In 1944 allied armies advanced slowly but steadily towards final victory in Europe. Anglo-American and other allied forces drove the Germans out of Italy, and after the Normandy landing on 6 June forced them into retreat everywhere. Meanwhile the Russians were expelling Axis forces from Soviet territories. On 20 July dissident Wehrmacht officers and a handful of anti-Nazi civilians tried to assassinate Hitler and take over the government, hoping to end the war and gain an advantageous peace. They failed disastrously and the war raged on. By autumn Rumania had surrendered, Paris was liberated, Finland accepted armistice, Brussels was freed, and German forces fell back in Holland, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. On 30 November Canadian units ‘broke into’ Germany proper, the first allied troops to enter the Nazi bastion. A German counterattack in mid-December failed utterly. This ‘Battle of the Bulge’ was the death-throe of a fatally wounded animal, and from that moment the allied advance became a headlong rush.

Britain’s propaganda in neutral Europe succeeded along with the allied armies. After Normandy no neutral country was likely to take up the Axis cause. But the struggle was far from over. The propagandists understood as well as anyone that winning the peace is often the most difficult part of winning the war, and they now had to concentrate on the post-war world. They assured neutrals that Britain’s peacetime interests were theirs also, and that small European nations would not be abandoned to either Soviet or American domination. This battle to win the peace began well in advance of the last shots fired and involved issues similar to those of the shooting war: Germany’s place in Europe; Soviet Russia, communism, and European security; Fascism as a political philosophy and the survival and advance of democracy; the security and independence of small nations, with which all questions concern-
ing social and political organization were bound up; and trade relations and economic progress. Persuasion concerning these issues remained MOI responsibility so long as the war continued even though they pertained to post-war foreign policy. The Foreign Office was not altogether pleased.\footnote{With the allied advance came increased competition, complications and outright conflict involving the propagandists, the Foreign Office and allied governments. BBC aid to the French resistance cut down on broadcasting time available to neutral countries. The Cabinet made ‘unreasonable demands’ on MOI capabilities by ordering the Ministry to take over assessing the effects of leaflets dropped on France.\footnote{William Ridsdale at the Foreign Office News Department defied MOI censors and gave out information to the press on Anglo-Russian discussions over Poland and European Advisory Commission plans, which angered both the Russians and the Americans. There were heated exchanges between the MOI and the Foreign Office, and Ridsdale was denied access to the Ministry.\footnote{The MOI revised broadcasting policy in order to prevent stations in liberated Europe being controlled by the OWI ‘in the interests of United States business to the detriment of British trade and industry’. Allied governments became reluctant to provide information for the propagandists concerning their post-war projections for education, social, parliamentary, financial and trade reforms. American publicity about British Greek policy was ‘very unsatisfactory’. The MOI laid plans to exploit Austrian radio facilities when they became available, in order to influence Austrian opinion against Russia.\footnote{Activities in anticipation of post-war developments upon which ‘winning the peace’ might hinge moved on to the centre stage of propaganda considerations. Consequently it was not well received when MOI staff, anxious about their post-war future, began leaving the Ministry to accept commercial employment. Radcliffe urged that they be equated with military personnel and made to stay at least until the European war had actually ended.\footnote{A long-established aspect of allied victory was the transfer of propaganda responsibility for liberated areas from the PWE to the MOI. In 1943 and 1944 the PWE and MOI discussed, planned seriously, and to a limited degree effected the transfer. It went so well at first that Lord Gage decided his role as MOI-PWE liaison was now redundant and stepped down. However, the two departments apparently overlooked the fact that countries would not be}}}}