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ARTICLE

Dear Charoux: Revealed – Orwell's 13 Letters to his Artist Friend

DARCY MOORE

George Orwell wrote at least thirteen letters to Siegfried Charoux which appear to be unknown to Orwell scholars. Twelve of these were handwritten from beds in three different hospitals, and one typed, at Orwell's home on the Isle of Jura. Darcy Moore reflects on what these letters tell us about Orwell, including the writer's sentimental attachment to ancestral portraits.

On 19 November 1948, Orwell wrote to his friend and patron, the editor of the *Observer*, David Astor, thanking him for his advice:

> It's very kind of Charoux to help about restoring the picture. When I can get round to doing so I'll make a crate and send it to him direct. I never can remember his address but I expect I have a letter of his somewhere (Orwell 1998 [1947-1948]: 468).

Peter Davison, editor of *The Complete Works of George Orwell*, included a footnote explaining that Charoux was 'a picture-framer and restorer' and that 'his address is given in Orwell's address book as 65 Holland Park Road, London, W14' (ibid: 469). There are only two other very minor references to Charoux in the *Complete Works*. One, in another letter to Astor, where Orwell says:

> Dear David,
>
> I wonder how you are getting on. I was slightly dismayed to hear from Charoux that you were getting along 'as well as can be expected'. I had thought the operation you were having was something very minor. Let me know how you are when you get a chance to write (Orwell 1998 [1949-1950]: 147).

And another, in a letter Orwell wrote to *Adelphi* editor and life-long friend Richard Rees, himself an accomplished amateur painter:

> I've just had back that picture that went to be restored. He's made a beautiful job of it, & it is almost like a new picture. Apparently they can lift a picture right off & stick it onto

a new piece of canvas. I have another old picture which I thought was past praying for, as the canvas is sort of moth eaten, but perhaps this chap could do something with it. He also put the picture in a quite nice new frame, & only charged 12 guineas for the whole job (ibid: 169).

Davison included brief footnotes for each: 'Charoux was a picture-framer and restorer recommended to Orwell by Astor to repair one of Orwell's pictures damaged in the move to Jura' and 'Rees, as a painter, might be expected to be particularly interested in what Charoux had been able to do' (ibid: 148; 169). It is now apparent that Siegfried Charoux was not a 'picture restorer' but had a friend who was one! Charoux was a sculptor, painter and caricaturist!



Siegfried Joseph Charoux © National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG x86678. © The Estate of Siegfried Charoux

THE LETTERS[1]

The first six letters to Charoux are written from Hairmyres Hospital in East Kilbride, Lanarkshire, where Orwell was being treated for tuberculosis. He had been admitted in December 1947 and was a patient until the end of July 1948. These letters, often written in appreciation for the gifts of food prepared by Siegfried and Margarethe Charoux, who were excellent cooks, include insights into Orwell's attitudes about his medical condition, the drug streptomycin which he was taking for his TB, art, smoking and ill-health. His son, Richard Blair, is a regular topic of conversation and Orwell's ever-present interest in nature is a feature, even though his observations are made while gazing out of hospital windows. Summaries follow.

13.1.48

A brief note where Orwell thanks Charoux for the food he has sent, especially the delicious cakes. He mentions that his appetite is returning. Orwell relays the good news that an X-ray has revealed 'one bit of his lungs is beginning to mend' and that there is a 'new treatment' putting the 'lung out of action for a long time to give it a chance to heal'. Orwell mentions 'David and Karl'[2] and that he has not worked on his book (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*) in three months.

30.1.48

Often illegible, this letter opens with niceties about the jam Charoux has sent, noting he has not had 'Oxford marmalade' since 1939. He provides some details about his medical condition saying: 'I think I am getting better.' He reports that X-rays continue to show 'distinct improvement'. His attitude towards tobacco is enunciated very clearly: 'If I am ill I don't enjoy smoking' as it does not have the 'proper taste'. He asks Charoux to remember him to his wife.

2.3.48

Charoux has sent more food and Orwell thanks him for the cakes which he shared with 'David and Karl'. He reports that he has been taking streptomycin for about ten days: 'I think it is doing me good.' He says he feels better and is doing a 'little light work – ie book reviews'.

21.4.48

More food has arrived for Orwell who is concerned that Charoux really cannot spare it. He reports that he has generally been 'a lot better' but over the last fortnight has suffered from the 'secondary effects of streptomycin'. He is hoping to 'get out of hospital' for the summer believing that only returning for 'periodical treatment' is a distinct possibility. He is depressed by his invalid status but hopes to be allowed outside 'in a chair' shortly. He has not noticed the seasonal arrival of the swallows yet and makes some other commentary about nature and farming.

12.5.48

Orwell thanks Charoux for the tin of marmalade and other food. He reports 'six negative tests' and hopes to check out of hospital by August (it is now mid-May). Orwell's chief worry is the length of time he has spent away from Richard. He is 'afraid' that his son may forget him and is looking forward to seeing him in the grounds of the hospital soon (noting that children are not permitted inside). Orwell tells Charoux that he feels well enough to 'get back into serious work again' soon. He has not 'heard from David for some time' (Astor is formally editing *The Observer* from 1948) and wonders if he is out of the country. There is much reflection on the progress of his garden at Barnhill, the remote farmhouse on Jura. The usual sign-off about Mrs Charoux.

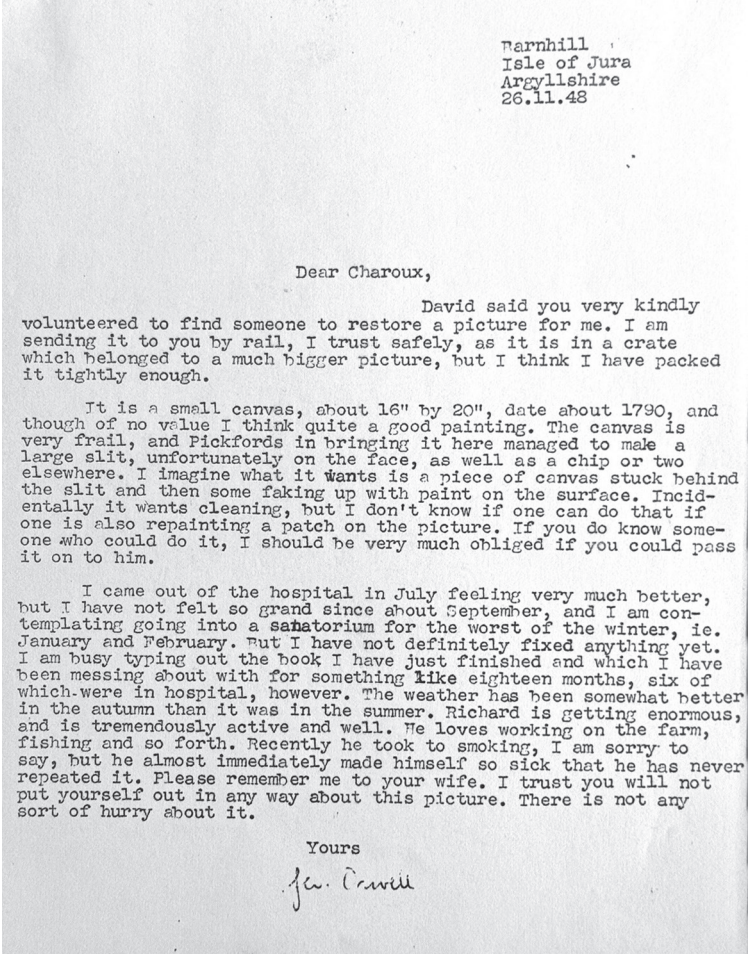
10.6.48

More appreciation is expressed for yet another parcel of food including more Oxford marmalade. Getting out of the hospital room for two hours a day is making Orwell feel much better. The doctors have stopped (illegible – but something about his

treatment/lungs). He has been told it will not be necessary to be an outpatient on departure (illegible something about Edinburgh). Orwell mentions Avril is 'going to bring my little boy to see me at the end of the month'. The writing is quite illegible in parts but mentions that Richard has already had measles and whooping cough and that Orwell has concerns about his son contracting scarlet fever. It appears these diseases only slightly impacted on Richard; it was difficult to keep him in bed. The weather on Jura is good he has been told. On a nearby ward a patient has procured bagpipes, which he feels is a little odd considering everyone has tuberculosis.

26.11.48

Typed letter to Charoux from Barnhill:



Barnhill
Isle of Jura
Argyllshire
26.11.48

Dear Charoux,

David said you very kindly volunteered to find someone to restore a picture for me. I am sending it to you by rail, I trust safely, as it is in a crate which belonged to a much bigger picture, but I think I have packed it tightly enough.

It is a small canvas, about 16" by 20", date about 1790, and though of no value I think quite a good painting. The canvas is very frail, and Pickfords in bringing it here managed to make a large slit, unfortunately on the face, as well as a chip or two elsewhere. I imagine what it wants is a piece of canvas stuck behind the slit and then some faking up with paint on the surface. Incidentally it wants cleaning, but I don't know if one can do that if one is also repainting a patch on the picture. If you do know someone who could do it, I should be very much obliged if you could pass it on to him.

I came out of the hospital in July feeling very much better, but I have not felt so grand since about September, and I am contemplating going into a sanatorium for the worst of the winter, ie. January and February. But I have not definitely fixed anything yet. I am busy typing out the book I have just finished and which I have been messing about with for something like eighteen months, six of which were in hospital, however. The weather has been somewhat better in the autumn than it was in the summer. Richard is getting enormous, and is tremendously active and well. He loves working on the farm, fishing and so forth. Recently he took to smoking, I am sorry to say, but he almost immediately made himself so sick that he has never repeated it. Please remember me to your wife. I trust you will not put yourself out in any way about this picture. There is not any sort of hurry about it.

Yours

Geo. Orwell

Published with the kind permission of Richard Blair

After being discharged from Hairmyres Hospital, in South Lanarkshire, Scotland, in July 1948, Orwell made a herculean effort to complete *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. He departed Jura early in January 1949 and was admitted to Cranham Sanatorium in the Cotswolds. His remaining months were spent there and at University College Hospital, London. The following six letters were written during the final six months of Orwell's life; four when he was a patient at Cranham Lodge and two from University College Hospital. Even as late as the second half of 1949, Orwell believed he had a good chance of survival.

10.6.49

A brief letter enquiring if the portrait he wanted restored ever arrived.

12.8.49

Orwell explains that he now knows the portrait was sent to the wrong address. He describes the painting as 'a small canvas, 18" by 15", painted about 1800 representing a young girl'. There is a 'bad slit in the canvas' and he suspects there may be 'weak spots' but he 'supposes it is repairable'. Orwell explains it 'has sentimental value and is a nice picture'. He describes himself as 'still rather so-so but better on the whole'. Richard has been staying here during the summer but will return 'to Jura shortly to attend the village school'. Usual sign-off about remembering him to Mrs Charoux.

24.8.49

Orwell thanks Charoux for his letter and reassures him the twelve pounds (something/illegible) is not too much for restoring the painting, acknowledging how trying a job it would be for the restorer. Orwell says his 'health has ups & downs' and that he will be in a 'London hospital shortly' but no date has been set.

NO DATE 1949

A longer letter thanking Charoux for sending 'the beautiful water colour of Tarbet' and 'the cakes'. He had not been aware that Charoux 'painted in water-colour' acknowledging 'it is terribly tricky stuff'. He had heard that Charoux 'had been at Tarbet, but didn't get as far as Barnhill'. Orwell mentions his health saying that the specialist thinks he is 'not doing so bad' and will 'probably recover' but 'will have to lay still and not work, possibly for as long as a year'. He says this 'is worthwhile if it means he can work again later'. Richard is staying nearby: '… he is now just 5' and attends 'kindergarten school in the mornings'. It appears that David Astor has suggested Charoux does a bust of Orwell who enquires about the expense of bronze.[3]



David Astor (1946). Bronze, height 29 cm, inventory number A0047
©The Estate of Siegfried Charoux, photograph by schultz+schultz

16.9.1949 (ROOM 65, PRIVATE WING UNIVERSITY COLLEGE HOSPITAL)

Orwell thanks Charoux for telling him that the picture has been restored successfully and plans to hang in his new hospital room. He is only allowed one visitor for twenty minutes a day and suggests Charoux phones him rather than making the 'expedition' to visit.

17.9.1949 (ROOM 65, PRIVATE WING UNIVERSITY COLLEGE HOSPITAL)

Charoux has sent more cakes and bananas. It is also clear that the restored painting has arrived and is 'almost like new'. Orwell mentions he has other paintings in need of restoration including a 'moth-eaten' canvas. The final letter in this sequence concludes with Orwell's news that he is going to wed Sonia Brownell:

> Did I tell you that I am going to get married again – though I don't quite know when, my health being what it is.

SIEGFRIED CHAROUX (1896-1967)

Although born in Vienna and only emigrating to Great Britain when he was approaching forty years of age, Charoux has an entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.[4] Even this brief overview of his life indicates the sorts of traits which made David Astor and Orwell so well-disposed towards the Austrian émigré, naturalised a British citizen in 1946, the year he exhibited a bronze bust of Sir Stafford Cripps, chancellor of the exchequer in the Labour government 1947-1950, at the Royal Academy of Arts in London:

> … a typical Austrian in appearance: fair-haired and blue-eyed, heroic in build, and with a magnificent head like a much more amiable version of Beethoven. Almost always he wore a faded old sculptor's smock, the rolled-up sleeves revealing a massive pair of forearms and hands. He seemed happy so long as he was making something – sculpture, pictures, pots, a new kiln, bread. (Jugged hare was one of his special culinary accomplishments.) He loved a good argument among friends and could be devastatingly funny, manipulating his enormous fingers to emphasize a point and wielding a shaky knowledge of English with wit and wisdom (Gross 2004).

Born Siegfried Joseph Buchta, he adopted his mother's maiden name 'Charous' in 1914 and formally changed it to Siegfried Charoux on marrying Margarethe Treibl, his life-long partner, in 1926 (Bockstefl and Veasey 2020: 2). A creative, intelligent and 'wilfully determined child' who much preferred roaming in the woods to the restrictive nature of formal academic studies, it is unclear whether Charoux immediately enlisted in the Austrian army at the outbreak of World War One or was conscripted in 1915 (Gross 2004; Veasey 2024: 6-7). Along with many of his generation who experienced the horror of mass mechanised slaughter, he grew resentful, disliking that he was fighting 'Russian peasants' for the 'Hapsburg monarchy' (Astor 1967). He was wounded twice and invalided out of the army in 1917.[5] A successful operation restored movement in his paralysed right arm (Gross 2004).

Charoux sought a traditional education at a prestigious Viennese art academy after the war – but never graduated. Struggling with the demotivating, conventional syllabus and professors derided as 'fire-extinguishers' (for their expertise in extinguishing self-expression), he left to establish a career as a professional sculptor in 1924 (Gross 2004; Veasey 2024: 7-9, 118). Always willing to challenge authority, a fervent supporter of democratic principles, left-leaning but no ideologue, Charoux was employed as a political caricaturist (1923-1928) for the *Arbeiter Zeitung* socialist newspaper (Groß 1997: 64; Gross 2004; Veasey 2024: 7-8, 118). His pseudonym, Chat Roux (Red Cat), clearly revealed his political sympathies as did his choice of satirical targets, which included the nazis as early as 1925 (Groß 1997: 64-217, 140; Veasey 2024: 7).

During the 1930s, Charoux exhibited works in several European countries, including Germany, accepting commissions for his sculptures to grace municipal buildings in Vienna (Gross 2004). In 1932, at the Viennese Art Exhibition, he exhibited busts of Stalin and Gandhi (Veasey 2024: 228). Charoux won a national competition to cast a memorial to one of his intellectual and artistic heroes, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, the 18th century German

Enlightenment figure who had visited Vienna in 1775 (ibid: 15). In 1939, this bronze statue was removed by the nazis, who despised unconventional art from politicised artists such as Charoux, which they later melted down for armaments (ibid).

DAVID ASTOR (1912-2001) AND CHAROUX

Considered a leading sculptor in 'Red Vienna', Charoux, whose wife was Jewish, was in the vanguard of European intellectuals and artists emigrating to London before the German annexation of Austria and invasion of Czechoslovakia, in March 1939. He and Margarethe were always adamant that they did not flee but had chosen 'self-exile' in 1935 after it became obvious that intellectual and artistic freedoms were curtailed in Austria (ibid: 18, 223).

On first arriving in London, having no studio, materials or patrons, Charoux thrived in 'gritty, uncompromising environments' where he connected with 'ordinary working men' – labourers and dock workers – whom he sketched (ibid: 31). Actively seeking patrons, he was fortunate to meet David Astor not long after arriving in the city. Cheekily, Charoux asked if Astor would consider sitting for a bust, not because he had an interesting head but because the wealthy aristocrat's status would assist with his career (ibid: 32, 166). Astor was vastly amused. The warm friendship which subsequently developed radiates from an unsigned obituary written over thirty years after that first meeting in late 1935:

> Siegfried Charoux was a man of many gifts and warm friendships. Sculpture and painting were his chief modes of expression, but he was also an inventor of technical devices in those arts, a memorable amateur cook and a powerful arguer.
>
> His political views were at the opposite pole from Adolf Hitler's. Journalism with him was not just an idea, but the conviction of a private soldier of the Hapsburg monarchy who had been made to fight Russian peasants against his will. During the chaotic times following World War I, he crossed many frontiers of Eastern Europe as a hobo, entering Russia illegally to see the revolutionary regime for himself.
>
> His voluntary exile to England in the thirties became a conversion. When he re-visited Vienna after the war, he felt homesick for London and its social tolerance. Yet his London home, with its piano, indoor plants, over-flowing book-shelves and rich compost of his own and other artists' work always exhaled a Continental atmosphere.
>
> He and his wife, who outlives him, were the most generous hosts. Even the austere Stafford Cripps used to unbend in their company. All their friends came to feel like relatives and

he will be greatly missed, although he will always survive for them in his lively and honest work (Astor 1967).



Charoux working on the clay model for the sculpture 'Mother and two children' for the Hugo-Breitner-Hof, 14th district, Vienna, in his studio at Holland Park Road, London, c. 1957, Langenzersdorf Museum, Austria, Charoux Archive, Barratt's Photo Press Ltd., London
©The Estate of Siegfried Charoux

Astor supported Charoux and Margarethe financially, socially and artistically until their deaths. He was instrumental in having Charoux released from internment as enemy alien on the Isle of Man in 1941, as well as supporting their applications to become British citizens (Lewis 2017: 180; Veasey 2024: 223). Subsequently, they were employed by the BBC to broadcast propaganda (Veasey 2024: 40). Astor rented and then purchased a home for Charoux and his wife which became a haven for a circle of close friends, many of whom were British and European intellectuals and artists, well-known to Orwell.

PORTRAITS

There are several clues in letters, photographs and memoirs about the ancestral portraits George Orwell owned. The earliest of these clues, from 1936, when Eileen Blair (née O'Shaughnessy) noted while 'staying with the Blairs' how surprised she was that their 'very small' house was 'furnished almost entirely with paintings of ancestors' (Orwell 2013: 67). Anthony Powell wrote in *The Atlantic*:

> We dined with the Orwells at this house (in Kilburn, North London) one night, prior arrangements being made for sleeping there too, owing to the exigencies of wartime transport. The sitting room, with a general background of furniture dating from more prosperous generations of bygone Blairs, had two or three eighteenth-century family portraits hanging on the walls (Powell 1967: 65).

The house mentioned by Powell, 10 Mortimer Crescent, was 'blitzed' in mid-1944 resulting in Orwell moving to what would be his final London residence, 27 Canonbury Square, in Islington. Ancestral family portraits were hanging on these walls when Vernon Richards, the Anglo-Italian anarchist, photographed Orwell at home in this Islington flat. It is not possible to identify with certainty which Blair ancestors adorned this otherwise spartan abode but a portrait of Lady Mary Blair née Fane (c.1741-1813) was in the possession of his sister, Avril Blair (1908-1978), who had lived with him on Jura during the last years of his life (Stansky and Abrahams 1972: 8).[6] Indeed, if this were the case, many would consider it a peculiar choice of home decoration for the average socialist and possibly, perceiving such choices as bourgeois, may go a little way towards explaining Richards' lack of enthusiasm about Orwell and his work. Although these portraits cannot be identified from the photographs taken at this residence in 1946, it is possible to see there are several on the walls (Richards 1998: 8, 10, 14, 19-20, 29, 31, 34, 61, 71). Orwell must have inherited these paintings – his father dying in 1939 and his mother in 1943 – but what exactly was the small canvas, about 16 by 20 inches painted around 1790 that had sentimental value for Orwell (which he also described as 18 by 15 inches and painted about 1800) 'representing a young girl' so in need of restoration?

My research into Orwell's ancestors has identified family portraits by some of Britain's most illustrious artists and their protégés: Thomas Frye (1710-1762), Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792), Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788), Sir Nathaniel Dance-Holland (1734-1811), George Romney (1734-1802), Thomas Beach (1738-1806), Ozias Humphry (1742-1810), Sir Henry Raeburn (1745-1806), Philip Reinagle (1749-1833) and Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830). These paintings, along with the gilded homes where they hung, were funded by a family of absentee landlords enriched from the sugar and rum produced on their plantations in Jamaica by enslaved people (Dresser 2013: 102; Hall 2014: 242-243; Moore 2020: 6-19; UCL 2020, 2024).

There is strong evidence the painting Orwell had restored was by Thomas Beach, who was a 'favourite pupil' of Sir Joshua Reynolds (Beach 1934). Beach, based in Dorset and often commissioned to paint the extended Blair family in the latter part of the 18th century, was an assured 'figure painter' and 'natural colourist' noted for his ability to 'capture a good likeness' (Graves 2009). Beach worked in Joshua Reynolds's studio in London (1760-1762) at the time when his master accepted the commission for a very large group portrait, which included Orwell's great-great-grandfather, Charles Blair (1743-1802) and his wife's brother, Henry Fane (Solnit 2022: 157-160; Baetjer 2010: 68-70). Lady Mary and Charles married in 1762, the same year that her father, Thomas Fane (1701-1771) became the 8th Earl of Westmoreland (ibid).

Beach's great-great-grand niece published a catalogue of his work in 1934, listing nine ancestral portraits in the 'Michel Collection' painted between 1777-1782:[7]

1. Portrait of a boy (Thomas Blair).
2. Portrait of a boy (Blair).
3. Portrait of a boy (Blair).
4. Portrait of a girl (Blair).
5. Portrait of a boy (Blair).
6. Charles and Henry Blair, two boys playing.
7. Charles Blair, 1777.
8. Charles Blair, 1782.
9. Colonel D.R. Michel.
10. Colonel D.R. Michel.
11. Mrs Michel.
12. Mary Michel.
13. Grace Michel (Beach 1934: 81).

'Blair. Portrait of a girl' is described as 19 inch by 15 inch and oval, very much the dimensions Orwell described to Charoux; the subject and period are also correct (ibid: 55). Listed on the same page is the painting of Henry Charles Blair (1775-1794) and Orwell's great-grandfather, Charles Blair (1776-1854) who were the sons of Lady Mary Blair, née Fane, and the elder Charles Blair (ibid). This painting, along with the portraits of Mary and Grace Michel, are the only works listed thus far located in auction records, suggesting they are possibly in the possession of Orwell's ancestors descended from his eldest sister, Marjorie Dakin, née Blair.



Thomas Beach (1738-1806) Portrait of the Masters Blair: Charles and Henry Blair, 1782 (Wikimedia Commons)

REFLECTION

These letters to Charoux demonstrate Orwell cared deeply about the family portraits, carted from apartment to apartment and then to Jura, he had inherited. They also reveal he knew Charoux and his wife reasonably well and that more research is needed to understand their shared circles with other émigrés in Orwell and David Astor's milieu.

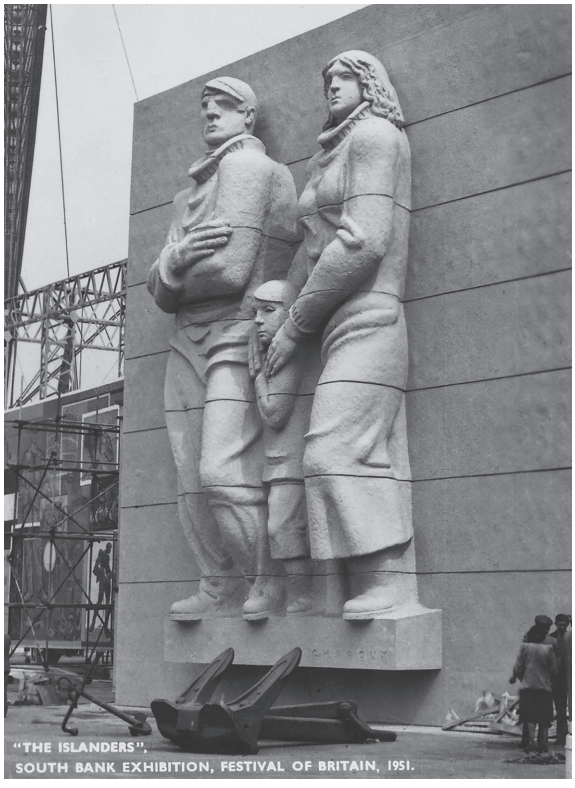
During the 1940s, Orwell's professional associates and friends expanded exponentially due to the popular and critical success of *Animal Farm* (1945), employment at the BBC and subsequent literary editorship of *Tribune*, along with his close relationship with Astor (Moore 2024b). Many of the most significant of these figures were Central European intellectuals, some of whom Astor referred to as 'the Professorate' when they were employed by the *Observer* and shaped the newspaper's post war policy directions (Ascherson 1999). Even a cursory overview of Charoux's life experiences and values suggests some common intellectual and political ground with Orwell, Tosco Fyvel, Isaac Deutscher, Sebastian Haffner and Arthur Koestler. Charoux can now be added to the social circles of these creative émigrés, escaping the anti-democratic regimes emanating from Russia, Austria and Germany, in Astor and Orwell's orbit.

Orwell's ability to write authoritatively about totalitarianism was mostly a result of his experiences in the Indian Imperial Police in Burma, as a militiaman during the Spanish Civil War and from a lifetime of wide reading. However, his circle of friends and associates included many who had experienced these regimes firsthand and

must have been sources of information and insight. Another Austrian who had arrived in London during 1935, Franz Borkenau, wrote perceptively to Orwell in September 1949:

> The problem for all of us is of course that the horrors of the totalitarian regime are such that they defy both scholarly analysis and artistic creation.… Yours is the only book which seems to me to convey fully what a totalitarian regime means in terms of the individuals living under it (Orwell 1998 [1949-50]: 167).

There is some evidence that Orwell and his family provided imaginative inspiration for Charoux's own work. Based on conversations with David Astor, the present owners of Charoux's studio, Mark and Ruth Beedle, believe that George, Eileen and Richard Blair were the inspiration behind Charoux's monumental bas-relief for the Festival of Britain, *The Islanders* (Veasey 2024: 83).[8]



The Islanders, 1951 (demolished in 1952). Plaster, monumental bas-relief for the Festival of Britain, London; postcard 1951, Cardcraft Publishing Service, London
© The Estate of Siegfried Charouxx

- Special thanks to Dr Melanie Veasey for her extraordinary intellectual generosity in sharing knowledge and scholarship about Charoux. I have also greatly appreciated the support of Gregor-Anatol Bockstefl, manager of the Langenzersdorf Museum, Austria, and curator of the estate of Siegfried Charoux.

NOTES

[1] Orwell's letters to Charoux are held in the Bodleian Libraries Special Collections, MS 15363/167

[2] Karl Schnetzler, a German electrical research engineer resident in England during the 1930s who had been interned (1939-1943) to later become a naturalised British subject in 1948. See *CWGO* 2893, as well as letters from Schnetzler to Ian Angus and Bernard Crick

[3] Charoux had finally completed a bust of Astor in 1946

[4] For detailed biographical information, I highly recommend Melanie Veasey's book, *Charoux's Sculptures*, which can be accessed online: https://www.lemu.at/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Charouxs-Sculptures_Melanie-Veasey_LEMU_24-09-17.pdf and the less accessible but excellent German language book by Hans Kurt Groß, *Siegfried Charoux: die Wiener Jahre des Karikaturisten und Bildhauers* [*Siegfried Charoux: The Viennese Years of the Caricaturist and Sculptor*]. NB: The British Library is devoid of materials on Charoux

[5] Charoux claimed that he wandered through Russia as 'a hobo' immediately after being invalided out of the army where he grew increasingly interested in political ideologies, especially anarchism (Veasey 2024: 7-8)

[6] This portrait of Lady Mary, 'in terrible condition', was subsequently inherited by Henry Dakin (the son of Orwell's eldest sister) who had it restored. It is unknown if he carried out his plan to have Christies identify the artist and value it. Dakin thought it was painted c. 1780 (Dakin 1988). Contextually, considering the other Fane family portraits painted by Thomas Gainsborough (who rarely signed his work), it is not inconceivable that this painting is from his brush

[7] A paper on Orwell's Dorset ancestors, including the Fane and Michel families, is in preparation for a future edition of *GOS*. The tentative title: 'The ruling class'

[8] Dr Veasey kindly re-interviewed Mark and Ruth Beedle in February 2025 to confirm their recollections for this article

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