

A PUBLIC PHILOSOPHER: MACMURRAY AND THE BBC, 1930 TO 1941

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INTRODUCTION

All who have read Freedom in the Modern World will recall Charles Siepmann's description of his first meeting with John Macmurray:-

"At my request he came to see me at Savoy Hill. I remember the room (very official), the interruptions of colleagues and office boys and telephone bells. We sat as strangers, a little on the defensive, with the wariness of first acquaintance. I told him of our needs and hopes and we discussed philosophy and the difficulty of making dry bones live. We warmed to our subject and to one another. A few minutes later the author of this book sat speaking at a microphone in what was then No. 6 Studio; and with the dispassionate inhumanity of the broadcasting official I remember sitting with a colleague weighing the quality and substance of that quiet voice with the endearing Scottish brogue which came to us through our headphones. Well, he *might* do, we coldly calculated! I recall these details because they were incidents of a first acquaintance which has since ripened to friendship... Nor are such personal recollections wholly irrelevant. For the contagion of personality which then made a warmth out of the chill of first acquaintance and sensitive reserve has since become part of the experience of many who will be readers of this book. Few would have expected that at the height of a beguiling summer and at the unlikely hour of eight of the evening twelve broadcast talks on Philosophy would have produced a miniature renaissance among thousands of English listeners. In that sense, at least, the talks made broadcast history. The pamphlet which introduced them became a best-seller."

I have confined this paper mainly to a narrative history of Macmurray's relations with the BBC from 1930 to 1941. This is the period of the 'miniature renaissance', from its promising beginning in 1930, through the demise of the Central Council for Broadcast Adult Education in 1934, to the virtual end of the Listening Groups in 1941. The British public had been introduced to the 'fierce word' Philosophy, and had found the experience not frightening but stimulating. Why, then, after such a promising beginning, did the experiment come to an end? How did it happen that somebody whose reputation on the air stood so high in 1932 should have all but vanished from the broadcasting scene by the end of the War?¹ BBC records have something useful to say about these two questions. But there is a third question of greater importance, on which they have nothing to say: why, at roughly this same period, did Macmurray's philosophy suffer an eclipse in academic circles from which it is only now emerging? Could there be any connexion? My guess is that there was not: nevertheless, the question might be worth pursuing.

We also need to consider how far Macmurray's broadcasting experience affected his philosophy. For this, I have been obliged, a bit diffidently, to attempt some analysis of his thinking. In particular, I find it helpful to recognise in it three distinct but interconnected categories. The first

is the pursuit of the philosophy of the Personal. As early as 1925, he was writing to his old friend and mentor Dick Roberts "...if the world is to be comprehended, it must be in terms of personality."² This pursuit dominated his philosophical thinking until 1930 at least, when he seemed set to embark on a book based on the five public lectures he was then delivering on the phenomenology of the Personal. Then came the invitation from the BBC; after that, what Dr Dorothy Emmet has described as "a series of short and tantalisingly impressionistic books."³ His work on the Personal was apparently put on one side. One of the 'short books', Interpreting the Universe (1933), defines the sticking-point he had reached at that stage in his formal thinking.⁴

The second category stems from his religious commitment. Though he decided in 1917 to sever formal relations with any Christian church, and maintained this resolve until he joined the Society of Friends in the late 1950s after his retirement, he had never wavered in his Christian conviction. As he put it, "to think that religion... is illusory and pointless has always seemed to me as preposterous as it would be to think the same of music."⁵ At the end of his life, in 1972, speaking to the Edinburgh Theological Club, he said "...in my own search for a satisfactory philosophy I found myself critical of the foundations of Greek philosophy, and so of all subsequent philosophy to date, and was reaching for a new philosophical form that would not exclude a belief in God, by making religion a matter of unjustifiable assertion."⁶

The third category in his thinking is, so to speak, a corollary of the first two, and covers those general questions which arise when we begin to philosophise -- to ask ourselves "what is philosophy for?"-- and to attempt to apply this thinking in our lives. It comprises a large part of Macmurray's literary output during this period. Freedom in the Modern World was his first book, published in 1932. Part of it, subtitled "Reality and Freedom", contains the substance of his first series of radio talks. Freedom and Reality are ideas which recur constantly in his writing, both then and later on. He consistently rejected dualism, which he regarded as the mainspring of most of what was wrong in both philosophy and theology; asserting in its place what he called "the primacy of the practical". A term now in currency here in Britain is "applied philosophy": I think Macmurray would have approved it.

In the course of the narrative, we shall find Macmurray making, or attempting to make, contributions to all three of these categories through his radio talks. His 'third category' contributions were generally welcomed and successful: the contributions to the other two categories less so. His contribution on the theme of Christianity was rejected; largely, I think, through mischance. His 'Persons & Functions' series in 1941, which dealt with a crucial aspect of his general theory of the Personal, had to be pushed through against opposition from within the hierarchy of the BBC; though it was welcomed by Churchmen, it seems to have made little impact on the general listener. One is left with the impression that perhaps radio is not the best medium through which to launch new ideas, embracing controversial issues, which need to be backed up by closely reasoned argument. A further important point is that, by 1936 and 1941, he had lost the crucial support of a strong adult education section within the Talks Department.

The radio did however enable Macmurray to speak to the condition of a great many men and women who were seeking a philosophy which would inspire, clarify, and underpin their commitment to their various professions. A second important development was in the sphere of style and language. He decided to "translate the specialism of his accustomed phraseology into the vernacular"⁷: not for the first time, so it happens, but with a commitment he had not had

before. He found, to his surprise, that the exercise gave him a deeper insight into the real meaning of the technical terms he habitually used. I think this explains why Neil Spurway, the historian of the Gifford Lectures, while awarding the palm to Macmurray for systematic Natural Theology, has commended his "deceptively simple language".⁸ Now to the narrative.

THE BBC AND ADULT EDUCATION: 1930

When Siepmann held his interview with Macmurray early in 1930, the British Broadcasting Corporation was just three years old, having taken over the work of the British Broadcasting Company on 1 January 1927. But already education had a high place in its priorities, and adult education was developing fast. From the Director General downwards there was a widely held belief in the "great educative work" to which they could contribute through the power of broadcasting.⁹ But problems abounded, particularly in regard to what came to be called the "Listening End". John Reith, the Director General, was uncertain of the BBC's responsibility and powers in this field, and invited Sir Henry Hadow, the author of a seminal report on The Education of the Adolescent (1926), to form a committee to advise him. The committee in 1928 produced its report under the title New Ventures in Broadcasting. As Reith pointed out, it could equally have been called New Ventures in Education.

Their first recommendation, accepted by the BBC, was that adult education policy should be the responsibility of a new body, the Central Council for Broadcast Adult Education. This came into being at the end of 1928, with a small money grant from the BBC, a research benefaction from the Carnegie Trust, and a five-year commission. "Russia has a Five-Year Plan: so also has the Central Council For Adult Education", said the BBC Year Book for 1932; but it hastened to add that theirs was "a plan with a difference; for it is an attempt to foster a natural growth, not to force the pace unduly."¹⁰ The Central Council was a prestigious body: a signal that the BBC took adult education seriously. The first Chairman was Lord Justice Sankey; he resigned in 1929 when the Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, appointed him Lord Chancellor in his new cabinet. His successor was William Temple, the Archbishop of York, second-in-line in the hierarchy of the Established Church of England.

Charles Siepmann was appointed secretary to the Central Council, which was also given executive responsibilities for the arrangement of programmes and choice of speakers. Meanwhile, the BBC retained sole control of the physical resources for putting the work of the Council out on the air.

A major user of these resources was the existing Talks Department; it was decided therefore to incorporate the Adult Education Section in that department, though Siepmann kept his autonomy on all matters affecting the Council. This curious dyarchy lasted about two years. Eventually the inevitable explosion occurred and Siepmann found himself in January 1932 as sole head of the Talks Department.

The Hadow Committee made two other notable recommendations. The first was that the BBC should enter the publications field with a weekly education journal. This was easily accomplished: The Listener was already on the stocks. The second was the creation of Area Councils representing local opinion, reporting to the Central Council, and responsible for the

'listening-end' of the enterprise. This meant, in particular, setting up and nurturing 'Listening Groups'.

These Listening Groups were the distinctive and remarkable feature of the broadcast Adult Education movement of the Thirties. Nearly all came into being informally and spontaneously. The task of the Central Council was not only to encourage but also to control Listening Groups, by organising courses and summer schools for Group leaders, and expediting the supply of pamphlets and supporting literature. The BBC's Annual Year Books for 1931, 1932 and 1933 are almost breathless in their reports of expansion achievement: "Already they have achieved results which are startling ... of importance to the future of education. ...Nothing like it before; the ground which has been explored is new ground to education." By the winter of 1930/31 there were over a thousand Groups in being in the country.¹¹

That was the heyday of the Groups. When Siepmann moved to Savoy Hill in December 1929 with his Adult Education section, to take up the new post in the Talks Department, things were altogether on a more modest scale, but they were beginning to move. Programmes were becoming more demanding; it was decided in April 1929 to extend the range of subjects to include Psychology, with a series on 'Mind and Body' planned for the summer of 1930, to be given by Dr Cyril Burt, a pioneer in the use of intelligence tests. There was talk also of a concurrent series on "some philosophical problems", but no speaker had been earmarked. On 10 January 1930 Siepmann asked the Central Council for help in "discovering new talent at the microphone." There is little doubt that Macmurray's name came up in response to that appeal.

JOHN MACMURRAY IN 1929

When the invitation came to meet Siepmann at Savoy Hill, Macmurray was at an interesting point in his career. He had held the Grote Chair of Philosophy of Mind and Logic at University College, London, for just over a year. He was in demand as a speaker. He had been invited in January 1929 to address the quadrennial conference of the Student Christian Movement in Liverpool, on the ideas of freedom and friendship, and according to the Secretary of the SCM, had deeply moved his hearers. More of that below. He had contributed two chapters to B H Streeter's Adventure: the Faith of Science and the Science of Faith (Macmillan, 1928), which, he told Dick Roberts, "has had a good reception over here and has puzzled a lot of people in the right way."¹² But, apart from a few articles in learned journals, he had not published anything else. It seems that this was a deliberate decision on his part. Earlier on in his career, he had decided not to publish any book before he was forty, thus allowing his ideas plenty of time to mature.¹³ It seems that he was now turning the matter of publication over in his mind. In February 1930 he would be entering his fortieth year.

There is no doubt what subject he would choose to write about. As we have seen, in 1925 he had told Dick Roberts "...if the world is to be comprehended, it must be in terms of personality." In January 1928 he had turned down the offer of a Chair in a Canadian University "on the grounds that my work is clear to me now and that I can do it best in this country... For thinking out the philosophy of Personality it is better to be in the older civilisation than in the new one."¹⁴ Then came the Chair in London University and his inaugural lecture, delivered in November 1928 and published in April 1929, under the title "The Unity of Modern Problems." In it he put the

matter this way: "The unity of modern problems is the problem of discovering or constructing... a new schema of the Self, which will transcend both the mechanical and organic schema; and which will enable us to construct... a civilization whose mechanical and organic structures will be at the service of a personal life, whose meaning and essence is friendship." He goes on to say, "You will have seen that the unity of modern problems is a philosophical problem. ... and you will have come to the conclusion that for me philosophy is essentially logic."¹⁵ We get the impression that he was planning a book on the logical Form of the Personal (the term he adopted for his Gifford Lectures in 1953/4), written in technical language more likely to appeal to the professional than to the general reader.

At the end of 1929, it looked as if he was ready to make a start. In a letter to Dick Roberts of 25 October 1929 he said, "I'm giving tomorrow the first of five public lectures ... on the Phenomenology of the Personal. It is about Personal Freedom and the Problem of Ethics... It seems to me that we have never yet begun to understand the Personal at all, and that we don't yet have the logical apparatus to do it... This is really my starting point -- that persons exist and are real in and through communion; and my five lectures are an attempt to point this out empirically over the whole personal field. When they are finished I shall get them published if Macmillan will have them, and I think he will... My own immediate ethical conclusions simply sweep away the whole structure of mechanical and organic ethics -- the ethic of law and the ethic of service too, establishing an ethic of love or communion, the conception of persons knowing and enjoying each other as independent realities of absolute intrinsic worth."¹⁶

This letter is significant in a number of ways. First: he has opted to approach the problem from a phenomenological, or empirical, angle rather than from tackling head-on the logical problem of what he had called in 1928 "a new schema of the self". He does not explain why he has changed tack; but it may be significant that in *Interpreting the Universe* (1933) he admits bluntly that "the unity pattern through which Personality could be represented has not been worked out" (p 122); and that "we do not know how to represent our knowledge of the personal in idea."(p 142)

Secondly: his description of the theme of the first of the public lectures makes it sound remarkably like the theme of his first set of radio talks, eventually published as "Freedom in the Modern World". We are at a disadvantage here, in that the texts of the five lectures have yet to be unearthed; they may lie hidden in the mass of material still on microfilm in the Regis Collection. But if he did in fact base his first series of radio talks on his five public lectures, then it helps to explain how he managed to get the material for the radio series ready in time so quickly.

Thirdly: we need to take note of his statement on ethics: "My own immediate ethical conclusions simply sweep away the whole structure of mechanical and organic ethics -- the ethic of law and the ethic of service too, establishing an ethic of love or communion, the conception of persons knowing and enjoying each other as independent realities of absolute intrinsic worth." It was this ethic which so scandalised some of his orthodox hearers when it was repeated in his radio series. It may have had something to do with his getting a reputation in the BBC hierarchy as a 'dangerous' speaker.

There remains the problem of style and language. The audience for his public lectures would have been quite at home with his technical vocabulary. For his radio listeners, though, he had "to

expound the central issues of philosophy in a fashion which will render them comprehensible to the uninitiated."¹⁷ This would involve the translation of "the specialism of his accustomed phraseology into the living vernacular"; in fact, the "difficulty of making dry bones live", which Siepmann says was discussed at their first meeting.

This was not the first time he had trod this path. At the SCM Liverpool Conference, he had been invited to give two papers, one in two parts, on "Science and the Idea of God". It was the other paper, though, "I Have Called You My Friends", which caused the greatest stir at the Conference. Commenting on it in the 'Student Movement' Tissington Tatlow, the General Secretary of the SCM, said "Macmurray's address on 'I Have Called You My Friends' had a curiously testing effect on the audience. Running through students and senior friends alike I found three reactions: either a surface acceptance of what seemed obvious, or a genuine fear of such revolutionary ideas on friendship, or an intense enjoyment of a masterly plea for love as the whole Christian way, the spring of all Christian action."¹⁸

As Macmurray explained to Dick Roberts in a letter of 19 February 1929, this address represented his "first effort really to put my philosophical conclusions into everyday dress." He wasn't all that happy with the result. "It was the outcome of pretty hard experience; when you get that into words for everybody it looks bald and empty." The audience, though, seems to have felt otherwise. "I Have Called You My Friends" made a natural appeal to the Religious Society of Friends. With its title changed to "Ye Are My Friends" it was issued that year as a pamphlet by the Quaker Home Service Committee. Fifty years later on, it was still in active currency.¹⁹

1930: THE "TODAY AND TOMORROW" SERIES.

Let us now return to that meeting at Savoy Hill mentioned in Siepmann's foreword. How did it come about?

I have no doubt that it resulted from Siepmann's request to Council Members for new names of likely broadcasters. There was at least one member of Council to whom Macmurray's name might have occurred: the Chairman, William Temple. A year earlier, he had commissioned Macmurray to write a memorandum for him for a "conference on the problems facing the church". It duly appeared in April 1929, entitled "The Christian Apologetic in the Modern World". The paper must have been commissioned very shortly after the Quadrennial Conference, or perhaps indeed while it was still on. It may well have been inspired by the stir caused by "Ye Are My Friends". Temple always took a keen and lively interest in SCM matters and had in fact given the inaugural address at the previous Quadrennial in 1925. Moreover, the man who had organised the Liverpool Quadrennial, on behalf of the SCM, was the Rev. Eric Fenn, who later joined Temple's staff. Word about Macmurray's contribution to the Liverpool Conference would undoubtedly have reached York; probably direct from Tissington Tatlow. Fenn later joined the BBC: we shall meet him again later on in this narrative.

The meeting could not have taken place before February 1930 at the earliest. The Programmes and Publications Subcommittee of the Central Council had on 29 January confirmed arrangements for the Burt talks on Psychology in the summer; but they had made no reference to

the parallel talks on Philosophy, presumably because they had not yet settled on a name. Macmurray, as we know, eventually gave the first of his twelve talks on 28 April. In not more than twelve weeks, therefore, he had settled with Siepmann the main outlines of his approach to the series, including a Talks Pamphlet "Today and Tomorrow: A Philosophy of Freedom" of fifteen printed pages, and an "Argument" (or summary) of a further thirteen pages. This strongly suggests that the talks must indeed have been based on the five public lectures; even Macmurray would have been hard pressed to complete the assignment in time had he not had something already up his sleeve. However, they were not yet written, I suspect, in the language and style in which they were eventually delivered. Macmurray devotes over a page of his preface to Freedom in the Modern World to describing how he "translated the specialism of [the philosopher's] accustomed phraseology into the living vernacular", and how he found to his surprise that he had himself benefited from the discipline.²⁰

Accordingly, on 28 April 1930 Macmurray gave the first of his twelve talks in the radio series originally called "Today and Tomorrow"; and soon made his mark not only with listeners and Listener Groups, but also with the Central Council Executive Committee. As Siepmann said in his foreword, the introductory pamphlet to the series very soon became a best seller. It also became the model for all future pamphlets of this sort. The 7th Report of the Executive Committee of the Central Council said of it, on 28 September 1930, "In regard to the follow-up literature the outstanding success of Professor John Macmurray's pamphlet suggests that pamphlets as a whole are likely to prove more successful if planned on rather different lines from those adopted in the past. It seems to us that it is desirable that in addition to a fairly full summary of the subject of each talk in the series, some introductory essay should be included to win listeners to a first interest in the subject. Professor Macmurray's pamphlet, which had nothing to commend it but the inherent merit of the matter presented to the consideration of listeners, was, in this sense, pre-eminently successful as a challenge to thought, and we recommend further experiment in this direction in the planning of future pamphlets."

As to the content of the talks; the BBC Year Book for 1931 had this to say of things: "Some will remember the public interest aroused by Professor Macmurray's course on a new philosophy of freedom. Philosophy and psychology are fierce words, but through broadcasting they are acquiring a familiarity which breeds not contempt but confidence among listeners."²¹ It did not mention that the talks had "caused a certain stir" -- as Macmurray described it in a letter to Roberts. That was putting it mildly. He had provoked widespread alarm by enunciating his ethical conclusions in the terms he used to Dick Roberts in his letter of 25 October 1929. He maintained that "real" morality must be based upon freedom; morality based on law or duty involves restraint on freedom; therefore, to a greater or lesser extent, it is a sham. This led him to make statements which, when taken out of context, look decidedly fierce. There were three in particular:-

- There is no such thing as a moral law
- The idea of obedience has no place in morality
- The first thing that we have got to stop is the false idea that it is a good thing to serve society and its institutions. It is not a good thing, but an evil thing.

This provoked violent attacks in the Press, charges of Bolshevism, immorality and general godlessness, an Open Letter to the Prime Minister headed "Is it sedition?", and a campaign to deny Macmurray speaking-time on the BBC.²² Macmurray ignored the more extreme of his critics; but he engaged in a courteous exchange of letters in The Listener with Father Martin D'Arcy SJ. He pleaded that he was "merely pushing Protestantism to its logical issue."²³ In fact, as A D Lindsay later pointed out in his Two Moralities (1940), most real moral problems are concerned with the tension between the two moralities which Lindsay calls "my station and its duties" and "the morality of grace".²⁴ This tension is as old as Christianity itself. According to some German writers, says Lindsay, the early Christians squared the circle by accepting the ordinary standards of society as an *Interimsethik* -- a 'meanwhile morality' -- and answered the challenge of the morality of grace by throwing all their energies into promoting the Kingdom of Heaven. It was a newly-ordained Presbyterian minister, though, Leslie Newbigin, who finally put the matter to rest by restating the *Interimsethik* in modern dress in his Christian Freedom in the Modern World (1937): "The love of one another does not spring up in us willy-nilly as a result of God's love for us; it passes through by way of the human conscience and will... Duty, in other words, belongs to the road which Christians must travel, but not to the goal to which they go."²⁵

Meanwhile, The Listener came to Macmurray's aid over the demand that he should be kept off the air on the grounds of immorality and godlessness. In an editorial of 27 August 1930, headed "Misrepresentation", it pointed out that he had, over a year earlier, put forward the same truths "to a vast company of students at Liverpool"; but in the language then of religion, rather than philosophy. It quoted the concluding words of the last of his broadcast talks: "We have to recapture the sense of beauty if we are not to lose our freedom... This is not a side issue; it is the heart of the problem of modern civilisation. We shall never be saved by science, though we may be destroyed by it. It is to art and religion that we must look, and both of these depend on freedom of feeling."²⁶ Siepmann also referred to the controversy in his foreword to Freedom in the Modern World, saying "The talks largely through a misunderstanding were held in certain quarters to be revolutionary and even disruptive, but I doubt if they are more revolutionary than truth has ever been when men have dared to apply it as the touchstone of life and conduct."²⁷

The "Today and Tomorrow" series established Macmurray's standing as a speaker acceptable to group listeners; a standing he maintained all the time the Central Council were in control of things. He played a major role in "The Changing World" symposium, as will be seen below. In 1933 he was invited to act as editor of a symposium "Makers of the Modern Spirit", later published as a book; contributing the summary, two chapters, and the introductory essay -- the only one to be published that year. Father Martin D'Arcy, his friendly disputant of 1930, contributed Chapter IV on St. Thomas Aquinas. When the Council were planning their last series, in 1934, on 'Authority, Freedom and Discipline', Macmurray was invited to submit an outline scheme, but may have declined since his friend Dr J H Oldham undertook the assignment. When work was under way, the Programmes and Publicity Subcommittee commented "This series is going to be difficult to work out... In view of his great popularity with group listeners it might prove a great advantage if Professor Macmurray were to give at any rate some of the earlier talks in the series." He duly gave the second and the third talks of the series.

"THE CHANGING WORLD" SERIES

When in April 1932 Macmurray wrote his preface to Freedom in the Modern World, and Siepmann his foreword, the BBC had just completed the most ambitious Adult Education project in its history. It was launched in August 1931; The Listener then had described it as "a giant symposium to which men of letters, economists, scientists and philosophers are all to contribute. 'The Changing World' this symposium is entitled -- and who today can escape the conviction that our world is changing around us, rapidly, and in ways none too much to our liking?"²⁸ The programme was planned to last six months, from autumn 1931 to spring 1932. There would be six different but related themes, one for each day of the week except Saturdays. Each talk would last half an hour instead of the previous twenty minutes. There would be five talks pamphlets designed on the new Macmurray model, plus a general pamphlet on Discussion Groups and How to Run Them.

Macmurray was made responsible for editing the Friday subject, "Education and Leisure", contributing the introductory pamphlet and six of the autumn talks. He was also asked to give four of the talks which had been arranged for the spring in the Sunday "Modern Dilemma" series, with T S Eliot contributing the next four.²⁹ When it was all over, it was he who was invited to give the final appraisal of the programme as a whole, his article appearing in The Listener of 13 April. He paid tribute to the skills of those in the Talks Department who maintained a unity of theme not merely in a single series of the lectures but also through a group of series on widely different topics running through the whole winter, and by welding all the lectures into a single whole, making the whole programme a single unity. The handling of controversial issues -- and there were plenty of them -- might, he said, have created a difficulty, leading to an attempt to impose censorship. In the event it did not. The real reason for the absence of public controversy lay in the way the issues were treated, so that it was almost impossible for any of the speakers to take a partisan view. The talks on Science (Professors Levy and Julian Huxley) and on Politics (Leonard Woolf and Lord Eustace Percy) were examples of serious effort to combine different points of view, to good effect. He concluded

"I feel certain that honest criticism can only record one verdict that, taken as a whole, it has been a success: that it has shown what can be achieved by broadcasting as an educational force, and along what lines success can be hoped for; that it has done much to develop the technique of broadcasting, and the spirit of freedom in the use of broadcasting. 'The Changing World' programme will form a standard of reference for the judgment of future programmes (not in this country alone); already it stands as a landmark in the development of educational broadcasting".

The editorial in that same Listener endorsed this, pointing out that the programme could be seen as a unique example of social self-analysis which could not have proceeded through any known medium of publicity other than broadcasting.³⁰

To Siepmann, who had claimed that the Macmurray talks of two years before had made broadcasting history and had produced a miniature renaissance among thousands of listeners, the manifest success of 'The Changing World' symposium must have brought welcome endorsement of his judgment of two years earlier. The Briggs official history of the BBC agrees that 'The

Changing World' symposium was the most exciting, as well as the best remembered, of broadcast adult educational programmes: "the literature surrounding The Changing World transports the reader back into the excitements of the brief heyday of wireless adult education."³¹ When, in 1936, Cecil Graves, the Controller (Programmes), produced a report on programme revision, he harked back wistfully to the great years 1931 to 1935, when Siepmann was Director of Talks. "Subjects of a provocative nature," he said, were then common fare. By 1936, "there was insufficient live quality in talks."³²

It was expected that a six-month programme of this sort would become a regular routine for the autumn and spring months. The experiment was never repeated on that scale. "The Changing World" stands in effect as a unique monument to a movement of popular education which sadly did not manage to sustain its early promise. The main difficulty was that a massive programme of this sort made demands on the BBC's technical resources, particularly during prime listening time, which could be met only at the expense of other programmes. Before "The Changing World" programme was even planned, in the spring of 1931, Siepmann had raised the question (in a memorandum dated January 1931 to the General Council) whether these Listening Group courses represented the best use of BBC resources: whether in fact the allocation between "fixity", which the Listening Groups demanded, and "flexibility", which the general listener wanted, should not be directed more in favour of the general listener. By 1932 the Central Council had begun talks with both the Carnegie Trust and the BBC about its own future. It soon became clear that the balance of opinion had swung away from the Listening Groups in favour of "flexibility". In April 1934, Group talks were reduced from five to three a week. In June of that year the Central Council's commission was ended. It was not renewed. The Adult Education Section was fully merged in the Talks Branch, thus finally losing its departmental identity.³³

This narrative would be incomplete without some account of a Listening Group in operation. Here is the description of one such Group, in a quintessentially English setting: a remote village in Warwickshire, in the heart of Shakespeare's Forest of Arden.

"The village has one hundred and forty-seven inhabitants, of whom thirty-seven are children, aged four to fourteen years, who are taught by the village schoolmistress with the help of a pupil teacher -- no easy task in education. The meeting was held in the village schoolroom, lit for this occasion by a lamp borrowed from a neighbouring house; and twenty-nine of the village folk, of all ages from seven to seventy, came to hear the first talk by Professor John Macmurray on 'Education and Leisure'. Quietly they listened to his deep thoughts, clothed in simple words; and the discussion which followed showed (as so often in BBC groups) that the experience of everyday life supplements and confirms the meditations of the learned".³⁴

DEPARTURE OF SIEPMANN. REJECTION OF THE CLUE TO HISTORY.

It will be seen, then, that by 1934 the 'miniature renaissance' had passed its peak and was running out of steam. The Central Council had been wound up, its place taken by a Central Advisory Committee with no executive powers. The Adult Education section had lost its individual identity and had been absorbed into the Talks Branch. The BBC had been sending signals, over the past year, that it was not prepared to accept further financial and administrative responsibility for the Listening Groups, whose allocation of air time had been reduced from five periods a week to three. It hoped eventually "to transfer, in due course, its financial and administrative responsibility in respect of all listening-end work to some other body or bodies."³⁵ For Adult

Education, no such body emerged. The Listening Groups lacked the solid substructure they needed for survival.

In May that same year, Reith had decided to divorce 'News and Topicality' from 'Talks', bringing in a man from outside as "right wing offset" to "balance" the direction of talks and news.³⁶ Finally, in June 1935, Siepmann was removed from Talks and sent to the new post of Director of Regional Relations.³⁷ The post at Talks Department remained effectively unfilled for six months, until in February 1936, a successor was at last appointed: Sir Robert Maconachie, late of the Indian Civil Service. There is no evidence that he and Macmurray ever met. If they had, they would not have got on; there is plenty of evidence that they did not see eye to eye on anything in the realm of ideas. In 1941, he was promoted Controller (Home), with responsibility for security. He regarded Macmurray with suspicion, as a subversive influence. He was wont to describe his thinking as "woolly and shallow": odd adjectives, one might think, to aim at a man with a reputation for clarity of thinking and expression. One is left wondering how much Maconachie understood of what Macmurray was attempting to convey.

I wish we knew something of Macmurray's reactions to these events, but no evidence is available. The BBC files on the Central Council of Broadcast Adult Education were closed. A personal file on Macmurray was not opened until late in 1936. There are no surviving letters to Dick Roberts between 1930 and the end of 1936, though it is known that in 1936 Macmurray had visited the USA and Canada, had stayed with the Roberts', had attended a conference of the Canadian SCM, and had delivered the Terry Lectures at Yale University and the Deems Lectures on "the Philosophy of Psychology" at the University of New York.³⁸ On 30 December 1936 he wrote once again to Dick Roberts saying, "the only piece of work I did after I got home was a synopsis on some talks on Christianity which the BBC invited me to prepare. Alas! after it was finished and sent them they got cold feet again. The 'talking mongoose' was too much for them and after an internal struggle they decided they wouldn't broadcast it."³⁹

The invitation had come to Macmurray, not from the Talks Department, but from the Director of Religious Broadcasting, Dr F A Iremonger: friend, correspondent and ultimately biographer of William Temple. Iremonger had submitted the synopsis to Cecil Graves, the Controller (Programmes): he in turn passed it on to the Director General, with the comment "Very clever but very dangerous: v. plausible but what else but a new form of socialist or communist propaganda?" Reith's minute in reply to Graves must be quoted in full:-

SUBJECT: IN THE GRIP OF CHRISTIANITY:
JOHN MACMURRAY

I have read the enclosed and although I can understand how you feel that it is all thinly disguised Communist propaganda it is not at all on this score that I would be chary of accepting it. It is not so much that it is a dangerous document as that it is misleading and poor. Is D.R. [The Director of Religious Broadcasting, Dr Iremonger] really satisfied that the teachings of Christ come to nothing more than equality and freedom - because that is what the synopsis shows. There are several other theological points, or quasi-theological points, that I might raise, but that is the main one. And of course what is misleading may become dangerous

but my primary objection is on the former score - that, and its narrowness of interpretation. Incidentally, the emphasis he puts upon Jews might be regarded as a trailing of the coat.

J.C.W.R.

November 5th 1936

On this minute, Iremonger noted "Talk with Chairman and C(P). Not to be broadcast. FAI. 11/xi/36."

This case has a number of curious features. It looks as if the synopsis had been rejected at top level. If so, by whom? And on what grounds? Cecil Graves, it will be remembered, only five months earlier, in his report on programme revision, had been deploring the lack of controversy on the air and calling for more provocative material. Now, he had just been handed some. Instead of welcoming it, he labels it "dangerous" -- a wolf of communist propaganda in Christian clothing -- and clearly expects the Director General to reject it on that score. But Reith does not. He finds Graves' objection unconvincing. Instead, he comes up with new ones of his own; objections of a theological nature, but ones which he had not discussed with his theological adviser, the Director of Religious Broadcasts. Iremonger, with Graves, is then summoned to a meeting; not, as one might expect, with the Director General, but with the Chairman of the Board of Governors, R C Norman. What was going on?

What had happened was that the synopsis had been submitted at a delicate and awkward time in the history of the BBC. Their Charter and Licence were due to run out at the end of 1936; renewal terms had been under discussion for the whole of the year. The House of Commons debated the question three times; first in April, then again in July and finally in November. Unfortunately for the BBC, R S Lambert, the Editor of The Listener, had in February fallen foul of one Sir Cecil Levita, an eminent public figure in London politics, who had impugned Lambert's judgment and queried his fitness to hold his BBC post. Lambert demanded a retraction; when that was not forthcoming he instituted legal proceedings. The case had reached the Courts, and the Press, just in time to coincide with the third debate in the House of Commons. Since it revolved around "a talking mongoose in the Isle of Man, answering to the name of Gef," the Press naturally were having a field day. Matters were made worse by earlier efforts on the part of the BBC's Controller (Public Relations) to persuade Lambert to withdraw his case: he was warned that if he carried on with it, he would be doing two dangerous things; making the Corporation doubt his judgment, and placing his own interests above those of the BBC. R C Norman, who was a political colleague of Levita's, spoke to Lambert in much the same terms. The BBC were then accused of interfering with the civil liberties of an employee. When their future was being debated in the House of Commons, the Opposition were having a field day too, the BBC being described as "the nearest thing in this country to Nazi government that can be shown."⁴⁰

The BBC then asked the Prime Minister to set up an official enquiry into the Lambert-Levita case: it produced a report which, though not uncritical, was more favourable to the BBC than Lambert had expected. But the damage had been done. In 1927, right at the beginning of the Corporation's existence, the Secretary of the Post Office had written formally to the Corporation calling attention to Clause 4 of their Licence, obliging them to abstain from "speeches or lectures containing statements on topics of political, religious or industrial controversy." It had taken

them at that time over a year to have the ban on controversy lifted.⁴¹ At this present delicate juncture, therefore, controversial subjects, however innocent-seeming, were off the agenda.

Iremonger was summoned to attend a meeting with the Chairman of the Corporation, so that he could learn from the highest possible source how it was politically out of the question to contemplate a series of talks which might spark off religious controversy. Macmurray's synopsis had become a political football, which was to be kicked into touch. However, it seems that Iremonger did exact one concession. When he wrote to Macmurray returning the summary, he offered him the prospect of broadcasting the talks later on, if someone could be found to match them with talks taking an opposite point of view. This was quite common BBC practice: it had been done in two of the series in The Changing World symposium, and Macmurray had commended it in his final appraisal. On this occasion, though, he was not keen; he no doubt saw that the future of his work would thereby depend, not on its inherent merit but on the BBC's recovery of political nerve, which was problematical. He replied that he feared that this step would put things off till the Greek Kalends. In effect, he withdrew the synopsis himself, and decided to work it up into a book. He sent the summary to the Left Book Club: it took them even longer than the BBC to reject it. In the end the Student Christian Movement Press took it on, and it appeared as The Clue to History (1938).⁴²

Macmurray was vexed by the rejection but not, I think, unduly cast down. Thirty-two years later, though, after he had retired and had joined the Society of Friends, he reverted to it when he was asked to address their Amersham General Meeting on 26 October 1968. The subject he chose was 'The rediscovery of Christianity'. "For us in the 20th century," he said, "Christianity is very much of a problem. If we can't give an agreed answer to the Question 'What is Christianity?' then our position as Christians is ridiculous, tragic and stultifying."⁴³ As for Sir John Reith; if we cast our minds back to the reception given to Macmurray's address "Ye Are My Friends" at Liverpool in 1929, it is clear that the Director General of the BBC, had he been at that conference, would have been numbered among those who "showed a genuine fear of such revolutionary ideas on friendship."

The final twist in this story came two years later, after The Clue to History had been published. On 7 December 1938, Sir Frederick Ogilvie, the new Director General of the BBC, received a personal letter from Lady Emily Lutyens, an Establishment figure if ever there was one: daughter of a Viceroy of India; wife of Sir Edwin Lutyens, "Architect of the Empire" and President of the Royal Academy; mother of the composer Elizabeth Lutyens. She reminded him that Macmurray's "Freedom in the Modern World" series was "amongst the most illuminating talks given under the auspices of the BBC." She drew his attention to Macmurray's new book, The Clue to History, "of vital importance at the present moment as it throws light on the Jewish problem." She recommended that the BBC invite him to give a series of talks on the subject. But Dr Iremonger had already planned talks on the "Faith of Israel" for the New Year. We do not know what the Director General said to Lady Emily in reply. One hopes that Dr Iremonger recalled the fate of the 1936 synopsis.

From 1937 to 1941, only scraps came Macmurray's way: a 15-minute talk on "Moral Progress" (verdict from Talks Department: "as good as ever") as part of a general series on 'Progress' edited by a Dr H A Mess; a 13-minute talk to the Empire on "Beyond Nationality" in 1941, with alterations made "to frustrate Dr Goebbels", and delivered by a staff member because all the

landlines were down between London and Aberystwyth, where University College spent the War, their London buildings having been badly damaged in the blitz. In May of that year he accepted an invitation to take part in a series of talks arranged on behalf of the Indian Government, with the aim of discussing some cultural aspects of democratic civilisation, Macmurray representing London University alongside Gilbert Murray for Oxford and George Trevelyan for Cambridge. Then in July 1941, the Assistant Director of Religious Broadcasting, the Rev. Eric Fenn, asked him to give a series of four talks that autumn, on a subject to be arranged.

1941: ERIC FENN AND THE "PERSONS AND FUNCTIONS" SERIES

Fenn was an old friend. He had been responsible for the organisation of the SCM Quadrennial Conference in Liverpool in 1929, when he was a member of the SCM staff. Later on, he became one of Archbishop Temple's assistants in the Oecumenical Movement, subsequently joining the BBC in 1939. Macmurray and he met in August and agreed a synopsis. Then the trouble began. Fenn submitted it to Nicolls, the Controller (Programmes). Nicolls copied it to Maconachie, Controller (Home), and replied to Fenn: "You will see from [Maconachie's] minute that he thinks the synopsis woolly and shallow. For myself, I was forcibly struck by the fearful academic dullness of the argument of the 4 talks. It seems to me that the talks will be far too hair-splitting to gain the appreciation of the ordinary listener. Ought we not to reconsider the whole matter?" In the event, Sir Frederick Ogilvie, Reith's successor as Director General, was appealed to. He called for a revised synopsis. Macmurray wrote a revised, longer and more explicit than the first. In his covering letter of 17 September to Fenn he wrote "I am not sure that it may not confirm the doubts of objectors instead of removing them. If so, it can't be helped. This is the kind of thing I want to say and feel needs to be said. But it does not follow that it will be allowed." It was received with ill grace ("I remain unenthusiastic... I think they are bad talks in every way... Page 6, especially the last paragraph, is full of gunpowder...") but grudgingly the series was allowed to proceed.

Macmurray started his synopsis by pointing out that there is both a personal and a functional aspect to the life of each one of us. Religion is concerned with the relations of people as persons in their character as human beings, insisting that we have an immortal soul, of absolute value. In this sphere, all are equal; differences of race, sex, class or function disappear. On the other hand, politics is concerned with our functional relations with other people and with society. The four papers of the series, he said, would make the distinction clear and find the basis of a solution to the problem of tension between the two aspects. In presenting it, Fenn had a long talk with the Controller (Programmes) in which certain points of substance emerged. First: most people in the BBC, he reported, interpreted "persons" as congruent with "individuals". Hence, they could not grasp Macmurray's identification of Religion with The Personal. His definition of 'The religious aspect of life' as 'providing the means for development of the free life of personal relationship' came under question. "Isn't this rather an odd definition?" it was asked. Secondly: they found the distinction between the personal and functional aspect very hard to grasp. "Can you really... put a man's working life into one paddock and his family life into another?" Thirdly: someone questioned the standing of the Religious Department in this sphere: "Talking about cooperation between Russia and this country in peace building is surely outside the proper scope of the Religious Department?" It was clear that the talks were not going to have an easy run; Fenn

exhorted him to make them as concrete as possible and do his best to cover the objections he had tabulated.

On 4 November Fenn submitted scripts of the first two talks, to be broadcast on 19 and 26 November. Maconachie commented: "This seems to me just as woolly and false in its antitheses as I expected from the synopsis. I am very sorry that we are going to broadcast it -- although I do not see anything to which I can object in my capacity as 'political' watchdog." A week later, Fenn submitted the text of the third talk: Maconachie commented to Nicolls, "In this talk Macmurray discovers that the distinction between the personal and the functional cannot be maintained -- the obvious comment is --then why try to make it? But this talk again seems to me woolly verbiage and little else." It may be helpful at this point to quote some of what was actually said in the third talk:

"The functional life is for the personal life; the personal life is through the functional life. This means that a man's working life is for the sake of his personal life; that the meaning and purpose of life in the factory or office is to be found in the home life; that men are not to be used for labour, but labour to be used for men; that people are more important than the jobs they do... [However] it is not possible in practice to keep the two lives separate. The kind of working life a man has to live decides the kind of personal life he can have... The personal life needs cultivation and that means time and resources. We cannot keep the two lives in watertight compartments because the shape of one decides the outlines of the other."⁴⁴

After the first talk was given, Fenn wrote to Macmurray "I think it was excellent. It held the interest all the way through & I felt it left people wanting to hear what you wd. say next." A few days later, he submitted the text of the fourth and last talk.

At that point, Maconachie pounced. "I read this and it seemed to me quite out of the question to broadcast it, and that there was so much wrong with it that it was not possible to amend it. However, as I might be considered prejudiced where this particular speaker is concerned, I referred it to the D[irector] G[eneral] for orders. These are that it is not to be broadcast and that an entirely new script is to be substituted for it." We do not know precisely what had upset Maconachie because no copy exists of the original draft. It was probably similar, though, to the assertion in the first paper that "The law of functional life is orderly subordination to authority, and obedience to the superior... The value of the individual lies in his doing his duty in the task assigned to him in society." This, Macmurray points out, is in fact the law of Hitler's Germany and of the New Order he was seeking to impose on the world. Maconachie as a former Indian Civil Servant was himself a Functional Man. In a lengthy minute to the Director General, he had observed "A State in time of war of course does usurp authority over the personal life of its citizens, so that (Macmurray's) statement is in effect subversive". Talk 4 was duly rewritten, and eventually delivered. Churchmen praised the series; as we have seen Fenn felt it had held the interest all through, and Dr. J H Oldham, another friend of long standing, made these broadcast talks the subject of a supplement to the Christian Newsletter, used to promote interchange between Christian thinkers of various traditions in Britain, Europe and North America; being later republished in booklet form as Real Life is Meaning.⁴⁵ As to the general listener, though, it seems that the Controller (Programmes) forecast was confirmed. Initially, Fenn had proposed

that the BBC might set an additional period aside for answers to listeners' questions. This was never pursued. There is no evidence of questions being put but not answered.

CONCLUSION

We can now consider replies to the three questions posed in the introduction: (1) When, and why, did the 'miniature renaissance' come to an end? (2) When, and how, did Macmurray's influence fade from the BBC scene? (3) What effect had his broadcast experience on his general philosophy?

The fate of the 'miniature renaissance' had been sealed when it was decided not to renew the mandate for the Central Council of Broadcast Adult Education. The crucial policy was set out in a Talks Department Memorandum put forward to the Council's Executive Committee in March 1934 and forwarded to the Council as part of their 16th Report. It contained the following points:-

1. The Listening Groups accounted for no more than a small proportion of the total broadcast audience.
2. They depended on talks specifically arranged with them in mind; the subject matter and techniques might not be acceptable for ordinary listeners.
3. The decision had already been taken to reduce the peak-hour Group listening periods from 5 to 3 per week.
4. Internally, the Adult Education department should lose its separate identity and be merged with the General Talks Department.
5. Regional Education Officers should not confine their duties to Groups but embrace a wider field.
6. The Central Council should be dissolved and replaced by an advisory council without executive duties.

The BBC decided to act in accordance with this Memorandum. The decision once taken, it acted swiftly and ruthlessly. The Adult Education section lost its identity within the Talks Department. Siepmann, and other young men of vision, were posted elsewhere. By 1936, in a memorandum on the future of the Group Listening movement, the BBC ruled that in future all weekly series of talks were to cater for the general listener as well as the Group listener. The BBC General Advisory Committee discussed group listening for the last time in 1938. It said then that it would not in any circumstances prolong financial assistance "at the listening end" beyond 1940; after that, the Listening Groups would be on their own, left to fend for themselves.⁴⁶ By 1941 the general mood in the BBC had moved from indifference to active hostility. In The Listener of 24 December appeared an anonymous review of a book, Radio's Listening Groups: the U. S and Great Britain (Oxford 1941). The introduction referred to Group Listening as "an adult educational mechanism still in the embryonic stage... there are many reasons to suspect that the butterfly may never emerge from the cocoon." The reviewer endorsed this, pointing out that "Groups, in Britain, have been fostered, even coddled, by the BBC, which has expended a vast amount of money... and energy on providing suitable talks"; without, in the reviewer's opinion, getting value for money. His opinion on 'The Changing World' symposium of ten years before was "admirable from the academic point of view [but] did

not succeed for discussion purposes."⁴⁷ This was the authentic voice of the 'Generalists' in the Talks Department. It represented their clear victory over the 'Educationists', the members of the Adult Education Branch. Siepmann, it will be recalled, was originally the head of that branch before he succeeded Hilda Matheson as Head of the Talks Department as a whole. Under his control, the Generalists were fearful that the interests of creativity and culture would be sacrificed to institutionalised education, despite clear evidence that adult education, properly handled, was as culturally creative as anything else the Talks Department could provide.⁴⁸

As for the second question: Macmurray himself was an out-and-out educationist. The BBC had sought him out and taken him on for the specific task of introducing philosophy into the Listening Group curriculum. The call to Savoy Hill came just as he was about to begin work on his first book. I am sure that he had no notion at that time that his first book would turn out to be based, not on the five public lectures, but on the twelve BBC talks. However, the interruption cannot have been unwelcome; it gave him the opportunity of carrying his message to a wider selection of listeners than he could ever have envisaged from the five lectures. Nevertheless, the audience would be "shifting, heterogeneous and unknown"; the task of "communicating a continuous series of talks on a single theme" would not be easy.⁴⁹ Siepmann and he discussed this and found they were of one mind. Together, they worked out a plan for the talks.⁵⁰ It would involve a lot of script -- the introductory essay, and the summary at the end, as well as publication of the talks themselves in The Listener. But it worked.

From 1930 to 1934 Macmurray was in continuous demand. The Adult Education organisation relied on him as, effectively, their resident philosopher; he in turn on them for the necessary substructure. When that organisation was dismantled, and Siepmann moved, his services were no longer called on by the Talks Department; the only commission he had from them being a 15-minute talk as part of a series of ten talks on 'Progress' in 1937, presented by a Dr Mess. His name did not occur to them again until 1953, when Mary Somerville, Controller Talks (Sound), wrote to her friend John Pilley, Professor of Education at Edinburgh University, asking his advice whether she should invite Macmurray to speak again on what was by then the Home Service of the BBC. "He used to do a lot of talking before the war but people seem to have got a bit tired of him, & he doesn't seem to have been asked to speak for a long time. You told me I think that you thought he again had a great deal to say that was worth hearing, & if you wd. suggest a subject I'd like to write to him & ask him to give a talk." Pilley replied positively and enthusiastically, but said that Macmurray was by then immersed in the Gifford Lectures and was unlikely to accept. There were proposals that he might tackle the subject of 'the Insolence of Office'; but eventually they came to nothing, Macmurray pleading exhaustion after the Gifford lectures.⁵¹

In effect, therefore, Macmurray's special relationship with the BBC was confined to his work on adult education, which by 1941 was substantially over. Despite the fiasco over "The Grip of Christianity" in 1936, Macmurray stayed on good terms with the Religious Department; first with Iremonger and then with Fenn. Both were friends. He welcomed Fenn's approach in 1941; but the attempt to revive talks on philosophical subjects through the Religious Department cut across departmental boundaries in the BBC, and did not succeed. I doubt if he regretted the loss of the BBC connexion during the remainder of the 1930s, having several books on the go, including The Clue to History. By 1941, however, things were different. I suspect the fate of the talks on Persons & Functions was a disappointment; but we have no evidence either way.

And now, finally, to the last question: what effect had Macmurray's BBC experience on his general philosophy? I have mentioned two developments in the Introduction, both of which stemmed from his broadcast experience: the enlargement of his audience, and his change of style and language. Both are important; but there is a third development of more, indeed of crucial, importance. It is this. By February 1930, Macmurray had expected to find himself fully immersed in turning his lectures on *The Personal* into book form. This was his intention, judging from his letter of 18 October 1930 to Dick Roberts. Instead, he found himself stuck. Had he been in full flow, it is more than likely that he would have turned the BBC invitation down. The necessity of preparing material for the radio talks released him from his writer's block; he was able to put part of his lecture material to immediate effect. But more than this: the success of the series, and the pressure brought on him to publish the text, provided the kickstart he needed to set his mind to work on the many ideas there clamouring for release. The result was the flood of short but stimulating books which followed *Freedom in the Modern World* throughout the '30s. I am certain that he never lost sight of his major objective, the pursuit of the philosophy of the Personal; but I think he must have realised, from his experience in 1930, that he was not yet ready to tackle head-on what he had described in many places as the emergent philosophical problem of the day -- the structure of the Personal world. These short books can be regarded as essential prolegomena.

By 1941, he was aware that there was yet one major issue still to be resolved: the relation between the personal and the functional aspects of human life. Hence the urgency of his letter of 17 September to Fenn, enclosing the revised synopsis. My impression is that he was hoping to get from these four radio talks far more response than it was reasonable to expect. What is rather surprising is that he did not find an opportunity to come back to the subject later on. He had enunciated a useful principle: "The functional life is for the personal life; the personal life is through the functional life." This was a promising beginning. What was now needed was to work it up; perhaps in a further short book. But that was not forthcoming.⁵² It is a pity that the talks did not receive a warmer welcome; but the average listener at that time -- one week after Pearl Harbor -- had other things on his mind.

SOURCES: ABBREVIATIONS: ENDNOTES

SOURCES.

My main source has been the collection of policy files and papers of the Central Council for Broadcast Adult Education, together with the John Macmurray personal files, housed in the BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham Park, Reading RG4 8TZ, England. I am most grateful to Mrs Jaqueline Kavanagh, Written Archivist, and to Miss Gwynever Jones of the Centre for their great help and kindness in assisting my researches, and for permission to quote from BBC copyright material.

On the BBC side, I have also made abundant use of Asa Briggs' "History of Broadcasting in the U.K.", Volume II, The Golden Age of Wireless (OUP, 1965), together with the BBC Year Books for 1931, 1932 and 1933, and volumes of The Listener for the years in question.

On the Macmurray side, my main source has been the Roberts letters (Regis Special Collection p. 25; Item No 36.5). The Very Rev. Richard Roberts (1874-1945) was Moderator of the United Church of Canada, 1934-36. He had been Minister from 1910-1915 of Crouch End Presbyterian Church, North London, attended by Macmurray. It was at his suggestion that Macmurray enlisted in the RAMC at the outbreak of War in 1914, rather than in the fighting services.

ABBREVIATIONS.

JM John Macmurray: RR Richard Roberts

GAW The Golden Age of Wireless.

FMW Freedom in the Modern World (Faber & Faber 1932)

IU Interpreting the Universe (Faber & Faber 1933)

SA Self as Agent (Faber & Faber 1957)

SRR Search for Reality in Religion (Quaker Home Service, London 1984)

ENDNOTES

1. Mary Somerville, Controller Talks (Sound) to Professor John Pilley, Edinburgh University, 31 July 1953: "He used to do a lot of talking before the war but people seem to have got tired of him and he doesn't seem to have been asked to speak for a long time." For more on MS, see Endnote #51.
1. JM to RR 27 July 1925.
2. Dorothy Emmet: Review of SA: *Journal of Theological Studies*, 1958.
4. IU, p. 142
5. SRR, p. 2
6. Lecture issued by Friends Home Service Committee in 1973, under title The Philosophy of Jesus, p.1
7. FMW, p. xli
8. Neil Spurway (ed.) Humanity, Environment and God (Blackwell) p. 21
9. GAW p. 186.
10. *ibid.* p. 220
11. *ibid.* p. 220
12. JM to RR 29 January 1928
13. See article "John Macmurray: A neglected Philosopher", by Philip Conford, Radical Philosophy 16, Spring 1977. (Regis College Special Collection, p. 33, Item No. 77.1)
14. JM to RR 29 January 1928
15. Journal of Philosophical Studies Vol. 4 No 14 April 1929. 162-9
16. JM to RR 25 October 1929
17. FMW, p. xli
18. Student Movement, Vol. 31 p. 117. See also Tissington Tatlow, History of the Student Christian Movement, (SCM Press 1933 p. 847)
19. It was republished in 1943; in 1972; and again in 1979, combined with "To Save From Fear", the text of JM's Lenten talks on the BBC.
20. FMW pp. xli, xlii.
21. BBC Year Book 1931, p. 216.
22. JM to RR, 18 October 1930.
23. The Listener, 3 September and 10 September 1930.
24. "My Station and Its Duties" comes from F H Bradley, Ethical Studies (Oxford 1927). But it had been around some time: see Henry Jones, Idealism as a Practical Creed (Glasgow, 1909) p. 117.
25. On 4 November 1994, Bishop Newbigin wrote: "... I am very glad to know that steps are being taken to continue and develop the ideas of John Macmurray for our own time. No doubt my book was a bit of cheek from a student barely out of college, but I hope I made clear both my gratitude for Macmurray's writing (which had an enormous influence among students during my time in the SCM) and also the grounds on which I believed

- that criticism was in order.. I still think the main point I was making is sound. I wish you all success in what you are doing."
26. The Listener 27 August 1930, p. 318.
 27. FMW p. xxxvii.
 28. The Listener 19 August 1931, p. 282.
 29. When JM, in 1932, was persuaded by friends and correspondents to publish his 1930 radio talks, he decided to preface them by the four talks he gave in January 1932 in the 'Modern Dilemma' series, since the latter diagnosed the philosophical problems presented in contemporary life. Had his choice of publisher anything to do with the fact that T S Eliot, who gave the next talks in that series, was a director of Faber & Faber?
 30. The Listener 13 April 1932.
 31. GAW p. 221.
 32. *ibid.* p. 52.
 33. *ibid.* p. 222
 34. The Listener, 14 October 1931, p. 643.
 35. GAW p. 223.
 36. *ibid.* p. 147.
 37. *ibid.* p. 148.
 38. JM to RR 30 December 1936. The Yale University Terry Lectures were published as The Structure of Religious Experience (Faber & Faber 1936); the Deems Lectures formed the basis of The Boundaries of Science (Faber & Faber 1939).
 39. *ibid.*
 40. GAW pp. 472, 473. See also GAW p. 512.
 41. *ibid.* pp. 128, 129.
 42. See "The Rediscovery of Christianity", JM's own summary of his address given to the Friends Bedford General Meeting at Amersham on 26 October 1968; (Regis College Special Collection).
 43. *ibid.*
 44. The Listener, 18 December 1941.
 45. The Christian Newsletter Books No. 14 Real Life is Meeting (J H Oldham, London, The Sheldon Press 1942). I am grateful to Harry Carson for this reference.
 46. GAW pp. 224, 225.
 47. December 1941.
 48. "Educationist" was the term used by E M Forster to describe Siepmann in particular, whom he mistrusted. After a talk with him over lunch in January 1932, Forster wrote that he was "a dark horse, and prone to that division between creative and uncreative careers which I have learned to dread...." See Mary Lago E M Forster: A Literary Life (Macmillan 1995).
 49. FMW, p. xxxix.
 50. *ibid.* p. xlii.
 51. Mary Somerville was herself, by origin, an Educationist; she had been in charge of Schools broadcasting when Siepmann was head, first of the Adult Education Section and later of the Talks Department. See GAW p. 197: "Whatever may be said in general terms of committees on the creative arts of broadcasting... (they)... did not kill 'the vision of exploration, delight and understanding' which had inspired Mary Somerville and her colleagues. They rather helped to bring the vision to fulfilment".

52. The synopsis introducing the Persons and Functions series, which JM sent to Fenn in September 1941 and which Maconachie dismissed as "woolly and shallow", begins, "The proper relation of religion and politics is the unsolved problem of our civilisation." This follows his thinking, over many years, about the problem of Freedom. In 1940, in "Freedom in the Personal Nexus" -- a chapter of Freedom, its Meaning, ed. Ruth Anshen, Harcourt Brace -- he had introduced his two related concepts of "Society" and "Community": Society, constituted by a common purpose; Community, arising from the sharing of a common life. Politics is the stuff of the former, religion of the latter. Now in 1941, with the world at war, he decided it was time to "state the difficulty in its simplest and most concrete expression"; from the bottom up, so to speak - the point at which we are each involved as persons.
- In later books, notably Conditions of Freedom (1949) and Persons in Relation (1961) he carried further the general theme of Freedom, Society and Community. The existential aspects, though, he did not pursue beyond the conclusions reached in his 1941 radio series. But they remained uppermost in his mind till the end. In his last book, Search for Reality in Religion (1965) he concludes, "The final issue that we shall have to face will be concerned with the economics of the Kingdom of Heaven. "