administration would be controlled by a Secretary General, and implementation of policy by a Director General. Policy-making would be the prerogative of a small Honorary Council to be appointed by the President of the Board of Education and CEMA's Chairman. The Crown would appoint the Council's Chairman.⁸

Other discussions were going on. An anonymous Council paper from the summer of 1944, written from a visual art perspective, argues that the work of CEMA, the Board of Education and the Royal Fine Art Commission ought to be co-ordinated under a body to be called the Arts Council.⁹ It would control all circulating exhibitions and for this purpose should have access to all national collections and the power to determine which regional galleries were suitable receivers. It should have powers within art education too, through a scholarship fund for art students and would also offer grants to young artists. It would form a bridge between art education and professional practice. Cursiter's fears for his plans look entirely justified in the light of this unrealised proposal.

Some aspects of both proposals were broad in vision and some too complex to be easily supportable, but others were focused on the essential nature of a 'future CEMA'. Both endorsed a role for the Crown that was later discarded. Keynes was back in London briefly in August-September 1944, when he gave Butler his long-awaited plan and Butler undertook to push ahead with the Treasury in Keynes's absence.¹⁰ The Scottish Office was not consulted, presumably because CEMA was the sole responsibility of the Board. Shortly afterwards, Glasgow presented the Council with a summary.¹¹ The new body, with Keynes's preferred name 'the Royal Council of the Arts', should be founded by Royal Charter with a grant awarded for several years at a time to assist forward planning. It might either continue on the Education vote or be funded directly by the Treasury.¹² On his return from the USA in December, Keynes was anxious to press ahead. In January 1945 he circulated his full proposals to the Council.¹³ As some elements of the plan were under CEMA's jurisdiction he wished to make immediate moves at the next meeting.

The proposal contained draft policy aims for the Royal Council (to distribute the arts widely; to improve standards; to encourage professional work and to advise and co-operate with other government departments) in which the Arts Council's are anticipated.¹⁴ Keynes wanted a President appointed by the Crown for a three-year, renewable, term, with a Vice-President and Council members appointed by the Minister for Education and the President. An Executive Committee would deal with all issues other than those reserved by the Council. The chief executive would be a Director-General who would be "the premier officer connected with the arts in Great Britain", the appointment to be made by the Council on the recommendation of the Minister of Education and the President. The Secretary General would be next in line, and below

that would be a Regional Director responsible for all regional offices. As Keynes had indicated in 1943, his objective was to consolidate power within the Council. His first demand was that the Executive Committee be set up immediately, which was agreed by the Council on the 30th of January 1945.¹⁵ Butler and Keynes had already agreed its functions and membership.¹⁶

The Executive Committee held its first meeting on the 14th of February, and met approximately fortnightly thereafter, chaired by Keynes whenever possible.¹⁷ At the second meeting it ruled that regional offices must receive expert advice from London rather than have their own art-form experts, even if this meant an increase in London staff.¹⁸ The whole trend was to consolidate power in London. Had the Royal Council been established as Keynes wished, the involvement of the Scottish Secretary would have been terminated. The Executive Committee, which was to make most of the decisions, would be controlled by the President's power of appointment. The Director-General was to be (whatever someone like Cursiter might think) pre-eminent in British art administration, while the Regional Director would control all the regional offices, of which the Scottish would be one. The decision regarding expert advice again shows Keynes's preference to expand the resources of the centre while limiting the autonomy of the peripheries. The centralising thrust can be seen too in the Executive Committee, to which Mavor was not appointed. Scotland would have no representation on the inner cabinet where critical decisions of policy would increasingly be made.¹⁹

Mavor's Nationalist Sympathies

Keynes pushed the Executive Committee through in Mavor's absence. That Keynes excluded Mavor from his inner circle is not surprising given his attitude to Scottish

affairs and the strained relations that grew between Edinburgh and London after the setting up of the Scottish Committee. Having gained experience in 1943 and 1944, the Scottish Committee was not likely to quietly accept this aggressive centralisation. It was now, in 1945 and 1946, that a confluence took place between the underlying cultural nationalism always detectable in the Scottish Committee's outlook, and rising political demands for Home Rule. This is especially evident in the opinions of Mavor and Honeyman. Following the split in the SNP in 1942, John MacCormick had formed the cross-party movement Scottish Convention, which attracted moderate Home Rule sympathisers including Mavor. The SNP also made progress. Douglas Young pushed Labour hard in Kirkcaldy in 1944 and in 1945 Robert McIntyre briefly held Motherwell.²⁰ John Boyd-Orr, an independent supported by Scottish Convention, won a bye-election in 1945 for the Scottish Universities.²¹

The strength of the nationalist challenge persuaded many Labour candidates in the general election to declare in favour of Home Rule, even Attlee approving the idea, but as Keating says, "with no definite commitment to action".²² In 1946, the belief that Home Rule was a near certainty influenced the outlook of members of the Scottish Committee and some on the Arts Council itself. On the other hand, the belief that "the Scottish Office under Tom Johnston had got away with too much" was abroad in Westminster, according to Pottinger, bringing an element of anti-Scottish backlash to the centralising tendency, a feeling perhaps present within the Arts Council.²³ One of those interested in Scottish Convention was Mavor. His cultural nationalism had been evidenced through membership of the Saltire Society and the founding of the Citizen's Theatre. Scottish Convention tried unsuccessfully several times between 1942 and 1946 to get him to speak on education and Scottish culture in debates held in the Cosmo

Cinema in Glasgow.²⁴ In August 1943 he received a copy of *The Leonard Declaration*, circulated by a group with loose connections to Scottish Convention.²⁵ The pamphlet argued for a devolved Scottish Parliament leading in time to a full federal system. By now Mavor was highly critical of Scottish government-from-a-distance but uncertain as to what was best done about it. He declined to sign, not because the declaration went too far but because it did not go far enough.

Although agreeing with most of the declaration, he remained unconvinced that a parliament with very limited powers was the correct solution. Having recently observed the Stormont Parliament, he said that it was “a useful body, but its prestige is low”. The same would be true, he feared, of what the declaration proposed for Scotland. Rather unrealistically, he argued that if Scottish MPs were more determined, the Scottish Grand Committee could force the government “to carry out its reasonable wishes, even to the extent of securing a budget of its own”; while the Council of State had “shown some promise”. But he conceded that even if they lived up to his hopes they would “have to spend a good deal of their time for some years to come counter-acting the damage done by the Gilmour glorification of the Civil Service”. He concluded that he would prefer to wait to see how things developed before committing himself.²⁶ By 1943, then, Mavor wanted a Scottish Parliament with some real authority. In 1945 Scottish Convention published the pamphlet *A New Deal for Scotland?* again arguing the case for a federal system. It included a paragraph, *The Development of a National Culture*:

With the control of her domestic affairs in the hands of a democratically elected Scottish Government, Scotland would have a source of inspiration and an added incentive for the development of her national culture. Precise details have not

been stated, but there can be no doubt that an effective measure of self government is essential to the good government of Scotland within a democratic framework, and to the future well-being of the Scottish people.²⁷

Mavor's opinions were becoming more resolved by 1945. We have not only Tom Johnston's word, but the evidence of the Charter negotiations and his correspondence in 1946. In March 1947 he joined the Committee of the Scottish National Assembly, representing "Scottish cultural organisations", suggesting that he was commenting on cultural policy.²⁸ Mavor, then, was on a rising track of involvement with the cross-party Home Rule movement when the future of the Scottish Committee was in question between 1944 and 1947. There seems no doubt that the positions he took in the negotiations influenced, and were influenced by, his growing political commitment.

Scottish Reaction to Keynes's Plans

Keynes had ensured that Mavor should not disturb his inner circle. Parker regretted his exclusion but felt little could be done unless Mavor or the Scottish Committee brought it to the Council.²⁹ That Keynes wanted to curb the Scottish Committee is certain. His correspondence with Glasgow in the autumn of 1944 and the first two months of 1945 reveal that they gave some thought to the Scottish question. After hearing her summarise Keynes's plan for the Royal Council in September, Mavor had asked if it would be like the Forestry Commission, an allusion she found mysterious. His reference was to the Scottish Committee of the Forestry Commission that was to be created under the 1945 Forestry Act, after a quarter of a century of Scottish dissatisfaction that it had no separate identity though it had the majority of British forests. The Act would give joint responsibility to the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Minister of

Agriculture. Scottish, Welsh and English matters were to be dealt with separately by National Committees, British matters jointly.³⁰ There would be four Directors of Forestry: one for Education and Training (based in London) and one each for England, Wales and Scotland. The main Scottish office would be in Edinburgh. Each country was to be divided into Conservancies, four of which were envisaged for Scotland with offices in Inverness, Aberdeen, Glasgow and Dumfries. The language of the Forestry Act even acknowledged that the Commission worked in three countries, not in one country with several regions, something CEMA was reluctant to admit. Mavor surely felt some resonance between the Forestry Commission and his plan for the Scottish Three Arts Council. Of course, it had taken 25 years for the Forestry Commission to get to this point and Mavor was determined that the same would not happen again. On discovering the meaning behind his cryptic question Glasgow informed Keynes, in the United States, that the Forestry Commission was “a special bone of contention in Scotland”, a warning to expect trouble ahead.³¹ In January 1945, she and Keynes exchanged their thoughts about Scotland. She wrote:

Quite apart from any question of autonomy for Scotland or Wales (which personally I should deplore), I think the time has come for there to be a Welsh CEMA committee, like the Scottish one. We, here, feel the need for guidance in Welsh affairs - which always seem to me far more special and complicated than Scottish...³²

Mavor’s efforts to make Scotland understood by CEMA, if not (as he said) popular, had evidently failed. Keynes made his feelings plain:

I always find the question of Scotland and Wales, as I fancy you do, too tiresome to concentrate on easily. I have no clear views and am in favour of turning a blind eye as long as possible.³³

Despite these comments, by March the Executive Committee had agreed that a Welsh Advisory Committee (the emphasis on 'advisory') might be established.³⁴ The Chairmanship was offered to Tom Jones, but he (now 75) declined.³⁵ The appointment went to Lord Harlech later in the year. Keynes nevertheless was turning a calculated blind eye to Scotland. He could justify his exclusion of Mavor from the Executive Committee on grounds of the non-representative nature of CEMA. For the Scottish Committee and the Scottish Office, the Charter negotiation was the opportunity to formalise the distinction between Scotland's right of representation and the non-representative principle as it applied to arts bodies. Keynes kept the distinction blurred because to concede the difference was (potentially) to weaken central control. Keynes's proposals for the Royal Council were not received uncritically and were modified considerably in the negotiations, the role of the Crown in appointments, for example, being abandoned.³⁶ A number of members considered the name unacceptable, presumably for being out of step with the more democratic, perhaps even socialistic, society that was expected to emerge after the war.³⁷ The idea that the new body might be transferred to the Treasury had surfaced in the autumn of 1944, and intimations now appear that this was being seriously considered. Although Butler wished to keep the connection with education his officials were advising against it, partly because of the complication of Scottish expenditures being carried on the Education Ministry's vote.³⁸ Keynes was aware of their concerns, but thought they were not especially serious and made it clear to Butler that he too preferred the link with Education.³⁹

The implications of the Royal Council proposal were not lost on the Scottish Office or the Scottish Committee. At the Council meeting in January Keynes had ruled out any discussion of formal matters which included the position of the Scottish Secretary. Parker, who had not attended the meeting, reported to Tom Johnston. In March he wrote to the Ministry of Education to register Johnston's insistence that the Charter must recognise his role in making appointments "so long as CEMA continues to act for Scotland as well as England". Johnston was willing (it seems) to pull Scotland out of the plan if he was not satisfied.⁴⁰ Fox meanwhile passed to the SED a copy of a letter from James to Kemp in which Scotland was referred to only as Region 11 and which, she said, "will...provide a little concrete evidence of the trend of affairs".⁴¹

Several incidents showed that deep problems remained in the relationship between the Scottish Committee and London. As in the previous two years each alone was relatively minor but that they should arise at all was becoming intolerable to the Scottish Committee. James cancelled an existing Scottish booking for an exhibition to make it available to English galleries. As it was his own stated principle to honour prior bookings, this was blatantly discriminatory.⁴² Fox complained too of a growing tendency to make Scotland pay for services, previously regarded as common costs, out of its £1,000 visual art grant.⁴³ The grant had been for costs, as Glasgow had put it, "over and above the cost of any touring exhibitions which you may ask for from London".⁴⁴ A tendency to offer fewer London-produced exhibitions to Scotland was also identified.⁴⁵ Next came an argument over the appointment of a permanent guide lecturer for Scotland, agreed by CEMA in December 1944. The Scottish Committee had appointed Patrick Thoms, an art teacher shortly to be released from National Service when Glasgow insisted that only London had powers of appointment. Thoms had to

endure a second interview.⁴⁶ London was equally intent on asserting its right to make arrangements for Scotland without the Scottish Committee. Dual control now began to undermine Mavor and Bullock's efforts to bring together the Reid and Scottish Orchestras to form a single Scottish National Orchestra. The director of the Glasgow-based Reid Orchestra, Sidney Newman (a member of the Music Sub-Committee) bypassed Mavor and Bullock and invited CEMA's Music Director, Steuart Wilson, to the negotiations. Glasgow arranged for him to meet personally with the two orchestras. For Mavor this was unconscionable interference in a Scottish matter, for Glasgow simply an expression of the Council's authority.⁴⁷

The Arts Council and Transfer to the Treasury

Between late March and May CEMA's future was being dealt with by the Treasury and the Ministry of Education.⁴⁸ On the tenth of May Parker was informed that CEMA would continue into peace-time as the Arts Council of Great Britain, but transferred to the Treasury. Three reasons were given. Firstly, to demonstrate the distance between government and the arts, it was felt that the Chancellor would be a more disinterested guardian than a spending minister. Secondly, a less direct connection to education would (it was argued) benefit the Arts Council in the eyes of the public. Thirdly (as Hale wrote to Parker):

It has the further advantage of curing the anomaly, under which you have been very patient, of provision for a service of Great Britain scope on a Vote which does not otherwise cover Scotland, and enabling your Secretary of State to take an appropriate position in the general picture.⁴⁹

This technicality is not the complete explanation. Opinion in the Ministry of Education had moved against having responsibility for the new body. Keynes had also come to favour the Treasury.⁵⁰ While some on the Council itself may have been content with the move others may have been less happy.⁵¹ The Treasury itself now positively wanted the responsibility, as Butler acknowledged.⁵² Hale's note to Parker glosses an underlying motive. On the basis of the correspondence between Hale, Wood and Keynes between March and May 1945, Leventhal states that the case against the Arts Council remaining under Education was essentially that:

Since Scottish education fell within the purview of another department, they feared that it would pave the way to a separate Scottish CEMA.⁵³

Leventhal is the only commentator on CEMA's transition into the Arts Council to notice that the desire to protect the new body from the risk of Scottish secession influenced this decision. The move would do nothing to improve the relationship of the Council and the Scottish Committee. Keynes was content to live with that if it would help secure what, in all his dealings concerning Scotland, he showed was his firm aim, that the Arts Council would be an undivided British body. The SED made no objection to the move because it was not pursuing separation, and the change removed the funding anomaly, giving it a definite place in the administration of the Arts Council. And unlike CEMA, the Arts Council could not then be called an English organisation, an advantage in winning Scottish public opinion.

Parker noted that the change "again raises the question of a separate Scottish body", but assured Mackay Thomson that the arguments in favour of a British body were still

persuasive and that there was no serious desire on the Scottish Committee for separate systems.⁵⁴ After ascertaining Mavor's views, Parker copied Hale's note to Johnston with the opinion that the terms were generally acceptable.⁵⁵ But the experience of Keynes's determination to consolidate a centralised structure in which Scotland had no special status had left Mavor worried. He continued to believe in the necessity of the London connection but it was a necessity that required Scotland to be vigilant in its own interest. Seeing that everything hinged on the terms of the new Charter and their interpretation, Mavor advised Parker and Johnston that they should make three stipulations. They were:

- (a) The Secretary of State should be consulted about the constitution of the new Council.
- (b) That the existing Scottish CEMA Committee should be continued with the function of assisting the new council in the formulation and carrying out of its policy in relation to Scotland.
- (c) That the Secretary of State should be consulted about important questions of policy.⁵⁶

Parker noted that (a) and (c) were covered in the draft parliamentary answer prepared for the Chancellor's statement to the Commons in July, but he agreed that it was desirable that they be included in any press statements. He thought that (b) need not be stated publicly but should be made clear to the Treasury, where the Charter was being prepared. He had already, however, objected to the draft answer's description of the Scottish Committee as the 'Advisory Committee', as Johnston intended that it should continue to 'advise and assist'.⁵⁷

Mavor and Honeyman's Debate

On the 23rd of May the wartime coalition government ended and Tom Johnston left office. By the fifth of June the interim Scottish Secretary, Lord Rosebery, had agreed with the Charter terms approved by Johnston.⁵⁸ A week later Anderson made his statement to the House.⁵⁹ On the same day Keynes made a BBC broadcast in which he characteristically conflated 'Britain' and 'England' while asserting that decentralisation would be the Arts Council's policy, citing the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre as a successful example, in his terms an entirely accurate description. But as Mavor pointed out, the Scottish Committee had played little or no part in that. The particular instance did not trouble him but the principle did.⁶⁰ Decentralisation in Keynes's terms still seemed centralisation to the Scottish Committee.

An unusually complete insight into how the relationship with London was seen within the Scottish Committee is contained in correspondence between Honeyman and Mavor at the beginning of July. Deeply frustrated by increasing London domination, Honeyman threatened to resign if Scotland were not given some genuine autonomy. He had believed that the Charter would produce a Scottish Committee with executive powers, but was now sceptical about Keynes's intentions:

I repeat the conviction...that "London" views Scotland with cynical indifference.

I know that some of us are considered "too nationalistic and difficult to work with" and that the London "control" cannot "understand" our attitude. The issue lies in their "inability" to understand. So long as the Scottish Committee is willing to function as "yes" men, everything will be all right. In addition to asking us to show why a Scottish Committee with powers is the most effective way to carry

out the objectives of the Arts Council, we are entitled to ask “What are the objections to it?” (The present trend in political thought in Scotland...should be kept in mind.)⁶¹

Honeyman offered an alternative, perhaps influenced by the example of the Forestry Commission. He argued for the appointment of a Director for Scotland, the creation of three regional offices (in Glasgow, Aberdeen or Inverness, and Dundee or Perth) each with a district officer and staff. Scotland should have one or preferably two representatives on the Arts Council. His aim was to replace the “present small-sized, haphazard plan of action” with an ambitious national scheme, something that could not be achieved unless the future status of the Committee was settled. He offered his picture of the new Scottish Committee. Mavor would continue to be Chairman (“Obviously!”); he himself would be “an irritant – and counter-irritant to Sassenach intrusions”; Bullock should remain (“to prove that we really do love the English”), as should McKechnie and Peddie for their experience and good judgement. Cursiter should join (“his absence is a perpetual criticism of CEMA. Moreover he has a scheme for Modern Art distribution which ought to be carried out in some sort of association with the Arts Council”). A representative from Inverness or Aberdeen was required, as was a female member.

The heart of the plan was not in the organisational reconstruction but in his vision of what the Scottish Committee should be and do. It was closer in spirit to Mavor’s Three Arts Council than to Keynes’s Arts Council. A conference of arts and educational interests (“with an emphasis on the outlying places”) should first be called, to make suggestions for future work. From this a national policy could be drawn up, but he offered his own idea of what that might be:

I have in mind small places and “dead” centres where we could create an active local organisation or stimulate one already in existence. In short the setting up of an active organisation with a scheme for “field work” is the first necessity. When the scheme is complete, we make our case for finance allocation to the Central authority and know – in advance – what monies are available.⁶²

Honeyman appears to be reaching towards something like (but more ambitious than) the Scottish Arts Council’s regional policy which developed in the 1970s. This grew on the back of the new money voted by the Labour government in the 1960s, supporting the creation of arts organisations beyond the central belt. However, his proposed organisation had broad, representative and consensual foundations. He sees the arts policy community as a convocation of arts and educational interests. He also shares something of the adult educational vision, shared by the early CEMA, of the arts growing in local communities rather than being (wholly) supplied from the centre, whether that centre were London or Edinburgh. Honeyman had no quarrel with ambitions to raise standards, but he evidently wished to create a truly Scottish arts policy which, while it must include new ‘beacons’ of culture, must also take seriously the issue of geographical spread and local initiative.

Mavor’s reply is in effect a defence of his leadership.⁶³ He explained that Keynes’s dominating personality and determined views had been the key factors in the “long, complicated and mostly private” discussions. No promise of devolved powers had been made, and the Royal Council proposal had not mentioned Scotland. Keynes, never enthusiastic about the Scottish Committee, had been persuaded to accept it only by himself and Johnston, and against Keynes’s wishes it had been founded with the

potential for considerable autonomy if it proved its value. He felt it had done so. In practice the Council had accepted that the Scottish Committee had more than an advisory function. The delegation of some budgetary functions, the creation of two art-form panels and the removal of Scotland from the list of regions, constituted “a very considerable step” towards a form of autonomy. Many questions remained, of course. He agreed with Honeyman that sooner or later Scotland should have its own Arts Council, but:

In my view Scotland is not nearly ready for such a Council. I see the country as a huge background of indifference and ignorance with a fairly large number of little, noisy coteries in the foreground, preoccupied mainly in making themselves important. I don't think we can have a National Arts Council without some contemporary national art and it is very doubtful whether there exists in Scotland any considerable body of painters, musicians and writers above a [~~low~~] provincial level. I am open to conviction but it is necessary to have this point made very clear. I imagine that one of the functions of a Scottish Arts Council would be to raise the level of performance, but it must have something to work on and some examples to work up to. I freely admit that this is the main objection in my mind against going all out for autonomy straight away.⁶⁴

The argument was about whether or not autonomy was a prerequisite for improving standards. In Mavor's opinion the general standard was low and the best hope of improvement lay in exposure to the best work being made elsewhere, in England and abroad. This would be more easily achieved within a British organisation. Standards, then, were the Achilles' heel of the autonomy argument. Honeyman's position was

diametrically opposed. Autonomy was primary because only with that could the Scottish Committee make policy tuned to Scottish circumstances, from which improvements in practice were more likely to follow. Mavor was not persuaded, but he did not see his as a long-term position.

[Your] answer to this is that we shall never get a high standard of performance until we are running our own show. This is debatable. I think that at least something ought to emerge, (even if the Scottish Committee continues as it is at present constituted) that would make her case for autonomy very much stronger than at present. If I were considering this aspect of the question alone I would be in favour of continuing on the present lines for a year or two longer.⁶⁵

The Council needed the Scottish Committee, and could not achieve its aims without it because of geographical and psychological remoteness from London and because Scotland had a separate history and culture. But although London should not dictate policy in Scotland the overwhelming importance of London demanded recognition. It was (he said) “the capital of the world” (for its cultural status) and argued that it would be “madness” for Scotland to separate itself, at least too soon. London bulked so large in Mavor’s experience that anything other than “the closest possible contact” with it was tantamount to being “cut off” from the wellsprings of serious art. CEMA had periodically threatened that a separate Scottish Arts Council would be cut off from London (i.e. denied exhibitions and performances) to undermine claims for greater autonomy. Mavor seems to have believed the reality of this threat.

Although certain that Scots had to take responsibility for their own culture, finance too persuaded Mavor that for the time being union was the best choice if Scotland wanted to get a penny more than “its Goschen scale dole”.⁶⁶ Without a supportive Scottish Secretary like Johnston and given a hostile Council “we should be promptly starved out”. In an echo of Parker’s advice of 1942 to let machinery follow function, he countered Honeyman’s argument that the powers and structure of the Scottish Committee must be determined first. It was necessary first to know what it would be for before constructing “a machine to beat the air”. He finished by urging Honeyman not to resign, and assured him that he and the other Committee members agreed with most of his ideas. From this it is clear that Mavor had little faith in London’s goodwill, and with Johnston gone was concerned that the Scottish Committee would be in a politically exposed position. Yet independence should follow in fairly short order – a year or two, as he put it.

Approaching Crisis

In the event, Honeyman was right. Debate did centre upon the constitution and powers of the Scottish Committee, rather than following the more organic path advocated by Mavor, whose optimism that the Council was gradually warming to Scottish devolution was about to be sharply punctured. July was a period of mounting crisis for the Scottish Committee. Mavor wrote candidly to Glasgow putting his views to her and asking for hers in return. She had just prepared a paper for the Council giving the Treasury’s comments on the draft Charter that contains a clue to the method by which Keynes was to resist mentioning the Scottish Committee in the Charter.⁶⁷ Referring to the art-form panels Hale pointed out that, being purely advisory, they had no legal status and asked “Need they be mentioned in the Charter at all?” Keynes had always insisted that the

Scottish Committee too was an advisory body and was now strengthening this stance. It need not be mentioned either. Weakening the Scottish Committee was the motive behind Glasgow's unyielding reply to Mavor. She laid out four functions that the Council would permit it: to advise on Scottish needs; to recommend courses of action; to carry out plans as requested by the Council and to spend money given to it within the framework of the Council's policy. There would be no role in policy-making. The Council's position rested (she said) on two overriding principles: that it was legally responsible for all activities undertaken in its name, and the specialist Directors in London were responsible for everything done in their field. Nor need the Scottish Committee look to the Charter to alter its position:

The formation of the new Arts Council under charter makes no real difference. It simply means that what were before matters of internal policy now become legally fixed - e.g. the various responsibilities, staff to Council, Council to Treasury, Treasury to Parliament.⁶⁸

Having thus pinned the Scots down she disingenuously appealed for a "human and flexible organisation" without which "we are finished". All the flexibility, it seems, was to be on the Scottish side. Reverting again to the authoritarian, she continued that the Council would try to remember to keep Scotland informed of its decisions but that it would continue to work through its own contacts in Scotland. If it chose, it might consult the Scottish Committee "as individuals if not always formally as a body". As a calculated insult this letter could hardly have been more pointed. Mavor, who must have been dismayed in the wake of his correspondence with Honeyman, reported her response to the Scottish Committee.⁶⁹ At the same meeting he presented a memorandum

on the Committee's future.⁷⁰ He recounted Parker's early advice to develop organically, but asked whether it was possible to continue in this way. Executive power had been more than ever concentrated in London. He chose to interpret Keynes's stated policy of decentralisation to be a commitment to devolution under which the Scottish Committee could prosper. The Committee therefore had an opportunity and a challenge. Since its founding the Committee had acquired "many executive and semi-executive functions" (a phrase pregnant with the slippage between policy-making and implementation); hence it had become "preoccupied with defining its relationship to London". To find a way forward he asked Peddie and McKechnie, "the two members with most departmental experience", to prepare a report, and once agreed about their proposals he would take them to Keynes.⁷¹ Mavor informed Keynes of what was afoot, arguing that it was his duty to present to the Executive the concerns of the Scottish Committee.⁷² The report was blunt. Scottish arts organisations must work through the Scottish Committee, not directly with London. Better communication was required. The Scottish Committee must exercise full authority to make appointments in Scotland. Once the Treasury grant for 1946-47 had been agreed, an appropriate sum must be allocated to the Scottish Committee. From 1947-48, with a full year's experience behind it, the Committee should prepare its own annual estimates for submission to the Council. Staff in Scotland must be increased to deal with the new responsibilities. If these things were done:

...the Scottish Committee, so far from advocating any separatism, would expect their officials to maintain close contact with officials south of the border to the end that frequent interchange might be made possible, e.g. that Scottish Art exhibitions could be seen in England and Wales and vice-versa., that touring

dramatic companies would be made available for Scotland and that Scottish companies could make tours in England and Wales.⁷³

A step-by-step progress towards effective autonomy had been sketched out but, writing privately to Mavor, Peddie made his frustration clear:

I don't want to be tarred with a Scottish Nationalist brush but more and more I feel that this is just one aspect of a national problem and it may be good for the London fools to know that we are happy to be "human and flexible" provided we don't become mere stooges.⁷⁴

Mavor thought the proposals "pretty well the limit of what the council will accept at this stage and are very cunningly conceived".⁷⁵ Honeyman's view was that whatever had to be done had to be done immediately.⁷⁶ Mavor assured him that he was preparing to involve the new Scottish Secretary after the July election and that the plan was "a fair basis for telling them what we want".⁷⁷ Fox thought it essential the matter be taken to the ministerial level, and (unimpressed by Glasgow's legalism) added:

There is bound to be a certain amount of bad blood whatever we do but the formal status of the Committee under the new Charter is important and I think we should get it fully recognised while the terms of the Charter are still in the making and capable of modification.⁷⁸

The draft Charter was nearing completion. With Scottish anxieties in mind, Parker insisted to the Treasury that the document must be shown to the new Scottish Secretary,

Joe Westwood.⁷⁹ The Council's attitude was a continuing source of concern. Glasgow's minute of the July Council meeting referred again to the 'Scottish Advisory Committee' and recorded the Council agreeing a request of Parker's that mention be made in the Charter of "special advisory bodies" (the Scottish Committee implicitly among them). Parker corrected her, stating that he had suggested the Charter "should empower the Council to appoint committees to advise and assist it in the exercise of its functions in any part of Great Britain". His point had been to ensure that the Scottish Committee would not be confined to a purely advisory role.⁸⁰ At the end of July, Glasgow had drawn Keynes's attention to the importance attached to the phrase 'to advise and assist' in Scotland. He was relaxed, replying "As long as they don't expect the Chairman to wear kilts at one meeting out of ten, it is, I think, all a matter of words".⁸¹

Resistance continued to any mention of the Scottish Committee in the Charter. As Parker recorded, the reason being offered now was the difficulty it might cause in the absence of a similar body for Wales.⁸² This was a familiar objection, raised in 1942 as a reason against having a Scottish Committee. It had been put forward again by Keynes at the July Council meeting.⁸³ Mavor had then been so dissatisfied that he had written to Keynes challenging the argument (and saying he supported forming a Welsh Committee). He reminded Keynes that he and Butler had satisfied Johnston that "special consideration" would be given to Scotland in the Charter, but no mention of it appeared in the current draft.⁸⁴ Without specific mention Mavor could not see how the Council could ever delegate any powers to the Scottish Committee. He finished:

This is not, in any sense, a demand for a Scottish Arts Council. My Committee is highly sensible of the value of the Arts Council of Great Britain and wishes to

remain a part and an instrument of that body. It is in complete accord with the aims, objects and general policy of the Council and is prepared to operate that policy to the limit of its powers. The policy of the Council, as outlined by you in your recent broadcast [of 12 June 1945], includes devolution and Scotland is an obvious area where devolution can be brought about. For many reasons this cannot be unless some specific recognition is given in the Charter that Scotland is not merely an area, but a civilisation within a civilisation.⁸⁵

Now even closer to Honeyman's position, and with Fox's warning in mind, Mavor was no longer prepared to leave the matter to Keynes who, it is clear, he did not trust to take the matter up with the Treasury and who was due to leave shortly for the USA. He now wrote to Westwood enclosing a copy of his letter to Keynes, informing him that in the draft Charter there was no mention of Scotland's special position, and without it the Scottish Committee could hardly develop the autonomy it needed. The Treasury finally responded that Westwood would be given the draft Charter.⁸⁶ This was what had been wanted, but Mavor wrote to Parker on the same day, perhaps with some trepidation, that it all rested on Westwood now.⁸⁷ Keynes, it seems, had persisted in using the case of Wales to prevent movement on Scotland, but Mavor was assured that Westwood (who at the time sympathised with Home Rule) would "take a hand".⁸⁸ As Mavor pointed out, the very fact that Scotland had a Secretary of State to act in its interests differentiated it from Wales.⁸⁹ A week later his mood had changed completely. He had received a copy of the next draft of the Charter and, despite everything, mention of Scotland had still not been included. The crisis had arrived. He wrote to Parker:

Quite a number of irritating things have cropped up showing that the wind is blowing more and more towards centralization in London. If the shape of things to come is as I visualise it, I shall resign as I can find better ways of employing my time. I propose to bring matters to a head by moving something like the enclosed resolution at the next meeting of the Council. I think I can get Ivor Brown to second it... If it is turned down I propose to resign on the spot and I imagine the Scottish Committee will follow suit.⁹⁰

Keynes had been at work. Though his communication is not extant, he had contacted Hale at the Treasury to insist that if the Scottish Committee must be mentioned, its role (despite what he had said to Glasgow) should be defined as advisory. Although Hale knew that Johnston had stipulated that it should also 'assist', he gave Keynes the assurance he wanted: "the word 'advise' will go in, in place of 'assist'".⁹¹ Hale sent Keynes a new draft the following day, which must have been the draft that confounded Mavor.⁹²

Mavor's resolution was a desperate alternative. If no mention could be secured in the Charter, might an order of the Treasury bind the Arts Council to the terms of the resolution? He put his idea to Parker: the Scottish Committee should be appointed on the advice of the Scottish Secretary and should receive grants based on the Goschen formula. The Council would have the right to veto any of its activities and to dismiss it at a month's notice.⁹³ This would have been less a compromise than a collapse, but seemed preferable to Mavor to immediate separation. Parker advised strongly against offering the Council such draconian powers, but in any case doubted if the Treasury could make such an order. The issue of devolution had to be resolved by the Charter or

left to the discretion of the Council. Expanding on the wider issue, he acknowledged that a British body would always make it difficult for Scottish opinion and needs to get due attention. The alternative was a separate Scottish Arts Council, but he and Mavor agreed that Scotland still stood to gain more from a British system. To encourage the Council to delegate more responsibility he had recently proposed (as Peddie had done) that the Committee should draw up an annual programme to be approved and funded by the Council. But in formal terms, the best course of action was that the Scottish Secretary, when he received the draft Charter, should be asked to press for the inclusion of clauses to secure the Scottish Committee. This would carry the discussion to the ministerial level, of which the outcome was not predictable: Westwood might even decide on separation.⁹⁴ For Mavor this was the crux. The Scottish Committee was being rendered almost redundant while the Executive Committee (on which Scotland had no voice) had already marginalised the Council itself. If the Scottish Secretary pressed for a clause ensuring the continuance of the Scottish Committee and delegation to it:

...we would be prepared to fight every inch of the battle with a good heart. Without it, as I think you might be disposed to agree, the fight is pretty hopeless. As to the possibility that the Secretary of State might think it better to have a separate Arts Council for Scotland, I am quite prepared to face the implications of that. I do not by any means think that Scotland is ready for such a council and I should have preferred that the Scottish arts should be nursed under the aegis of the United Kingdom [sic] body until they were more able to stand on their own feet. Under your first two possibilities this might have been possible; but the trend seems to be away from any proper realisation of either of the two. ...That being so, a separate Arts Council for Scotland is the only logical conclusion if Scotsmen

are to have any say in the matter at all. I don't hold with logical conclusions but I am prepared to support them if I am forced in their direction.⁹⁵

Without the support of Westwood, he told Parker, the Committee would resign. Although against his instincts, Mavor could now contemplate separation. Parker briefed Mackay Thomson, informing him that with the creation of the Executive, the Council had been reduced to a rubber stamp. Keynes had by now accepted that the Scottish Secretary should be consulted on major matters of policy affecting Scotland but Mavor's request at the July Council meeting that the Scottish Committee be recognised in the Charter had been countered by the assertion that as 'Great Britain' included Scotland it would not. However, Keynes (at the Council meeting on 31st August) indicated that he accepted that the Council might appoint (as Parker put it) "such committees as it might think fit, to advise and assist it". Parker now proposed a draft clause for the Charter which, amended by Mackay Thomson, read:

The Council shall appoint, in consultation with the Secretary of State for Scotland, a Committee to advise and assist it in the exercise of its functions in relation to Scotland, and may from time to time delegate to that Committee such functions as it sees fit.⁹⁶

This was to be the basis for clause 12(1) of the Charter. Mackay Thomson now briefed the Under Secretary of State, Tom Fraser (another Home Rule sympathiser), with the warning that Mavor was "threatening to go on strike" unless the clause was inserted in the Charter.⁹⁷ He pointed out that (despite Keynes's apparent change of heart) the

Council was reluctant, and might prefer “a provision in more general terms”. Fraser’s reply gave Mavor the political support he hoped for:

I should imagine the S of S will wish to press at least for the formula suggested by Mr. Parker... It is not for us to be scared because of possible Welsh reactions. In this connection it is relevant to bear in mind that under the Forestry Act of 1945 national committees for England, Scotland and Wales respectively are to be set up and will exercise such powers as may be delegated to them by the Forestry Commission... I am inclined to agree with Dr. Mavor that the time is not ripe for the creation of a separate Arts Council for Scotland. On the other hand the Scottish committee should know what is required for Scotland and they should have the power to exercise some kind of initiative.⁹⁸

Keynes’s Stratagem and Compromise

At a meeting in Edinburgh on the same day, Mavor assured Glasgow that the Scottish Secretary would ensure that the Scottish Committee was mentioned in the Charter along with his rights of appointment. Two days later he told Parker that she had informed him confidentially that the clause would be included in the next draft.⁹⁹ Keynes appears to have gradually convinced himself that the phrase ‘to advise and assist’ was tolerable. He finally committed himself on the ninth of September when, referring to Mavor’s letter of the fourth of August, he wrote to Hale at the Treasury:

I think you have already heard something from Miss Glasgow about the desire of the bag-pipers to be mentioned in the Charter... You will see that what he is after is keeping the door open for a measure of home-rule amounting to

separatism whilst simultaneously drawing on our resources as freely as though the Scottish Committee was in the same position as any other regional committee. I expect that we have to accept some form of words which will satisfy them and leave the future to look after itself and to protect itself from serious abuse. I fear the whole question will go on getting increasingly tiresome, and we increasingly wondering whether it is worthwhile, until finally there is a fissure. But we may as well put it off as long as we can. The immediate question is what form of words would not be redundant and out of place in the Charter... I see no objection to something like the following: "The Council shall be advised and assisted by such regional committees as may from time to time be appointed by it and by a Scottish Committee appointed with the approval of the Secretary of State for Scotland".

This leaves the position substantially as it is, but I read Mavor's letter as putting us on warning that the Scottish Committee will shortly ask for a new definition of its function and powers. It is then rather than in wording the Charter that the real difficulty will arise.¹⁰⁰

This was not quite the concession it might seem. Keynes's private thoughts are revealed in an earlier letter to Glasgow in which he explained his strategy.

I thought it would avoid a great row with the Scots and do no harm whatever if in 12 (1) (b) for the words "to advise the Council" they were to substitute the words "to advise and assist the Council". Since the Scottish Committee has already been

called an advisory panel, there is no danger, I think, in these words, whilst echoing Mavor's own phrase we shall have a sound defence.¹⁰¹

Keynes had accepted the phrase 'to advise and assist', but his purpose was still to make the word 'assist' refer to the carrying out of instructions from London. The Scottish Committee was already caught (in his interpretation) by the Council's power to appoint advisory committees and panels. The point was to deny Scottish ambitions while seeming to grant them. Keynes knew that ultimately the issue was the interpretation of the Charter, not in its words themselves. Between September 1945 and January 1946 the final touches were put to the Charter, most of the work done in Keynes's absence. It still took some persistence by Parker and Fraser to have the word 'advisory' removed from the title of the Scottish Committee. Only with the draft of the ninth of January 1946 were the Scots satisfied that all their requirements had been included.¹⁰² The delay over the word 'advisory' was not caused by the obtuseness of the drafting solicitor but was a final rearguard action by Glasgow. The Treasury Solicitor seems to have struggled with the conflicting demands, and on the tenth of September Hale provided Glasgow with a draft in which 'advisory' was not used, calling it complete unless she felt strongly about the omission. She did, but Hale responded that the Scots would again object if it were inserted. They did. Following an intervention by Fraser on the 15th of November Glasgow made a final effort to hold the line. On the 27th she wrote to Hale again asking that the titles of the two territorial committees (Wales now to be given its too) include the word 'advisory':

I do not think Lord Keynes will be at all happy about omitting the word "advisory" from the Scottish and Welsh Committees. If it has to be taken out

would it be possible to omit the words “and assist” from the same paragraph? I feel it is so important to define the functions of these committees beyond the possibility of question, and if they go on thinking that they have Executive powers of any kind we shall be in constant doubt and difficulty. If they are to have real Executive powers that is another matter and we must revise our way of working accordingly.¹⁰³

Keynes disappointed her. On the final day of December, returned from the USA, and with the Charter mired in a ridiculous game of ping-pong, he conceded Parker’s argument, writing to Hale that he now saw no danger in dropping the disputed word.¹⁰⁴ The function of the two committees was defined as being “to advise and assist”, and hence ‘advisory’ did not need to appear in their titles. Following this final comment, Hale completed the draft. But even now Keynes did not intend to give the Scots the devolved powers they sought. He conceded the argument only because a close reading of Clause 12(4) had convinced him that the Council still had the power to determine what the role of the Scottish and Welsh Committees ought to be.¹⁰⁵ If relationships became too fractious, the Council could use the clause to rein back the committees without need of consultation. That this appeared to the Scottish Committee to be a defeat for Keynes and Glasgow given the dogged and at times devious opposition that they had mounted for the last year, cannot be doubted. On the other hand power, as Keynes knew, still lay with the Council, effectively with the Executive Committee. He must have realised that the Scots, at bottom, did not want immediate separation. The Council would determine whether, when and to what extent power might be delegated. As he had said, it was all a matter of words.

¹ Keynes to Butler, 15 February 1943, KCC PP 84/3/2-3.

- ² Jowitt to Butler, November 1942, NA ED 136/196C and Jowitt to Butler, 17 February 1943, NA ED 136/196C.
- ³ Glasgow to Goodfellow, 26 November 1942, NA ED 136/196C.
- ⁴ Keynes to Butler, 3 March 1943, KCC PP 84/3/9-10; and 25 June 1943, KCC PP 84/3/17. Keynes wrote that he did not want the sort of body “before whom any blighter would be entitled to bring his blights” (KCC PP 84/3/9-10).
- ⁵ Keynes to Courtauld, 20 April 1943, VA EL 2/39.
- ⁶ Butler to Wood and Glasgow, 1 July 1943, NA ED 136/196C.
- ⁷ Evans to Keynes, 31 March 1944, KCC PP 84/1/272-273. Evans’s document must have reflected conversations with Keynes over a period of time.
- ⁸ Evans to Keynes, undated, KCC PP 84/1/274-275. Keynes appears to have kept papers in chronological order, and it seems likely that Evans made the offer because Keynes was going to the USA again in June.
- ⁹ Sir Kenneth Clark was presumably one of the authors.
- ¹⁰ Keynes to Butler, 9 September 1944, KCC PP 84/3/31 and Keynes to Barlow, 20 September 1944, KCC PP 84/1/282.
- ¹¹ Minutes of 30th Meeting of Council, 26 September 1944, VA EL 1/7. The document (copied later to Council members) was dated 6 September.
- ¹² Clark favoured continuing under the Board, which would facilitate close relations with the national collections.
- ¹³ Keynes to Butler, 7 January 1945, KCC PP 84/1/288-289.
- ¹⁴ Parker’s copy has his emendations to Keynes’s text, which take them a step closer to those eventually agreed for the Arts Council.
- ¹⁵ Minutes of 32nd Meeting of Council, 30 January 1945, VA EL 1/7. Mavor was not present at this meeting, nor was Parker.
- ¹⁶ Parker to Williams, 16 March 1945, NAS ED 61/27.
- ¹⁷ At its second meeting it agreed to the Scottish Committee forming a Music Sub-Committee (Minutes of Executive Committee, 28 February 1945, VA EL 1/18). The members were Bullock, Lady Rosebery, Dr. B. Hague, Prof. S. Newman, Francis George Scott and Herbert Wiseman, with David Yacamini attending. Glasgow “deplored the multiplication of machinery up there” but hoped it might do some good (Glasgow to Keynes, 14 February 1945, VA EL 2/40).
- ¹⁸ Minutes of Executive Committee, 14 March 1945, VA EL 1/18.
- ¹⁹ The Executive Committee was sidelined by Lord Goodman in 1965 and abolished by the 1967 Charter. Scottish chairmen only joined the Executive Committee following the Balfour Commission in 1953.
- ²⁰ Mitchell, *Strategies for Self-Government: The Campaigns for a Scottish Parliament* (Edinburgh, Polygon, 1996), p. 191.
- ²¹ *Ibid.* pp. 89-90.
- ²² Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism - Scottish Society and Politics 1707-1994* (London, Routledge, 1994), p. 76; Keating, in Donnachie (Ed.), *Forward! Labour Politics in Scotland* (Edinburgh University Press, 1989), p. 91.
- ²³ Quoted in Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism*, op. cit. pp. 78-79.
- ²⁴ NLS Acc. 6649/1 and NLS 6649/2, Scottish Convention Minute Books, 1942-44 and 1944-46. The Cosmo was owned by George Singleton, who later joined the Scottish Committee. He was sympathetic to Home Rule and made contact with the ABC Film Corporation on behalf of Scottish Convention to push the idea of a film based on the life of Thomas Muir of Huntershill, to be scripted by MacCormick and another Convention member (20 October 1942, Acc. 6649/1 NLS). Honeyman, a strong supporter of Scottish Convention, was invited to join the National Committee but declined due to pressure of work (Acc. 6649/1 NLS, 15 October 1942).
- ²⁵ NLS Acc. 5798, Box 1, File 2, Declaration on Scottish Affairs, 1942-1944.
- ²⁶ Mavor to Porteous, 14 August 1943, NLS Acc. 5798/Box 1/File 2.
- ²⁷ *A New Deal for Scotland*, para. 4 (b), undated pamphlet, NLS Acc. 5979, Box 1, File 1.
- ²⁸ Minutes of Meeting of the National Committee, 7 June 1947, NLS Acc. 5987, Box 1, File 3: Scottish Convention, Scottish National Assembly 1946-49.
- ²⁹ Parker to Williams, 16 March 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ³⁰ *Report of the Royal Commission on Scottish Affairs, 1952-1954*, Evidence, First Day, testimony of David Milne, p. 5 (Cmnd. 9212, Edinburgh, HMSO, 1954).
- ³¹ Glasgow to Keynes, 30 October 1944, VA EL 2/39.
- ³² Glasgow to Keynes, 17 January 1945, VA EL 2/40.
- ³³ Keynes to Glasgow, 22 January 1945, VA EL 2/40.
- ³⁴ Keynes to Butler, 1 March 1945, VA EL 2/87.

- ³⁵ Glasgow to Jones, 20 February 1945, VA EL 2/18.
- ³⁶ Keynes to Butler, 1 March 1945, VA EL 2/87.
- ³⁷ Other names were suggested, all (on Keynes's stipulation) to yield acronyms impervious to abuse of the sort which 'CEMA' had suffered. A clearly jaundiced Mavor came up with several to avoid using 'Great Britain' in the title: "'Scotland, Wales and England' (in that order so you can't SEW an acronym), or have you considered 'Scotland Etcetera'?" (Witts, op. cit. p. 145).
- ³⁸ Butler to Keynes, 4 April 1945, KCC PP 84/3/61-62.
- ³⁹ Keynes to Butler, 6 April 1945, KCC PP 84/3/63-65. White (op. cit. p. 59) notes that Keynes "was definitely in favour" of staying with Education but gives no reason why "other counsels" prevailed.
- ⁴⁰ Parker to Pearson, 12 March 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ⁴¹ Fox to Williams, 15 March 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ⁴² Fox to Williams, 15 March 1945, NAS ED 61/28. Copy of James's letter attached.
- ⁴³ Williams to Parker, 16 March 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ⁴⁴ Extract from Glasgow to Fox, undated, in Fox to Williams 15 March 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ⁴⁵ Minutes of 14th Meeting of the Scottish Committee, 27 March 1945, NLS Acc. 9787/270.
- ⁴⁶ Glasgow to Fox, 10 July 1945, VA EL 3/94. She stated that she "liked Thoms very much". Fox's reply was close to the insubordinate, saying that she was glad "and that your worst fears of being confronted by a sandy-haired, knobbly-kneed hobbledehoy, with a curly walking stick under one arm and bagpipes under the other and a strong reek of whiskey [sic] over all, were unrealised" (Fox to Glasgow, 18 July 1945, VA EL 3/94). Thoms's brother Colin had loaned pictures to the Kemp's first Scottish exhibition in 1940.
- ⁴⁷ Glasgow to Mavor, 18 July 1945, NLS Acc. 11309/5.
- ⁴⁸ Draft parliamentary answer for Sir John Anderson, May 1945, attached to Hale to Parker, 10 May 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ⁴⁹ Hale to Parker, 10 May 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ⁵⁰ Leventhal, op. cit. pp. 315-316.
- ⁵¹ A cutting from an unidentified publication (June? 1945) records Brown's opinion. Under the title *The Arts Council: Promise and Task*, Brown wrote "CEMA was always open to criticisms that "it messed about humbly and drably in the provinces and lacked prestige and panache; and that it didn't stick to the provinces but swaggered about in St. James or the Haymarket... What I particularly hope is that the Arts Council will not be diverted by the lights of London, the grandeur of Grand Opera and the reclame of ballet into forgetting its old haunts and habits. There are a thousand reasons why it should devote time and money to "messaging about in the provinces"... My immediate point is that the Arts Council should be closely linked with national education as CEMA was from its start. That, some will reply, is to tie a millstone round its neck" (KCC PP 84/1/336). Brown's title plays on Keynes's BBC broadcast of 12 June 1945, *The Arts Council: its Policies and its Hopes*. His article was presumably published shortly after the broadcast. It is interesting that Keynes kept this contrary opinion to his own.
- ⁵² Butler to Anderson, 10 May 1945, VA EL 2/87.
- ⁵³ Ibid. p. 316. 'They' refers to Hale, Wood and Keynes. Their correspondence is in NA ED 136/196A. This file could not be located on my visit, hence I must rely on Leventhal. It is interesting to note that Wood suggested 'National Arts Council' as the title for the new body, perhaps intending to underscore its over-arching British identity (Glasgow to Keynes, 2 March 1945, VA EL 2/87).
- ⁵⁴ Parker to Mackay Thomson, 11 May 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ⁵⁵ Parker to Johnston, 17 May 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid.
- ⁵⁷ Parker to Pyke-Lees and Pearson, 23 May 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ⁵⁸ Parker to Mavor, 5 June 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ⁵⁹ *Hansard*, 12 June 1945. Following convention, I refer to the Arts Council from here on.
- ⁶⁰ Mavor, Memorandum on the Status of the Scottish Committee, 17 July 1945, copied by Fox to Scottish Committee, 20 July 1945, NLS Acc. 11309/5.
- ⁶¹ Honeyman, 'Memo on the Arts Council to Dr. O.H. Mavor', undated (late June-early July) 1945, NLS Acc. 9787/271. He cited William Gaunt's recently published *British Painting* as a "typical example" of English indifference to Scottish art. He also quoted John Boyd Orr on Scottish self-government and noted the article by Ivor Brown warning that the Arts Council was over-concerned with London.
- ⁶² Ibid.
- ⁶³ Mavor to Honeyman, 4 July 1945, NLS Acc. 9878/271.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid. 4 July 1945, NLS Acc. 9878/271.

- ⁶⁷ Council Paper 200, The Arts Council of Great Britain, Charter Negotiations, 17 July 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ⁶⁸ Glasgow to Mavor, 18 July 1945, NLS Acc. 11309/5. Mavor copied part of her letter to Honeyman.
- ⁶⁹ Minutes of 15th Meeting of the Scottish Committee, 23 July 1945, NLS Acc. 9787/271.
- ⁷⁰ Memorandum on the Status of the Scottish Committee, 17 July 1945 (attached to Fox to Scottish Committee, 20 July 1945, NLS Acc. 9787/271).
- ⁷¹ Peddie prepared the memorandum (Minutes of 16th Meeting of the Scottish Committee, 11 September 1945, VA EL 4/103). McKechnie wrote something but it does not survive. His views were given by Peddie: "...he feels like myself that there wasn't much fun in going on when one hears, long after the event, that the Glasgow Citizen's Theatre had got £X for a new theatre, that Newman had been to London, that Barnes had fixed up something with London, that there had been losses on plays sent out on tour but what the loss was was vague in the extreme, that appointments made in Scotland had to be "vetted" in London and so on and on and on" (Peddie to Mavor, 26 July 1945, NLS Acc. 9787/271).
- ⁷² Mavor to Keynes, 25 July 1945, KCC PP 84/1/304.
- ⁷³ Peddie, Scottish Committee paper, 25 July 1945, NLS Acc. 9787/271.
- ⁷⁴ Peddie to Mavor, 26 July, 1945, NLS Acc. 9787/271. Mavor commented on this letter "I agree with it." (Mavor to Honeyman, 27 July 1945, NLS Acc. 9787/271).
- ⁷⁵ Mavor to Honeyman, 26 July 1945, NLS Acc. 9787/271.
- ⁷⁶ Honeyman to Mavor, 28 July 1945, NLS Acc. 9787/271.
- ⁷⁷ Mavor to Honeyman, 30 July 1945, NLS Acc. 9787/271. It seems that Tom Johnston spoke directly with Butler and Keynes about the Charter sometime shortly before leaving office (Mavor to Keynes, 4 August 1945, KC 84/1/365-367).
- ⁷⁸ Fox to Mavor, 28 July 1945, NLS Acc. 11307/5.
- ⁷⁹ Parker to Hale, 31 July 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ⁸⁰ Parker to Glasgow, 17 August 1945, NAS ED 61/28 and Parker to Mackay Thomson, 7 September 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ⁸¹ Keynes to Glasgow, 30 July 1945, VA EL 2/40.
- ⁸² Parker to Mavor, 17 August 1945, NAS ED 61/28. The committee being envisaged for Wales at this stage was purely advisory and hence not relevant to the dispute with the Scots. Once the Scottish case had been conceded, however, the Welsh Committee had to be given the same status.
- ⁸³ Parker to Mackay Thomson, 7 September 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ⁸⁴ Mavor to Keynes, 4 August 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ⁸⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁶ Hardy to Arbuckle, 9th and 10th August 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ⁸⁷ Mavor to Parker, 17 August 1945, NAS ED 61/28. The reason for the lack of reply may have been that Keynes was preparing for another visit to the United States, this time from September to December 1945.
- ⁸⁸ Westwood's sympathies are mentioned by Mitchell, *op. cit.* p. 88.
- ⁸⁹ Mavor to Parker, 23 August 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ⁹⁰ Mavor to Parker, 30 August 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ⁹¹ Hale to Keynes, 23 August 1945, KCC PP 84/1/374.
- ⁹² Hale to Keynes, 24 August 1945, KCC PP 84/1/375.
- ⁹³ Mavor to Parker, 30 August 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ⁹⁴ Parker to Mavor, 3 September 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ⁹⁵ Mavor to Parker, 4 September 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ⁹⁶ Parker to Mackay Thomson, 7 September 1945, NAS ED 61/28.
- ⁹⁷ Mackay Thomson to Fraser, 9 September 1945, NAS ED 61/28. Fraser's attitude to Home Rule is mentioned by Mitchell, *op. cit.* p. 88.
- ⁹⁸ Fraser to Mackay Thomson, 11 September 1945, NAS ED 61/28. Written on reverse of Mackay Thomson's memorandum.
- ⁹⁹ Parker to Mackay Thomson, 13 September 1945, NAS ED 61/28. The attitude of Keynes and Glasgow to Mavor was colder now than it had ever been. She had written to Keynes on 7 September "Dr. Mavor (or James Bridie) is as militant as ever", threatening to resign over an issue concerning Perth Repertory Theatre (Glasgow to Keynes, 7 September 1945, VA EL 2/40). Keynes's reply was "If he does resign, we, I think, will be resigned" (Keynes to Glasgow, 25 September 1945, VA EL 2/40).
- ¹⁰⁰ Keynes to Hale, 9 September 1945, KCC PP 84/1/368-369.
- ¹⁰¹ Keynes to Glasgow, 26 August 1945, VA EL 5/45.
- ¹⁰² Hale to Parker, 9 January 1946; Parker to Hale, 12 January 1946, NAS ED 61/28.
- ¹⁰³ Glasgow to Hale, 27 November 1945, VA EL 5/45.
- ¹⁰⁴ Keynes to Hale, 31 December 1945, VA EL 5/45.

¹⁰⁵ Clause 12(4): “The Council may, from time to time, make such regulations as to quorum and procedure of any such Committee as it thinks fit and any such Committee shall conform to such regulations.” No consultation would be required to make any changes, and the committees had no right of appeal. The crux would seem to hinge on the interpretation of the word ‘procedure’. The clause appears to concern itself with how these committees conducted their business, not what their business should be, but it would be arguable that procedure is inseparable from the sort of business to be discussed. Kenyes may have intended a very narrow delimitation of ‘procedure’ in this sense, but the clause was never interpreted that way in practice.

Chapter 13: Reaching Agreement, 1946-47

Securing the desired references in the Charter was only the beginning of a process, and the Scottish Committee was far from seeing that as the end of the affair. Keynes had conceded because he believed that the Charter did not give away what the Scots imagined it did. His opposition had brought the two sides of the question of Scotland's position within the Arts Council into sharp focus. On one hand was the legal framework laid down by the Charter and on the other the Council's interpretation of the Charter and those aspects of its work that the Charter did not define. Having secured the first, the Scottish Committee had to secure the second, or Keynes might still win. Concurrently, then, with its pressure for recognition in the Charter the Scottish Committee prepared plans for the structure and role of the Scottish Committee which would be reconstituted after the Charter had been granted. The plan was to be presented to the Council in the form of a resolution.

The idea of a resolution, suggested by Mavor to Parker in August 1945, originated in Peddie's report in which he had set out ten objectives to secure the Committee's authority in Scotland.¹ The first draft dates from October 1945. It proposed an enlarged Committee responsible for all matters affecting Scotland, an Executive Committee and art-form panels. The decisions of the Executive would be subject to approval by the Committee. Meetings would be held alternately in Edinburgh and Glasgow. The panels would be enlarged, and joint meetings with the Executive and with the Committee would be held periodically. It concluded with a list of possible members that included Walter Elliot, Sir John McEwen, Lord Inverclyde and Stanley Cursiter.² The list drove home the point about the talent available to a strong Scottish body compared to a neutered one. The Committee's plan, effectively, was for a 'shadow Council' that,

gathering experience over a period of time, would be prepared for full autonomy when it came. Indeed, Honeyman several times referred to 'the Scottish Arts Council' at this time. It was also easily realisable, compared to Mavor's Three Arts Council or Honeyman's proposal but its ambition was on the same national scale. Mavor sent a copy of the draft to Glasgow, who, sensible of its purpose and in the absence of Keynes, was non-committal.³ Mavor sent the draft to Parker in November, indicating his intention to present it to the Council in December. He wanted Westwood to demand two Scottish members on the Arts Council and an annual Scottish grant of £5,000. A representative of the Council would be expected to attend every statutory meeting of the Committee.⁴

The tone of this missive reflects the self-assurance the Scottish Committee had gained from receiving the support of Westwood and Fraser.⁵ It was also necessary to get clear at the outset exactly what it expected for the future. Mavor did not press ahead in December for reasons that are not clear, but may be related to the wish that the Committee should submit its annual budget to the Scottish Secretary in the first instance.⁶ This raised the same issue of accountability that had been dismissed in December 1942. Although no reply from Parker is preserved, he would have pointed out the difficulty and may have advised that the Committee should take care to get its resolution right before presenting it. The issue next appears in correspondence in March 1946. Honeyman's idea of a Scottish Director appears to have been pressed by Mavor in the intervening months. In March the Council appointed Huw Wheldon Director for Wales at a higher salary than Fox received in Scotland.⁷ Glasgow informed Mavor that Fox was not considered strong enough to be Director for Scotland. In his reply Mavor

re-introduced the subject of the resolution, saying that with the backing of the Scottish Committee, he intended to propose “considerable devolution”.⁸

These two issues, a Director for Scotland and the preparation of the resolution, were the last issues of importance Mavor was to deal with as Chairman of the Scottish Committee. On the 21st of April, Keynes died. All progress was halted until a new Chairman could be appointed.⁹ At the end of the month Mavor left for Hollywood and on returning in May found that the new Chairman was to be Sir Ernest Pooley. Mavor resigned immediately. Pooley had been one of the three members of the Customs and Excise Committee (Mavor called them ‘The Three Blind Mice’) which adjudicated on exemptions from Entertainments Tax.¹⁰ Their unpredictable decisions had plagued the early years of the Citizens’ Theatre, one incident in 1943 involving the Scottish Office in an unsuccessful appeal which dragged on for a year.¹¹ Before these events unfolded Mavor had, confidentially, pressed hard for the appointment of Honeyman as Director for Scotland. Honeyman had submitted his resignation as Director of Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries in January over a dispute about salary, and was working his notice when the issue of the Welsh Directorship had arisen.¹² On Mavor’s approach he agreed to do it, on condition that the post was on equal terms with the London art directors, which was not the case with Wheldon. For Mavor the opportunity seemed “a gift from heaven”. Honeyman’s appointment would complete the proposals for devolution contained in the resolution, which he proposed to send in a matter of days.¹³ Keynes’s death left Glasgow to deal with Mavor. She expressed herself freely:

I think the result would be chaotic! The whole idea of a local director is that he represents the Council in his own area, interprets its policy, carries out (in his own

way, of course) the programme initiated at Headquarters and makes known to Headquarters his particular needs.¹⁴

While conceding that some real devolution was now entrained in Scotland and Wales, she feared that the relationship would lead to constant disputes over authority. A Scottish Director of equal status to a London Director would mean that “the Council in Scotland must split off and become autonomous. Otherwise the thing is unworkable”. This was not a threat that would have worried Honeyman or even Mavor, who linked the Council’s development in Scotland to a wider political perspective:

Another thing which is not fully appreciated in London is the furious and universal demand to manage its own affairs that has arisen lately in Scotland. A week’s study of the Scottish newspapers of all shades of opinion would make this very clear; but these journals are not generally available in London.¹⁵

His own “interventions” were “the mildest demonstration of the very strong feeling that is behind them and animates them”. Mavor then left for New York. Shortly afterwards Honeyman reached a settlement with Glasgow Corporation and withdrew his resignation.¹⁶ The significance of the incident is twofold. Firstly, it proves that Mavor and Honeyman had come even closer over the year of Charter negotiations. Although the entire Scottish Committee was to be re-constituted under the Charter, Mavor was expected, and expected himself, to continue as Chairman. Had he doubted Honeyman’s suitability as his chief executive he would not have proposed him. Secondly, it confirms the ambition that was now motivating the Scottish Committee. Mavor was seeking to position it for independence. As his letter to Glasgow makes plain, he saw the politics

of the Scottish Committee as an instance of the general Scottish demand for greater control of its own affairs. Under Home Rule, expected in the fairly near future, an autonomous Scottish Arts Council would be inevitable. After Mavor's resignation, Ivor Brown made the same political link in a forceful note to Glasgow.

There has to be Home Rule now, I'm sure. If Honeyman also resigns it means that the Scottish Committee is almost nothing. Even the solid Peddie is a Home Ruler now. Scottish opinion on all topics is getting intensely anti-London. Even the grave ministers of the Kirk assembly...were talking devolution. Why not put the job through as soon as possible?¹⁷

By early April Mavor was planning to meet Keynes and Glasgow to thrash out the whole subject. As he wrote to Parker, the Scottish Committee wished to put "clear-cut and definite proposals" to Keynes on his return from the United States.¹⁸ Mavor believed that he had a chance of winning. Brown and Clark would (he told Parker) give him "strong support", while Evans, Williams and Stanley Marchant were "also likely on our side". Lord Harlech, he knew, was more ambivalent. Keynes and Glasgow could be expected to be unenthusiastic but with most or all of the Council against them he was confident that he would get his way. He also wished to know that his terms would have the support of the Scottish Office. With a view to reconstructing the Committee he had sounded out Walter Elliot and Stanley Cursiter. Both had indicated their willingness to serve, Cursiter with his usual rider that he must be satisfied with the Committee's autonomy from London.¹⁹ Parker was alarmed. Once again Mavor was asking people to join before the Scottish Secretary had been consulted, and the two names which had been offered were unlikely to be acceptable.²⁰ He advised Mavor to do no more until

they had spoken and, ideally, he had consulted Westwood. On the 18th Mavor sent him a revised draft. It required the Council to agree that the Scottish Committee would act for it in Scotland, with an annual grant based on an agreed, costed programme, subject to the terms of the Charter and any exceptions that the Council or Executive might make.²¹

Keynes's Death and Mavor's Resignation

The Committee's resolve is apparent from Mavor's covering letter, in which he described the resolution as material for a showdown. But as he pointed out, the Council still retained full control and he was only proposing another step in a process already underway. Parker thought the new text an improvement but remained concerned.²² Before he could reply in detail Keynes died. Writing to Mackay Thomson on the 23rd of April, Parker reveals that he had tried to persuade Mavor to drop the resolution because he was much less certain that the Council would agree to it. Reverting to his preference for a more organic development, he had suggested that the Committee should focus on preparing an annual programme, which, if the Council approved, would entail the practice of devolving power. But Mavor had made it plain that the Scottish Committee would resign unless it was guaranteed greater freedom from London.²³ On the 26th the Scottish Committee gave its unanimous agreement to the terms of the resolution.²⁴

Mavor left Peddie to act as Scottish Chairman in his absence in the United States. Nothing further was done before Mavor tendered his resignation on 25th of May.²⁵ Westwood had formally accepted his resignation by the 13th of June, but with the long summer break it was not accepted by the Council until late August.²⁶ By the 30th of July, after ten weeks, his resignation had still not been made public. Finding a successor

proved more difficult than anticipated.²⁷ Mavor remained in touch with the Council and the Committee throughout not only because of the delay in finding a replacement but because he had been persuaded that if the resolution were accepted he would join the new Committee, though not as Chairman.²⁸ That it was not proving easy to replace him vindicated (he felt) his belief that without assured powers it would be difficult to attract the right person.²⁹ When he had submitted his resignation it had not occurred to him that progress on the resolution might be suspended until his replacement was found. Glasgow argued this consistently.³⁰ The Scottish Committee was still the committee constituted under CEMA and therefore, like CEMA itself, had no clear legal status. With Mavor's resignation it had been placed in limbo between the old and the new dispensations. The issue of Scotland had, on this view, to be shelved for the time being. To Mavor and the Scottish Committee this was absurd, but their objections were ineffective. Despite protests from the Committee, the impasse lasted through August and September.³¹ In September *The Glasgow Herald* ran an article on the Arts Council which expressed strong devolutionary sentiments:

...even the beginnings of CEMA were tentative, and not until hostilities in Europe were ended was that body's work recognised to the degree of being set on a permanent footing... It may none the less be regretted that the Council's Scottish Committee has not been enabled to play a more active part in fostering production and performance on this side of the Tweed - for instance, by making its financial resources more nearly equal to those allotted to Wales. The Scottish Committee's present lack of a Chairman suggests that its position is not altogether happy. This may be due, as in other comparable instances, to the kind of London-centred constitution which divides England into 10 "regions" and classes Scotland and

Wales as merely two more. Culture...is not something to be measured out on a numerical basis of population, and the Arts Council of Great Britain must live up to the implications of its title.³²

James Welsh becomes Chairman

This evidence of wider sympathy with its case must have been welcome to the Scottish Committee. By early October Mavor was asking Parker “when is the Iron Curtain to be lifted from the Scottish Area of the Arts Council?” and raising the threat of mass resignation, warning that he would be vociferous in the Press.³³ Parker was relieved to be able to inform him that a new Chairman would be appointed soon.³⁴ It was to be James Welsh, ex-Lord Provost of Glasgow.³⁵ Welsh’s political roots were in the ILP. He had become a Glasgow councillor in 1913, and in the mid-1920s Convener of the Parks Committee. This had brought the convenership of the Art Gallery Sub-committee, and he was credited with the “experience, energy and enterprise” which was “largely responsible for the improvement of the music and entertainments” in Glasgow’s parks in those years.³⁶ He had served as MP for Paisley from 1929 to 1932, when he returned to Glasgow politics as councillor for Maryhill. When the ILP severed relations with the Labour Party, Welsh joined the breakaway Scottish Socialists, led by Patrick Dollan.³⁷ When he was elected Lord Provost of Glasgow in 1943 it was as a Scottish Socialist. On becoming Lord Provost he automatically became a trustee of the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland. Here he would have met Peddie and Lady Rosebery (who also joined the Scottish Committee in December 1946). Other trustees at the time included the Duchess of Atholl, Lord Macmillan and (ex officio as Secretary of State) Tom Johnston.³⁸ He would also have been known for his membership of the Scottish Committee of the Council for Art and Industry and the Scottish Film Council’s Joint

Committee on Industry.³⁹ He was in fact one of the Scottish Film Council's founders. Quick to see the potential of film, Welsh (with his partner George Smith) had built a chain of cinemas in and around Glasgow. He became a prominent member (and President) of the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association, the professional body of cinema owners.⁴⁰ Welsh was a respected political figure and businessman, seen as tried and tested, with knowledge of the arts and a special interest in music. No doubt the recent reconciliation of the Scottish Socialists and Labour had made him the more acceptable to the government. Perhaps unknown to the Council, he was also a supporter of Home Rule and had been Vice-Chairman of the group behind *The Leonard Declaration*.

The Scottish Committee was not informed of Welsh's appointment. On the eighth of October, the members wrote collectively to Pooley to demand that the Council, if it would not deal with them, appoint a Vice-Chairman from among them who would have the authority to take affairs forward. They believed that the failure, after four months, to appoint a Scottish Chairman had damaged the Council's standing:

The fact that the Direction of the policy of the Arts Council comes wholly from London has resulted in the active opposition in Scotland of many whose aid would be invaluable. We do not feel that we can continue indefinitely to be the Council's apologists in Scotland, while we ourselves have grave doubts whether the Council has ever given serious consideration to what Scotland wants and needs in this sphere.⁴¹

Despite the urgency of its appeal Pooley kept the Committee waiting three weeks for a reply, until Welsh had been formally appointed. It was brief and bland, informing them of Welsh's appointment and making no comment on their complaint.⁴² The reason given for the delay, that he had wished to be able to inform them of the name of the new Chairman, was spurious. The appointment had been known informally from the beginning of the month, and could easily have been shared confidentially with Peddie. Pooley, it would seem, thought that the unreconstructed Scottish Committee had no status and no rights in the matter.

Welsh met Glasgow near the end of October to discuss the issues facing the Council and the Scottish Committee.⁴³ The question of the future basis of Scottish funding was raised and Hale confirmed that the Goschen formula would be applied, following the arrangement for the Education (Scotland) Fund.⁴⁴ It was to continue as the basis for calculating the Scottish grant until 1953-54, when the Scottish Committee acceded to pressure from London and Wales to move to a 'needs-based' assessment.⁴⁵ Between November and December events moved quickly, for reasons not explicit in the evidence that I have seen. Several factors may have been in play. It is possible, for example, that Welsh accepted the chairmanship only on condition that the Scottish Committee gained the practical autonomy it expected under the Charter. Pooley, on the other hand, evidently did not share Keynes's entrenched hostility to devolving some power, and seems to have approached the issue pragmatically. On the Council itself, some members (Sir Kenneth Clark and Ivor Brown for example) sympathised with the Scottish Committee's position. Brown, who had publicly disagreed with Keynes's London-centred ambitions in 1945, probably saw devolution as an antidote to this legacy.⁴⁶ Others may simply have been weary of continuous conflict.

Mavor rejoined in December, satisfied with Welsh's appointment and confident that Pooley had given way on the material argument, which was confirmed when the resolution was finally passed by the Council at its December meeting.⁴⁷ The resolution, almost identical to the draft of April, stated:

That this Council, in furtherance of its policy of decentralisation and in conformity with Section III Paragraph 12 (1) (a) of the Charter, directs its Scottish Committee to act for the Council and on its behalf in the Council's activities within the area of Scotland; and that it will grant to the Scottish Committee for these purposes annually a sum of money based on a programme submitted by the Scottish Committee and approved by the Council before the end of each financial year; provided that such delegation of duties and responsibilities shall be subject to the terms of the Charter and to such exceptions as the Council or its Executive may from time to time determine.⁴⁸

The feeling in Scotland was so far so good. The words had been put in place, now the task was to secure their interpretation in practice. An early meeting to discuss the precise organisational arrangements was needed. Any possibility of euphoria on the Scottish Committee had been tempered by the frustrations of the last few months. The Scots would now press harder to secure their demands, as Mavor warned Glasgow.⁴⁹

She and some members of the Council may still have hoped that new appointments would deliver a more docile Scottish Committee. If so, they would have been disappointed. In the years ahead, Welsh was to prove the most relentless champion of Scottish interests of all the Chairmen before 1967, and was strongly supported by his

committee members. The new members in 1946 were drawn from the aristocracy and the arts. Lady Eva Rosebery, whose husband had been Scottish Secretary for a few weeks in 1945, had opened exhibitions for CEMA during the war. She had joined the Music Sub-Committee when it was set up in 1945 and was involved in planning the first Edinburgh Festival. She was the first female member of the Scottish Committee (a small group which, up to 1967, had only attained eight in number against 57 men in the same period). The novelist Eric Linklater also joined, though he resigned little more than a year later. Ian Finlay was an art historian, writer and broadcaster who was to become, in 1961, Director of the National Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh. He was to be the longest serving member of the Scottish Committee and the Scottish Arts Council, serving in an unbroken stretch for 11 years to 1957, then for a further six from 1962 to 1968.

The 1947 Agreement

A detailed agreement that would embed in practice the autonomy that had been achieved on paper was the Scots' priority. As Welsh put it to the new Committee at its first meeting in January 1947, "everything would depend on [the] interpretation" of the terms of the resolution. All the efforts of the last two years now came to a head, in search of the final breakthrough. Welsh proposed that the Scottish Committee should first decide what it wanted, then have an informal meeting with the Council, and finally a formal Council meeting to ratify the settlement. Mavor argued that the Committee must have full control of its own annual budget, a position that Welsh confirmed would apply. The basis of the Scottish allocation had not yet been agreed, although Welsh intimated that he expected it would be "based on population", effectively, on the

Goschen formula.⁵⁰ A list of proposals to define the relationship between the Committee and the Council was then agreed.

The informal meeting with Council representatives in London was held on the 30th of January. Welsh, Peddie and Lady Rosebery represented the Scottish Committee, Pooley, Ifor Evans and Ivor Brown the Council, with Parker and Glasgow attending. The business-like note (written by Glasgow) which recorded the discussion betrays no hint of the atmosphere, but it would seem that agreement was reached with little difficulty, the major hurdles having already been cleared.⁵¹ The proposals minuted by the Scottish Committee formed the basis of discussion, expanded in the final document that was now agreed. The Council conceded that the Scottish Committee would carry sole responsibility for its work in Scotland, and that the relationship between them would be made as explicit as possible and adjusted as circumstances required. The Scottish Committee, in return, would “place at the disposal” of the Council its knowledge of Scottish art and Scottish affairs, and would carry out the policy of the Council “so far as...appropriate”, being responsible for “the choice and artistic standard of enterprises originated, supported or encouraged in Scotland”. In short, the Scottish Committee was to be responsible for “the whole range of the Council’s interests and prestige” in Scotland and would advise the Council on “Scottish aspects of United Kingdom enterprises”.

All Committee minutes would be provided to the Council, with lists of Scottish “fixtures” for publicity purposes. The Committee was given the right to “consult” with the London art-form directors and make use of the “Headquarters organisation” for services such as negotiations with UK artists societies and government departments,

excepting where there were “equivalent or roughly equivalent” bodies in Scotland. It was empowered to make all “subordinate staff appointments, and make recommendations for ratification regarding senior appointments (recognising the Council’s legal responsibilities). The Council reserved the funding of the newly established Edinburgh Festival (deemed to be a British event) and the funding of some amateur music clubs, and would continue to make exhibitions and sponsor orchestras and theatre companies that would be available to Scotland. The agreement confirmed that the Scottish Committee’s annual grant would be founded on the Goschen formula, that the Committee would prepare a programme and estimates for the year ahead, and submit an annual report and accounts. To cover its share of costs associated with activities organised by the Council from which Scotland benefited, it was agreed that “an arbitrary figure” (because impossible to ascertain precisely) of 10% of the annual Scottish allocation should be paid back to London.⁵²

The Council ratified the terms on the 27th of February 1947. The Scottish Committee finally had an agreement by which the devolutionary potential of the Charter could be given substance. With some modifications over the next five years, the agreement of 1947 was to govern relations between the two bodies for the next two decades.

¹ In September Honeyman wrote to Glasgow asking for a breakdown of Scottish expenditure. He had, he said, been at a meeting in Glasgow to discuss “block grants and Goschen formulae” and had expressed his personal doubt whether Scotland benefited by ignoring them. This may have been an Art Advisory Committee meeting but its interest is that it indicates an ongoing debate about the proper basis of Scottish financing (Honeyman to Glasgow, 14 September 1945, NLS Acc. 9787/271).

² ‘Notes for Re-Organisation of Scottish Committee’, 11 October 1945, NLS Acc. 11309/5.

³ Glasgow to Mavor, 15 October 1945, NLS Acc. 11309/5.

⁴ Mavor to Parker, 14 November 1945, NAS ED 61/28. £5,000 equates to about £136,000 in 2003 terms.

⁵ Mavor had discussed the issue with Walter Elliot, who had indicated his willingness to serve in April. Coming from a senior politician this must have boosted the Committee’s confidence.

⁶ Mavor to Parker, 23 November 1945, NAS ED 61/28.

⁷ Glasgow to Mavor, 14 March 1946, NLS Acc. 11309/5. Tom Jones was offered the Welsh Chairmanship but declined (Glasgow to Jones, 20 February 1945, VA EL 2/18).

⁸ Mavor to Glasgow, 17 March 1946, NLS Acc. 11309/5.

⁹ Parker to Mavor, 23 April 1946, NAS ED 61/28.

¹⁰ Three internal candidates were considered and dismissed as unsuitable, Lord Harlech, Ifor Evans and Sir Kenneth Clark (Barlow to Parker, 10 May 1946, NAS ED 61/28). Clark, Keynes's Deputy, had hoped to succeed him, but (unknown to him) had no support from fellow Council members or politicians (Ibid.). Other names briefly considered were Lord Lytton and Lord Crawford and Balcarres. Drama was seen as the Council's major challenge over the next few years, so someone with knowledge of theatre as well as administrative experience was preferred. Pooley had been Clerk of the Drapers' Company until 1944 and, from 1941, had been a member of a committee advising the government on its support for voluntary hospitals, a contribution relevant to the creation of the NHS (see Titmuss, op. cit. p.456). He was a trustee of the Old Vic and (according to Barlow) had effectively been running it since he retired. Barlow concluded that the only objections to him were his age (69) and that he had been "a member of the small committee...appointed to advise the Board of Customs on the exemption from entertainment duty of plays which could be regarded as partly educational. In this capacity he inevitably was criticised by some of the theatre people, particularly the theatre managers. This committee has now ceased and I do not think this objection is serious".

¹¹ The appeal is documented in NAS ED 61/28.

¹² Honeyman, *Art and Audacity* (London, Collins, 1971), pp. 226-230.

¹³ Mavor to Keynes, 20 April 1946, NLS Acc. 11309/5. London Directors were on salaries of £1,500 per annum; the Welsh Director on £1,000 and Mary Fox on £800.

¹⁴ Glasgow to Mavor, 24 April 1946, NLS 11309/5.

¹⁵ Mavor to Glasgow, undated draft, late April 1946, NLS Acc. 9787/271.

¹⁶ Honeyman, op. cit. p. 230. Honeyman added that the withdrawal of his resignation "gave Hugh MacDiarmid a chance to have a smack at Bridie and me. His comment was "The two most recent disasters to afflict Scotland have been the withdrawal of Honeyman's resignation and the return of James Bridie from America"".

¹⁷ Brown to Glasgow, undated hand-written note, May or possibly June 1946, VA EL 5/92.

¹⁸ Mavor to Parker, 4 April 1946, NAS ED 61/28.

¹⁹ Mavor to Parker, 4 April 1946, NAS ED 61/28.

²⁰ Parker pointed out to Mavor, possibly by telephone, that Westwood might well be reluctant to appoint a politician, especially of another party. The objections to Cursiter were not spelled out but were probably connected to the events of 1942 (Parker to Mackay Thomson, 23 April 1946, NAS ED 61/28).

²¹ Mavor to Parker, 18 April 1946, NAS ED 61/28.

²² Parker to Mavor, 23 April 1946, NAS ED 61/28

²³ Parker to Mackay Thomson, 23 April 1946, NAS ED 61/28.

²⁴ Minutes of 19th Meeting of the Scottish Committee, 26 April 1946, VA EL 4/103.

²⁵ Mavor to Evans, 25 May 1946, VA EL 2/84. He wrote of Pooley "His record as leader of the Three Blind Mice, and the very deadly blows he struck at CEMA enterprises...make him an utterly impossible Chairman."

²⁶ Glasgow to Mavor, 24 August 1946, VA EL 2/84.

²⁷ Parker to Mavor, 31 July and 6 August, VA EL 2/84.

²⁸ Westwood to Mavor, 5 June 1946, NLS Acc. 11309/5.

²⁹ Mavor to Parker, 8 August 1946, VA EL 2/84.

³⁰ Parker to Mavor, 4 October 1946, VA EL 2/84.

³¹ Peddie wrote a long memorandum to Westwood complaining about the situation and the treatment of the Committee, warning that it would resign if meaningful devolution were not achieved (Peddie to Westwood, Arts Council of Great Britain Scottish Committee, 28 June 1946, NLS Acc. 9787/271).

³² *The Glasgow Herald*, 11 September 1946 (cutting in NAS ED 61/28).

³³ Mavor to Parker, 3 October 1946, VA EL 2/84.

³⁴ Parker to Mavor, 4 October 1946, VA EL 2/84.

³⁵ Hale to Glasgow, 4 October 1946, VA EL 5/92. Welsh was formally invited by Hugh Dalton on 17 October (VA EL 5/59) and accepted on 19 October (NAS ED 61/28).

³⁶ *The Bailie*, Vol. CVI, No. 5752, 8 July 1925 (Mitchell Library).

³⁷ Fry, *Patronage and Principle* (Aberdeen University Press, 1987), p. 171.

³⁸ Peddie, *The First 50 Years, The Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland, 1901-1951* (Edinburgh, Pillans and Wilson, 1951), pp. 80-81. Welsh is not named as a Trustee, only the office of Lord Provost being given.

³⁹ In *The Scottish Dictionary of National Biography* the unsleeping Welsh gave his 'other interests' as 'Public Service'.

⁴⁰ Information on the Smith and Welsh cinemas can be found in Peter, *100 Years of Glasgow's Amazing Cinemas* (Edinburgh, Polygon, 2000).

⁴¹ Scottish Committee to Pooley, 8 October 1946, VA EL 5/92. The letter was signed by Peddie, Honeyman, McKechnie and Bullock.

⁴² Pooley to Peddie, 24 October, VA EL 5/92.

⁴³ Glasgow to Welsh, 31 October 1946, VA EL 5/59.

⁴⁴ Hale to Glasgow, 28 November 1946, VA EL 5/92.

⁴⁵ W.E. Williams, correspondence October-November 1952, VA EL 5/95. In doing so the Scottish Committee made the stipulation that, if it was felt necessary in the future, they would insist on a return to the Goschen formula assessment. Williams hoped "the spirit of Goschen, though always present, will never have to be invoked in future" (Williams to Firth, 18 November 1952, VA EL 5/95). His wish was not granted.

⁴⁶ See Chapter 13, Note 52.

⁴⁷ Glasgow to Mavor, 13 December 1946, VA EL 2/84.

⁴⁸ Glasgow to Honeyman, 13 December 1946, NLS Acc. 9787/271.

⁴⁹ Mavor to Glasgow, 16 December 1946, VA EL 2/84.

⁵⁰ Minutes of the First Meeting of the Scottish Committee, 14 January 1947, VA EL 4/104.

⁵¹ Council Paper No. 225, 1 February 1947, (NAS ED 61/29).

⁵² Initially set at £5,000, rising to £10,000, this charge became another bone of contention in the following years.