The Vagaries of British Compassion: A Contextualized Analysis of British Reactions to the Persecution of Jews Under Nazi Rule

Russell Mark Wallis

PhD

2010

I certify that all work presented in the thesis is my own.

Russell Mark Wallis.

ABSTRACT

The Vagaries of British Compassion: A Contextualized Analysis of British Reactions to the Persecution and Mass Murder of the Jews Under Nazi Rule

By Russell Mark Wallis

This thesis explores British reactions to the persecution and mass murder of the Jews under Nazi rule. It uniquely provides a deep context by examining British responses to a number of man-made humanitarian disasters between 1914 and 1943. In doing so it takes into account changing context, the memory of previous atrocities and the making and re-making of British national identity. It shows that although each reaction was distinctive, common strands bound British confrontation with foreign atrocity. Mostly, the British consciously reacted in accordance with a long 'tradition' of altruism for the oppressed. This tradition had become a part and parcel of how the British saw themselves. The memory of past atrocity provided the framework for subsequent engagement with an increasingly dangerous and unpredictable world. By tracking the discursive pattern of the atrocity discourse, the evidence reveals that a variety of so-called 'others' were cast and recast in the British imagination. Therefore, a disparate group of 'foreign' victims were the beneficiaries of nationwide indignation almost regardless of the way the government eventually was able to contain or accommodate public protest. When Jews were victims there was a break with this tradition. The thesis shows that atrocity was fully comprehended by Britons but that Jews did not evoke the intensity or longevity of compassion meted out to others. In other words it shows that the reaction to Jewish suffering was particular. They were subject to a hierarchy of compassion.

Table of Contents

The Vagaries of British Compassion: A Contextualized Analysis of British Reactions to the Persecution and Mass Murder of Jews Under Nazi Rule

Acknowledgements

On the completion of this thesis my thanks and appreciation go to my supervisor David Cesarani. From the initial meeting when his enthusiasm and insight confirmed that I actually had an argument to make he has ceaselessly maintained the right balance between encouragement and rebuke. His almost effortless ability to straddle the divide between overarching themes and acute attention to detail has been a revelation to me. He has been the chief author of my intellectual development over the course of completing my doctorate. Furthermore, he has frequently gone 'above and beyond' in terms of nurturing my academic potential. I feel privileged to have spent so much time in David's company, not least because it has been so enjoyable.

My thanks also go to Dan Stone who acted as advisor. His advice, particularly after the upgrade interview, was highly valuable. Dan has been a positive influence since undertaking my masters. I am also grateful to Zoe Waxman whose insightful guidance, sensitively given, was so beneficial.

Finally, I would like to state my appreciation to Sarah Butler, who has faithfully read, listened and talked through seemingly endless ups and downs not just throughout this project, but since I started as an undergraduate.

Introduction

The twentieth century was a time of unparalleled violence.[1] The numbers affected by man-made humanitarian crises reached their height between 1914 and 1945. This upsurge of violence abroad coincided with an extraordinary expansion of the British mass media. Reports of brutality in foreign lands were read by all sections of society. They were the subject of headline news, government discussion, Parliamentary debate and everyday conversation. In many cases, overseas brutality evoked humanitarian action on behalf of perceived victims. All this was part of Britain coming to terms with an increasingly dangerous world.

From the onset of World War One British society responded to a series of atrocities and humanitarian crises in different parts of the world. The first of these was the so-called 'rape of Belgium' by German forces in late 1914. Part of that response was that atrocity was un-English, it was something the 'Prussians' did. In this sense, responses were framed by a sense of national identity: in other words, who the English thought themselves to be. However, after 1918 the response to German actions was complicated by British involvement in colonial atrocities. Once German violence was qualified by news of atrocities committed by the British, the memory of wartime 'frightfulness' reified, but in its new form it helped to shape the response to later atrocities. This thesis will show how a similar process was repeated in the case of the Armenian genocide, the treatment of Jews in Eastern Europe after World War One, the Abyssinian crisis of the mid-1930s, the Spanish Civil War and Japanese atrocities in China. In each case it will show how context affected responses. A part of the context was the sense of national identity at any one time and the memory of previous atrocities.

The thesis culminates in an examination of responses to the persecution and mass murder of the Jews of Europe between 1933 and 1943. It seeks to explain this response in the light of earlier responses and to determine whether the reaction to the

[1] Bartov, Omer, Grossmann, Atina and Nolan, Mary, *Crimes of War: Guilt and Denial in the Twentieth Century* (New York: The New Press, 2002) p.xii; Hobsbawm, Eric, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991* (London: Abacus, 1994) p.12.

plight of the Jews was singular, primarily conditioned by anti-Semitism, or part of a generic pattern. In particular it questions whether the response can be framed solely in terms of 'liberalism'. In other words, whether the British liberal imagination curtailed the ability to perceive the illiberal nature of Nazi violence, an argument proposed by Tony Kushner.[2]

Britain's response to each atrocity will be examined within its own particular context. However, in accordance with Kushner's plea for a more intellectually productive historiography, this thesis adopts a 'social and cultural history perspective' and takes 'a long time span' in order to analyze 'the complex processes of history and memory'.[3] By examining the response to atrocity case by case, and showing how one instance reacted on others, this argument challenges mono-causal explanations, including the tyranny of *realpolitik* and shows that it is unfeasible to look at any one case in isolation. It offers a shaded and complex account of British responses involving a taxonomy of tolerance and empathy, influenced by the multifaceted historical and ideological context and the interplay of contemporary forces. The thesis therefore evaluates the vagaries and selectiveness of British compassion.

Specifically therefore, this account tracks the intensity of response in Britain to a variety of foreign atrocities and more pertinently to a range of different victims. In most cases the British reacted with a level of humanitarianism that was in accordance with a widely believed and much-lauded national tradition of compassion for the oppressed. This principle had substantial basis in fact. After all, the 'history of Great Britain in the nineteenth century is punctuated by humanitarian crusades.'[4] The movement to abolish the slave trade, Gladstone's campaign against the Bulgarian atrocities in 1876 and the massive outpouring of indignation on behalf of the Armenians under Turkish rule in the 1890s were all seen as part of this tradition. Moreover, these events helped to cement the belief that this form of humanitarianism

---

[2] Kushner, Tony, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination: A Social and Cultural History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), pp.18-20.
[3] Kushner, Tony, 'Britain, the United States and the Holocaust: In Search of a Historiography' in Stone, Dan. (ed.) *Historiography of the Holocaust* (London: Palgrave, 2004) pp.267-9.
[4] Cookey, S.J.S., *Britain and the Congo Question 1885 – 1913* (London: Longmans, 1968) p.1.

was a crucial aspect of the national character. This belief lasted at least until the end of World War Two and adherence to its precepts was astonishingly consistent. Tom Buchanan, for example, when writing about Britain's response to the Spanish Civil War, has identified three reasons why 'foreign causes have become major political issues.' Among these, he suggests, are firstly, 'a pressing sense of national peril making the conflict appear directly relevant to British interests'; secondly, '[o]ne side in the conflict has been seen as representative of political or religious values with which a section of the population is in profound sympathy and opposing an equally well-defined ideological enemy'; and lastly, 'there has been a strong sense of humanitarian identification with one side, generally those regarded as the victims'.[5] These criteria were not only met, as Buchanan suggests, for the Spanish Civil War but also for most other major outbreaks of foreign violence in the interwar years. This thesis will show however, that British responses to atrocities against Jews were notably muted by comparison, whether in Poland in 1919 or under Nazi rule after 1933. Therefore what follows is part of the history of the Holocaust.

Placing British reactions to anti-Jewish persecution in the wider context of responses to atrocity over a long time period provides a unique insight into one important aspect of the Holocaust: the responses of western democracies. Saul Friedlander states:

> The "history of the Holocaust" cannot be limited only to a recounting of German policies, decisions, and measures that led to this most systematic and sustained of genocides; *it must include the reactions (and at times the initiatives) of the surrounding world* and the attitudes of the victims, for the fundamental reason that the events we call the Holocaust represent a totality defined by this very convergence of distinct elements.[6]

In the context of Holocaust research reactions of the British has been placed under the category of 'bystanders'. Yet the word 'bystander' requires qualification, not

---

[5] Buchanan, Tom, *Britain and the Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p.30.
[6] Friedlander, Saul, *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews 1939-1945* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2007) p.xv. My italics.

least because it seems 'morally conceived' and 'based on a potentially religious conception of the obligations of witness.'[7] In addition, this sense of moral condemnation often seems 'determined by the present rather than the past.'[8] Clearly, if this is the case then the very use of the term 'bystander' can be anachronistic.[9] There is also a danger that all British contemporaries are squeezed into simplified categories or worse, one monolithic block. The 'bystander' category should be treated with caution not least because, as Kushner states 'we like our bystanders to be as bifurcated as the categories of victim and perpetrator.'[10] Instead, as David Cesarani suggests historians should work towards a 'taxonomy of rescuers'.[11] The development of nuance in an area of research that seems so susceptible to bias is therefore crucial. Thus, this thesis, by examining events from a 'British history' perspective, explores a further nuance, that of the perceived victim. My argument will show that, when it came to reacting to foreign atrocity, a hierarchy of empathy existed in the British imagination. This was not something that was rigid but rather subject to a variety of forces. For example, the Chinese had long been associated with degeneration. A once great empire had fallen and now, for many in Britain, Chinese opium dens signified something immoral and pernicious in their character.[12] All this changed in a remarkably short space of time when Japan embarked on a merciless imperial mission in Chinese territory just before the Second World War. The Chinese were quickly recast in the role of victim and evoked nationwide indignation.

The 'bystander' category has almost exclusively been used in the context of Holocaust historiography. The historiography of British responses to the Holocaust demonstrates a continued, if slow, development of much needed nuance. The first attempt to analyze British reactions to German atrocities against Jews was written by Andrew Sharf in 1964. *The British Press and Jews Under Nazi Rule* was publicized

---

[7] Cesarani, David and Levine, Paul A., (eds.) *Bystanders to the Holocaust: A Re-evaluation*, (London: Frank Cass, 2002) p.269.
[8] Lawson, Tom, *The Church of England and the Holocaust: Christianity, Memory and Nazism* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006) p.4.
[9] Cesarani and Levine, (eds.) *Bystanders* p.4.
[10] Kushner, 'In Search of a Historiography', p.257.
[11] Cesarani, David, 'Mad Dogs and Englishmen: Towards a Taxonomy of Rescuers in a 'Bystander' Country – Britain 1933-45' in Cesarani and Levine (eds.) *Bystanders*, p.28.
[12] For example *The Times* 23 January 1919, p.7; 12 August 1933, p.8.

as ‘a revealing study of British reluctance to admit’ the ‘horrifying facts of Hitler’s final solution’. As such it focused on the ‘habit, deeply ingrained in these islands, of making the best of every situation, refusing to believe the worst.’[13] This, of course, refers to a popular interwar English stereotype. Something fondly evoked by Stanley Baldwin who, in his summary of the English national character, suggested that ‘the Englishman has a mental reserve owing to that gift given him at his birth by St. George, so, by the absence of worry keeps his nervous system sound and sane.’ The very reason why Baldwin saw the English as ‘made for a time of crisis’ is the starting point for Sharf’s book, which is introduced as a form of antidote to this aspect of national character.[14] This ‘inveterate British inability to grasp imaginatively what could happen on the continent of Europe’ is posited as the major cause of inaction.[15] More specifically, Sharf’s study was commissioned by the Institute of Race Relations and sought to show the relevance of the study ‘to many other situations’. Therefore, it was ‘more by analogy than directly’ that they were concerned with Jewish ‘problems’.[16] What Sharf did, that few emulated subsequently, was to examine the period from 1933 to the end of the Second World War, thereby maintaining the sense of continuity between pre-war and wartime reactions to anti-Jewish measures.

One of the weaknesses relating to the historiography of British responses is the tendency to study selected sections of time after Hitler came to power. Good examples of this trend are the studies of A.J. Sherman and Bernard Wasserstein. Sherman’s *Island Refuge*, published in 1973, concentrates on the period between 1933 and 1939. He further narrowed his field of enquiry by concentrating on newly released government sources and within that charts the development of refugee policy. Despite this focused approach his conclusions are achieved only by comparison with the response of other nations to Jewish refugees. Britain’s record was said to be ‘not unimpressive’.[17] Sherman’s history squares up to the ‘acrimonious debate’ and deliberately attempts to empty the issue of emotional

[13] Sharf, Andrew, *The British Press and the Jews Under Nazi Rule* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964) p.v.
[14] Baldwin, Stanley, *On England and Other Addresses* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1938) p.13.
[15] Sharf, *British Press*, p.209.
[16] Ibid., pp.v-vi.
[17] Sherman, A.J., *Island Refuge: Britain and Refugees from the Third Reich 1933-1939* (London: Elek Books, 1973) p.264.

content. '[L]ack of imagination' on the part of British administrators is, for him, largely a problem of practicality.[18] Wasserstein's book *Britain and the Jews of Europe* takes up where Sherman left off. Written in 1979, it remains a leading study of British policy during wartime. '[I]gnorance' of events in Europe and anti-Semitism are rejected as defining factors in British responses.[19] Instead he suggests the low priority accorded to the Jews gave way 'to what were believed to be inexorable strategic realities' of the total war effort.[20] Jews were therefore the victims of 'an ocean of bureaucratic indifference and lack of concern.'[21] However, Wasserstein detected a wave of public concern after the Allied declaration on the destruction of European Jewry in December 1942. I will argue that, on the contrary, the government was driven more by *fear* of public protest than its actual manifestation.

Wasserstein was also struck by the 'imaginative failure' of officials to 'grasp the full meaning of consequences of decisions' because they and the Jewish victims as well as being separated by physical distance, inhabited 'different psychological universes'.[22] Walter Laqueur in *The Terrible Secret* showed that the Allies did not suffer from want of information about the Final Solution. He argued that paralysis in the face of mass murder was due to a number of reasons including incomplete information, 'fear', 'reckless optimism' and 'disbelief stemming from a lack of experience or imagination or genuine ignorance'.[23] For those in London, he suggests, the 'evil nature of Nazism was beyond their comprehension.'[24] This theme is a mainstay of Kushner's *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*. Since its publication in 1994 Kushner's innovative and sophisticated analysis has remained

[18] Ibid., p.264.
[19] Wasserstein, Bernard, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945* (London: Clarendon Press, 1979) pp.349-351.
[20] Ibid., p.352.
[21] Ibid., p.345.
[22] Ibid., p.356.
[23] Laqueur, Walter, *The Terrible Secret: Suppression of the Truth About Hitler's "Final Solution"* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980) p.208.
[24] Ibid., p.203.

largely unchallenged. It has been less successful as a catalyst for a more nuanced historiography, something that has been a source of frustration for Kushner himself.[25]

Kushner sought to address one of the principal weaknesses of the existing historiography; over-concentration on the importance of government decisions. He did this by attempting to 'connect everyday life and high politics, and to rethink each in the light of the other',[26] thus opening new vistas for research. This thesis thus also tackles what might be called the 'crucible of interaction' between national decision-makers and public opinion. For Kushner, however, 'the nature and origins of Nazi anti-semitism were rarely understood'.[27] He implies that violence specifically directed against Jews somehow bounced off the British conscience.[28] In other words the 'liberal imagination' was incapable of comprehending the '*illiberal* phenomenon' of Nazi violence.[29] The evidence that follows reveals that from 1914 onwards, the British government and its population grappled with occurrences of large-scale violence against certain groups in other parts of the world. Elected and permanent officials, the media and the public were engaged by tumultuous events in foreign lands, especially when they involved man's inhumanity to man. These terrible happenings were observed, dissected, and absorbed into public consciousness. Far from keeping quiet about them, British society evolved what might be termed an 'atrocity discourse'. After 1914, each new atrocity added a layer of 'memory', which in turn influenced the way others were interpreted. This meant that news of foreign atrocity was rarely received in a vacuum. There was already a substantial body of knowledge about foreign violence and this contributed to the humanitarian outbursts of the 1930s

Kushner's central thesis is that 'the *strength* of liberalism and toleration rather than its weakness…explains the complex nature of democratic responses towards the

---

[25] Kushner, Tony, "Pissing in the Wind'? The Search for Nuance in the Study of Holocaust Bystanders' in Cesarani and Levine, (eds.) *Bystanders*; Kushner, 'In Search of a Historiography'.
[26] Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p.18.
[27] Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p.273.
[28] An idea that was considered by George Orwell. Orwell, Sonia and Angus, Ian, (eds.) *The Collected Essays Journalism and Letters of George Orwell: Volume III, As I Please 1943-45* (London: Penguin, 1970), p.419-20.
[29] Ibid., pp.18-20.

persecution of the Jews.' He believes that when faced with the Holocaust, 'truly an international event', the inability of the British to accommodate 'difference' hindered responses. Kushner later stated that he had been 'keen to show that liberalism was not the antithesis of anti-Semitism'.[30] His contrast between the comparatively generous American response to the Holocaust and Britain's relative lack of action are explained as resulting from the process of 'Americanization [which] at least allowed for some ethnic diversity within society.'[31] Kushner therefore uses what can be seen as more of a modern day phenomenon, in this case 'multi-culturalism', to explain a moment in history when such a concept was some distance from common understanding.[32] In this sense his explanation seems anachronistic. In addition, Kushner emphasizes 'Englishness' after 1918 remaining a 'near totally exclusive concept' as another factor in British responses. This meant that unless 'certain alien groups' could assimilate successfully they were perceived a 'constant danger to the well-being of society'.[33] Viewing British responses in this light perhaps gives too much emphasis to the refugee question or put another way, fear of immigration. What this approach fails to take into account was that there were many ways in which the British government could and did respond to overseas crises and there were correspondingly many pressure points for outraged public opinion to probe. It also fails to accommodate the notion that Englishness could be projected outwards or bestowed on others to elicit sympathy.

Reading the discourse on the Jews as a separate and distinct area of historiography it could be argued that Kushner's identification of 'ambivalence' as a repetitive factor in responses to Jews is correct. He argues that 'liberal ambivalence' in its most basic form is characterized by 'dislike of Jews at home and sympathy for the Jews abroad.'[34] However, this thesis shows that the second part of that equation cannot be taken as read when the debate is considered in a wider context. The evidence of 'compassion' or 'indignation' on behalf of a range of foreign victims between the wars is overwhelming. If, for example, we look at the outbreaks of violence against

[30] 'England, Liberalism and the Jews: Anglo-Jewish Historikerstreit', *The Jewish Quarterly*, Autumn 1997, p.33.
[31] Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p.273.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid., p.272.

'foreigners' during the Nazi period such as the Abyssinian Crisis, the Spanish civil war and the Sino-Japanese conflict, it soon becomes clear that mass atrocity was not only known about, it was understood. Moreover, the 'otherness' of the victims was no barrier to compassionate action. It is apparent that these other cases evoked humanitarian concern on a different scale to that displayed on behalf of Jews. In the case of Jews, lack of compassion was particular. By taking a wider and longer view of British responses this thesis shows that there existed a hierarchy of compassion for foreign victims, which in many respects depended on how the British viewed themselves. 'Others', depending on political, social, economic and ideological circumstances in Britain itself could be recast as worthy of compassion. After 1914 there was a particular resistance to expressions of compassion resulting in action for Jews. They simply could not be recast as worthy victims in the same way as others. There is evidence of a form of struggle in which contemporaries fought to be or to be seen as compassionate towards Jews. What is clear, however, is that the struggle was noticeably less intense when the British were faced with other foreign victims. In an additional twist, it appears that among those most likely to make a stand, especially on the Left wing of British politics, empathy for ordinary Germans who were perceived as labouring under the Nazi yoke, was more deep set and persistent than for the Jews.

There is one more fundamental modification to the existing historiography suggested by the wide-ranging approach adopted in this thesis. Kushner situates his analysis within a comparative methodology. For him Britain and the United States provide useful contrasting models of liberal democracies perhaps because of their physical separation from main land Europe. In relation to the Continent this model if anything reinforces the notion of a British *sonderweg*, a notion that pervades previous research on this subject. It is argued here that Britain in the 1930s and '40s was enthralled by Europe. Senior politicians such as Baldwin and Chamberlain may have been driven by a desire for greater isolationism, but they could not afford to take their eyes off the Continent. In an era when the 'democratization' of British foreign policy was perhaps at its most pronounced, domestic opinion strengthened this focus.[35] The

[35] 'Democratising British Foreign Policy: Rethinking the Peace Ballot, 1934-5' *Journal of British Studies* (May 2010)

principal framework for foreign policy during the interwar period was unquestionably the League of Nations; Britain and France its two most powerful members; Germany, Italy and Spain the major sources of concern. This thesis shows that Britain, from the top down, saw itself intrinsically linked to European affairs. Britain was in Europe and reflected its tensions. Its response should therefore be seen in a Europe-wide context.

With this in mind British attitudes and policies towards the persecuted Jews of Europe perhaps need to be integrated into a pan-European historiography. Frank Caestecker and Bob Moore in their compendium of European responses to the 1930s refugee crisis adopt a more Euro-centric approach.[36] The work of historians such as Vicki Caron who charts the French response is also a useful point of comparison. She examines the effect of public opinion on governmental policies and shows that French compassion for Jewish refugees undulated throughout the pre-war decade, starting in 1933 when attitudes and policy were relative generous.[37] As the crisis intensified a middle class 'hue and cry' underpinned a more restrictive French policy.[38] There is a need for further research on whether a similar tightening of policy in Britain after the *Anschluss* was, likewise, facilitated by public opinion. Other perspectives might also be gained by, for example, comparison with Denmark's immigration practices.[39] Although this thesis does not specifically focus on refugees, by placing the British experience next to the European response to the Jewish refugee crisis we may gain some perspective on how British officials judged their own policies, especially in the light of popular conceptions of British generosity. Louise London's work provides an excellent starting point for British policy.

In her study of *Whitehall and the Jews*, London revisited government responses between 1933 and 1948. In a work that was balanced and rich in historical context she sought to explain why, although the chances of saving Jewish lives was weak,

[36] Caestecker, Frank and Moore, Bob, *Refugees from Nazi Germany and the Liberal European States* (New York and Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2010).
[37] Caron, Vicki, *Uneasy Asylum: France and the Jewish Refugee Crisis 1933-1942* (Stanford University Press, 2002).
[38] Caestecker and Moore, *Refugees from Nazi Germany*, p.57-8.
[39] Rünitz, Lone, 'The Danish Immigration Authorities and the Issue of *Rassenschande*' in Caestecker and Moore, *Refugees from Nazi Germany*, pp.48-56.

'the will to pursue such prospects was significantly weaker.'[40] Although she spends little time exploring societal values in Britain, government responses were, for her, an 'expression of the values of the society that produced it.'[41] London's assumption needs clarification. The tendency of the British to respond generously to man-made foreign crises needs to be taken into account in order to provide much needed perspective on what is, after all, a complex issue. This thesis goes some way to providing it.

Dan Stone's *Responses to Nazism in Britain*, which combines the history of ideas and cultural history, takes a more studied approach to selecting an appropriate time period for analysis. He deliberately rejects a teleological approach to the pre-war years because the 'moral world of the writers of the 1930s had not yet been torn asunder by the death camps.'[42] By pointing to the prevalence and sophistication of British debates about Nazism, he tentatively distances himself from Kushner. Indeed Stone contends that 'the violence of the Nazi regime especially was fully adumbrated in its pre-1933 statements',[43] and moreover 'debates over Nazism were at the heart of public discussion.'[44] If then, it was well understood that Nazism 'could lead only to war and catastrophe' then it is a relatively short step to concede that the violence that was at the heart of that movement was also clearly perceived.

In their attempts to explain why Britain did not react with expected moral force, contemporary observers and historians have debated whether it was caused by an English trait, a psychological stumbling block or the strong tradition of British liberalism. That foreign violence against foreign victims was fully comprehended in Britain is a major finding of my research. From the outbreak of war in 1914, through peacetime, to the close of hostilities in 1945, the British became more familiar than ever with distant atrocity. In most cases it is not hard to detect signs of intensive and pervasive empathetic response. Yet in the case of Jewish victims, things were different. Most foreign victims of violence and in some cases their oppressors could

[40] London, Louise, *Whitehall and the Jews: British Immigration Policy and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) p.284.
[41] Ibid., p.15.
[42] Stone, Dan, *Responses to Nazism in Britain, 1933-1939: Before War and Holocaust* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) p.6.
[43] Ibid., p.7.
[44] Ibid., p.192.

be cast and then re-cast in the British imagination with a fair degree of alacrity and in such a way as to make them creditable objects of compassion. The image of Jews was somehow more intractable and less susceptible to sympathetic malleability. They were therefore subject to a hierarchy of compassion.

Understanding Britain's position in the world order is crucial to any study of British reactions to man-made humanitarian crises. It was, and remains, popular to consider the interwar years as years of decline for the British Empire.[45] However, this is not how Britain was perceived at the time, at home and abroad. Richard Overy points out that pervading Britain in the interwar years was 'the widespread contemporary belief that, together with the Empire, Britain was the hub of the Western world…in much the way that America is regarded, and regards itself, today.'[46] The British felt at the time that their strength imposed on them a moral burden in an unstable world. English writer Margaret Storm Jameson summed up this feeling of obligation, especially for those who were frustrated by what they perceived as political drift in the 1930s. Of Britain, she wrote,

> [o]urs is the largest and most important political unit in the world. Our people occupy territory in every continent; our interests – more penetrating – cross the frontiers of every foreign State. More than any other State, more even than those which exceed us in actual or potential wealth, we can influence world thought. This power we have is recognised by other countries…it is the English on whom all wait.[47]

America's self-proclaimed isolationism reinforced Britain's prominence.

Expectations stemming from Britain's lofty global status had a long heritage. Interwar Britons had fond memories of their nation's involvement in good causes. This form of intervention had in many ways become part and parcel of the way they viewed themselves. Acting as the champion of small nations and the defender of the

---

[45] Hyam, R., *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonisation 1918-1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
[46] Overy, R., *The Morbid Age: Britain Between the Wars* (London: Allen Lane, 2009) p.7.
[47] Cited in Overy, *Morbid Age*, pp.372-3.

oppressed was, for many, intricately connected to deeply embedded national characteristics. National identity, or in other words, the way the British or English, looked at themselves, is an important aspect of this thesis because it helped frame responses to foreign atrocity. Reactions to overseas violence were more than just political; they were also cultural.[48] The quality of altruism for the weak and defenseless helped the British define who they were. When faced with an ever more dangerous world after the outbreak of World War One, many in Britain felt this all the more keenly.

However, caution needs to be employed when examining the convergence of historical 'events' and perceptions of national identity. Anthony Nicholls has suggested that 'national identity' is of 'legitimate interest to historians' because such concepts were not only 'widely disseminated', but prominent in political-decision making in the first half of the twentieth century.[49] Nonetheless, comments containing references to 'Englishness' and 'Britishness' were rarely, if ever, uttered with a clear idea of delineation between the two. Although, according to Peter Mandler 'The years between the world wars were the heyday of the idea of the English national character',[50] reference to so-called Britishness, which before World War One was frequently used to highlight the homogeneity of the Empire, was often, after 1918 evoked to denote a more narrow form of 'English values' and *vice versa*. The sources used in this thesis reflect this confusion. Despite the confusion over terminology, it was often the case that reference to national identity, whether British or English, referred to similar traits. It was common, especially when faced with an ever-darkening world, for commentators of the Right or Left to conjure up a particular form of national character in order to separate Britons generally or Englishmen specifically out from other nationalities, especially Europeans.[51]

---

[48] Colls, Robert and Dodd, Phillip, (eds.) *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920*, (Beckenham, Croom Helm, 1986). Preface.
[49] Anthony, J. Nicholls 'The German 'National Character' in British Perspective' Jordan, Ulrike (ed.), *Conditions of Surrender: Britons and Germans Witness the End of the War* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1997) p.27.
[50] Mandler, Peter, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (London: Yale University Press, 2006) p.143.
[51] Ibid., p.143

The very 'stability' which attached itself to 'national identity', its reference to long-held attributes and beliefs made it attractive for commentators, but it is a shifting phenomenon. It has always been 'fought over, fractured by varying class, political and cultural interpretations.' What becomes apparent in any history of national identity is that 'Englishness has to be made and re-made in and through history, within available practices and relationships, and existing symbols and ideas.'[52] Moreover, the very things that are deemed to be outside definitions of English national identity at any time often dictate its elasticity. Linda Colley, suggests that 'Englishness' is defined 'by the social or territorial boundaries drawn to distinguish the collective self and its implicit negation, the 'other' rather than being dependent on objective criteria such as language or race or cultural uniformity.' In other words 'we usually decide who we are by reference to who and what we are not.'[53] In a further twist, David Matless not only sees national identity 'as a relative concept always constituted through definitions of Self and Other' but also 'always subject to internal differentiation.'[54] Specifically for the interwar years, Peter Mandler has expressed his frustration at pinning down how the British saw themselves.[55] The flexibility of interwar national identity is vital to the way in which it was used in relation to atrocity abroad. In the years after 1914, the bestowal of English qualities on 'others' was a major tool for eliciting a compassionate response. There is evidence that throughout the period that in regard to relationships with 'foreigners' certain aspects of *their* perceived characteristics were either brought to the fore or dismissed depending on the political or ideological stance of the commentator or their employer. These were then implicitly or explicitly juxtaposed against popular conceptions of what it was to be English or British, and these could be, as has just been shown, many and varied. The aim was to facilitate a discourse that could be sympathetic or antagonistic depending on the extent to which those being spoken about were endowed with one or other English or British quality. What was noticeable about the discourse relating to a diverse selection of victims, or even perpetrators, was the ease with which many of them could be shown to share traits

[52] Colls and Dodd, *Englishness*, Preface.
[53] Colley, Linda, 'Britishness and Otherness: An Argument' in 'Britishness and Europeanness: Who are the British Anyway?', *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol.31, No.4, (October, 1992) p.311.
[54] Matless, David, *Landscape and Englishness* ((London: Reaktion Books, 1998) p.17.
[55] Mandler, Peter, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (London: Yale University Press, 2006) p.163.

which the inhabitants of the United Kingdom projected onto themselves. Thus foreigners could move with surprising speed from being 'outsiders' to 'insiders' and become deserving of empathy.

This happened again and again throughout the interwar period. The Armenians were the subject of widespread and long-standing humanitarian concern in Britain largely because of their adherence to Christianity under tyrannical Muslim rule. This 'Christian' label was eventually a millstone as they were conflated with atrocities committed by 'Christian' Greeks. The Turks under Mustapha Kemal were quickly designated as the Englishmen of the Near East. The Abyssinians were on the edges of British imagination until Mussolini decided in the mid 1930s to make their country part of a new Roman Empire. The inhabitants of this small east African country were no longer 'slave owning savages'. As Malcolm Muggeridge succinctly put it:

> The enlightenment, at any rate latterly, of Haile Selassie's rule was stressed; his determination to abolish the slave trade in his dominion, admired, and Abyssinian's Christianity discovered by many who had formerly assumed its non-existence.[56]

The Spaniards before and even during the Civil War were a mishmash of stereotypes. They were first, 'incompetent and lazy; second, cruel and violent; and, finally, highly individualistic'.[57] Only after the inhabitants of the town of Guernica had suffered the blanket bombing that so many British feared, did perceptions alter. British commentators bestowed on the Basques in particular a plethora of characteristics common to the English. The most surprising recipients of this malleable process were the Chinese. As they fought off a vicious assault from Imperialist Japanese forces, the Chinese were no longer the 'degenerate yellow peril' of the popular imagination, but the inheritors of a stoic tradition, not unlike the British, which was mostly seen in their efforts to resist.

---

[56] Muggeridge, Malcom, *The Thirties: 1930-1940 in Great Britain* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1940) p.144.
[57] Buchanan, Tom, *The Impact of the Spanish Civil War on Britain: War, Loss, Memory* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2007) p.4.

Nowhere, however, was this tendency more accentuated than in the case of the Germans. During the First World War they were constructed as the antithesis of everything Britain stood for. German 'Kultur' came to represent barbarism in its most extreme form and was persistently compared to British 'civilizing' values. Nevertheless, after the British committed atrocities of their own in India and Ireland, the Versailles settlement was almost immediately condemned as draconian and unjust. Norman Angell, writing in 1922 of the Paris Peace Conference, complained that the British Press were distorting German wartime atrocities and that it was 'necessary to tell with equal emphasis of the humane actions of the enemy, and of the atrocities committed even by the allies' to get the 'whole truth'.[58] Rosa Maria Bracco in her history of middlebrow literature between the wars asserts that '[t]he debunking of the myth of German evil began immediately after the war…With each year war novels became more concerned with being 'truthful' about the question of the enemy'. She goes on to state that '[b]y the end of the Twenties the vast majority of novels about the Great War depicted English and German soldiers sharing in the same predicament'.[59] Not the least of these many similarities was the overwhelming desire for peace. The myth of evil Germans was replaced by another myth that lasted well into the Second World War. This was the notion that all Germans, barring a few fanatics, were incapable of wickedness. The strength of this particular legend was based on British guilt and an increasing sympathy with the majority of German people who were labouring under the yoke of the Nazi aberration. Its durability is astonishing.

However, flexibility simply did not apply to Jews. This cannot be reduced to blatant anti-Semitism. Instead, a complex interaction of forces meant that the image of Jews could not be remoulded as easily as others in the British imagination. This is connected to the way in which Jews were viewed in interwar Britain, something that has already been hotly debated. On this subject there seem to be two main schools of thought. On the one hand, there are those who believe the British prided themselves

[58] Cited in Hampton, Mark, *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850-1950* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004) p.162.
[59] Bracco, Rosa Maria, *Merchants of Hope: British Middlebrow Writers and the First World War, 1919–1939* (Oxford: Berg, 1993) pp.74-5.

on their tolerance and liberalism but that Jews were only accepted on condition that they assimilated into British society and became invisible. Others believe that English or British culture may indeed have contained elements of anti-Semitism, but that the country offered Jews opportunities they could not find elsewhere.[60] This last approach 'is implicitly comparative especially in relation to Europe and the Russian Empire.'[61] These different approaches inform differing views about Britain's response to the Holocaust. This thesis attempts to depart from that debate, although it must be stated that it is not specifically intended to establish the nature of anti-Semitism in Britain between the wars. It adopts a comparative approach, but not between Britain and other nations, some obviously anti-Semitic. Instead it contrasts reactions in Britain over time to different victim groups. To a certain extent, it compares like with like and shows that the way that Jews were conceptualised by the British had a real effect on the potential for Jews to be reconstructed as victims. Therefore, for the purposes of this argument what is important is not what 'Jews are actually supposed to be or what they do, but how they are constructed in language and culture.'[62]

The treatment of Jews was 'a topic that most exercised commentators from the very start of the Nazi regime's existence.'[63] Anti-Jewish measures on the Continent undoubtedly caused a degree of discomfort in most sections of British society. However, cutting across this was a persistent discourse about Jews, one that fed into debates about atrocities. Reactions to atrocity were born out of a British 'tradition' of compassion. Although Anglo-Jewish citizens had the same rights as other British citizens under law, they were subject to the vagaries of such issues as national identity, memory and the forces that contributed to the formation of public opinion at any one time. Stereotypical perceptions of Jews were part of this. There is now a consensus that anti-Semitism in interwar Britain was rife. It existed as what one

[60] 'England, Liberalism and the Jews': Anglo-Jewish Historikerstreit' *The Jewish Quarterly*, Autumn 1997, p.33.
[61] Cheyette, Bryan and Valman, Nadia, (eds.) *The Image of the Jew in European Liberal Culture 1789-1914* (Edgeware: Vallentine Mitchell, 2004) p.3.
[62] Cesarani, David, 'Reporting Antisemitism: *The Jewish Chronicle* 1879-1979' in Jones, Sian, Kushner, Tony and Pearce, Sarah, (eds.) *Cultures of Ambivalence and Contempt: Studies in Jewish – Non Jewish Relations* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1998) p.248.
[63] Stone, *Responses to Nazism in Britain*, p.83.

might term 'background noise'. This was 'was not confined to those of conservative tendencies',[64] but 'part and parcel of the mainstream political spectrum in Britain.'[65] These presuppositions affected the way they could be portrayed or treated as victims. Kushner points out that 'the popular image of Jewish power within the liberal world contrasted strongly with the representation of Jews as innocent and defenceless victims.'[66] Evidence shows that such representations had a real effect on the very individuals who were most likely to respond to humanitarian causes. Activists were more likely to be moved by victims of atrocity in Spain, for example, than by the anti-Jewish measures carried out under Nazi rule. Furthermore, by examining a long time span, and taking into account the reactions to anti-Jewish atrocities committed by Poles just after World War One, it is possible to detect how deep-seated these assumptions were. In a country that prided itself on a history of humanitarian responses there was a continuum of resistance to compassion for Jews. Not only that, but the earlier bout of atrocities was re-written in British minds and confirmed that Jews had a tendency to 'make a fuss'. Moreover, the association of Jews with atrocity brought out what might be termed a 'specialist rhetoric'. Borrowing an argument from Richard Alston who writes about the constructed perception of Egyptians in the Roman Empire, the Jews were 'objectified, classified and discussed' at all levels of British society over time. They were 'separated by this very act of analysis' and as a result 'disempowered by their objectification', unlike other 'foreigners' who were the beneficiaries of positive re-characterizations that brought them into line with recognized forms of British identity.[67] Consequently, the impact of Jews speaking up for their own was compromised and more importantly there was a fatal inertia to the notion that Jews could be reconstructed as worthy victims. This is not to say that there were not many who gave generously of their commitment, time and money at specific moments and sometimes consistently. It is just that, for Jews, this form of compassionate activity was never dominant in the public mind. 'Ambivalence', a mixture of sympathy and what might be called 'distaste' towards Jews certainly played a part in this process. But overall there was an on-going

[64] Kushner, Tony, 'The Impact of British Anti-Semitism 1918-1945' in Cesarani, David, (ed.) *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990) p.197.
[65] Stone, *Responses to Nazism in Britain*, p.97.
[66] Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p.41.
[67] Alston, Richard, 'Conquest by text: Juvenal and Plutarch on Egypt' in Webster J., and Cooper N., (eds.) *Roman Imperialism: Post-colonial Perspectives: Leicester Archaeology Monographs* No. 3, 1996, p.102.

stubbornness reinforcing this form of objectification that can only be fully comprehended when comparing the reaction to violence against Jews against those reactions elicited by brutality directed at other victim groups.

This analysis will be undertaken using a linear model. Over the course of time British debates about atrocity reified and took on new forms. In this sense, part of this thesis will examine how the memory of earlier atrocities reacted on later ones. In other words they will be looked at from a position of 'cause and effect'. Richard Evans points out that the 'idea of a cause depends rather obviously on the concept of sequential time. Something that causes something else generally comes before it in time, not after'.[68] For this argument, this simple but fundamental observation is complicated by the role of memory, which was subject to constant reinterpretation and consequently gave rise to what might be termed 'myth'. Dan Todman in his study of popular myths that have attached themselves to the memory of the Great War, explains that '[m]yths simplify, reducing the complex events of the past to an easily understood set of symbols…Myths in themselves are not a bad thing they are a necessary part of human society and they can function for good or ill.'[69] Myth and memory therefore intertwine to create new 'truths' about past events.

The starting point for this argument will be the simple dictum posited by Paul Ricoeur that 'to remember, we need others.'[70] He argues that:

> [s]tarting with the role of the testimony of others in recalling memories, we then move step-by-step to memories that we have as members of a group; they require a shift in our viewpoint, which we are well able to perform. In this way, we gain access to events reconstructed for us by others. It is then by their place in an ensemble that others are defined.[71]

---

[68] Evans, Richard J., *In Defence of History* (London: Granta Books, 1997) p.140.
[69] Todman, Dan, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: Hambledon and London, 2005) p.xiii.
[70] Ricoeur, Paul, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Trans. Blarney, Kathleen and Pellauer, David) (London, University of Chicago, 2006) p.120.
[71] Ibid., p.121.

The memories that are developed within the community are therefore, to a significant degree, a construct. If this is true then memories are subject to manipulation or change. More often than not, as Maurice Halbwachs argued, 'the past is not preserved but is reconstructed on the basis of the present.'[72] To put it another way, political, social, economic, and ideological forces combine to give a warped view of previous events. However, into this picture we must weave another complication. Alon Confino has argued that a:

> characteristic feature of memory cultures is precisely their ability to give a sense of shared experience to groups with conflicting positions – they function, in other words, not so much to *reflect* as to *overcome* divisions within a community, insofar as they manage to represent, for a broad section of the population, a common destiny that overcomes symbolically real social and political conflicts in order to give the illusion of a community to people who in fact have very different interests.[73]

One might say therefore that participation in the formation and perpetuation of collective memories becomes a means of belonging; a means of defining whom one is within the collective. The corollary of this is that it creates, not 'one monolithic memory in a society' but one that is 'dominant'.[74] As such, common ideas are much more difficult to dislodge from the public imagination.

Neil Gregor shows that in post-World War Two Nuremberg '[a]s time went on, some…experiences were acknowledged in public while others were marginalized.'[75] A similar picture emerges in Britain with regard to memory of atrocity after World War One. For example, numerous scholars who focus on reactions to the Holocaust tell us something along the lines that the 'peddling of alleged atrocities', especially by the British government in the First World War, reinforced skepticism over news

---

[72] Halbwachs, Maurice, *On Collective Memory* (Trans. Coser, Lewis A.) (London: University of Chicago Press, 1992) p.40.
[73] Alon Confino quoted in Gregor, Neil, *Haunted City: Nuremberg and the Nazi Past* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008) p.12.
[74] Stone, *Responses to Nazism in Britain*, p.77.
[75] Gregor, *Haunted City*, p.5.

of the Final Solution.'[76] Although this contains some truth, it takes contemporaries too much at face value. Interwar objections to 'atrocity mongering' were coloured by the development of the collective memory relating to the allegedly shabby treatment Germany received at Versailles. In Britain, this version of the past was given prominence partly because the British committed atrocities of their own which in turn made moralizing about German wartime 'frightfulness' a touchy subject. The fact that Germany *had* committed atrocities was pushed to the background and became a 'myth'.

There are two further elements to this part of the argument. Firstly, the widespread belief that German atrocities in World War One had been 'made up' did not prevent immediate belief and indignation when the British were confronted with other atrocities such as those, for example, in Abyssinia or Spain. Secondly, there is a point concerning Jews. As has already been alluded to, real atrocities against Jews in Poland in 1919 were recreated as a myth. The Jewish 'tendency' to elaborate their own suffering was somehow conflated with the furor about 'false' German atrocities. Jews were therefore perhaps doubly unlucky. Firstly, to be the subject of a 'memory' that designated them as fitting with a pre-existing stereotype; that of having a propensity for emotionalism and exaggeration, especially concerning their own distress. Secondly, to be the victims of a group, the Germans, that had been recast since the First World War as the victim of British subterfuge. These combined to muddy the waters when the British reacted to Nazi oppression. One additional point to bear in mind is that of metonyms and their role in the public memory. During the Great War the atrocity discourse gave birth to the word 'frightfulness' as a metonym. It quickly became a symbol for German barbarism, characterizing everything that the British were fighting against. After the war the phrase lived on. It lost its anti-German connotations after British brutality in India and Ireland but was regularly evoked throughout the 1930s, in a condemnatory sense, as a substitute for the word atrocity. It was designed to create a sense of outrage, being liberally applied to Italy's behaviour in Abyssinia, atrocities against Republican Spain and Japanese bombing of

[76] For example, Favez, Jean-Claude, *The Red Cross and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999) p.31.

Chinese civilians. It is noticeably absent from public descriptions of German anti-Jewish violence.

So far then, it has been argued that British reactions to atrocity were at least partly formed by the interplay of how the British viewed themselves and others, and the role of memory in confronting foreign atrocities. At this point it is appropriate to analyze what constitutes a 'compassionate response' and how it can be evaluated. Public opinion plays a large part in this process. Government actions in a crisis are invariably accompanied by attempts to assess the 'temperature' of public opinion. Kushner calls attention to how 'high-level decisions were not taken and cannot be understood without reference to public opinion, especially in the liberal democratic countries.'[77] In a country like Britain '[s]tate and public informed one another, but did so in a complex and sophisticated relationship'.[78] Certainly Buchanan is correct when he asserts 'public opinion on foreign policy undoubtedly concerned politicians in the 1930s'.[79] It was also crucial before that, as witnessed by the efforts of the government to galvanize public opinion behind the war effort between 1914 and 1918. It also played a large role in the confrontation with foreign atrocity in 1922 when the Coalition government was brought down. Therefore this thesis devotes a great deal of time to the formation of public opinion at specific moments between the wars and draws attention to government responses. Not that politicians had any accurate way of predicting or assessing how the majority voice might make itself heard. Nevertheless, the 1930s saw the advent of 'new conceptions of how public opinion could be both measured and mobilized'. Public opinion was 'conventionally regarded as being the public views of opinion-formers, who interpreted the sentiments of their voiceless fellow citizens.'[80] In fact it would probably be more accurate to say that public opinion was more of a nebulous public morality to be deciphered by politicians and journalists. This chimes with the ideas of Walter Lippmann.

[77] Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p.17.
[78] Ibid., p.275.
[79] Buchanan, *Britain and the Spanish Civil War*, p.22.
[80] Ibid., pp.22-4.

Writing in 1922, Lippmann a Jewish-American intellectual and eventual advisor to presidents, suggested with regard to responses to that which someone has not personally experienced, 'we must note one common factor. It is the insertion between man and his environment of a pseudo-environment.'[81] He was referring to a simplified man-made construction of what are invariably complex events. He argued, the 'only feeling that anyone can have about an event he does not experience is the feeling aroused by his mental image of that event',[82] therefore the 'way in which the world is imagined determines at any particular moment what men will do.'[83] Whereas information is received via this pseudo-environment, actions that occur as a response to that information happen in the 'real world'. Furthermore, because 'the world is vast, the situations that concern us are intricate, the messages are few', there is a tendency 'to pick out what our culture has already defined for us and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture.'[84] In other words, he suggests, 'we do not first see, and then define, we define first and then see.'[85] Not only do politicians and the press attempt to interpret events in accordance with their own agendas but each individual is constantly engaging with a set of stereotypes fostered by the society that they live in. The media play a significant role here. As Stanley Cohen points out '[c]ommunication, and especially the mass communication of stereotypes, depends on the symbolic power of words and images.'[86] These images are 'processed images' and moreover, 'the images and the way they were reacted to were socially created.'[87] Cohen adds that '[a]lthough the rumours, themes and beliefs derive mainly from the mass media, they later encounter reinforcement or resistance in a group setting.'[88] Such ideas are important to this argument. The construction of stereotypes and the fact that these become a principle means of engaging with the world, especially the world beyond the shores of Britain, means that, taking into account the many forces conspiring to give their slant to events, they can be made and re-made depending on the strength of

[81] Lippman, Walter, *Public Opinion* (New York: Dover Publications, 1922) p.26.
[82] Ibid., p.25.
[83] Ibid., p.34.
[84] Ibid., p.44.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Cohen, Stanley, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987) p.40.
[87] Ibid., p.17.
[88] Ibid., p.50.

the underlying stereotype. Reports of violence overseas often evoked what Lyn Hunt has recently described as 'feelings, convictions, and actions of multitudes of individuals who demand responses that accord with their inner sense of outrage.'[89] When analysing this form of response the man-made constructs that sit behind and influence reports of actual events need to be borne in mind.

Interwar Britain was a time of political and social engagement. Poet and associate of the Bloomsbury group Stephen Spender commented that to ignore the issues facing British society in the 1930s was 'in itself a political attitude.'[90] This was underpinned by the fact that in Britain 'open debate was possible where it was closed off in much of Europe by the 1930s', Overy points out that:

> [t]he public displayed a sustained appetite for information about the European political extremes and debated the issues surrounding them in a cultural and organizational milieu often quite independent of the party political system or party allegiance.[91]

'Beyond the media' but not independent of it,

> lay whole networks of voluntary organizations that channelled academic debate, government information, scientific developments and current crises to society at large. In the days before television and the internet the positive, voluntary pursuit of information was a social phenomenon of great importance. No doubt this practice drew on traditions of voluntarism that were embedded in British public life. In the inter-war years they flourished to a remarkable degree. Every public issue provoked the formation of committees, associations, or societies which in turn established a circle of branches and sub-committees to spread the word countrywide.[92]

---

[89] Cited in Carmichael, Cathie, *Genocide Before the Holocaust* (Yale University Press, 2009) p.62.
[90] Spender, Stephen, *World Within World* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977) p.249.
[91] Overy, *Morbid Age*, pp.184, 270.
[92] Ibid., p.377.

Foreign affairs consumed ordinary Britons. They were discussed, debated and written about with an astonishing degree of intensity that reflected widespread desire for a better world, one that was fair, just, and overall peaceful. This is clearly illustrated in an account by Vera Brittain of the death of her friend Winifred Holtby in September 1935. Three days before she died Holtby told her husband about a questionnaire she had seen recently in the *Daily Mail*, asking readers to say what they wanted most if they only had two days to live. Brittain reported that 'her own reply had been "A decided British foreign policy"'.[93] The importance of foreign affairs in everyday British life cannot be underestimated. The interwar public was informed and involved. Moreover, public opinion was a dynamic phenomenon, something that political leaders could not ignore.

In order to gauge its strength and effect different forms of evidence will be used. These include official and government papers, especially those that mention how the 'public mood' is to be incorporated, sidelined or used in other ways to validate or otherwise specific courses of action to be taken by political leaders. The public utterances of politicians or political activists who represented some aspect of the recognized political spectrum in Britain will also be considered because they give a clue to the issues at the heart of what they perceive the dominant opinion to be. Conservative supporters, Labour organizations and Liberals all had much to say on atrocities abroad. The political divisions of the interwar years are often stressed in relation to attitudes towards foreign policy, for example over Spain or perhaps Munich. Nevertheless, what is perhaps surprising is how often a dominant or consensual view quickly becomes perceptible in relation to overseas crises. Organizations such the League of Nations Union helped facilitate this tendency. Inclusive of all main political parties, it 'became the most powerful advocate within Britain of international co-operation and collective security'. By setting itself 'above' party politics, it became a crucible for political co-operation and galvanized a 'centrist approach' around which mainstream opinion could gather.[94] The role of Christian leaders also forms part of this examination because they had what might be

[93] Bishop, Alan, (ed.) *Chronicle of Friendship: Vera Brittain's Diary of the Thirties 1932-39* (London: Gollancz, 1986) p.211.
[94] McCarthy, Helen, 'Leading from the Centre: the League of Nations Union, Foreign Policy and 'Political Agreement' in the 1930s', *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 23, No. 4, December 2008, pp. 529, 538.

termed moral influence. After all, Tom Lawson points out that 'we should not underestimate the role of the Church in the middle of the twentieth century.'[95] But advocating a moral stand in international relations was not limited to religious leaders. For this project I have identified individuals who by force of reputation were considered qualified to speak intelligently about Britain's responsibilities in world affairs. These could be politicians, novelists, journalists or social commentators.

Public opinion will also be measured by reference to such things as election results, delegations to political leaders, petitions, and from the late 1930s, Mass Observation. These will be reinforced by more personal sources, for example, private diaries, personal papers and correspondence. The press is a particularly useful source, not least because those who wanted their opinion to be heard had to acknowledge its reach. Mark Hampton writes that 'by the interwar period [the press] had become arguably the most important medium of political communication and cultural influence.'[96] Mushrooming circulation gives an indication of its power. In 1918 'the total circulation of the national dailies stood at 3.1 million. By 1926 it had climbed to 4.7 million and by 1939 it had risen to 10.6 million.'[97] Increased circulation tended to benefit national rather than local newspapers. The relative decline of provincial titles meant 'concentrated ownership of the most important medium of mass communications gave the interwar Press Barons an unprecedented power.'[98] *The Times* deserves a mention here because as Stephen Koss pointed out 'despite its decreased sales and meagre dividends, *The Times* retained its aura.'[99] It was particularly influential within the political classes. This did not stop newspapers from claiming to be separate from the establishment. Positioning themselves as the 'Fourth Estate' enabled them to give the impression they were the bearers of objective truth. In fact as George Boyce shows the 'paradox of the Fourth Estate, with its head in politics and its feet in commerce, can…only be understood if it is appreciated that the

[95] Lawson, *The Church of England and the Holocaust*, p.169.
[96] Hampton, *Visions of the Press*, p.21.
[97] Murdock, Graham and Golding, Peter, 'The Structure, Ownership and Control of the Press, 1914-76' in Boyce, George, Curran, James, and Wingate, Pauline (eds.), *Newspaper History: From the 17th Century to the Present Day* (London: Constable, 1978) p.130.
[98] Hampton, *Visions of the Press*, p.42.
[99] Koss, Stephen, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain* (London: Fontana, 1984) p.412.

whole idea of the Fourth Estate was a myth.'[100] Most newspaper owners aspired to political influence. Boyce adds that:

> influence and power were achieved, not by their newspapers acting as a check or restraint on politicians, but, on the contrary, by their papers gaining for them access to the political elite whose decisions they intended to shape. Journalists…aspired to be part of the political system: more – they were part of it.[101]

The press in the interwar years then was far from objective. Rather than acting as a guardian of democratic values, it was a channel of opinion.

Nevertheless, newspaper proprietors were not free to express anything they wished. Like politicians they had to strike a balance between reflecting and providing a lead to the *vox populi*. They had to be in tune with the political, social and cultural currents moving through British society. John Hartley argues that '[p]art of the meaning of the news, and part of the ability of news to mean at all, is derived from the social structure in which it is uttered'.[102] If a newspaper contravened the prevailing standards of its readership, it risked isolation from its intended audience. Hence, it is important not to overstress the power of the press to manipulate public opinion; it must also reflect the values of the society it serves.[103]

Journalists are part of what might be termed an 'interpretive community'.[104] To this extent newspapers can be considered part of Lippmann's 'psuedo-environment.' In order to give themselves validity within this structure journalists employ what Barbie Zelizer has called 'the ideology of eyewitness authenticity'. She shows that '[i]n producing metaphors like "eyewitnessing," "watch-dogs," "being there," practices of discovery, or "being on the spot," reporters establish markers that not only set up

---

[100] Boyce, George, 'The Fourth Estate: The Reappraisal of a Concept' in Boyce, Curran and Wingate (eds.) *Newspaper History*, p.27.
[101] Ibid., p.29.
[102] Hartley, John, *Understanding News* (London: Routledge, 1988) p.36.
[103] Ibid., p.62; Berkowitz, Dan, (ed.) *Social Meanings of News: A Text-Reader* (London: Sage, 1997) p.xiv.
[104] Zelizer, Barbie, 'Journalists as Interpretive Communities' in Berkowitz, Dan, (ed.) *Social Meanings of News*, p.406.

their presence but also uphold its ideological importance.'[105] This is not the only role the press can play in shaping public understanding. Reporters also 'assume the role of "pedagogical objects" – giving the discourse an authority that is based on [a] pre-given historical event.'[106] They use similar and often 'iconic' examples from the past in order to give their stories cultural resonance. To elucidate a little more,

> events will be selected for news reporting terms or their fit or consonance with pre-existing images – the news of the event will confirm earlier ideas. The more unclear the news item and the more uncertain or doubtful the newsman is in how to report it, the more likely it is to be reported in a general framework that has been already established.[107]

Between the wars journalists and commentators in the press regularly reached for past examples of foreign atrocity to frame those in the present.[108] However, this made such reporting susceptible to biases dictated by present circumstances. There seems to be direct correlations here between the way the press worked and the processes discussed above involving the formation of collective memory, national identity and public opinion.

In order to chart the trajectory of these interweaving forces in interwar Britain, this thesis explores the development of the British atrocity discourse by using what is largely a chronological approach. Therefore the first chapter starts in 1914 when German forces committed atrocities against Belgian and French civilians at the start of World War One. It shows that this caused outrage across British society. The debate was not limited to sensationalist reports, it was a serious issue and care was taken to ensure reports of brutality were properly verified. German action was quickly merged with prevailing ideology. Germans were seen as barbarians and their

---

[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid., p.407.
[107] James D. Halloran, *et al., Demonstrations and Communications: A Case Study* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), cited in Cohen, *Folk Devils*, p.47.
[108] Matti Holmila claims the Holocaust was a 'media event'. Holmila, Matti Lauri Antero, *Framing Genocide: Early Interpretations of the Holocaust in the British Swedish and Finnish Press, 1945-1950*. Unpublished PhD thesis Royal Holloway, University of London October 2007, p.10.

behaviour was regularly contrasted with British 'civilized' values. Atrocities became central to the meaning of the war. When war ended, indignation continued, partly fostered by politicians and the press. They were regularly invoked to justify the post-war settlement. However, British atrocities in India and Ireland cut across the momentum that had built up behind vehement anti-Germanism. Debates about these atrocities were soaked with references to German 'frightfulness'. The British became tainted with the accusations they had freely and recently employed against Germany. The equation between the German character and brutality became increasingly difficult to sustain, paving the way for the recasting of 'ordinary Germans' in British minds. The qualities Germans shared with Britons were emphasised whilst the atrocities were recreated eventually as a 'myth', with the help of what Horne and Kramer call a 'pacifist reinterpretation'.[109] As a consequence, Germany became the 'victim' of Allied foul play. This incarnation proved to be an enduring one, lasting well into World War Two.

Chapter two shows how atrocities against Armenians also animated British public morality during the Great War. Turkish authorities carried out systematic persecution of their Armenian minority leading to hundreds of thousands of innocent civilian deaths. Building on a strong Christian-based tradition of pro-Armenian support dating back to the nineteenth century and reinforced by the belief that Germans were also somehow culpable, British politicians, the press and the public became convinced that any post-war agreement with Turkey should include autonomy for this long-persecuted minority. The chapter shows that Armenians became the victims of changing British priorities and the ability to re-characterize former enemies with impunity. It plots the change in British attitudes when faced with the threat of war in the near East against a Turkish army that threatened the British position at Chanak. Firstly, Armenians were conflated with Greeks and implicated in atrocities against Turks thus calling into question their role as innocent victims. Secondly, Turks having suffered from negative characterizations for years were increasingly endowed with 'English' characteristics.

---

[109] Horne, John and Kramer, Alan, *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial* (London: Yale University Press, 2001) p.373.

This flexibility was not something that was afforded to the Jewish minority in Poland in the immediate aftermath of World War One. The creation of Poland out of the old European empires was a key Allied war aim. Poles were seen as deserving the reinstatement of their country after years of German and Russian domination. It was inconvenient for the British government that having spent four years fighting against tyranny, Poland was the setting for outbreaks of vicious anti-Semitism. Chapter three reveals that British patronage of Poland in the face of a perceived Bolshevik threat from Russia and Germany proved stronger than a commitment to the ideals that were regularly trumpeted during the war. From the outset of violence, Jews were seen as untrustworthy, susceptible to exaggeration of their sufferings, and part and parcel of the Bolshevik 'menace'. Anti-Jewish persecution caused discomfort in Britain but never achieved anything like the indignation caused by other contemporary violence. Whilst giving the appearance of support, British officials eventually worked to undermine Jewish claims. The effect was a legacy of scepticism, which reinforced popular beliefs about the Jewish character.

Chapter Four follows the development of the atrocity discourse into the 1930s. The Abyssinian crisis in the middle years of the decade marked a crossroads in Britain's response to overseas crises. The public had become increasingly convinced of the wisdom of connecting British foreign policy to the League of Nations. This was in no small part due to what can be termed 'pressure from below.' The 1930s, as has already been pointed out, were years of political engagement at all levels of society. Foreign affairs stood high on most agendas.[110] Momentum behind advocacy of League principles built from the time of the Manchurian crisis when Japan had taken advantage of an atrophy of international leadership. By the time it became apparent that Fascist Italy was intent on extending its sphere of influence in northeast Africa, public support for 'international justice' reached a peak. The Abyssinians became a cause worth supporting and perhaps even fighting for within the guidelines of the League Covenant. Public opinion railed against the sight of a civilized European nation pounding virtually defenceless Abyssinians. Italian atrocities galvanized massive indignation. The British government, ideologically opposed to the concept of an internationalist League, moved on a subtle course of action to undermine its

[110] Overy, *Morbid Age*, p.5.

precepts. They paid for their subterfuge with the loss of the Foreign Secretary Samuel Hoare. However, they achieved what they set out to do. The League was effectively disenfranchised as a serious concern. The whole episode showed both the power of British opinion when roused and its weakness in altering the course of a government convinced of its policy and electorally unassailable.

The Spanish Civil War and the Sino-Japanese War are dealt with in Chapter Five. Historians have extensively explored British reactions to Spain in the 1930s. Jim Fryth, Enrique Moradiellos and Tom Buchanan have dealt respectively with popular, government and cultural responses in Britain to a civil war that for many reflected the ideological tensions in 1930s Europe.[111] This chapter shows that, at least during the first twelve months of the conflict, the atrocities committed by Franco's insurgents created a form of consensus in Britain that was in some ways more deeply reflective of what the British thought themselves to be than any of the political alignments expressed at the time. From being on the periphery, not just of Europe but also the British imagination, Spain moved to the centre of British thinking partly because of atrocity. Atrocities committed by Republican supporters were marginalised in Britain by overwhelming evidence of systematic butchery employed by the Fascists. The bombing of Guernica brought all but the most ardent advocates of Franco out in sympathy for the population of the Basque territories. Ideological connections between Basques and Britons were discovered, underpinning an outpouring of compassionate action on behalf of the victims. The balance of sympathy tipped inexorably away from the Francoists. Spain was 'ceaselessly debated in Parliament, caused divisions within the parties; 2,500 volunteered and over 500 died; thousands more participated in political and humanitarian campaigns.' Although the Cabinet 'was forced to give it a high priority for almost three years' by ceaseless public pressure, the British government remained entrenched in their policy of 'non-intervention'.[112]

---

[111] Fyrth, Jim, *The Signal Was Spain: The Aid Spain Movement in Britain 1936-39* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1986); Moradiellos, Enrique, 'British Political Strategy in the Face of the Military rising of 1936 in Spain' *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 1, Part 2, July 1992 pp.123-37; Moradiellos, Enrique, 'The Origins of British Non-Intervention in the Spanish Civil War: Anglo-Spanish Relations in Early 1936' *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 3, July 1991; Buchanan, *Britain and the Spanish Civil War*.

[112] Buchanan, *Britain and the Spanish Civil War*, p.9.

The outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War signalled the start of a nationwide campaign on behalf of Chinese victims. For campaigners, the Far Eastern conflict provided a 'second front' along with Spain to attack the government. Guernica provided momentum for renewed public outrage over the bombing of Chinese civilians, a strategy liberally employed by Japanese forces. Mass protests were endorsed by leading public figures. The 'foreignness' of the victims did nothing to prevent indignation. The Chinese had for some time been cast as the 'other', but in a short space of time were reinvented as supporters found ways of bringing their suffering home to a receptive public. The government however, was now more adept at containing public opinion by making 'right' sounding public announcements whilst accommodating a political strategy more in line with the policy of 'appeasement'.

Chapter Six charts the trajectory of public and official responses to the persecution of Jews under Nazi rule. Between Hitler's accession to power and knowledge of the so-called Final Solution reaching the British public, at no time did public indignation reach the pitch achieved in the case of atrocities against non-Jewish victims from 1914 onwards. This chapter shows that a number of factors combined to cut across compassion on behalf of persecuted Jews. Building on the myth that atrocities committed by Germans in the Great War were themselves a 'myth', pro-German sentiment was deeply entrenched in British society. There was strong resistance to the notion that ordinary Germans could be culpable in Nazi crimes or imbue themselves with Nazi aims. This was reinforced by a stubborn inability to recast Jews as victims. This had not changed since the end of the First World War. Many were certainly moved by their plight. However, some aspect of their 'collective character' was invariably raised during public debate about their suffering which broke potential momentum building behind widespread public support.

In interwar Britain, atrocity was a consistent frame of reference. In 1934 the *Daily Express*, one of most successful of the interwar newspapers, issued a book entitled *Covenants with Death.* It had a black cover emblazoned with a red skull holding a 'treaty' in its boney fingers. Inside were pictures of war that had been too appalling for publication during wartime. The purpose of the book was 'to reveal the horror, suffering and essential bestiality of modern war' with a view to showing the 'peril of foreign entanglements.' Thus, it clearly reflected the isolationist views of Lord

Beaverbrook, the proprietor. A sealed section at the back of the book was devoted to images that were 'inescapably horrible' showing the victims of atrocity. Nevertheless, they were deemed 'essential to a full view of the World War in its phases of terror and bestiality.'[113] The book was deliberately sensationalist and designed to be read by the masses. Unrelenting photographs were used to reinforce what was supposed to be a message of peace. Atrocity was understood and an essential part of the British discourse.

This thesis builds on the findings of other historians who have grappled with the problem of understanding British reactions to the Holocaust. Chapter Six cannot be seen as separate or distinct from the others. If the reaction to anti-Jewish persecution and violence is examined on its own, the vital context for exploring British responses to atrocity remains hidden. This argument seeks to place British responses to the Jewish disaster in a wider and more encompassing context. Britons were confronted with atrocity, dealt with it and incorporated it into their national story. In fact, their very identity was in many ways caught up with protecting those who suffered. From the outbreak of the First World War, the British acted in accordance with this tradition. A disparate group of 'foreign' victims were the recipients of nationwide indignation, almost regardless of the way the government eventually was able to contain public protest. This thesis shows that when Jews were victims there was a break with this tradition. In other words it shows that the reaction to Jewish suffering was particular. It gives reasons why, in the British case, as Saul Friedlander states '*Nazi and related anti-Jewish policies could unfold to their most extreme levels without the interference of any major countervailing interests*'.[114]

[113] *Covenants with Death* (London: Daily Express Publications, 1934).
[114] Friedlander, Saul, *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews 1939-1945* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2007) p.xxi.

Chapter One.

A History of 'Frightfulness': German Atrocities and British Responses During and After World War One

From the outbreak of war in August to the end of October 1914, German officers and troops systematically subjected Belgian and French civilians to acts of terror. The violence:

> appeared to be anything but accidental. Rounding up the inhabitants in the public square or church, separating men and boys from the women, children and the old, proceeding to collective executions and deportations, trailing the inhabitants for days on a forced march, or exposing them to fire as a human shield…reflected high military policy and not just vagaries of mood among the NCOs and junior officers.[1]

News of the violence was quickly transmitted to Britain where it was incorporated into the national enlistment campaign. German atrocities became one of the main reasons why so many signed up. The strength of the response was in part because of the belief that atrocity was un-English, it was something the 'Prussians' did. In this sense, the popular response was framed by a sense of national identity: in other words, who the English thought themselves to be. On the basis of atrocity stories the conflict rapidly came to represent a fight between German barbarism and British civilization. This was encapsulated in the word 'frightfulness', a term with specific connotations. For the British, it neatly summed up German methods of dragooning subject peoples and was a metonym for the ideological differences between Britons and their enemies. During the war the perception of Germans as barbaric was largely unchallenged. In fact, to portray the Germans as anything less than brutal was considered at least unpatriotic and at most treasonable.

After 1918 the response to German brutality was complicated by British involvement in atrocities in India and Ireland. British culpability meant it became increasingly difficult to suggest that atrocity was particular to the Germans. The massacre of Indian civilians at Amritsar ordered by a respected British General sparked a national

[1] Horne, John and Kramer, Alan, *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial* (London: Yale University Press, 2001) p.191.

debate. After Amritsar the dichotomy between Britishness and German 'frightfulness', so familiar from wartime, was no longer clear cut. Instead, methods of British rule were increasingly compared to German behaviour in Belgium in 1914. This blurring was exacerbated by the semi-official British policy of violent reprisals against the Republican movement in Ireland. The national discourse on Irish policy was suffused with comparisons between British and German 'methods' of coercing subject peoples. Talk of atrocity, which had tripped off British tongues so readily in the war, became loaded with pejorative meaning.

This represented something of an intellectual and cultural sea change. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century many influential British thinkers believed the nation had a genius for gradual, peaceful change and was not subject to the same mode of violent upheaval so often witnessed on the continent.[2] British atrocities in the post war period challenged this notion. As a result Britain's moral standing was shaken. Wartime calls for retribution against perpetrators of atrocity were largely silenced. There is a clear link between British violence and subsequent vilification of the 'harsh' terms of the Versailles Treaty. In the two decades after the war the settlement with Germany was increasingly seen as the root of international turmoil. All shades of opinion came to see Versailles as unjust. German atrocities, which had fuelled Britain's indignation, were subsumed by the discourse on British brutality. It became increasingly apparent that talk of German war crimes was hypocritical. The momentum behind calls for punishment stalled. In short, British brutalities were the seedbed for the rehabilitation of Germany, because they contributed to the idea that German atrocities were a myth. This had a direct impact on British reactions to news of atrocities from Germany and Eastern Europe in the 1930s and 1940s. Yet, the 'myth' of German atrocities in the Great War was itself a myth.

In 1914 German atrocities, not only 'confounded Allied presuppositions of warfare in Europe', but played on deeper British fears of national decline.[3] The response was influenced by 'deeper mentalities and traditions' rooted in the anxieties generated by the German naval challenge, the second Moroccan crisis and fear of a German

---

[2] See Collini, Stefan, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850 – 1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) p.346.
[3] Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, p.187; Kumar, Krishnan, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) p.197.

assault on Britain. Before 1914, invasion stories had permeated popular culture.[4] The *Daily Mail*, which enjoyed unrivalled popularity under the proprietorship of Lord Northcliffe,[5] had consistently predicted the outbreak of war and boy's literature reinforced growing insecurities.[6] One contemporary suggested that 'as 1914 neared the invasion stories came thick and fast'.[7] Antwerp's fall, which coincided with the arrival of Belgian refugees and their horror stories, heightened fear of German military behaviour.[8] By late September atrocities became central to British understanding of the war. The ubiquity of their dissemination set the tone for popular involvement in the conflict. Wickham Steed, editor of *The Times* from 1919 to 1922, later commented, 'the invasion of Belgium, the burning of Louvain, [and] the arrival in England of thousands of Belgian refugees fleeing from German "frightfulness"' were among the things that 'kept Britain breathless' in the first months of the war.[9]

Atrocity stories reinforced indignation and confirmed the justice of Britain's cause. Norman Angell, the prominent pacifist campaigner, admitted 'the issue of Belgium…gave the war a moral purpose'.[10] This conviction was reinforced at the highest level. A speech by Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, at the Guildhall on 4 September 1914, set the tone for the military recruitment drive. He described the destruction of Louvain as 'the greatest crime committed against civilisation and culture since the Thirty Years War' and claimed 'the Government and the people of the country' were at the behest of their 'national conscience and sense of honour.'[11] After the speech, *The Times* correspondent Michael MacDonagh witnessed 'hundreds of fine recruits' enlisting.[12] The south of England was particularly

---

[4] Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, p.212.
[5] Weaver, J.R.H., *The Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937) p.398; Koss, Stephen, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain* (London: Fontana, 1990) p.471.
[6] Brex, John Twells, "*Scaremongerings" from the Daily Mail 1896-1914* (London, 1914).
[7] Turner E.S., *Boys Will be Boys* (London: Michael Joseph, 1948) pp.173-7.
[8] Pennell, Catriona, 'Perceiving the Enemy: Popular Understandings of Germany in Britain and Ireland at the Outbreak of the First World War, August to December 1914', Paper at Institute of Historical Research, 26 October 2006.
[9] Wickham Steed, Henry, *Through Thirty Years 1982–1922: A Personal Narrative*, Vol.II (London: William Heinemenn Ltd., 1924) p.39-40.
[10] Angell, Norman, *After All: The Autobiography of Norman Angell* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1951) p.185.
[11] Asquith, H.H., *The War its Causes and its Message: Speeches Delivered by the Prime Minister August – October 1914* (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1914) p.14.
[12] MacDonagh, Michael, *In London During the Great War: The Diary of a Journalist* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1935) p.21.

susceptible to invasion fears. At a recruitment meeting in Chichester on 23 September the speaker drew a harrowing comparison between the fate of Belgium and the potential of what might happen if Britain was invaded. The audience was told Belgium was now a 'wreck' and that

> it was known there were ships ready somewhere to make an attack and if the German troops were to land at Bognor they would see women and children flocking into Chichester, driven before these Uhlans, wounded men shot as they ran into the streets, women bayoneted and outraged.[13]

Local newspapers reported these meetings as well attended and enthusiastic. The British public were genuinely indignant. Belief in German atrocities was largely unquestioned and their invocation at national and local recruitment meetings guaranteed success especially 'when it appeared that the regular army might be defeated and Prussian barbarism unleashed on Britain.'[14]

Apart from encouraging recruitment, one of the principal manifestations of British reactions to German atrocities was the wholehearted welcome given to Belgian refugees. MacDonagh commented in his diary on the arrival of 'tens of thousands' of Belgians who had been 'torn from their homes' by the Germans. They were, he said, 'very properly the guests of the nation.'[15] Home Secretary, Reginald McKenna, set the tone for the treatment of Belgian refugees. They were to be 'treated as friends, and no difficulty w[ould] be put in the way of their landing at any approved port, if they c[ould] satisfy the Aliens officer that they [were] in fact Belgians and not Germans or Austrians'.[16] According to Herbert Samuel, President of the Local Government Board, following the Aliens Legislation rushed through Parliament in August 1914, between four and five thousand Belgian refugees per week were allowed into Britain.[17] At the peak there were over a quarter of a million Belgians residing in the country.[18] Peter Cahalan states 'never before or since have as many

---

[13] *Observer and West Sussex Recorder*, 23 September 1914.
[14] Todman, Dan, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: Hambledon and London, 2005) p.125.
[15] MacDonagh, *Diary of a Journalist* pp.19-20, 31 August, 1914.
[16] Kushner, Tony and Knox, Katherine, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide: Global, National and Local Perspectives During the Twentieth Century,* (London: Frank Cass, 1999) p.53; Cahalan, Peter, *Belgian Refugee Relief in England During the Great War* (London: Garland, 1982) pp.11, 58-9
[17] This was counter to the Aliens Restriction Bill of 5 August 1914. For details of the Bill see Kushner and Knox, *Refugees,* p.44.
[18] Ibid., p.48.

people as the Belgians entered England as refugees or immigrants in the short space of little more than a year.'[19] Church leaders reinforced the outpouring of compassion. Dean of Durham, Hensley Henson, referred to the Belgians who had 'been fighting our battle' in his sermon on 19 September:

> Every instinct of gratitude and honour unites with every sentiment of compassion to urge us to do what we can do to assist their cruel necessity…We cannot bring back those who have been foully murdered, we cannot restore those fair cities, or blot out of mind those scenes of unimaginable cruelty amid which they perished…Let us give freely and liberally to the Belgian Relief Fund.[20]

A campaign to raise funds in the *Observer and West Sussex Recorder* exceeded 1,000 shillings by 23 December, a figure they 'had not dared to expect'.[21] For the majority the refugees were 'concrete reminders of the righteousness of the Allied cause,' and objects of considerable interest.[22] One relief worker commented '[i]t is wonderful how "the refugee question" pervades the whole country. It is as good an opening subject for conversation as the weather once was, and like that is common to all classes.'[23] The *Pall Mall Gazette* noted how '[r]eligious differences do not exist. A Protestant people are extending their arms of affection to a Catholic one, and the common enemy is Pagan.'[24]

German atrocities in Belgium and France helped crystallise the image of the enemy as the antithesis of British civilised values. The serious and popular press widened the constructed ideological divide between Germans and Britons. On 22 August *The Times* acknowledged 'that from the moment Germany began to mobilize there have been repeated examples of gross ruthlessness and often of barbarity on the part of German officers and men'.[25] The *Mail* adopted sensationalist banner headlines, with reports detailing the use of women and children as shields and male citizens shot

---

[19] Cahalan, *Belgian Refugee Relief,* p.1. The generous reception coincided with an outpouring of xenophobia against perceived enemy aliens as anxiety regarding the possibility of a fifth column intermingled with invasion fears. Pennell, 'Perceiving the Enemy'.
[20] Henson, Hensley H., *War-Time Sermons* (London: MacMillan, 1915) pp.9-10.
[21] *Observer and West Sussex Recorder*, 23rd December 1914, p.5.
[22] Cahalan, *Belgian Refugee Relief*, p.6.
[23] Ibid., p.4.
[24] *Pall Mall Gazette*, 24 September 1914.
[25] *The Times*, 22 August 1914 p.7.

without reason.[26] The official nature of the evidence was emphasized in order to validate the atrocities. The leader advised that '[a]ccusations of atrocities' should be treated with 'cautious scepticism' but that this was 'no ordinary arraignment',

> [i]t is the outcome of a committee of inquiry comprising the highest judicial and university authorities of Belgium, and it is concerned not with hearsay evidence but with incidents that in each case have been carefully investigated and that are attested by trustworthy eye-witnesses.[27]

Punch, which had 'iconic status',[28] published full-page satirical cartoons depicting stereotypical militaristic Germans and their dead or terrified Belgian civilian victims.[29]

Throughout 1914-18 British civilians were bombarded with anti-German propaganda. Charles Masterman, head of the British War Propaganda Bureau, estimated in June 1915 that Wellington House circulated 'some 2½ million copies of books, official publications, pamphlets, and speeches in 17 different languages' concerning the 'rights and wrongs of the war'.[30] A government commission headed by Lord Bryce was appointed to examine evidence and report on German atrocities. Its content and official nature arguably fortified public ire. Nevertheless, it was not the overt propaganda operation portrayed by some commentators.[31] Care was taken to reject certain witness statements as fantasy, but the remaining evidence, partly taken from the diaries of German soldiers, genuinely affronted Liberal commissioners.[32]

For others the report did not go far enough in its condemnation of Germany. One correspondent to *The Times* was concerned that 'Blue Books are apt to fade from

---

[26] For example, 'German Savageries', *Daily Mail*, 26 August 1914.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Pennell, 'Perceiving the Enemy'.
[29] For example, *Punch*, 26 August 1914, 'The Triumph of Kultur'; 9 September 1914, 'God (and the women) Our Shield'.
[30] Cited in Gullace, Nicoletta, 'Sexual Violence and Family Honour: British Propaganda and International Law during the First World War', *The American Historical Review* Vol. 102, No.3 (June, 1997) p.717.
[31] Wilson, Trevor, 'Lord Bryce's Investigation into Alleged German Atrocities in Belgium 1914-1915', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.14 (1979) p.378; Gullace, 'Sexual Violence and Family Honour'. p.718.
[32] Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, pp.236.

memory' and suggested the creation of a national museum full of grisly reminders of German war-time conduct.[33] In 1915 Professor J.H. Morgan, Home Office Commissioner with the British Expeditionary Force who collected evidence for the Bryce Commission, published his own version of events.[34] Frustrated with the 'extreme moderation' of the Bryce Report, he asserted '[t]his is not the time for mincing one's words but for plain speech'.[35] Morgan believed that German 'lust for conquest and arrogance' had made them 'rotten to the core'. Furthermore, all were 'infected with a common spirit'.[36] Under the heading 'Methods of Inquiry', Morgan outlined his techniques for ensuring witness statements obtained orally were verified. He explained the official nature of the inquiry to each 'soldier or officer', stating 'he must be prepared to put his name to any testimony he might elect to give'. Each individual's account was 'cross-examined' by Morgan then read aloud before obtaining his signature.[37]

Lurid reports often contained legalistic justification. For example, in 1916 the *Daily Chronicle* published a translation of the *Official Report of the French Commission*. It emphasised the 'duty' only to record crimes 'established beyond dispute' and to omit 'acts of war properly so-called' however 'destructive or cruel they were'.[38] The back cover was emblazoned with an advertisement for an easily affordable book called *In the Trail of the German Army*. It was accompanied by an illustration of an eagle representing the German Army with its feathers interspersed with rifles, and talons resting on the body of a semi-naked woman. Proceeds were to be 'devoted to Funds for the Belgian Refugees'.[39] Gendered representations of German atrocities provided a suitable framework for public understanding of international affairs. Images depicting a vision of the brutalisation of women and children 'privileged a set of

---

[33] *Times*, 14 May 1915, p.9.
[34] Morgan, J.H., *A Dishonoured Army: German Atrocities in France: With Unpublished Records*, Reprinted from *The Nineteenth Century*, June 1915 (London: Spottiswoode & Co. Ltd, 1915). Morgan also translated what became known as the German 'War Book' which 'inculcates upon German officers the duty of "frightfulness"'. *The Times* praised Morgan as having done 'the cause of civilization a great service.' *Times*, 23 January 1915, p.9.
[35] Morgan, *Dishonoured Army*, pp.5, 12.
[36] Ibid., p.20.
[37] Ibid., p.3.
[38] *German Atrocities in France: A Translation of the Official Report of the French Commission*. Published by *The Daily Chronicle* (London 1916) p.3.
[39] Ibid.

familial and sexual concerns'.[40] They conjured up fears relating to the domestic environment and combined with legalistic language that 'verified' atrocities and reinforced belief in German 'frightfulness'. As Dan Todman states '[l]urid descriptions of rape and murder brought pornographic titillation onto the breakfast tables of respectable Britain; horror sold papers as well as encouraging young men to fight.'[41]

In order to protect Britain's self-proclaimed civilised status, many expressed concern that British behaviour did not imitate that attributed to the enemy. In September 1914, jurist, E.D.W. Fry wrote to *The Times* warning against 'retaliation'. He drew attention to the British 'claim' of defending 'civilization' against 'militarism' and urged 'self control in the repression of any desire to "get even" with our adversaries by adopting their practices.'[42] Fervent protests were printed in *The Times* at the prospect that the British should embark on a programme of reprisals for Zeppelin raids on England. According to Lord Alverstone, former Lord Chief Justice, they would involve Britain and the Empire 'being party to a line of conduct condemned by every right-thinking man of every civilized nation'.[43] In 1917 Sir Edward Clark, former Solicitor General, wrote concerning 'our bombardment of an unfortified German town' stating, 'the more indignant we are at these outrages the greater will be our shame and disgrace if we imitate them'.[44] Jurist and professor, A.V. Dicey agreed. Although the Germans had 'made themselves outlaws…this is no reason for our sinking to the German level of barbarity'.[45] British culture and German 'Kultur' were persistently contrasted for the duration of the war. For most the protection of intrinsically humane indigenous qualities was central to the meaning of the war. When war-weariness set in, the National War Aims Committee invoked German 'frighfulness' in order to 'reanimate the war culture of the early years and stiffen national resolve.'[46]

After the armistice on 11 November 1918 the Coalition government called a general election for the following month. Atrocities were a central theme. *The Times*

[40] Gullace, 'Sexual Violence and Family Honour', p.716.
[41] Todman, *The Great War*, p.14.
[42] *Times*, 14 September 1914, p.9.
[43] Ibid., 20 October 1915, p.9.
[44] *Times*, 1 May 1917, p.7.
[45] Ibid., 4 May 1917, p.9.
[46] Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, p.320.

summed up the election pointing to the 'almost universal determination' that Germany should pay the cost of the war and that the Kaiser should be brought to trial. This was considered 'the outstanding feature of the campaign'.[47] The second point of Lloyd George's 'six-point manifesto', which was attached to the final list of Coalition candidates, promised '[p]unishment for those responsible for atrocities.'[48] The desire for revenge did not last. British atrocities in India and Ireland meant that characterisations of German brutality became difficult to sustain. Although German 'frightfulness' had been heavily linked to the war's meaning, officially condoned British violence quickly undermined the sense of British moral superiority at home and abroad. The massacre of unarmed civilians at Amritsar and the reprisals against Irish Republicans prompted controversy. The 'frightfulness' that had achieved metonymic status during the war represented state sponsored violence against defenceless civilians. Soon it was being applied to British actions. This would have direct ramifications for the trial of war criminals and the way in which German atrocities were remembered.

On 13 April 1919, at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, British Indian Army soldiers commanded by Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer opened fire without warning on a crowd of unarmed locals. According to official figures 379 people were killed and over 1,200 wounded.[49] The crowd had been peacefully protesting against the implementation of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms and the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act of 1919.[50] Although recent protests had left twelve Indians and five Europeans dead, there had been a period of relative calm. To aggravate matters, in the street where a British woman missionary had been attacked, Dyer ordered that Indians wishing to pass should do so on all fours. Six people arrested on suspicion of the crime were flogged. The General stated that his actions

---

[47] *Times*, 14 December 1918, p.9. See also Taylor, A.J.P., *English History 1914-1945* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965) p.127; Mowat, Charles Loch, *Britain Between the Wars 1918-1940* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1978) p.4.
[48] *Times*, 11 December 1918, p.9.
[49] Indian estimates are higher.
[50] Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State for India and Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford produced the *Joint Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms*, Cd. 9109, 1918. The Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act was passed by the Legislative Council of India on 18 March 1919 in response to 'widespread agitation in all part of India, including the Punjab.' Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 5th Series, Vol.36, Col. 496, 6 August 1919.

were designed to create a 'necessary moral and widespread effect' in order to prevent revolution.[51] For Dyer '[t]here could be no question of undue severity'.[52] In Britain his actions caused a political storm. Public opinion divided between those who condemned the shootings and those who supported the General.

A Committee was convened under former Scottish Solicitor General William Hunter, to investigate unrest throughout the Punjab, in which the events at Amritsar played a part. It was divided along racial lines and this cleavage was reflected in the differing intensity of criticism levelled at Dyer in the respective conclusions of the Majority and Minority Reports.[53] The Majority Report criticized Dyer for failing on two counts. Firstly, he had overstepped his responsibilities and secondly, his 'excessive' methods were likely to 'produce the opposite result to that desired'.[54] The Minority Report went further. It suggested, Dyer's actions were 'compared to the acts of "frightfulness" committed by some of the German military commanders during the war in Belgium and France'.[55] The Indian members of the Committee attempted to undermine Dyer's evidence by claiming, 'the plea of military necessity is the plea that has always been advanced in justification of the Prussian atrocities.'[56] Thus within a short time after the end of the war, German atrocities were established as a recognised frame of reference for British violence. However, the report stopped short of suggesting that 'Prussianism' was part of the values and methods of their imperial rulers. Therefore, the actions were condemned as 'inhuman and un-British'.[57] During the national debate, on the other hand, allusions to 'Prussian' methods were uncomfortably frequent.

The Labour Party, concerned that similar methods would be used to suppress working-class protests, denounced the 'cruel and barbarous actions' of British officers in the Punjab. Delegates at its conference in Scarborough 'rose in their

---

[51] Hunter, William, *Report of the Committee Appointed by the Government of India to Investigate the Disturbances in the Punjab, etc.* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1920) pp.30-31.
[52] Ibid., pp.30-31.
[53] Five British members signed the Majority Report and the three Indian members signed the Minority Report. Ibid., pp.86, 140.
[54] Ibid., pp.31-31.
[55] Ibid., p.115.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.

places as a tribute to 'India's martyred dead''.[58] Most opponents of Dyer sought to preserve their belief in Britain's liberal heritage. *The New Statesman* reaffirmed '[t]he strength of the British *Raj* in India is derived not from its sword but from India's consciousness of the advantages of the British connection'. Indians, it stated, should have 'faith in the British sense of justice and fairplay [sic] and in Britain's freedom from racialism'.[59] Those on the moderate Right were equally concerned with protecting Britain's reputation. *The Times* was keen, from the moment the Hunter Report was made public, to 'efface' the 'bitter memories'.[60] The extent of discomfort is evident in the Oxford Union debate on 10 June 1920, which narrowly endorsed official condemnation of Dyer.[61] British opinion was divided.

The Times attempted to set the tone for the Parliamentary debate on 8 July 1920, suggesting public opinion no longer favoured despotic imperial rule. Instead they were said to favour 'a British commonwealth founded on the willing cooperation of free peoples.' Not only was this evidence of 'our national repute for genius in government' but 'events like those at Amritsar' obscured 'our national purpose and betray the ideals which inspire it.'[62] The Amritsar massacre was portrayed as an anomaly. Nevertheless, a letter from Conservative M.P. and Naval Commander Carlyon Bellairs suggested recourse to extreme violence was sometimes acceptable. He believed that '[i]n every great achievement, as in Dyer's case, there is dust and dirt', but '[w]hen a handful of whites are faced by hundreds of thousands of fanatical natives, one cannot apply one's John Stuart Mill.'[63] The extent of disagreement was evident in Parliamentary debate. Opponents of Dyer characterised his advocates as Prussians, whereas Dyer's supporters vented their anger at so-called Jewish influence. Both sides laid claim to genuine Englishness. 'Prussian frightfulness' was central to the Amritsar debate. The massacre of innocent people in India forced the British to examine themselves. By particularising Dyer's action, events at Amritsar could be portrayed as an aberration. Such methods were seen as inherently un-English.

---

[58] Sayer, Derek, 'British Reaction to the Amritsar Massacre 1919 – 1920', *Past and Present*, No. 131, (May, 1991) p.152.
[59] *The New Statesman*, 1 May 1920, p.98.
[60] *Times*, 27 May 1920, p.13.
[61] *Times*, 11 June 1920, p.16.
[62] *Times*, 8 July 1920, p.10.
[63] Ibid., p.10.

Opening the debate, Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State for India, stated:

> If an officer justifies his conduct, no matter how gallant his record is…by saying that there was no undue question of severity, that if his means had been greater the casualties would have been greater, and that the motive was to teach a moral lesson to the whole of the Punjab, I say without hesitation…that is the doctrine of terrorism…you are indulging in frightfulness.[64]

The Secretary of State, fully aware of the significance attached to the word 'frightfulness', thus accused a serving British general of adopting the same tactics as those attributed to Britain's recently defeated enemy. He asked the House to choose between imperial rule based on 'terrorism, racial humiliation, and frightfulness' or 'partnership'.[65] He deliberately used language commonly employed during the war to describe German barbarity and contrasted it with Liberal doctrine as a form of Englishness.

To associate a British general with 'frightfulness' was a provocation. Supporters of Dyer were incensed. Because German atrocities had been so intrinsically connected to British war aims they had become a means of justifying why so many young men had lost their lives. Legal advocate and Unionist Leader, Edward Carson, applied the British 'sense of fair-play' differently, believing that 'to break a man under the circumstance of this case is un-English'.[66] Thus, Englishness was used to verify the moral basis of both arguments. Winston Churchill found a compromise that eventually soothed the febrile atmosphere. He described the massacre at Amritsar as 'an episode which appears to me to be without precedent or parallel in the modern history of the British Empire…It is an extraordinary event, an event which stands in singular and sinister isolation'.[67] Having particularised Dyer's actions, Churchill distanced British methods from 'frightfulness', which was 'not a remedy known to

[64] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.131, col.17078, 8 July 1920.
[65] Ibid., Col.1708.
[66] Ibid., Col.1719.
[67] Ibid., Col.1728-9.

the British pharmacopoeia'. He suggested it was more connected to the 'bloody and devastating terrorism' employed by Bolsheviks.[68]

British politicians had been caught out by their own wartime rhetoric. The tension between condemnation of German behaviour in Belgium and the unnerving evidence that the British were now guilty of similar crimes was made worse for the supporters of Dyer, for whom Montagu's Jewishness was an issue now central to the debate. Montagu had always considered himself more able than most to identify with the peoples of India. On a tour of India in 1917 he had stated '[p]erhaps there is some truth in the allegation that I am Oriental. Certainly that social relationship which English people seem to find so difficult comes quite easy to me'[69]. His 'oriental' identity was about to be turned against him. Montagu's 'Jewish' attributes were contrasted with English 'self-restraint' in an increasingly desperate defence of national character. A month earlier, the *Morning Post* attempted to divert the attention from Dyer to Montagu. The newspaper represented a significant and vocal pro-Dyer lobby and sought to protect British values by arguing 'it is not General Dyer who is on trial'[70] but Montagu. It condemned Montagu's '[o]riental' oration on the basis that is was 'imbued with racial bitterness' and 'solely inspired…with the fanatic motive of proving that an alien race is as good as the English'.[71]

T.J. Bennett, wrote to *The Times* claiming the debate, was 'not free…from the racial prejudice which worked mischief in France during the anti-Dreyfuss controversy'.[72] The *Manchester Guardian* praised Montagu for his courage in the face of 'anti-Semites'.[73] Rejection of 'Prussianism' was, for them, 'a political issue of the first magnitude'. Reactionary methods of control, if officially endorsed, would create a dangerous precedent. They believed Dyer's supporters did not 'intend to stop at India' but advocated 'the principle of undiluted violence…to be of general application'. Ireland was alleged as the next target and after that 'British workmen on strike…The Prussians at Visé, at Louvain, at Aerschot and a score of other places

[68] Ibid.
[69] Montagu, Venetia, (ed.) *An Indian Diary* (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1930) p.17.
[70] *Morning Post*, 1 July 1920, p.6.
[71] Ibid., 10 July 1920, p.6.
[72] *Times*, 12 July 1920, p.10.
[73] *Manchester Guardian*, 19 July 1920, p.6.

took the same view.'[74] However, a significant minority in the House connected the alleged fallacy over Dyer's actions with Montagu's Jewishness and vilified Montagu in distinctly anti-Jewish tones. *The Times* seemed to agree arguing Montagu was guilty of:

> bad advocacy in two ways. It was too passionate, and the malcontents were irritated by its sharp logical dilemmas. Secondly, the English mind does not work in that way. We are the most daring political generalizers in the world, but it is our wont in politics, as in science, to proceed inductively from the particular to the general, not from the general to the particular…East and West, be they produced ever so far, will never meet, and Mr Montagu, patriotic and sincere English Liberal as he is, is also a Jew, and in excitement has the mental idiom of the East'[75]

This passage is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, *The Times* was highly influential for the political classes and recognised for its moderation and balance. Secondly, it cast the blame for anti-Semitic Parliamentary uproar on Montagu. He was 'too passionate'. Thirdly, he was accused of expressing the Dyer issue too starkly. Hence 'the malcontents' were 'irritated' by his 'sharp logical dilemmas'. Finally, he was charged with generalizing the issue of 'frightfulness'. *The Times* wanted it contained and forgotten. Therefore, Montagu was portrayed as lacking a form of pragmatism, which was seen as peculiar to the English mind.[76] In short, *The Times* saw Montagu as over-emotional and therefore un-English. Montagu could adhere to Liberal values, but would always be betrayed by 'the mental idiom of the East'. Sir William Sutherland reported to the Prime Minister that Montagu became 'more racial and more Yiddish in screaming tone and gesture.' Liberal J.L. Maffey condemned Montagu's 'windy and unconvincing rhodomontades'.[77] Austen Chamberlain stated privately to his sister with perhaps more candour that the 'feeling' in the Commons was of '[a] Jew, a foreigner, rounding on an Englishman &

---

[74] Ibid.
[75] *Times*, 9 July 1920, p.16.
[76] Stephan Collini writes of the 'cherished' notion 'of the supposed English incapacity for systematic abstract thought.' Collini, *Public Moralists*, p.358. Stanley Baldwin as Prime Minister stated in 1924 that 'as a nation we are less open to the intellectual sense than the Latin races'. Baldwin, Stanley, *On England And Other Addresses* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1938) p.12.
[77] Cited by Morgan, Kenneth, *Consensus and Disunity: The Lloyd George Coalition Government 1918 – 1922* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979) p.123.

throwing him to the wolves…A Jew may be a loyal Englishman & passionately patriotic, but he is intellectually apart from us & will never be purely and simply English.'[78]

For the *Morning Post* the defence of Dyer, seen as an English patriot and defender of Empire, was indissolubly linked with the identity of Montagu and his supposed alien nature. The serialisation of the forged *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* by the *Morning Post* was at least partially influenced by the Amritsar debate. The first instalment was accompanied by the comment that '[o]nly last week the House of Commons witnessed a startling exhibition of that racial dementia which would pit East against West in desperate opposition. That is the spirit that must be exorcised if we are again to have peace in the world'.[79] On 10 July the *Morning Post* launched a national appeal for General Dyer. The response was immediate and substantial.[80]

The House of Lords finally voted against the recommendations of the Commons, which were to relieve Dyer of his command and for him to be placed on half pay.[81] *The Times* probably adopted the prevailing view when it stated '[t]he debate itself added nothing of importance to public knowledge, though it served to revive a controversy far better relegated to oblivion'.[82] After more than a year of public wrangling this was an episode the British wished to forget. National self-confidence was dented and Britain's moral standing on the world stage had been dealt a severe blow. The bitterness of the debate was testimony to its sensitivity. Direct comparison between German and British barbarism meant ideological contrasts constructed during wartime were no longer clear-cut. The Commons exchange coincided directly with the Spa Conference at which the issue of German war criminals was to be

[78] Cited in Makovsy, Michael, *Churchill's Promised Land: Zionism and Statecraft* (London: Yale University Press, 2007) p.81.
[79] *The Morning Post*, 12 July 1920. Their editorial response to the Parliamentary debate (*Morning Post*, 10 July 1920) carried the headline 'These Be Thy Gods, O Israel'. On the same page, under the headline 'World Unrest' the paper advertised a forthcoming 'series of articles disclosing the existence of a revolutionary movement in which Jews and secret societies play a great part'. On Jews as a 'new scapegoat' see Fein, Helen, *Imperial Crime and Punishment: The Massacre at Jallianwala Bagh and British Judgement 1919-1920* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii 1977) p.189.
[80] The fund closed £26,317. 4s. 10d had been raised. They provided an on-going list of contributors which included such monikers as 'anti-Jew', 'another believer in the Jewish Peril', 'Anti-Alien' and 'a hater of Montagu'. *Morning Post*, 12 July 1920.
[81] Mowat, *Between the Wars*, p.111.
[82] *Times*, 21 July 1920, p.15.

discussed. The Dyer debate and the growing crisis in Ireland effectively submerged the issue. War crimes received only cursory attention in the press. The whole episode has been called 'a thinly coded discussion of Ireland' which at the time was moving towards open revolt.[83] Hamar Greenwood, Chief Secretary to Ireland, stated in conversation with other cabinet members that 'the Dyer debate has not helped us to govern [in Ireland] by soldiers'.[84] The repercussions from Amritsar helped create uncertainty at the heart of government which dispelled ideas of martial law in Ireland and paved the way for reprisals.

When war broke out Ireland was the 'overseas' crisis that had preoccupied the British public.[85] The prospect of armed opposition to Home Rule had been averted by Britain's declaration of war. The 1916 Easter Rising demonstrated that political tension and violence remained intrinsically linked. After the war inadequately commanded quasi-military forces were used to implement a semi-official reprisals policy. Violent methods employed by armed and organised Irish republicans were echoed and exceeded by Crown forces. According to D.G. Boyce, 'the Irish question, after the Great War, excited almost continuous public interest in Great Britain'.[86] Officially sanctioned terrorism divided public opinion. On balance, sympathy tended to go to the Irish, partly as underdogs and partly because the representatives of law and order could not be seen to sully themselves with terroristic methods. C.K. Peatling states, 'English opinion about Ireland was manufactured in England for home consumption, had nothing to do with Ireland, and everything to do with England'.[87] One reason for this was that violence in Ireland acquired a fresh conceptual framework. Wartime rhetoric surrounding German atrocities meant new and forceful allusions were created for government inspired brutality. As with India, Ireland became a debate about Englishness. Wartime constructions of national identity based on civilization versus German barbarism became virtually impossible

[83] Sayer, 'British Reaction', p. 153.
[84] Middlemas, Keith, (ed.) *Thomas Jones Whitehall Diary*, *Vol.III, Ireland 1918-1925* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971) p.33.
[85] Angell, *After All*, p.179.
[86] Boyce, D.G., *Englishmen and Irish Troubles: British Public Opinion and the Making of Irish Policy 1918–22* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1972) p.13.
[87] Peatling, C.K., *British Opinion and Irish Self-Government 1865–1925: From Unionism to Liberal Commonwealth* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2001) p.8.

to sustain. German atrocities were pushed to the sidelines of the debate, allowing room for a new interpretation of the war.

In early 1920 the British government reinforced security forces in Ireland.[88] Threat-induced resignations and low numbers of recruits to the Royal Irish Constabulary had forced the government to reappraise its strategy for keeping order. These new additions to the Irish police were not without precedent. Relieving the army of responsibilities had long been a consideration for British military chiefs.[89] This was especially pertinent in 1920 given the unprecedented size of the Empire and public desire for domestic reconstruction. Nevertheless, hasty recruitment, made obvious by patchy uniform provision, hence their nickname the 'Black and Tans', demonstrated the hand-to-mouth strategies of a British government anxious to locate almost any solution to the plethora of post-war challenges.[90] As to the men themselves, Winston Churchill suggested they had been selected 'from a great press of applicants on account of their intelligence, their characters and their records in the war'.[91] In reality the majority were unemployed recently demobilised junior officers and NCOs. As much as trench warfare had contributed to their un-preparedness for guerrilla tactics, it had also created a body of men used to extreme violence. In an influential article published in 1921, government advisor on Indian and Irish affairs Lionel Curtis argued that trench warfare had left 'a mass of combatants who are afterwards fitted for little but fighting' but 'not easily amenable to discipline'.[92]

1920 was the year in which guerrilla warfare took hold in Ireland. Shootings, ambushes, midnight raids, kidnappings, hostage taking, torture, curfews and arson characterised the conflict.[93] Several towns and villages were raided and sacked by Black and Tans.[94] In Tralee after an attack on three policemen, government forces embarked on 'a carnival of shooting and shouting', which lasted till dawn; they

---

[88] Bennett, Richard, *The Black and Tans* (Staplehurst: Spellmount, 1959) p.24.
[89] Jeffery, Keith, *The British Army and the Crisis of Empire 1918–22* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984) p.71.
[90] The 'Black and Tans' were supplementary members of the R.I.C. These were reinforced by a force of Auxiliary Cadets, known as 'Auxis' under the command of General F.P. Crozier.
[91] Bennet, *Black and Tans*, p.37.
[92] Curtis, Lionel, *Ireland (1921) with Introduction: The Anglo-Irish Treaty and the 'Lost World' of Imperial Ireland* (ed.) Pat Walsh, (Belfast: B. Clifford, 2002) p.60-1. Originally published in the magazine *Round Table* in 1921.
[93] Mowat, *Between the Wars,* p.66.
[94] Briollay, Silvain, *Ireland in Rebellion* (Dublin: 1922) pp.91-2.

burned the County Hall and displayed a notice: 'TAKE NOTICE. Warning! Unless two Tralee police in Sinn Fein custody are returned, reprisals of a nature not yet heard in Ireland will take place in Tralee.'[95] It is unfeasible that violence by British forces was not known and authorized by people in the highest echelons of government. It was not so much the individual acts of these forces which aroused indignation in England, where questions were regularly asked in Parliament, as it was the impression of aggressive, unruly groups encouraged by the authorities to intimidate, pillage and shoot, but protected from the consequences. The government never officially adopted a policy of reprisals although, as 1920 progressed, denial became increasingly difficult for Greenwood.

By September 1920 levels of violence had spiralled. In response to the murder of Head Constable Burke and his brother in Balbriggan, government forces arrived in the town en masse, killed two men, set fire to three public houses, nineteen private houses and a factory. British newspaper correspondents were based close by. Over the next few days the press gave considerable coverage to these events. On 21 September the *Westminster Gazette* described 'terrible scenes of destruction in Balbriggan' caused by the 'Black and Tans'.[96] The following day the *Manchester Guardian* published an editorial entitled 'An Irish Louvain'. It reflected widespread fears that the 'latest bout of murder and counter-murder in Ireland is the most damaging of all to our reputation abroad'.[97]

On 28 September the same paper called on the government to declare whether they were 'fully adopting a policy of 'frightfulness'.[98] Shocking photographs of the damage in Balbriggan were published. The commentary stated:

> They look quite like Bapaume after the Germans had fired it…what use is it to tell us, as Sir Hamar Greenwood does, in extenuation of this savagery, that somebody else of the same nationality as these poor burnt-out people murdered a policeman or a hundred policemen? That is exactly what the German commanders in Belgium said when they put a dozen innocent people

[95] Martin, Hugh, *Ireland in Insurrection: An Englishman's Record of Fact* (London: Daniel O'Connor, 1921) pp.91-2.
[96] *The Westminster Gazette*, 21 September 1920, p.3.
[97] *Manchester Guardian*, 22 September 1920, p.6.
[98] Ibid., 28 September 1920, p.8.

against a wall and shot them because somebody else not in uniform had sniped a German soldier.[99]

The resonance with German atrocities could not be starker. Asquith took up the theme in Parliament, labelling 'the affair at Balbriggan…an act of "frightfulness."'[100]

The Times, increasingly antagonistic towards the Coalition government whilst attempting to maintain ostensibly 'balanced' coverage, was forced towards a more critical response. It 'found a residuum of truth which seemed to support the charge that the forces of the crown are no longer acting in accordance with the standards of civilised government.'[101] However, it saw a gap between the government's culpability and the Irish Police who had 'with some encouragement, arrogated to themselves a free hand in inflicting indiscriminate and illegal punishments' but warned 'there is no argument that could justify any Government in resigning the execution of justice to the whim or passion of its subordinates.'[102] As with the Amritsar debate there was a desire to find a guilty party in such a way that cherished British values could be protected. The scale of atrocity made this tactic increasingly difficult to sustain. On 27 September *The Times* intensified pressure on the government suggesting they either disavow 'secret adoption of the barbarous method of vicarious punishment' or 'as a result of their own silence, stand under suspicion'.[103] It was argued that 'judgement may, by default, go irrevocably against [the Prime Minister] and against the good name of England.'[104] By 30 September all caution was dropped. Under an editorial entitled 'A National Disgrace' *The Times* claimed '[t]he name of England is being sullied throughout the Empire and throughout the world by this savagery'.[105] Significantly it drew attention to a letter from Annan Bryce, 'brother of Viscount Bryce', which warned that unless reprisals ceased 'the people of England…[would] be permanently debarred from raising their voice in future against the lawless employment of force'.[106] On the same day the *Daily Mail*, which according to Hugh Martin, *Daily News* correspondent in Ireland,

[99] Ibid., 29 September 1920, p.6.
[100] *Times*, 21 October 1920, p.6.
[101] *Times*, 23 September 1920, p.9.
[102] Ibid., p.9.
[103] Ibid., 27 September 1920, p.11.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid., 30 September 1920, p.11.
[106] Ibid.

was 'a paper that few would accuse of being strongly anti-British or pro-Irish',[107] although progressively more anti-government, detailed nine days of reprisals. On 21 October, *The Times* printed a letter from T.P. Gilmartin, Archbishop of Tuam on 'the sack of Tuam' by Black and Tans as evidence of 'frightfulness'.[108] On 25 October T.P. O'Connor, Irish Nationalist M.P., moved a motion on the 'continuance…of frightfulness'. *The Times* Parliamentary correspondent called it a 'sad and inconclusive debate.'[109]

The British press united to condemn the policy of reprisals. On 28 October the *Daily News* printed a cartoon entitled 'The Target'. It showed John Bull, representing 'English People' tied to a stake denoting the 'Irish Policy of Frightfulness'. A brick labelled 'Foreign Criticism' was striking his face.[110] Fear of international condemnation forced a reappraisal of Germany's wartime stance over Belgium. The *New Statesman* condemned English statesmen who had denounced the German practice of taking civilian hostages and threatening to shoot them. British leaders knew 'very well' that Germans 'would undoubtedly be shot from windows and from behind walls by Belgians in civilian clothes', adding that '[t]his indeed, according to the Germans, was what happened at Louvain. It is the sort of thing that happens in every invaded country.'[111] Germany's account of the war in Belgium was gaining purchase in Britain as a direct result of British actions in Ireland. Conversely, 'British' values, so lauded during the war, were being eroded. Charles Masterman, Liberal politician and journalist, used Disraeli's contempt for Gladstone's denunciation of Bulgarian atrocities as a model for government callousness.[112] For Masterman, the Irish policy not only represented 'the denial of everything that Liberalism has ever stood for – it represents the denial, by the most powerful of the victors of the world-struggle against Imperial domination, of the very principle for which five million men have died.'[113] Masterman still believed the meaning of the war was a fight against tyranny. Government policy in Ireland represented the betrayal of wartime principles.

---

[107] Martin, *Ireland in Insurrection*, p.177.
[108] *Times*, 21 October 1920, p.11.
[109] Ibid., 26 October 1920, p.11.
[110] *Daily News*, 28 October 1920, p.3.
[111] *New Statesman*, 16 October 1920, p.42.
[112] *Daily News*, 7 October 1920, p.4.
[113] Masterman, C.F.G., *The New Liberalism* (London: Leonard Parsons, 1920) p.170-1.

On 20 October, Arthur Henderson, Labour's Chief Whip, proposed a vote of censure citing the 'lack of discipline in the armed forces' in Ireland.[114] Although the motion was defeated, Greenwood was forced to refute comparisons between Balbriggan and Louvain. Lieutenant-Commander Kenworthy believed unless there was public protest the British would share Germany's guilt. Furthermore, he invoked the memory of the war dead to substantiate his argument. 'If we do not condemn it…The Prussian spirit will have entered into us. The Prussian spirit will at last be triumphant, and the 800,000, the flower of our race, who lie buried in a score of battle-fronts will really have died in vain.'[115]

The extent to which 'The Troubles' in Ireland seeped into remembrance is evident in the build-up to Armistice Day in 1920, the day the remains of the Unknown Warrior were to be interred in Westminster Abbey and the stone Cenotaph unveiled.[116] National preparations for this symbol of ubiquitous suffering and sacrifice were caught up in the Irish debate. The *Manchester Guardian* suggested that only chance 'caused this special unknown soldier to be buried in Westminster Abbey on Armistice Day instead of being killed that day as a Sinn Feiner by old comrades now become "Black and Tans"'.[117] Mass mourning for the war dead was tinged with irony because of the 'reprisals'. Moreover, there was a perception that Britain, having gone to war to defeat 'frightfulness' was now adopting German methods. Pressure on the government was exacerbated by the death of Terence McSwinney, the Lord Mayor of Cork, in Brixton Prison after a hunger-strike. McSwinney's funeral procession was marked by public respect in London. The *Manchester Guardian* compared 'the invincible English decency of London's citizens' with the 'shabby scramble for the Lord Mayor's body' in Ireland. It speculated that when an Englishman goes to Ireland,

> something seems to happen…perhaps some old Junker, loose from Potsdam, throws him into Holyhead Harbour, after stealing his clothes, and goes across

[114] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.58, Col.92520, 20 October 1920.
[115] Ibid., col.961-2.
[116] Lloyd, David W., *Battlefield Tourism: Pilgrimage and the Commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia and Canada 1919-1939* (Oxford: Berg, 1998) pp.65-75.
[117] *Manchester Guardian*, 27 October 1920, p.6.

> the Irish Sea to make Zaberns, Louvains, and Aerschotts in his name, instead of the decent, illogical, workable compromises that he would have made.[118]

Whilst the paper suggested that English behaviour in Ireland was an aberration, debates on 'frightfulness' cast a shadow over the armistice anniversary.

On 2 November, *The Times* published a letter from Lord Monteagle who had recently written for the *Contemporary Review* condemning government action as futile and degrading, and suggesting that Ireland should be made a Dominion.[119] He highlighted the plight of innocent individuals 'singled out for this policy of frightfulness.'[120] The following day T.P. O'Connor asked a private notice question in Parliament on 'whether there had not been a renewal within the last two days of the policy of reprisals at Littleton, Thurles, Tralee, Ballybunion, and Ballyduff' and asked for assurances 'that the Government would take immediate and adequate steps to put down this policy of frightfulness'. Greenwood assured him 'there is no Government policy of reprisals' but merely 'legitimate acts of self-protection by police and soldiers'.[121] However on 8 November Lloyd George 'described the state of Ireland as one of war' adding this justified 'reprisals in certain forms and under certain conditions.'[122] A 'student of politics' reporting on events at Westminster stated:

> Either reprisals are mere "frightfulness" (in which case the Government have underestimated the weight of moral censure that they will provoke), or, if they are limited by rules, these rules should be made public and approved.[123]

Ex-Unionist M.P. Horace Plunkett, in a feature article, pointed out the 'weakness of the Government' which was 'that they have no moral sanction behind their policy. It is this which makes it impossible for them to discipline the agents of their frightfulness.' He believed those opposing the violence 'should press for an open impartial inquiry' which he maintained would have 'a much clearer obligation on the

---

[118] Ibid., 30 October 1920, pp.8-9.
[119] *Contemporary Review*, September 1920, pp.305-14.
[120] *Times*, 2 November 1920, p.8.
[121] *Times*, 3 November 1920, p.17.
[122] Ibid., 9 November 1920, p.13.
[123] Ibid.

part of Britain than was Lord Bryce's inquiry into the Belgian atrocities.'[124] Protests against 'reprisals' started to spill over to the public. On 21 November, Republican supporter and Archbishop of Melbourne Daniel Mannix, declared to four thousand people in Bolton 'that the world had never seen worse frightfulness than was to be seen in Ireland to-day'. He called on the British to leave Ireland.[125]

On the same day fourteen men connected to British Intelligence were murdered. In the afternoon Black and Tans opened fire on crowds converging for a Gaelic football match at Croke Park, killing twelve and injuring dozens more. Concern over the adverse effects on public opinion at home and abroad dominated the exchanges in a full-scale Parliamentary debate instigated by Asquith on 24 November. His motion echoed Campbell-Bannerman's 1901 speech, which had characterised British methods of waging war in South Africa as 'methods of Barbarism'.[126] Asquith alluded to 'methods of terrorism and reprisals' that impacted on 'the lives and property of the innocent' and therefore were 'contrary to civilised usage'.[127] The motion was defeated.

Another significant development that troubled the government was the formation of The Peace With Ireland Council on 29 October. Its membership was predominantly English and, according to Boyce, 'therefore more effective'.[128] It attracted high-profile politicians who decided in May 1921 to form a committee of enquiry on the lines of the 1915 Bryce Commission.[129] Bryce was asked to head the commission but declined.[130] Several eminent individuals agreed to serve, but the project was eventually curtailed.[131] Having had appeals for an independent enquiry turned down, the Labour Party set up its own commission to investigate atrocities. The report,

---

[124] Ibid., 18 November 1920, p.8.
[125] Ibid., 22 November 1920, p.12.
[126] For atrocities in the Anglo-South African War and British reactions see, Warwick, Peter and Spies, S.B., (eds.) *The South African War: The Anglo-Boer War 1899 – 1902* (Harlow: Longman, 1980); Spies, S.B., *Methods of Barbarism: Roberts and Kitchener and Civilians in the Boer Republics January 1900 – May 1902* (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 1977).
[127] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.135, 24, Col.487, 24 November 1920.
[128] Boyce, *Englishmen and Irish Troubles*, p.65.
[129] William Cavendish-Bentinck was chairman of the executive, Oswald Mosley was honorary secretary, and Sir John Simon spoke on its behalf.
[130] Gilbert Murray Papers, 7 May 1921, Bryce to Murray.
[131] Including jurist, Sir Frederick Pollock, Bishop Gore, Zoologist, Dr Chalmers Mitchell and social reformer, Eleanor Rathbone.

published on 18 January 1921, was accompanied by a nationwide campaign. At a rally in the Free Trade Hall Arthur Greenwood declared 'Manchester under German rule would be like Cork or Dublin under British rule today.'[132] The rally reflected Left-wing fears that 'frightfulness' could be used against British workers. Reprisals were therefore described as a 'class weapon'.[133] Reinforced by the campaign, the report had considerable impact, perhaps because it successfully marginalized the perpetrators by suggesting, 'not more than one percent. of the R.I.C., are men of really bad character'.[134]

Increasing disquiet amongst Conservatives as well as a broad-based protest from church leaders presaged the ending of hostilities. By this time the report of an American commission was, according to Masterman, 'being circulated' globally 'literally in the same millions of copies as we once circulated the report of the Bryce Commission' on German atrocities.[135] When the policy of reprisals was finally exchanged for a diplomatic solution, the charge of 'frightfulness' hung over the government and the British people like an ominous cloud. Continuous reference to the 'Prussian' model meant that it now overshadowed discussion. Boyce states, '[r]eprisals hit Englishmen's sense of justice and fair play; they also wounded their pride – the pride of Englishmen in their country and its reputation. And this was a sentiment common to all sections of British opinion'.[136] In the light of worldwide criticism the 'rights of small nations', a cornerstone of British involvement in the war, became a millstone. Consequently, Britain lost considerable credibility as a moral force. In 1921 E.N. Bennett published an English translation of the German White Book, which was a thinly veiled criticism of 'British reprisals' in Ireland.[137] It virtually exonerated Germany from any wrongdoing. In a foreword to Hugh Martin's 1921 book *Ireland in Insurrection* Phillip Gibbs outlined the damage being done to England's international reputation:

> To every country in the world went day by day lurid details of English reprisals, cruelties, blackguardism. Not only in America was this stirring

[132] *Daily Herald*, 18 January 1921, p.1.
[133] *Report of the Labour Commission to Ireland* (London: Caledonian Press, 1921) p.7.
[134] Ibid., p.7.
[135] *Daily News*, 11 April 1921, p.4.
[136] Boyce, *Englishmen and Irish Troubles*, p.99.
[137] Bennett, E.N., *The German Army in Belgium: The White Book of May 1915* (London: Swathmore Press, April 1921) p.xi.

> public opinion against us, but in Australia, Canada, South Africa, France, Italy, and other countries, our own relatives, and warmest friends, were disturbed and distressed and filled with a sense of amazement and indignation that England, the champion of small peoples, the friend of liberty, pledged to self-determination of the peoples, should adopt a Prussian policy in Ireland after a war in which, after all, hundreds of thousands of Irishmen had fought for the Empire.[138]

Not only had Britain's ability to influence opinion abroad been impaired, but the issue of German war crimes had been relativised. General Crozier, Commandant of the Auxiliary forces in Ireland resigned and revealed tales of 'murder, arson, looting and other forms of terrorism…practised by the Crown Forces during the six months he held his Irish command'.[139]

British concern with the prosecution of German war crimes was also eroded by awareness of how far their own behaviour in Ireland had fallen. On the same day as Crozier's allegations were discussed in Parliament the *Daily News* detailed the war crimes trial at Leipzig at which a German NCO named Heinen was 'accused of persistent cruelty to British prisoners in April, 1916, at Herne Camp, Westphalia'. The worst accusation was that he struck a prisoner on the head 'with a broomstick'.[140] Not only had British atrocities in Ireland sidelined the German war crimes trials as a point of public interest but Irish violence appeared even worse than German war crimes.

In February 1921, the Allied list of Germans to be charged and prosecuted at Leipzig had been cut from nine hundred to forty-five. Thirteen of these were either dead or untraceable.[141] The number of British cases was eventually cut from seven to four. In the face of sporadic Parliamentary questioning officials paid mere lip service to the continuing importance of prosecuting war criminals.[142] When eventually the

---

[138] Martin, *Ireland in Insurrection*, p.11.
[139] *Daily News*, 24 May 1921, p.1.
[140] Ibid., 25 May 1921, p.3.
[141] *Times*, 4 February 1921, p.12.
[142] For example 4, 14, 19 and 26 July.

sentences were announced, charges that they were 'light' were offset by satisfaction that guilty verdicts were achieved at all.[143]

Claude Mullins, part of the British legal team at Leipzig, wrote a defence of British conduct regarding the trials in response to criticism from the Northcliffe Press and *Punch* that the proceedings were farcical.[144] Mullins suggested that if 'the public opinion of 1919 had its way' the trials would have created a sense of shame in 'future generations.' However, he believed that 'public yearning for revenge' had been converted 'into a real demonstration of the majesty of right and of the power of law.'[145] For Mullins public anger had been replaced by something more civilised. It was a way of demonstrating enlightened English values and possibly one reason why, he believed, their efforts had earned 'the gratitude of British public opinion'.[146] He nevertheless insisted 'only Germany made a system of atrocities'.[147] Thus, by implication, he suggested this particular form of state terrorism went unpunished. Despite some criticism, by the end of 1921 most in Britain seem to have lost their enthusiasm for legal retribution against individual offenders. 'British opinion was by and large satisfied' with the outcome of the Leipzig trials.[148] The moral indignation that originally fed the vengeful mood of the public in 1918 had dissipated. Violence in Ireland and India had dealt a serious blow to British self-belief. Accusations that the British were as guilty as Germans in their treatment of subject people sapped resentment.

During wartime, Germans were constructed as the ideological 'other'. Their values were, because of atrocity, held to be the antithesis of Britishness. Naturally, the defeat of 'Prussianism' formed part of the positive interpretation of the war after it had ended. However, the use of so-called 'German methods' by British authorities in India and Ireland created tension in the post-war narrative. Either they became associated with the betrayal of British values or conversely, (depending on political viewpoint) the 'required' means of controlling subject populations. In the latter case German methods had to be

[143] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.146, Col.1534-6, 17 August 1921.
[144] *Times*, 2 June 1922, p.15.
[145] Mullins, Claud, *The Leipzig Trials: An Account of the War Criminals Trials and a Study of German Mentality* (London: Witherby, 1921) pp.17-18.
[146] Ibid., pp.18-19.
[147] Ibid., p.229-30.
[148] Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, p.347.

recast as necessary or inevitable. Either way, the clear ideological divide that had existed during the war had been muddied. The notion of German atrocities appeared progressively less in the public discourse. This had a direct affect on the reaction to the Leipzig war trials. Attacks on the wartime purity of British identity watered down anti-German indignation. The dissipation of negative characterisations of Germany's war conduct gave way in the mid 1920s to a widespread acceptance of pre-war history in which the narrative had a pronounced pro-German bias.[149] This dovetailed with the growth of the pacifist critique of the war and atrocity tales. In just ten years from the end of the First World War, for the British, real German atrocities became a myth.

[149] Historian, Sir Sidney Lee, pointed to the 'formidable miscellany of diplomatic papers' known as *Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette* 'which is intended to form a detailed picture of European diplomacy between the years 1871 and 1914. Eighteen volumes, bringing the record well into the present century have already appeared, and some 25 further volumes are announced for early issue'. He suggested that '[t]he authentic, if incomplete, evidence which Germany is freely placing at the disposal of historical study must inevitably, unless the English Foreign Office qualify its tradition and take a hand in the illumination of the recent past, tend to give the German interpretation of pre-war events historical authority all the world over'. *Times*, 12 November 1924, p.10.

Chapter Two.

The Armenians: The End of a Long Tradition of Compassion

On 30 October 1914 Britain and France broke off diplomatic relations with Turkey, signaling the latter's entry into World War One on the side of the Axis Powers. The Armenians were a minority group under Ottoman rule. Over the course of the war Armenians were massacred on an enormous scale. Those in eastern Anatolia were killed or 'deported to the deserts of modern-day Iraq or Syria'. Along the way,

> they were subject to massive and repeated depredations – rape, kidnap, mutilation, outright killing, and death from exposure, starvation, and thirst – at the hands of Ottoman Gendarmes, Turkish and Kurdish irregulars, and local tribes people. The Ottoman army was also involved in massacres.[1]

Those deported from Cilicia and western Anatolia were also marched south. Harsh conditions led to mass death.

The systematic persecution was fully comprehended in Britain. The Armenians' plight helped define Britain's wartime cause. Building on a strong Christian-based pro-Armenian tradition, news of mass violence quickly translated into indignation. Alleged German 'complicity' reinforced this tendency.[2] The government used the strong public reaction to reinforce commitment to the war effort. Although senior figures ensured that concrete promises relating to a pro-Armenian post-war settlement were largely rhetorical, Armenian sympathy was officially endorsed and crossed political boundaries. The church was especially active in galvanizing support. Most believed Armenians should never again be placed under Turkish rule.

At the end of the war public desire for swift demobilization together with French and American reticence to commit resources for the protection of Christian minorities meant Armenians remained vulnerable. The rise of Turkish Nationalism under

---

[1] Bloxham, Donald, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) p.1; See also Dadrian, Vahakn N., *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007).
[2] Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, p.129.

Mustafa Kemal exacerbated their plight.[3] The Prime Minister, David Lloyd George encouraged the Greeks to step in where the Allies had kept order. This was supported in Britain, despite Greek forces committing atrocities on their arrival. Although the Treaty of Sèvres created an Armenian state in 1920, none of the Western powers were willing to commit resources to ensure its survival. It was overpowered by Turks and Soviet Russians. Although pro-Armenian sympathy remained strong in the postwar period, the Greco-Turkish war reduced its effectiveness. Armenians were conflated with Greeks and implicated in atrocities, undermining their status as victims. Furthermore, Lloyd George's advocacy of the Greeks became a liability partly because of charges of hypocrisy with regard to the Irish reprisals policy.

There had always been a pro-Turkish tradition in Britain, especially among Conservatives. After a wartime hiatus, sympathy for Turkey started to gain ground when it became clear that the terms of Sèvres were only sustainable through the deployment of Allied troops. Nevertheless, in mid-1922, as evidence of further atrocities against Armenians grew, public opinion once more briefly became anti-Turk. Lloyd George though was increasingly vilified in the press, especially by papers owned by Lord Northcliffe. The fate of the Armenians also became intertwined with British domestic politics. As the Prime Minister's position became less tenable, he chose the protection of Christian minorities as a central plank of his fight back. However, when Kemal's forces approached British forces stationed at Chanak in a designated neutral zone on the western edge of Asia Minor and military confrontation became a real possibility, pro-Turkish sentiment was resurgent.

As the threat of conflict loomed, both sides disputed the memory and meaning of the Great War. The Prime Minister thought that more resolute action would have prevented the conflict. Whereas many were starting to believe that the belligerents had inadvertently slid into war. This had a direct impact on the outcome of the Chanak crisis. The Prime Minister and Churchill emphasized the defence of wartime gains, the protection of war graves at Gallipoli and 'little Belgium.' Their critics believed lives had been sacrificed to prevent further war. Although Lloyd George reflected wartime sentiment more accurately, the latter interpretation gained greater credence.

---

[3] From this point I will refer to Kemal's nationalist movement as 'Turks.'

The Chanak crisis is normally portrayed as the victory of common sense over sentimentalism. Opponents of pro-Greek policy certainly claimed to be objective, neutral, or even enlightened. However, this required the image of the 'barbarous Turk' being recast, in many cases by subverting nineteenth century pro-Armenian rhetoric. This process helped distance Kemal's movement from state-sponsored violence. The latter part of the crisis was marked by attempts to bestow 'English' characteristics on the 'new' Turk. Opponents of the Prime Minister, of which there were many, developed myopia over Turkish atrocities. It was regularly suggested that because Greeks had also committed atrocities it was unfair to take sides. In fact, this played into Turkish hands because by the summer of 1922 the Greek army was a beaten force. Therefore, opponents of Lloyd George were able to portray themselves as adhering to the English tradition of 'fair play' whilst knowing that a 'neutral' stance would reinforce Turkish claims. However, this had another consequence. Britain's traditional support for persecuted Christian minorities, specifically the Armenians, had to be forgotten.

This chapter therefore traces how the atrocity discourse was linked to the contested memory of the Great War. It shows that a pacifist reinterpretation of the conflict started earlier than has previously been thought. It also shows that a foreign minority, which had benefitted from a long tradition of compassion, could be quickly recast according to flexible notions of British national identity. The longer-term ramification of this process was that Armenian suffering was sidelined in public memory. Instead of becoming a point of reference for those wishing to invoke public indignation, the mass murder of Armenians was supplanted by the notion that a once barbarous regime, in this case 'the Turk' could be reformed and made into a solid ally. This was later applied to the Germans who during the 1930s and 40s, despite their slide into barbarism, were often seen as 'redeemable'.[4] In order to understand the context for the Chanak crisis, it is necessary to examine firstly, British responses to the Armenian massacres from 1915 onwards and secondly, how this was supplanted by pro-Turkish feeling over the period leading to October 1922.

---

[4] See, for example, Gilbert Murray letter to *The Times*, 20 January 1942, p.5 and Laski, H.J., *The Germans–Are they Human? A Reply to Sir Robert Vansittart* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1941) p.5.

In Britain, reports of Armenian massacres gathered pace in early 1915. In July Viscount Bryce, the Earl of Cromer and Randall Davidson, the Archbishop of Canterbury, joined in condemnation of Turkish brutality. The Marquess of Crewe, on behalf of the government, confirmed '[w]holesale massacre and deportation had been carried out' and that on 24 May the Allies had made representations 'in regard to outrages'.[5] Individual members of the Ottoman government 'would be held personally responsible'. Because the government was keen to associate German and Turkish barbarity he pointed out that the atrocities 'had not been challenged by German officials'.[6] *The Times* had already suggested the atrocities were the 'more tragic counterpart' to the plight of the Belgians.[7] The Archbishop of Canterbury hoped something would be done to show Britain's 'sympathy' and 'the desire to ameliorate the condition' of the Armenians.[8]

A Commons debate was held on 16 November. Liberal M.P. and pro-Armenian activist, Aneurin Williams stated, 'it is no exaggeration to say' that the substance of the Lords' deliberations 'sent a wave of horror…over this country…The great majority of reading and thinking people realized…for the first time that the greatest massacres in history had been taking place during the last five months.'[9] T.P. O'Connor pointed to the 'one great analogy between the Germans in Belgium and the Turks in Armenia, and that is the system and policy which underlie what might be regarded by superficial observers as mere sporadic or individual blood-lust'.[10] Lord Robert Cecil, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, asserted 'the greatest possible protection for the Armenians is our victory in this war.'[11] The systematized nature of slaughter was acknowledged and believed, however the government, fearful of 'Moslem feeling', was less than forthcoming on the subject of rescue schemes.[12]

---

[5] *The Times*, 29 July 1915, p.19. For Allied statement see Hovannisian, Richard G., 'The Allies and Armenia, 1915-18', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 3, No 1 (Jan., 1968) p.147. According to Bloxham, 'Britain was initially reluctant to support the 24 May declaration.' He cites as reasons early doubts about the news, belief that Armenian insurgent action was to blame and the potential effect on Islamic sentiment. Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, p.136.
[6] *Times*, 29 July 1915, p.19.
[7] Ibid., 14 January 1914, p.9.
[8] Ibid., 29 July 1915, p.19.
[9] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.LXXV, Cols.1761-2, 16 November 1915.
[10] Ibid., Col.1769.
[11] Ibid., Col.1775.
[12] Ibid.

News of mass murder was greeted in the context of a long and on-going sympathy for the Armenians.[13] Wartime efforts to galvanize public support built on this tradition, which had included public meetings, relief groups and relief work.[14] The Armenian Refugees' Relief Fund and the Armenian Red Cross and Refugee Fund had been inaugurated in January 1915, before mass murder became public knowledge. This was followed by The Armenian Refugees (Lord Mayor's) Fund, which was heralded on 15 October at a Mansion House meeting.[15] Speakers included the Lord Mayor, Bryce, Cardinal Bourne, Archbishop of Westminster, the Bishop of Oxford, Sir Edwin Pears, Sir J. Compton-Rickett, Liberal M.P and T.P. O'Connor.[16] Lord Robert Cecil and A.J. Balfour also expressed sympathy with the cause. This effectively gave the campaign semi-official government endorsement.[17] The Bishop of Oxford showed that pro-Armenian action had its roots in a shared sense of guilt dating back nearly forty years. 'Englishmen', he believed, 'had a very special measure of responsibility and a very special obligation', because they had barred the way for Russia, when negotiating the Treaty of San Stephano, after the Russo-Turkish War in 1878, to fulfil 'its mission as the liberator of the Christian populations of Turkey'.[18] Akaby Nassibian states British churches 'closely co-operated with the Fund and many clergymen took a very active part in organizing collections.'[19] Support also came from the Left. Labour Party leader, Arthur Henderson 'expressed the determination of the British workers, deeply

---

[13] Much of the traditional support for Armenia rested on Christian stereotypes. See Robinson, Emily, *Armenia and the Armenians* (London: 1917) p.6.
[14] For details see Nassibian, Akaby, *Britain and the Armenian Question* (London: Croom Helm, 1984) pp.59-62; For the pro-Armenian tradition see also Marsh, Peter, 'Lord Salisbury and the Ottoman Massacres', *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol.11, No. 2. (May, 1972) pp.63-83; Zeidner, Robert F., 'Britain and the Launching of the Armenian Question', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.7, No.4. (Oct. 1976) pp.465-483.
[15] Vice-Presidents of the Fund included the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, Cardinal Bourne, Bryce, Lord Curzon, various Bishops, Lady Frederick Cavendish, George Cadbury and Arnold Rowntree. Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question*, pp.63-4.
[16] For Pears role in the 'Bulgarian agitation' see Shannon, R.T., *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation 1876* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1963) p.38.
[17] Arthur Balfour, First Lord of the Admiralty.
[18] *Times*, 16 October 1915, p.5 During the Treaty negotiations Britain, uncomfortable about Russian territorial aspirations, reached a secret agreement with the Ottomans that their claims would be supported in exchange for acquiring Cyprus on the tenuous basis that it would be an appropriate place from which to monitor Ottoman reforms. Zeidner, 'Britain and the Launching of the Armenian Question', pp.465-483.
[19] Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question*, p.64.

shocked by Turkish savagery, to see that never again should a Christian people be bound by the odious Ottoman shackles.'[20]

At the instigation of Bryce, the historian Arnold Toynbee compiled a report on the Turkish atrocities.[21] Known as the 'Blue Book', it represented Britain's official view and was welcomed in Parliament by Lord Robert Cecil.[22] The evidence was submitted to H.A.L. Fisher and Professor Gilbert Murray who regarded the evidence as 'entirely convincing.'[23] Its publication met with approval across the political spectrum. The *New Statesman* in a 'Blue Book Supplement' called it 'conclusive evidence of massacres and cruelties perpetrated by the Turks which can vie with the greatest crimes of human savagery.'[24] *The Times* editorialized on the 'Martyrdom of the Armenians'.[25] The 'authentic' evidence told of 'the tragic destruction of an inoffensive and intelligent race', adding, 'the volume should be studied as a whole in order that the methods of Germany's ally may be understood.'[26] Viscount Grey approved Toynbee's view. He believed it should be published for the 'immediate information of public opinion' and as 'a mine of information for historians in the future.'[27] In accordance with the government's view, Toynbee later laid out his belief that 'Armenians were not massacred spontaneously by the local Moslems the initiative came entirely from the central Government at Constantinople, which planned the systematic extermination of the Armenian Race'.[28] As such the Turkish government was guilty of 'frightfulness'. For most, the events were construed within a wider framework of anti-German propaganda.[29] However, Toynbee believed, it was

---

[20] Hovannisian, 'The Allies and Armenia, 1915-18' p.147.
[21] *The Treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Falloden Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916) Presented to Parliament on 23 November 1916 Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.LXXXVII, Col.1547, 23 November 1916.
[22] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.LXXXV, Col.2650, 23 August 1916.
[23] *Times*, 14 December 1916, p.7. Fisher was President of the Board of Education. Gilbert Murray was a Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford University, Liberal supporter and activist.
[24] *The New Statesman*, 27 January 1917, p.4.
[25] *Times*, 14 December 1916, p.9.
[26] Ibid.
[27] *Treatment of the Armenians*, p.xviii.
[28] Toynbee, Arnold J., *Turkey: A Past and a Future* (NewYork: George H. Doran, 1917) p.22.
[29] For example, *Times*, 30 September 1915, p.7.

'on the whole, unlikely that the German authorities initiated the crime. The Turks do not need tempters'.[30]

The government manipulated pro-Armenian humanitarianism. Endorsement of atrocity charges was linked to the intensifying campaign to 'influence American entry into the war'.[31] Although British officials exerted influence on friendly Muslim tribes to provide support for Armenian victims, warnings of retribution 'substituted for an overall policy of assistance to the victims.'[32] Senior government figures made rhetorical pledges guaranteeing Armenian autonomy after the war. Lloyd George in his first speech as Prime Minister stated his belief in the 'doctrine that the Turk is incapable of governing any other race justly' because of 'his misrule and his massacres'.[33] On 6 November 1917 Foreign Secretary, Balfour announced in the Commons that Britain would 'liberate those peoples whose progress had been impeded by the Ottomans.'[34] On 20 December 1917, Lloyd George, stated in Parliament that 'Armenia, the land soaked with the blood of innocents, and massacred by the people who were bound to protect them' should 'never be restored to the blasting tyranny of the Turk.'[35] These turned out to be empty promises.

Nevertheless, throughout the war public opinion was unanimously favourable towards Armenian victims. On 16 May 1917, Lord Robert Cecil remembered when 'progressive forces believed Turks should be thrown out of Europe 'bag and baggage' and 'it was only we benighted Tories who ever said anything for the Turks. We are all agreed that there is nothing to be said for the Turks now'.[36] 13 June, 1917 was designated 'Armenia Day'. The British public was invited to do 'something to help'. *The Times* displayed an advert covering virtually a whole page headed by a Gladstone quote that '[t]o serve Armenia is to serve civilisation'. It was accompanied by quotes from the late Lord Salisbury, Bryce, Viscount Grey, Lord Robert Cecil and former Labour Party Chairman Ramsey MacDonald. Ex-Prime Minister, H.H. Asquith was

---

[30] Toynbee, Arnold J., *Armenian Atrocities: The Murder of a Nation* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915) p.17.
[31] Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, p.23.
[32] Ibid., p.138.
[33] Lloyd George Papers (LGP), New Government Speech at Carnarvon 3 February 1917. Gladstone's phrase that the Turks be thrown out of Europe 'bag and baggage' had gained iconic status.
[34] Hovannisian, 'The Allies and Armenia', p.148.
[35] Ibid., p.148.
[36] LGP., Lord Robert Cecil, Commons speech, 16 May 1917.

quoted: 'In our own country…the incredible suffering of this nation has aroused profound sympathy and…raised large sums for [Armenian] relief and their repatriation in the future.'[37] The sympathy of the British press, public and officials was virtually 'universal', as was disdain for the Turks.[38] However, Lloyd George's statement of war aims on 5 January 1918 softened the official position towards Turkey. He stated, '[w]e are not fighting…to deprive Turkey of…the rich and renowned lands of Asia-Minor and Thrace, which are predominantly Turkish in race.'[39] The Bolshevik Revolution and America's entry into the war probably influenced this new position.[40]

Conflict between the Allies and Turkey ceased on 30 October 1918 with the signing of the Mudros Armistice. When examining Armenian claims for autonomy, the British government used the 'general principle' that 'we must not allow the misdeeds of the Turks to diminish the patrimony of the Armenians.'[41] Parliament was almost unanimously behind Lord Robert Cecil's statement that 'we recognise the tremendous claims that the Armenians have from every point of view on the assistance and protection of this country.'[42] However, the Armistice 'aroused discontent' in Parliament 'since it provided neither for the immediate withdrawal of Turkish forces from Kars and Ardahan in Transcaucasia, nor for a supervised demobilization in Turkish Armenia.'[43] Nevertheless, the coalition government exploited Turkish wartime atrocities during the December election campaign.[44] They also promised swift demobilization of wartime troops. This had a dramatic impact on policy in the Near East. Arslanian states 'British intervention was virtually terminated in the summer of 1919 because of the accelerated demobilization of troops, increasing criticism at home and the need to concentrate dwindling resources in areas considered

---

[37] *Times*, 13 June 1917, p.4.
[38] Arslanian, Artin H., 'British Wartime Pledges, 1917-18: The Armenian Case', *Journal of Contemporary History,* Vol.13, No.3 (Jul., 1978), p.518.
[39] *Times*, 7 January 1918, p.7.
[40] Woods, H. Charles, 'Sevres – Before and After', *The Fortnightly Review*, Vol.CXII, July to December 1922 (London: Chapman and Hall Ltd., 1922) p.546-7.
[41] Hovannisian, 'The Allies and Armenia', pp.149-50.
[42] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.110, Col.3264, 18 November 1918.
[43] Hovannisian, 'The Allies and Armenia', pp.149-50. Kars and Ardahan, provinces on the Eastern edge of Turkey.
[44] For example LGP., 18 November 1918. Lord Robert Cecil speech on Turkish rule over Christians.

more crucial.'[45] In March 1920 Bryce expressed frustration after failing to secure British protection for threatened Armenians. Furthermore, he stated, the 'French say they have not the troops and money to occupy it, so want the Turks back. The Turks meanwhile are starting fresh massacres', whilst the American President, Wilson, 'had led the Armenians to believe he would secure justice for them, and now America stands aloof.'[46]

Lloyd George sought to plug with Greek forces the gap left by Allied withdrawal. In May 1919 France, Britain and America authorized the landing of Greek troops at Smyrna to impose autonomy in the city and its hinterland. The news received only cursory attention in the press. Lloyd George believed the Turks 'are a decadent race. The Greeks on the other hand are our friends, and they are a rising people.'[47] The newspapers agreed with the Prime Minister that the Greeks were a civilizing force in contrast to a beaten barbaric former enemy. *The Times* emphasized the validity of Greek claims to ex-Ottoman territory.[48] The *Daily Mail* suggested they were there 'to protect the interests of the Greek nationals', and quell 'anti-Allied Bolshevist agitation'.[49] Elefthérios Venizélos, the Greek Prime Minister, was portrayed as the hope of democracy and aligned with British values.[50] That Greek troops marred their arrival by committing atrocities against Turkish prisoners and the local population was known by the British government but not reported in the press.[51] Positive characterizations of Greeks helped sooth British consciences after their forces withdrew from eastern Anatolia.

Pro-Armenian pressure continued to garner considerable support in Britain. A 'crowded meeting' was held in London in early March 1920 under the chairmanship of Bryce detailing 'Turkey's attempts at Extermination'.[52] Lloyd George responded by making a Commons statement on 'the need of taking very strong action to protect

---

[45] Arslanian, 'British Wartime Pledges', pp.524-5. Also conversation between Lloyd George and Lord Riddel in August 1919. Riddell, *Lord Riddell's Intimate Diary of the Peace Conference and After 1918–1923* (London: Gollancz, 1933) p.118.
[46] Fisher, H.A.L., *James Bryce (Viscount Bryce of Dechmont, O.M.)*, Vol.II (London: Macmillan and Co., 1927) p.245. Bryce to Dr Charles W. Eliot, 2 March 1920.
[47] Riddell, *Intimate Diary*, p.208.
[48] *Times*, 16 May 1919, p.12.
[49] *Daily Mail*, 17 May 1919, p.5.
[50] Ibid., 15 November 1920.
[51] LGP., G.W. Rendell to Lloyd George.
[52] *Manchester Guardian*, 5 March 1920, p.7.

the minorities.'[53] On 11 March the Allies formally occupied Constantinople, and General Sir Charles Harington took command of 8,000 British troops at Chanak on the western edge of Asia Minor near the Dardanelles.[54] This was part of a designated Allied 'neutral zone'. When the Treaty of Sèvres, negotiated at San Remo in April 1920, created an Armenian state, it was acclaimed in the press. *The Times* declared that 'Common sense has prevailed at San Remo'.[55]

The *Daily Mail* concluded that Turkish 'expulation [sic] from Europe' was 'a well-merited punishment' because the 'massacres committed during the war were the last straw' on top of '500 years' of 'Turkish bloodlust and intolerance'. Turkish retention of Constantinople and some of Thrace were now 'dependent – and justly – on her good behaviour towards the comparatively small population which is still retained in her charge.'[56] For majority British opinion the Armenian massacres justified the terms of Sèvres.[57] Yet none of the Western powers were willing to enforce the treaty. The withdrawal of Allied troops left the fledgling state vulnerable to Turkish nationalists and Soviet expansionism. Lloyd George stated, although there was 'no lack of sympathy from England', the assumption of greater liabilities was a 'physical impossibility'.[58] Greek atrocities however, gave 'impetus' to the Nationalist movement of Mustapha Kemal Pasha, a former General in the Ottoman Army and hero of the Gallipoli campaign, who was gaining support in Anatolia.[59]

British military authorities had started to accept Armenia's probable demise in February 1920. A memorandum outlined the difficulties of maintaining Armenian Erzerum stating, '[t]he area now reported on by General Milne [is] being peopled almost entirely by Turks and Kurds. This is of course due to the Armenian massacres and is regrettable; but it is none the less a practical factor which cannot be ignored.'[60] By this stage a political division was resurfacing in Britain. Lloyd George commented '[t]he military are against the Greeks…They favour the Turks. The military are

---

[53] Ibid.
[54] Otherwise known as Çhanakkale.
[55] *Times*, 28 April 1920, p.17.
[56] *Mail*, 12 May 1920.
[57] The Treaty of Sèvres was signed on 10 August 1920 but was never ratified by the Ottoman government. Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, p.359.
[58] LGP., draft for San Remo statement, April 1920.
[59] Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, pp.149-50.
[60] LGP., Memorandum detailing the potential difficulties of maintaining an Armenian Erzerum. From General Staff 11 Feb 1920.

confirmed Tories. It is the Tory policy to support the Turks.'[61] The increasing strength of the Kemalist movement and Soviet manoeuvring meant the 'Armenian state had disappeared under the hooves of the occupying Russian and Turkish cavalry in December [1920]'.[62] Pro-Armenians continued to question government commitment to 'expressions and statements and promises made over and over again by its representatives to protect the Armenians from further butchery.'[63]

A debate raged in the Foreign Office about the ratification of the Treaty. Curzon was in favour of a pro-Turkish modification supported by Horace Rumbold, the new Turkish Ambassador.[64] In February 1921 he invited the Turkish government, Nationalists and Greeks to London to discuss a possible compromise over Sèvres. No settlement was reached. The Greeks, quietly encouraged by Lloyd George, decided to push for a complete victory over Nationalist forces by advancing further into Anatolia. The *Daily Mail* wrote 'Mustapha Kemal cannot be permitted to defy the Allies. The Greeks are ready to undertake the work of dealing with him if they are given a free hand.'[65] *The Spectator* complained that Nationalist demands for the expulsion of Greek forces meant the treaty would be 're-written at the dictation of a defeated enemy.'[66] The *New Statesman*, in line with broad Left Wing opinion believed the Allies should 'take definite action at the earliest possible moment for the constitution of a free Armenia under the direct supervision of the League of Nations.'[67]

The *Manchester Guardian* sent Arnold Toynbee, one of the principle pro-Armenian and anti-Turk protagonists, to cover the Greco-Turkish war. The sense of indignation, which drove him to compile the Blue Book, had dissipated. He wrote, since the war 'our moral position is very different. What the Germans have done in Belgium and the English in Ireland rather chokes one when one's tempted to take a high line.' He was affected by the 'Prussian' behaviour of British troops stationed in the Near East.[68]

---

[61] Riddell, *Intimate Diary*, p.208.
[62] Walder, David, *The Chanak Affair* (London: Hutchinsons, 1969) p.92.
[63] O'Connor T.P. in Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.136, Col. 14, 13 December 1920.
[64] Gilbert, Martin, *Sir Horace Rumbold: Portrait of a Diplomat 1869-1941* (London: Heinemann, 1973), pp.227-8.
[65] *Mail*, 22 June 1920.
[66] *The Spectator*, 12 March 1921, p.317.
[67] *New Statesman*, 19 March 1921, pp.692-3.
[68] Arnold J. Toynbee Papers (ATP), Letter to Rosalind Toynbee, 11 May 1921.

Moreover, having witnessed first-hand evidence of Greek atrocities, he sent a regular flow of dispatches defending Turkish actions and emphasizing Greek atrocities.[69] By mid-1921 he was converted to a fully pro-Turk viewpoint.[70] Toynbee used family connections to get his accounts circulated to influential government figures.[71] They were all the more effective because of his previous support of Greece and Armenia. Samuel Hoare wrote to Lady Mary Murray, 'I had already heard of the massacres from other sources, and knowing your son-in-law personally and his sympathetic views about Greece I attach all the greater importance to the disclosure that he and Mrs Toynbee make.'[72] Charles Roberts, based at the National Liberal Club informed Toynbee of a 'great confirmation of opinion against going into new help to Greeks.'[73]

Sending Toynbee to the Near East created a bigger impact than C.P. Scott, editor of the *Manchester Guardian* anticipated. He was against Toynbee's correspondence being used 'as just propaganda, in as much as the Turks had done the same things on a much larger scale and more deliberately.'[74] However, an editorial on 16 July stated '[i]f the Greeks are no better than the Turks, our interest in transferring to the Greeks areas which have hitherto been Turkish must proportionately diminish'.[75] A letter to Toynbee dated 4 December 1921 suggested his reports placed 'the Armenian question in a different light.'[76] The Armenian issue was becoming conflated with the Greco-Turkish war, and Armenians were being identified with Greeks. When commenting on the Greek atrocities in Yalova, Rosalind Toynbee stated 'all the Christian population, Greeks and Armenians alike, had somehow become semi-human. They had ghastly bestial faces as though they had been drinking blood'.[77] Rumbold informed the Foreign Office that 'grave excesses' had been committed against the Turkish population, sometimes involving Greek regular troops.[78]

---

[69] For example ATP., 'The Turks Point of View', 19 May 1921, and 'Greek Massacre of Turks', *Manchester Guardian*, 27 May 1921.
[70] ATP., Letter to Gilbert Murray, 13 June 1921.
[71] He was married to Rosalind, daughter of Sir Gilbert and Lady Mary Murray. They ensured his reports were read by Lord Robert Cecil, Sir Maurice Hankey, Eyre Crowe, Wedgewood Benn and Samuel Hoare.
[72] ATP., Samuel Hoare to Lady Mary Murray, 13 June 1921.
[73] Ibid., Roberts to Toynbee, 14 June 1921.
[74] Ibid., C.P. Scott to Lady Mary Murray,1 July 1921.
[75] *Manchester Guardian*, 16 July 1921.
[76] ATP., Letter to Toynbee, 4 December 1921.
[77] ATP., Rosalind Toynbee to Gilbert Murray, 28 May 1921.
[78] Gilbert, *Rumbold*, p.239.

In May 1921 an Allied team was dispatched to investigate Greek atrocities. Two teams concentrated enquiries in Yalova and Guemlec, and the Ismid Peninsula. The former concluded that Turkish villages were systematically burned and looted 'by Greek and Armenian bands' abetted by the Greek regular army, although '[a]cts of violence and barbarism as well as massacres on a large scale' were committed by 'Kemalist bands, or by soldiers of the regular army'. In Ismid the enquiry team believed both sides committed 'crimes', but 'those on the part of the Turks have been more considerable and ferocious than those on the part of the Greeks.'[79] The extent to which western policy of support for Greece influenced the conclusions is unclear. However, it is significant that an investigation into Greek atrocities exposed Turkish violence.

From September 1921 Greek forces were in retreat. After another aborted Allied attempt at conciliation between Turks and Greeks in March 1922, pro-Armenians berated the government in Parliament for their failure to honour wartime 'promises'. Lord Robert Cecil, who had left the Cabinet in 1919 criticized the government for failing to 'discharge an obligation of honour which we undertook during the War on behalf of the Armenians.'[80] Asquith could 'never be a party to any policy which has in intention or in effect the re-establishment of Turkish rule over large bodies of Christian populations'.[81] Prompted by Rumbold's warning that the 'Turks appear to be working on a deliberate plan to get rid of minorities'[82] and perhaps sensing public opinion was moving towards a pro-Turk position, Lloyd George had officials compile a dossier containing a 'mass of documentary evidence' detailing the massacres and ill-treatment of Armenian and Greek Christians by Turkish forces between 1919 and 1922.[83] It stated that '[d]uring November and December [1921] reports of increasing persecutions continued to reach His Majesty's High Commission in growing numbers, but it was not until the following year that the first really large scale massacres occurred.'[84] In May, Conservative Leader and Lord Privy Seal, Austen Chamberlain

---

[79] *Turkey No. 1 (1921) Reports on Atrocities in the Districts of Yalova and Guemlek and in The Ismid Peninsula*, Cmd.1478.
[80] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.151, Col. 1124, 7 March 1922.
[81] LGP., Asquith Commons speech, 9 March 1922.
[82] Gilbert, *Rumbold*, p.252.
[83] LGP., G.W. Rendel memorandum on Turkish Massacres and Persecutions of Minorities since the Armistice, 20 March 1922.
[84] Ibid.

confirmed further atrocities by Kemal supporters including the slaughter of '10,000 Greeks followed by the seizure of their widows and daughters for transfer to Turkish harems and the starvation to death of their children'.[85] Curzon believed it was 'inconceivable that Europe should agree to hand back to Turkish rule, without the most stringent guarantees'.[86] The Archbishop of Canterbury referred 'to the plight of the Christian minorities' stating 'our sense of Christian fellowship gave us a special responsibility' towards the sufferers. He also believed it 'humiliating' that 'we were not able to fulfill the promises extended to them' during the war.[87] *The Times* wrote of the 'Turk's Insane Savagery' and editorialized that the latest reports bore 'painful resemblance' to wartime Armenian massacres and could not 'but arouse concern even at a time when the immeasurable sufferings of Eastern Europe would seem almost to have exhausted the powers of human sympathy.'[88]

Pro-Turkish opposition had grown since the war. According to Lloyd George's secretary, Frances Stevenson, the Tories were beginning to use the phrase 'the Turk is a gentleman' from around March 1921.[89] Growing support for Turkey was increasingly evident in Parliament. Objections to government support for Greece included lack of consultation with Turkish authorities, government hypocrisy over 'massacres' in Ireland, the expense of maintaining a 'British Army of occupation', 'unease amongst the Indian Mahommedans' and the threat of Turkey 'being driven into the arms of Russia'.[90] Nevertheless, government-inspired indignation had some impact. Churchill later commented that in June 1922 'public opinion…turned sternly against the Turks.'[91]

Government influence, however, was increasingly fragile. The security of Lloyd George's position had decreased since the landslide election of 1918. He had been embroiled in an 'honours scandal' that 'rocked the government to its foundations' and, not unconnectedly, he was increasingly criticized for running the government

---

[85] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.154, Col. 46, 15 May 1922.
[86] Gilbert, *Rumbold*, p.252.
[87] *Times*, 4 May 1922, p.20.
[88] Ibid., 16 May 1922, p.17.
[89] Walder, *Chanak*, p.114.
[90] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.154, Cols. 46-59, 15 May 1922; *Times*, 17 May 1922, p.6; *Times*, 31 May 1922, p.19.
[91] Churchill, Winston S., *The World Crisis: The Aftermath* (London: Thronton Butterworth, 1929) p.417.

autocratically.[92] Distrust of the Prime Minister, especially over state-sponsored violence in Ireland meant a vocal section of the press saw his support for Near East Christians as merely another political ploy. The publication of Arnold Toynbee's *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey* in August 1922 further undermined pro-Greek and pro-Armenian opinion. Despite supplementing the 'Blue Book' with anti-Turkish publications,[93] he was now indignant about his work being exploited as 'war-propaganda'.[94] He argued, the 'combination of maximum actual effect with minimum consciousness and interest had made the Western factor in the Near and Middle East on the whole an anarchic and destructive force'.[95] This was a direct attack on Lloyd George's patronage of the Greeks. He believed when 'judging Greek and Turkish atrocities, Westerners have no right to be self-righteous. They can only commit one greater error of judgment, and that is to suppose that the Turks are more unrighteous than the Greeks'.[96] Reviewers were shamed by British support for Greek forces.[97] The *Birmingham Post* built on Toynbee's argument:

> Greece and Turkey were influenced psychologically by the Western thought which made Greece a "spoiled child" and Turkey a "whipping-boy." Over-kindness always does more harm than unjust severity. The Turk became sullen, hostile, reckless. But at least he kept his soul. The Greek suffered and suffers from "spiritual pauperisation".[98]

Toynbee's view dovetailed with an increasingly isolationist tendency in post war Britain.[99] He provided an intellectual and moral basis for anti-government rhetoric. His position as eye-witness and his reputation for Near East expertise reinforced the impact of his argument. The *New Statesman* wrote 'Professor Toynbee went out to Anatolia with a bias in favour of the Greeks; but he soon saw enough to convince him

---

[92] Morgan, Kenneth, *Consensus and Disunity: The Lloyd George Coalition Government 1918-1922* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979) pp.339-341.
[93] Toynbee, *Armenian Atrocities*; Toynbee, *Turkey*.
[94] Toynbee, Arnold J., *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey: A Study in the Contact of Civilisations* (London: Constable, 1922) p.50.
[95] Ibid., p.5.
[96] Ibid., p.269.
[97] For example, *Manchester* Guardian, 4 August 1922.
[98] *Birmingham Post*, 29 August 1922.
[99] For inward turn and increasing British isolationism see Samuel, Raphael (ed.) *Patriotism: the Making and Unmaking of British National Identity, Vol. 1 History and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1989); Light, Alison, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991).

that the Greeks were every whit as barbarous as their opponents' adding '[t]o let the Greeks and the Turks alone is the beginning of wisdom for European statesmanship.'[100] C.P. Scott wrote to Toynbee, 'I confess that my first inclination is to dissent rather violently from the view you express, but I have far too great a respect for your opinion on any question relating to the Near East to be in a hurry to set up my own against it.'[101] The resonance of Toynbee's view's can be seen from *The Times* comment that '"The Western Question in Turkey and Greece," [sic] which, appearing in the very midst of the Greco-Turkish crisis has played no small part in shaping public opinion in this country regarding the rights and wrongs of that complex problem'.[102]

In mid-July the Greeks, fearing the Allies would soon desert them in their attempt to retain at least some of the territory of the former Ottoman Empire, threatened to march on Constantinople. In Rumbold's absence his deputy Nevile Henderson and Harington resolved 'to confront the Greeks with the maximum of force.'[103] This was in contrast to the conciliatory approach the latter took to the Turks over the next three months. Kemal launched a major attack on 26 August. In September with the Greek forces in retreat, the Kemalist forces approached Smyrna and the edge of the neutral zone, increasing chances of a military engagement with British forces. This became headline news in Britain in September and October. The Prime Minister favoured a show of force in order to secure the freedom of the Straits and to protect Christian minorities. As the prospect of British involvement in the Near East conflict loomed, public opinion, led by the press, diverged further from the government line. British support for the Armenian cause was a casualty of this process.

In a clear contradiction of its previous anti-Turk editorial policy the *Daily Mail* subverted Lord Salisbury's quote about the Armenians, suggesting 'Lloyd George has put his money on the wrong horse'.[104] The *Express* followed suit.[105] The *Morning*

---

[100] *New Statesman*, 16 September 1922, p.640.
[101] ATP., Scott to Toynbee, 14 September 1922.
[102] *Times*, 13 October 1922, p.17.
[103] Gilbert, *Rumbold*, p.254. Henderson became Britain's ambassador to Germany in 1937.
[104] As a result of the public outcry over Turkish massacre of Armenians in the 1890s Salisbury had ventured that by supporting Turkey 'we put all our money on the wrong horse'. The phrase was subsequently extensively used by the pro-Armenian lobby. LGP – Notes on the words of the Marquis of Salisbury in the House of Lords on 19 January 1897. The *Mail* was quoting Sir Henry Wilson, who had recently been murdered by Irish Republicans, thereby capitalizing on charges of hypocrisy in relation to the Prime Minister's Irish and Near Eastern policies.

Post, smarting from the government's compromise in Ireland, drew attention to the Prime Minister's 'Gladstonian fervour which breaks out in indignation against atrocities, regardless of political considerations. He is too well accustomed to the ignoring of the atrocities at home to be credited with overpowering moral sentiments on that point.'[106] *The New Statesman* believed the Turks had learned their lessons of brutality from Britain's example of '"civilised" methods of dragooning subject-peoples'.[107] It distanced itself from the 'old Liberal tradition which taught that the Turk was the enemy of Christianity, of civilisation and of humanity', suggesting the 'Turk has, undoubtedly, given his critics in the course of his career plenty of justification for an honest dislike of him. But an honest dislike can be carried too far; it can become a violent prejudice.'[108] Drawing attention to Greek atrocities, it played off one liberal tradition against another. Compassion for oppressed minorities was undermined by drawing attention to the idea of 'fair play'.[109] It cited the pernicious role of the West, emphasizing the principles of 'nationalism' and 'self-determination' stating that the Greeks 'must evacuate Turkish territory' and what was keeping them there was 'the false sentiment of the idealists.'[110] Toynbee's ideas relating to Western interference permeated these views. The *Pall Mall Gazette* believed Toynbee had helped 'counteract the prejudices which exist in the minds of the public who do not realize that, given the chance, all peoples of the Near East are brutal according to their own standards.'[111]

Against an increasing tide of anti-government invective *The Times* reminded its readers, '[t]he pretence that the Kemalist Turk is a humane and civilized soldier wholly different from the Turk of the Armenian massacres deceives nobody.' Adding, 'the combination of the crude barbarism of the Turks with the degenerate barbarism of the Soviets is significant.' The paper hoped 'practical steps' would be taken for the 'immediate safety' of Near Eastern populations. The paper raised the spectre of

---

[105] *Daily Express*, 6 September 1922, p.4, Editorial 'The Wrong Horse'.
[106] *Morning Post*, 2 September 1922, p.6.
[107] *New Statesman*, 2 September 1922, pp.576-7.
[108] Ibid.
[109] For ideological resonance of 'fair play see Stray, Christopher, *Classics Transformed* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998) p.170; Winter, J.M., 'British National Identity and the First World War' in Green, S.J.D. and Whiting R.C. (eds.) *The Boundaries of the State in Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) p.276.
[110] *New Statesman*, 2 September 1922, pp.576-7.
[111] *Pall Mall Gazette*, 4 September 1922.

discontent in India. A Kemal victory would 'move the imagination' of 'Mahomedan fanatics in Irak and India, and when their imagination is fired they become troublesome and even dangerous.'[112] Two days later, *The Times* announced the victory of Kemal's forces at Smyrna.[113] Henry Morgenthau, the wartime American Ambassador to Constantinople and active in disseminating knowledge of the Armenian genocide, was said to 'entirely back the case being made by *The Times*.' He warned a 'revived Turkey may lead to another conflagration, unless the danger is recognized and dealt with firmly', while expressing 'confidence that the British public would…support the British Government in any positive policy it might adopt to localize the danger and prevent it from spreading into Europe.'[114] *The Times* coverage was soon to undergo a dramatic change of emphasis.

Other parts of the right wing press repeated Turkish assertions of Greek and Armenian insurgency in Smyrna. A *Daily Mail* editorial claimed Turkish discipline had been maintained. A report from George Ward Price, who had changed his view since 1918 when reporting on Turkish treatment of British prisoners of war,[115] rallied against Greek atrocities. It was 'certain' that Greek troops 'have been burning villages – if not committing worse outrages – on the line of their retreat'. Kemal's troops, however, 'showed none of the arrogance of conquerors' and 'even when a young Greek on the quay wildly let off a revolver' wounding a Turkish officer 'the Turks made no reprisals and their officers shouted to the crowd that they had nothing to fear'.[116] Ward Price was rewarded for his partisan reports by an interview with Kemal and Nur-ed-Din, his principle commander, who stated '[t]he moderation we have shown in the hour of victory proves that the Turks need lessons in self-restraint from no one – and this in spite of the severe provocation caused by Greek atrocities.'[117] Turks were now being portrayed as disciplined and civilized in a brutalized environment.

After taking control of Smyrna, Kemal's army 'sealed off the Armenian quarter and began systematically butchering its 25,000 inhabitants. Then they set fire to it, to

---

[112] *Times*, 9 September 1922, p.9.
[113] Ibid., 11 September 1922, p.10.
[114] Ibid., 12 September 1922, p.9.
[115] *Mail*, 22 November 1918.
[116] Ibid., 13 September 1922, p.9.
[117] Ibid., 15 September 1922, p.6.

incinerate any survivors.'[118] This event caused temporary difficulties for those opposed to the use of humanitarian arguments on behalf of threatened minorities.[119] Initial reports in British newspapers suggested the Turks were responsible. The *Morning Post* stated 'the fire was started yesterday by Turkish regular troops in order to hide the massacres which had taken place'.[120] The *Daily Express* was equally certain and ran a headline, 'Smyrna Fired by the Turks. Greek and Armenian Quarters Destroyed in a Terrible Vengeance'.[121] The following day the front page reported, '[t]errible atrocities have been committed by the Turks, and thousands of people have been massacred'[122] Significantly *The Times* blamed 'irregulars', while the Turkish authorities were portrayed as fair-minded and out of sympathy 'with the incendiaries or looters, whether Turk or non-Turk, who were shot at sight.'[123]

Ward Price, stationed at Smyrna, telegraphed his reports to London from the British ship the *Iron Duke*. His account gave prominence to the explanation of the 'Town Commandant' who blamed the fire on the Armenians who had barricaded themselves in a church 'with supplies of arms'. He reassuringly pointed out that twenty-two had been arrested.[124] The traditional view of Armenians as victims was supplanted by an image of desperate, dangerous criminals. Ward Price's 'eye-witness' status and the report's specificity lent gravitas to the account. Two days later, Ward Price suggested, that the arrival of Turkish irregular troops was 'as harmless and uneventful as a parade of the Ancient Order of Oddfellows at home.'[125] Killing and looting was almost entirely the work of thieves and the lowest classes, out for plunder.[126]

Conversely the Greeks' '[g]uilty conscience made double cowards of them all' because, not only did they 'desert the blackened streets and cower in their houses', but they remembered atrocities committed by Greeks in 1919.[127] The *Mail* concluded 'the

---

[118] Ferguson, Naill, *The War of the World: History's Age of Hatred* (London: Allen Lane, 2006) p.182. See also Dobkin, M., *Smyrna 1922: The Destruction of a City* (New York: Newmark Press, 1972). The cause of the fire is still disputed by some historians.
[119] According to Dobkin the fire was started just after midnight on Tuesday 12 September 1922. Dobkin, *Smyrna*, p.155.
[120] *Morning Post*, 16 September 1922, p.7.
[121] *Express*, 16 September 1922, p.1.
[122] Ibid.
[123] *Times*, 16 September 1922, p.8.
[124] *Mail*, 16 September 1922, p.7.
[125] Ibid., 18 September 1922, p.10.
[126] Ibid., 19 September 1922, p.6.
[127] Ibid.

city was destroyed by enraged Greeks.'[128] A private letter to Lloyd George from the father of a Paymaster Lieutenant stationed off Smyrna, who had 'never been in favour of a pro Greek policy,'[129] suggested British forces on the spot were 'bitter against Ward Price' because 'reliable witnesses' had confirmed 'that the Turks systematically fired the city'.[130] Despite this counter evidence, the reports submitted by Ward Price, had a significant effect. After their publication few questioned that Armenians or Greeks were responsible.

The *Daily Express* then changed its view. An editorial on 27 September stated, '[i]t has been sedulously suggested and commonly accepted that the Turks fired Smyrna. We do not believe it. It is far more probable that this conflagration was the work of the Greeks.'[131] *The New Statesman* agreed and used non-attributable 'eye-witness' testimony to verify their position. That Lloyd George had 'implied that Smyrna was burnt by the Turks' was weighed against 'the first-hand stories of English and American eye-witnesses [which] all suggest that the town was not fired by the Turks but by the Greeks'.[132] Turks and Greeks, it asserted, were as bad as each other and therefore the '"atrocity" cry' was 'the most irrelevant, of political arguments'.[133] This did not stop the periodical speculating in line with Toynbee that 'if Turkey was freed from the pressure of Europe' the rise of 'abler men' would enable it to 'turn over a new leaf and surprise us by a policy of tolerance and liberal administration.'[134]

Evidence about the Smyrna fire was contradictory. However, over a short period, the idea of Turkish responsibility was rejected. For most, either Greeks or Armenians started the fire or apportioning blame was pointless. Growing acceptance of the Turkish Nationalists as a civilizing force was reinforced by biased 'eye-witness' reports. Evidence claiming Kemalist responsibility only appeared after the crisis was over.[135] Toynbee wrote to his wife in 1923 that on Smyrna 'the account, when

---

[128] Ibid., 25 September 1922, p.5.
[129] LGP., Letter to Lloyd George, 16 October 1922.
[130] Ibid.
[131] *Express*, 27 September 1922, p.6.
[132] *New Statesman*, 14 October 1922, p.33.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid., 16 September 1922, p.640.
[135] Ibid., 4 November 1922.

balanced, lies against the Turks…there was a general orgy of incendiarism and looting by the Turkish soldiers and populace.'[136]

The British Cabinet met on 15 September to decide how Kemal's forces should be kept out of the Allied zone. Churchill supported by Lloyd George advocated the immediate dispatch of reinforcements. He believed 'Liberal opinion would be a great deal influenced by the recent atrocities and Conservative opinion would not be willing to see the British Flag trampled on.'[137] Curzon and Chamberlain dissented, but the Cabinet authorized Churchill to contact the Dominions inviting co-operation. He emphasized the defence of wartime gains and the importance of protecting Gallipoli war graves. Only New Zealand agreed to send troops. On 17 September Rumbold telegraphed Curzon, '[t]here seems no doubt that Turks deliberately massacred many Armenians' in Smyrna. He believed trusting purely to diplomatic action would be 'futile and dangerous.'[138] Lloyd George had little faith in 'verbal protests' and thought a show of force would prevent 'war, pillage, outrage and murder' spreading 'from Asia into Europe.'[139] Despite warnings from his officials in late September that Britain would 'not stand for a fresh war', Lloyd George believed the public would 'willingly support our action regarding the Straits by force of arms if need be'.[140] Churchill was given control of an inner war Cabinet to direct immediate policy.

British Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon traveled to Paris on 19 September to find common ground with the French who were in favour of allowing Kemal to take control of the neutral zone including Constantinople and Eastern Thrace. The resulting 'Allied Note' warned Kemal not to advance into the neutral zone, but suggested a conference would accede to his territorial demands.[141] Pro-Armenians were outraged. Noel Buxton wrote, '[i]t is absurd to assume…that because the Greek Army has suddenly given way, the Near Eastern Settlement must be arranged along the lines of the Turkish demands.'[142] On 20 September French and Italian troops were ordered out

---

[136] ATP., Arnold to Rosalind, 22 April 1923.
[137] Gilbert, *Rumbold*, p.261.
[138] Ibid., p.262.
[139] LGP., Minutes of Labour Delegation to Lloyd George, 21 September, 1922.
[140] Riddell, *Intimate Diary*, pp.388-9.
[141] Hehir, P., 'The Near East Crisis', *The Nineteenth Century and After*, XIX-XX, July-December 1922 (London: Constable, 1922) p.840.
[142] *Times*, 16 September 1922.

of the area by their respective governments. Britain was left to defend the Allied zone alone.

Significant sections of the press now launched an anti-war tirade. The *Daily Express* made false allusions to the outbreak of the Great War by suggesting that Serbia was mobilizing, warning its readers not to pass 'light-heartedly to other matters' as had apparently happened 'a little over eight years ago' when Britain had allegedly drifted into war.[143] The *Daily Mail* raged 'Stop This New War', asking why the government were 'so eager for a deadly war in the East, which may end by setting half the world aflame once more?' It castigated the Prime Minister for thinking he could 'rouse the nation as Mr. Gladstone did in the seventies of last century about Bulgaria; but Mr. Lloyd George is no Gladstone and he cannot save himself by arranging this wanton war.' It suggested 'the "Stop the War" movement was steadily growing' throughout the country.[144] The *Morning Post* wrote '[n]obody wishes to fight the Turks, not even the non-conformist conscience.'[145] This view was supported across the political spectrum. The *New Statesman* mocked the idea that 'the Turk' was 'a beast of prey' and thought the 'British people…have not the slightest inclination to spend blood or money on fighting the Turks.[146]

The T.U.C. sent a delegation of thirty to Downing Street on 21 September. Ben Tillet, Labour M.P. and Trade Union leader hoped the Cabinet was 'not so ridiculous, so mad or stupid' as to contemplate war, and added 'things may drift as other wars have drifted'.[147] He warned the Prime Minister 'we are here to tell you the plain God's truth – we should be opposed to war and would organise opposition against any form of war.' T.U.C. woman's representative and non-conformist Margaret Bondfield asserted 'women's opinion in the country' was 'unable to accept…a holy war' and thought 'a new war would be the beating of the dead, because they died to prevent any more war.'[148] The ideas that nations had drifted into war and the dead had given their lives

---

[143] *Express*, 14 September 1922, p.1.
[144] *Mail*, 18 September 1922, p.8.
[145] *Morning Post*, 19 September 1922, p.6.
[146] *New Statesman*, 16 September 1922, p.624.
[147] LGP., Minutes of Labour Delegation to Lloyd George, 21 September 1922. The delegation included J.H. Thomas M.P., Will Thorne M.P., O.W. Bowerman M.P., A. Hayday M.P., Robert Smillie, J.B. Williams, John Turner, Ben Turner, John Beard and A, Connelly. They were met by Lloyd George, Austen Chamberlain, R.S. Horne and L. Worthington-Evans, the Minister for War.
[148] Ibid.

to end war were increasingly popular interpretations of the conflict. All delegates peppered their protests with appeals to the interests of 'humanity'.

Lloyd George, apparently unmoved, read out a message from General Maurice, stationed in the Near East, who was 'certainly no supporter of the Government' warning that British evacuation would create 'a sequel which would make the fires of Smyrna pale.' The Premier added 'I recommend that to those who put forward the interests of humanity.'[149] Union leader, J.H. Thomas thought the League of Nations should occupy the Allied zone. Lloyd George was in favour, 'provided it is really done.' In other words the League should be more than a 'moral force'. He finished by quoting Labour party policy as stated in 1918 condemning 'the systematically violent domination of the Turkish Government [over] any subject people' and supporting the idea that 'the Dardenelles should be permanently and effectively neutralised'.[150] The two sides agreed that no publicity should be given to the meeting. *The Times* commented its 'secrecy' was the cause of 'keen resentment' from all sides.[151] The meeting was followed by protests from the National Union of Railwaymen, the Miners Federation of Great Britain and the British Communist Party.[152]

There was some justification for Left wing representatives evoking the fear of war. Influential public figures shared the sentiment. The diary of writer and academic, C.S. Lewis is largely devoid of any mention of political events. However, in response to the crisis, Lewis complained:

> [t]his whole day has been overshadowed by the news in the evening papers. Our negotiations with the Turks have broken down and I cannot for the life of me see how a war can be avoided. Miss Featherstone has heard from some big wig that such a war wd. involve taking on all Islam and that conscription would be applied at once.[153]

He was possibly reacting to fears, unjustifiably stoked by *The Times*, that 'the Turkish question had achieved the almost impossible task of bringing together on a common

---

[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid.
[151] *Times*, 23 September 1922, p.8.
[152] Ibid., 22 September 1922, p.11.
[153] 6 October 1922. Lewis, C.S., *All My Road Before Me: The Diary of C.S. Lewis 1922-1927* (ed. Hooper, Walter) (London: Harper Collins, 1991) p.114.

platform the two sections into which the non-co-operation movement had divided the politically-minded people of India'.[154] This was reinforced by Sir Ignatuis Valentine Chirol, retired diplomat and former foreign editor of *The Times*, who warned 'the greatest danger for the British Raj was the complete loss of confidence in British promises and pledges'.[155] The *New Statesman* lamented the loss of national honour, arguing that Britain's position in Asia 'rested on moral rather than material strength'.[156] The combination of lost prestige and Muslim unrest was a potent mixture.

While many feared the impact of Britain's damaged reputation, A.A. Milne, the noted author and playwright, expressed his bitterness over the Prime Minister's indignation about Turkey when there were more pressing social matters at home. In an article for the *Daily News* he wrote:

> The Prestige of England! The Honour of England! Here surely is the biggest joke of all. Every day an English child dies of hunger. Is the honour of England touched? Ah no! Every day an English soldier, broken in the last war, begs of us. Is the honour of England touched? Ah, never for that! But there are some Turks yet to be killed, and England blushes for very shame. Not a penny more for Education, not a penny more for Housing, or England's finance would collapse; but how easy to find money for more shells – for England's honour.[157]

E.M. Forster, congratulated Milne on his 'brilliant article' and suggested that government action was 'the viler because the sentiment it tries to pervert is a noble one'.[158] Lloyd George was seen to be subverting not just the memory of the war but Englishness itself.

From the beginning of September there was an increasing tendency to bestow English characteristics on the Turks. The image of 'the Turk' was transformed accordingly. Conservative M.P. General Sir Charles Townsend, after visiting Kemal and having his

---

[154] *Times*, 22 September 1922, p.9.
[155] *Times*, 18 September 1922, p10.
[156] *New Statesman*, 23 September 1922, p.652.
[157] *Daily News*, 4 October 1922, p.4.
[158] *Daily News*, 9 October 1922, p.7.

'pro-Turkish sympathies…strengthened' wrote to *The Times*.[159] He reported Kemal's 'salient features' were 'piercing blue eyes, fair hair, a diminutive close-cropped moustache'. He wore 'plain clothes' which were 'knickerbockers breeches…well cut and rather in the English style.' Kemal's supporters were united and his orders were 'obeyed implicitly, his rule is an iron one beneath a velvet glove.'[160] This was the antithesis of the traditional British caricature of the Turk.[161] The overall impression was of bringing order out of chaos. From the nineteenth century the British had adopted a 'civilisational' model of rule as justification for dominating allegedly backward peoples. It was believed that indigenous populations were well served by good colonial administration that would educate and Christianize them.[162] Townsend sought to bestow similar motives on Kemal. *The Times* took up this theme and offered a 'contrast in character' between Harington and Kemal. Harington was a hero of the Great War and 'a typical British officer, with all his good points, honest and sincere'. Furthermore, he was 'a cheering reminder of the best traditions of British diplomacy and a model for the further conduct of negotiations till peace is attained.'[163] Kemal was a 'Turk of new type', 'a man of simple tastes' who had 'reached his position by sheer force of character and merit shown in times of adversity.' As a soldier he possessed 'a first-hand acquaintance with British military policy and with the characteristics of the British soldier.'[164] Townsend's letter was reproduced in the *Daily Mail*. In an editorial the allusion to British values was projected onto the 'The New Turkish Army'. The Turkish Army was contrasted favourably with the 'demoralised' Ottoman forces of the recent war. They had 'been reborn under the stress of patriotic resolve directed by sound discipline.'[165]

On 21 September the *Daily Mail* published two feature articles. Firstly, Toynbee wrote on 'How the Greeks Massacred the Turks'. Atrocities in the Near East, he claimed, were common sense in the context of war. 'War in the Near East' he wrote,

---

[159] Townsend was a self-styled British envoy to Kemal. Weaver, J.R.H. (ed.) *The Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937) p.851.
[160] *Times*, 1 September 1922.
[161] A number of *Punch* cartoons had appeared periodically over a forty year period depicting 'the Turk' as distinctly 'oriental', decadent and butcher. On 13 September 1922, *Punch* published the first positive image of 'the Turk' in the form of Mustapha Kemal.
[162] Levine, Philippa, *The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset* (Harlow: Pearson, 2007) p.100. For example of this enduring attitude see *Times*, 11 September 1922, p.4.
[163] *Times*, 14 October 1922, p.11.
[164] Ibid., 3 October 1922, p.9.
[165] *Mail*, 5 September 1922, p.6.

'is never war pure and simple. It is war plus atrocities.' The Turks had a worse reputation because 'Greeks and Armenians had been' in their power. Now, the 'actors exchanged parts.'[166] Secondly, Arthur Weigall wrote on 'What the Plain Man Thinks of Turkey.' 'Let us admit' he wrote 'what we all feel, even though we may have qualms in case we are "shaking hands with murder"'. He believed the British should 'trust our instinct and be sportsmen'. He argued that the public believed the Turk 'a pretty tough customer' who had 'a nasty way of letting things slide in administrative matters'. Presumably this referred to persistent Turkish refusals to reform their policies towards minorities. The Turk had a passion for 'smiting the men of the more craven races' but 'on the other hand,' Weigall argued, 'match him in arms against foes worthy of him and he will prove himself to be a clean fighter and a gentleman, as the Anzacs will tell you to a man'. It was not the fault of the Turks that they 'went to war with us' because Britain had done 'every conceivable thing to irritate him' and allowed German propaganda to prevail. Furthermore, Britain had given Turkey a dishonourable peace by taking 'infinitely more' than they should have. Weigall endowed the Turks with ascribed characteristics of Englishness:

> He has a way with him that has earned him the name of the Englishman of the Near East – a sort of dignity and force of character and courage of his convictions. And, moreover, he has been very badly treated, yet in the face of the greatest difficulties, he has reasserted himself and played the patriot in a manner that is really very fine, not to say thrilling…Let us be frank with ourselves. We cannot help admiring him; and, that being so, we should trust our instinct and say openly what we are all saying in secret, "Well done!"[167]

What started as an apologia for Turkish misrule ended as a panegyric.

The Times now gave precedence to anti-government letters. Frederick Harrison thought the distribution of ex-Ottoman territories to 'Serbians, Bulgars, Greeks, and Armenians' was a 'policy of medieval Crusades.' He believed 'religious sympathies' should not be allowed 'to intrude on good political sense and practical statesmanship.'[168] Retired officer T.S.B. Williams believed 'the Turk has been,

---

[166] Ibid., 21 September 1922, p.9.
[167] *Mail*, 21 September 1922, p.9.
[168] *Times*, 22 September 1922, p.11.

generally, a tolerant ruler of minorities.'[169] Major-General Hehir was 'convinced' the Turk was 'not as bad as he is painted.'[170] Having supported the government line in early September, *The Times* was now aligning itself to the growing mood of opposition. It disingenuously suggested 'a policy of firmness which is free from provocation'[171] and stated the Allied aim was 'to persuade the Turks to accept in a pacific mood the generous terms offered to them in the Allied collective note.'[172] A Trafalgar Square demonstration was arranged for 24 September. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York issued a bland call to prayer over the 'anxiety and suspense in the life of Europe and Asia'. The National Free Church Council passed a resolution calling for 'the safety of the Christian populations' in the Near East, but 'without resort to force.'[173] Lloyd George summoned press representatives telling them that the Turkish army could not be restrained from committing atrocities in the past, therefore 'hundreds of thousands of Armenians and Greeks' would be susceptible to 'a repetition of those terrible incidents.[174] It had little effect. General Seeley noted as he passed through London 'I saw placarded in every street the legend "Stop the New War"'.[175] On 25 September a further thousand British troops arrived at Chanak.[176]

Rumbold was apparently receiving information about the shifting mood in Britain. On 26 September he wrote to Sir Lancelot Oliphant that he and Harington 'feel the last thing our country wants is to have another war and that the average man does not care a straw whether Eastern Thrace and Adrianople belong to the Greeks or Turks'.[177] In direct contrast to his attitude to the Greeks, Harington telegraphed Lord Cavan to ask '[w]hy not start at once and give Turkey Constantinople and Maritza…and so end it all.'[178] The situation in the Near East was growing tense. Kemal's forces were regularly encroaching into the Allied zone. Harington telegraphed the Cabinet, 'in Constantinople…the air is full of electricity' and announced he was 'sending all

[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid., 27 September 1922, p.11.
[171] Ibid., 28 September 1922, p.11.
[172] Ibid., 26 September 1922, p.10.
[173] Ibid., 23 September 1922, p.8.
[174] *Mail*, 25 September 1922, p.5.
[175] *Times*, 20 September 1920, p.10.
[176] Gilbert, *Rumbold*, p.266.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid., p.269.

British army wives away'.[179] The tenor of his reports led the 'General Staff with Naval and Air Staffs' to surmise that the position at Chanak 'was such that the defensive position…would be seriously endangered if [the Turks] commenced an offensive by a sudden movement, and that without serious menace to the safety of [British] troops, the position could not be allowed to continue any longer.'[180] Therefore, on 29 September the Cabinet decided Kemal had had long enough to reply to the Allied note. Harington was ordered to inform the Nationalists that unless they withdrew their forces from the neutral zone around Chanak, 'all the forces at [his] disposal – naval, military, aerial – will open fire'.[181] Before the ultimatum was delivered the Turks agreed to meet Allied representatives at Mudania. An agreement was reached on 11 October.[182] Greek authorities were to return to Greece, Turkish forces to withdraw fifteen kilometers from the coast and the Allies were to hold their positions until a formal peace treaty was signed.

There were still some who believed the government had acted properly. Brigadier-General H.C. Surtees, although 'distrustful of the Prime Minister's Near Eastern Policy' expressed his 'admiration of the manner in which the Government have so far handled the menace to the Chanak district.' He believed it was 'to the glory of this country' that Britain had stood alone.[183] Sir Arthur Evans, who had '50 years experience of the Near East', believed Greek soldiers were 'implicated' in atrocity but added, 'all that has been done on that side can still only be regarded as a very partial retaliation for massacres going back nine years, and on such a scale as history hardly records.' He pointed out 'the policy of extermination, or at best "elimination" of subject populations begun during the war, has now triumphed throughout…Asia Minor.'[184]

Nevertheless, the tide of opinion was against government action. On 7 October *The Times* published a letter from Andrew Bonar Law, who had been absent from government deliberations owing to ill-health. His letter received positive coverage

---

[179] LGP., Harington to Cabinet, 22 Sept 1922.
[180] LGP., Cabinet to Harington 30 September 1922.
[181] Gilbert, *Rumbold*, p.268.
[182] To come into force on 14 October.
[183] *Times*, 4 October 1922, p.13.
[184] Ibid., 6 October 1922, p.11.

throughout the press.[185] He argued, '[w]e cannot alone act as policeman of the world' because the 'financial and social condition of this country makes that impossible'[186] and threatened that Britain would follow America into isolationism. Bonar Law artfully repudiated Britain's traditional commitment to the protection of minorities, in particular the Armenians. Instead, he advocated withdrawal from world affairs. Churchill, perhaps sensing the mood within his own party and public opinion telegraphed the Dominion Prime Ministers, 'Bonar Law in a timely letter today expresses a very general view'.[187] C.P. Scott, editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, agreed that it was 'impossible for us to act as permanent policeman to keep the Turks in order'.[188] Lloyd George's political allies were deserting him. *The Times* deliberately hailed the letter as a 'manifesto' thus reinforcing its political magnitude. It provided a rallying point for all who wished to express their condemnation of the Prime Minister. Lloyd George's seemingly unassailable status as the Premier who won the war was almost completely undermined. The *New Statesman*, for example, proclaimed the British were 'not the sentimental people we were ten years ago and we are not inclined to regard dead British soldiers as sufficient justification for any expenditure.' The Turks were 'a very "small nation" after all' and now the requirement was 'an exhibition of British honesty and common-sense.' It concluded that perhaps 'the inoculation of 1914-18 left an impression after all' on the British public.[189] Right wing tabloids continued their vicious invective. The Liberal *Daily News* quoted J.L. Garvin of the Right Wing *Observer* that Lloyd George 'not only backed a wrong horse, he backed a dead one.'[190] *The Times* quoted *The Spectator*, which argued for remaking the government on the basis of 'Safety First'.[191]

On 10 October the Cabinet decided to call an election. It was to be fought as a Coalition. Lloyd George returned to his constituency to defend his handling of the crisis and his premiership in an 'Appeal to the Nation'.[192] Like his opponents, he used the Great War as a major point of reference, seeing parallels between the

---

[185] For example, *Daily News*, 7 October 1922, p.1; *Daily Express*, 7 October 1922, p.1.
[186] *Times*, 7 October 1922.
[187] Cited in Gilbert, Martin, *Winston S. Churchill Vol. VI 1916-1922* (London: Heineman, 1975) p.859.
[188] 13 October 1922, Wilson, Trevor, (ed.) *The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott 1911-1928* (New York: Cornell University, 1970) p.428.
[189] *New Statesman*, 7 October 1922, pp.1-4.
[190] *Daily News*, 9 October 1922, p.1.
[191] Quoted in *Times*, 7 October 1922.
[192] LGP., 'The Government's Near East Policy. An Appeal to the Nation'.

confrontation with Turkish Nationalists and the events of 1914. He believed 'that language less correct, that language more direct, language more emphatic, might have stopped it…it was the greatest, the most calamitous diplomatic failure that the world has ever seen.' He drew parallels with British defence of 'civilization' in 1914 with 'regard to Belgium' and highlighted the slaughter of 'a million and half Armenians – men, women, and children' since Gladstone. He maintained that preventing 'Turks from crossing into Europe and committing atrocities upon the Christian population' was 'in accordance with the highest interests and traditions of this land', and added '[y]ou can, if you like, say that we threatened, but meant it, but' it was because 'the Turks knew that we meant it, that you have peace now.' On the prospect of being driven into the political wilderness, he stated that he was proud that the final weeks of his Premiership had been used to 'invoke the might' of the British Empire to 'protect from indescribable horror men, women and children' under threat.[193] Lloyd George's rhetoric should be treated with caution, he wrote to Curzon in October suggesting 'the best we could hope to achieve…was to secure some protection for the Xtian minorities.'[194] *The Times* was unmoved. An editorial on the same day saw 'a new kind of Turk' who had 'a passionate desire for enlightenment, for rational and persistent constructive effort'. Nevertheless, it was admitted the 'new Turkish Government will be neither willing, or able, to use Greeks and Armenians in the central administration to the same extent as before.'[195] The *Daily Express* saw his speech as 'deplorable.'[196] Lord Robert Cecil stated the move against the Prime Minister 'was not a sectional feeling it was the spontaneous demonstration of the opinion of the Conservative forces of this country.'[197] It was not limited to Tory opinion. The *New Statesman* wrote 'as a national spokesman [Lloyd George] fails. He does not seem even to understand the English point of view'.[198]

On 19 October Conservative backbenchers met at the Carlton Club. Having been galvanized by Samuel Hoare, Bonar Law led a revolt against the Coalition. Stanley Baldwin, President of the Board of Trade, fearing a Conservative split, called the

---

[193] LGP., Hand written notes for speech in Manchester on 14 October 1922. 'The Government's Near East Policy. An Appeal to the Nation'.
[194] LGP., Lloyd George to Curzon, October 1922.
[195] *Times*, 14 October 1922, p.11.
[196] *Express*, 16 October 1922, p.6.
[197] *Daily Telegraph*, 18 October 1922.
[198] *New Statesman*, 21 October 1922, p.65.

Prime Minister 'a dynamic force…a very terrible thing.'[199] The Conservative Party decided to fight the next election as a separate party. That afternoon Lloyd George resigned. Bonar Law was installed as Prime Minister and called an election for 15 November. The Archbishop of Canterbury wrote to the new Premier warning about the 'sense of unutterable shame' if it was 'announced that we are ignoring the solemn pledges given and leaving great Christian populations to the unrestricted sword of a merciless foe.'[200] Bonar Law's draft reply suggested the Christian population had either already been massacred, were working in labour gangs, therefore 'not likely to survive very long' or were 'Islamized women and children'. He rejected the idea that the new treaty with Turkey would provide for minorities, and blamed Britain's allies 'who apparently do not feel so strongly on the subject of the minorities as we do ourselves. Nor is the subject one…on which public opinion as a whole, even in this country - stirred as it has been by pro-Turkish and even pro-Islamic propaganda – has yet been deeply moved.'[201] This reply was not sent. His actual reply suggested he had not had time to consider the issue because he was too busy 'undertaking' his 'new responsibilities'.[202]

Bonar Law hoped to unite his party behind the idea that Britain's ideals did not differ from the French who throughout the crisis had been unyieldingly pro-Turk.[203] He believed the 'nations first need' was 'in every walk of life, to get on with its own work with the minimum of interference at home and disturbance abroad.'[204] The Conservatives won the election with a clear majority. When it came to negotiating with the Turks at the Lausanne Conference it was admitted Britain 'had to make concessions in regard to minorities…unless we were prepared to fight and the Turks knew we were not ready.'[205] Instead the Turkish case was persistently made in Britain. For example, J. Ellis Barker reinforced the identification of England with Turkey. He thought the best way to 'visualise' Costantinople was by 'imagining the Thames to be the Bosphorus' and the natural objections that 'Englishmen' would have to

---

[199] Walder, *Chanak*, p.325.
[200] Bonar Law Papers (BLP), Randall to Bonar Law, 30 October 1922.
[201] Ibid.
[202] BLP., Bonar Law to Randall, 31 October 1922.
[203] BLP., Broad outline of Conservative and Unionist Policy around which 'the Party might reunite'.
[204] BLP., Address 'To the Electors of the Central Division of Glasgow'.
[205] *Times*, 15 February 1923, p.11.

> foreign warships passing along the docks, the city and the Embankment, being able to destroy at any moment the business sections, the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey and the Royal graves and Buckingham Palace.[206]

P. Hehir, writing in *The Nineteenth Century and After* believed there were 'numerous reasons' for 'concord and co-operation' with the Turks. Turkey should be Britain's ally because during the Great War 'fighting with us was against their natural inclinations.'[207] After months of tough negotiation at Lausanne, at which the issue of minority protection in Turkey nearly led to the collapse of negotiations, the conference ended without a signed agreement. Bonar Law intervened. Under his orders the Treaty, which gave the Turks a significant diplomatic victory, was signed. Churchill lamented in 1929 'In the Treaty of Lausanne, which registered the final peace between Turkey and the Great Powers, history will search in vain for the word Armenia'.[208]

---

[206] Barker, J. Ellis, 'The Freedom of the Straits', *The Fortnightly Review*, Vol.CXII July to December 1922 (London: Chapman and Hall Ltd., 1922) pp.775-6.
[207] Hehir, P., *The Nineteenth Century and After*, XIX – XX, July – December 1922 (London: Constable & Company Ltd., 1922) p.829.
[208] Churchill, *World Crisis*, p.408.

Chapter Three.

The Re-emergence of Poland: A Legacy of Mistrust

Between 22 and 24 November 1918 the Jewish community at Lemberg suffered 'the most prolonged and extensive carnage against civilians since 1906.'[1] Having defeated Ukrainian forces in a battle for the Galician town Polish troops, abetted by civilians, engaged in two days of murder, rape, looting and burning in the Jewish quarter. News of the violence was quickly transmitted to Britain where sensitivity to the use of terroristic methods to control civilians peaked around the election of December 1918 when the call to 'Hang the Kaiser' was a major theme. German 'frightfulness' had just been defeated. Victory over Germany had confirmed Britain's international reputation and self-perception as defender of small nations and protector of minorities. This chapter explores the myriad forces that dictated British reactions to reports of brutal anti-Semitism in Poland. In particular two distinct but connected war aims were at variance: firstly, the re-establishment of Poland as a separate democratic state which was seen as possessing 'small nation' status and, secondly, the banishment of repression as a method of control. To accommodate the former, the British felt compelled to give the latter considerable latitude.

Although drained by the unprecedented conflict, Britain remained the world's foremost power. It's position at the heart of the world's largest empire meant it could exert widespread influence. Kenneth Campbell states '[n]o international order can long exist without the most powerful state within that order defending and preserving it.'[2] Apart from an increasingly isolationist America, Britain was best placed to fulfil that role. Its 'civilising mission' had, after all, provided the moral and ethical justification for many of the territorial acquisitions now contributing to its primacy. Moral indignation at German atrocities against 'little Belgium' was a principle reason why so many Britons fought. Both inside and outside the United Kingdom many justifiably hoped Britain's widely acclaimed moral standing would be applied to help shape the post-war world.

---

[1] Fink, Carol, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878–1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) p.111.
[2] Campbell, Kenneth J., *Genocide and the Global Village* (New York: Palgrave, 2001) p.12.

The collapse of empires in Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia meant the once subordinate nations of Eastern Europe claimed independence. Among these was Poland, which benefitted from Great Power patronage. It was widely held in Britain that Poland deserved independence after years of occupation. Nevertheless, the realisation of Polish statehood was accompanied by considerable anxiety. On one side of Poland stood Bolshevik Russia; on the other, a defeated Germany that, to many, looked like it might go the same way. Within Poland, old systems of law and order crumbled and were replaced by rudimentary Polish authorities. The situation was particularly volatile in disputed border areas. In particular, Jewish communities became vulnerable to a combination of anti-Semitism and resurgent Polish nationalism.

The Foreign Office was confronted with a melange of new states and potentially violent, internecine conflicts in Eastern Europe. Diplomats and officials faced a host of unfamiliar practical and ideological dilemmas. Poland, however, had particular importance as a physical and ideological barrier to Bolshevism. Jewish communities in Poland became the victim of these unprecedented considerations. Firstly, in order to maintain Polish territorial integrity, perceived to be in Britain's interest, it was considered necessary to protect the nascent state from public criticism. To this end, the Poles were treated with paternalistic indulgence in Britain, even with respect to anti-Jewish violence. Poland was given the attributes of a fledgling British-style democracy and also benefited from Britain's traditional support for the underdog. Secondly, the Jews themselves were often portrayed in stereotypical terms as part of the ideological problem facing Eastern Europe. Thanks to the identification of Jews with Bolshevism they were deemed unworthy of sympathy and blamed for bringing persecution onto their own heads. Apart from within the Anglo-Jewish community public indignation about their ill-treatment was largely absent.

The Foreign Office feared public sympathy for the Jewish plight, but this had more to do with false ideas regarding the strength of Jewish influence than actual manifestations of broad-based compassion. However, some officials did show persistent discomfort concerning the outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence. They exerted some influence but were eventually marginalised. The British press, instead of acting as a critical counterweight to government policy, reinforced anti-Jewish prejudice. The churches showed little or no independent opposition to anti-Jewish attitudes. British representatives of the International Red Cross had become so entwined within the

nation-state framework that their capacity for neutral humanitarianism in the case of Jews was undermined.[3]

In influential quarters, Polish Jews were imagined as the carriers of subversive creeds and Britain's relative inaction in the face of anti-Jewish violence reinforced the notion that Eastern European Jews were largely friendless. It left them vulnerable to the phantasms of anti-Semites over the following twenty-five years. Outright condemnation and action, in accordance with a much-lauded British ethical tradition, may have provided a more secure context in which Poles and Jews could work out their relationships. However, it was the events in Eastern Europe in 1918-1920 that helped initiate what is now widely accepted as one of the most anti-Semitic periods in British history.

This chapter reveals that British wartime notions of international justice did not apply to eastern European Jews. Whereas Belgian and French civilians had been cast as 'worthy' victims with relative ease throughout the war, Polish Jews in the immediate post-war period were somehow seen as irrevocably 'other'. This was particularly the case for Foreign Office personnel whose job it was to untangle the sometimes chaotic conditions created by the redrawing of European boundaries in the interests of 'self-determination'. What this affair also shows is that the difficulty of recasting Jews in the British imagination was not new to the Nazi period. Negative ideas of Jewishness were somehow too ingrained to facilitate any meaningful shift in British minds. It provides a necessary contrast to the way reputations of other 'others', such as the Chinese or 'ordinary Germans', were malleable enough to change and therefore elicit empathy. This crucial episode also provides the seedbed for the anti-Semitism of scepticism that coloured the perception of Nazi persecution and violence in the 1930s and 1940s.

On 5 January 1918 Lloyd George announced British and Allied war aims included the re-establishment of an independent Poland.[4] It was to comprise 'genuinely Polish elements who desire to form part of it' and deemed 'an urgent necessity for the stability

---

[3] Best, Geoffrey, *Humanity in Warfare: The Modern History of the International Law of Armed Conflicts* (London: Methuen, 1983) p.142.
[4] Poland had been partitioned in 1815 at the Congress of Vienna after the defeat of Napoleon.

of Western Europe.'[5] Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour, reiterated that Poland should recover 'those provinces ravished from her by Germany at the time of partition, or since'.[6] The British portrayed themselves as righting a historical wrong and their gesture fell squarely within the context of responses to German 'frightfulness'. However, this wording placed approximately three million Jews who lived on potentially Polish territory in an ambiguous position. They would have to demonstrate their Polish credentials to be accepted by the Allies as part of the project.

Before the end of the First World War Sir Stuart Samuel, President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and Claude Montefiore, President of the Anglo-Jewish Association, who between them represented British Jews, wrote to Balfour on the 'uneasiness' among the 'large Jewish communities' in Eastern Europe regarding the attitude of the British and Allied governments 'in regard to their long standing claims for civil and political emancipation.'[7] They claimed the war aims statement did not cater for Jews in the same way as Poles, Serbs and Czechs, despite suffering greater injustices.[8]

They further suggested the Balfour Declaration was of limited use to Jews who wished to 'remain in their native lands' and expressed alarm at 'the interpretation given…by the Anti-Semites of Poland and Rumania' who regarded it 'as an invitation to solve the Jewish question by emigration'.[9] As well as being motivated by humanitarianism they were also ideologically opposed to Zionism.[10] Jews, they believed, should work within the national framework towards greater tolerance for Jewish cultural and religious practices.[11] These principles dictated their approach to the Jewish question in Eastern Europe. Samuel and Montefiore therefore asked for a 'supplementary Declaration' assuring Jews of 'religious, civil and political emancipation on a footing of equality

---

[5] *The Times*, 7 January 1918, p.7. For unanimity behind war aims see Lloyd George, David, *Memoirs of the Peace Conference*, Vol.I, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939) p.36.
[6] *Times*, 28 Feb 1918, pp.7-8.
[7] Louis Marshall Correspondence, Peace Conference, Paris, 1919 (1) Boxes 5-6, Samuel and Montefiore to Balfour, 18 June 1918 (New York: American Jewish Committee Archives).
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Cohen, Stuart A., *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1895–1920* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1982) p.178.
[11] A view shared by Lucien Wolf. Wolf, Lucien, *Diary of Peace Conference*, 11 June 1919, unpublished (London: University College Archives).

with their fellow citizens.'[12] They were frustrated that Allied rhetoric concerning 'the essential ends for which this country is striving in the present war' did not seem to apply to East European Jewry.[13] Balfour expressed his 'closest sympathy' with the emancipation of East European Jews but did not comply with their wishes.[14] The principal Anglo-Jewish advocates of the cause of East European Jews were divided and lacking political weight. Lucien Woolf, long regarded as the community's expert lobbyist in this field, was now even regarded by the Foreign Office as little more than a nuisance.[15]

By contrast, Polish influence in government circles was significant. In October 1917 the Polish National Committee (PNC) had been recognised by the government as officially representing Polish views even though English Jews and British-based Poles believed they were anti-Semitic. The Council of the Polish Committee in Great Britain, which claimed long-standing British connections in contrast to the PNC 'new-comers', complained to *The Times* about the 'privileged position' given to the PNC who were 'violently anti-Semitic'.[16] Yet the latter successfully presented themselves as the 'government in exile and the true spokespeople of the Polish nation.'[17] Although wary of Roman Dmowski,[18] a self-proclaimed anti-Semite, Foreign Office personnel were of the opinion that members of his party were the only ones possessing 'political experience and capacity'.[19]

Recognition by the British government led to a number of openings for the PNC in Britain. The PNC was allowed to take a lead in presenting to the business community the opportunities that would present themselves after liberation;[20] they played a role

---

[12] Marshall Papers, Samuel and Montefiore to Balfour, 18 June 1918.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] See for example, Levene, Mark, *War, Jews, and the New Europe: The Diplomacy of Lucien Wolf 1914-1919* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) p.235. However, lower ranking officials such as Rex Leeper of the Political Intelligence Department and George Prothero were more actively sympathetic. Wolf /Moshowitsch Papers, RG.348, R. Leeper to Wolf, 26 June 1918 and George Prothero to Wolf, 30 August 1918. (YIVO, Institute for Jewish Research, New York).
[16] Wolf /Moshowitsch Papers, letter from 'The Council of the Polish Community in Great Britain', 2 August 1918.
[17] Black, Eugene, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry 1880–1920* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1988) p.354.
[18] Wolf /Moshowitsch Papers, 2 January 1919. Dmowski was leader of the PNC.
[19] Headlam-Morley, Agnes, Bryant, Russell and Cienciala, Anna, (eds.) *A Memoir of the Paris Peace Conference 1919* (London, Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1972) p.12.
[20] *Times*, 12 January 1918, p.5.

within the War Office 'in connection with the Daily Review of the Foreign Press';[21] they were also given the responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of the Aliens Restriction Order for Poles. Their methods led to charges of a two-tier system. Those who were 'Poles by race' were exempted from entry restrictions into the United Kingdom, whilst Polish Jews remained enemy aliens.[22] Just as news of the Lemberg pogrom reached Britain, Balfour announced Poland would have a seat at the Paris Peace Conference and Dmowski would be among those who officially represented their interests.[23] In Foreign Office circles political experience was given precedence over ideological considerations. By contrast, a request by the Anglo-Jewish delegation to be included in preparations for Versailles was refused by Balfour on the grounds of 'lack of space'.[24] Poland's recognition by the victorious powers gave their delegates official status denied to the Jewish contingent. The Jews had to rely on nebulous calls for a just post-war settlement.

In early November 1918 the Anglo-Jewish leadership forwarded telegrams to Balfour alleging PNC inspired outbreaks of violence against Jews in Poland and Galicia. Chaim Weizman, leader of the world Zionist movement, called for immediate public protests in the United States, and American Jewish representatives prepared to 'communicate with the President'.[25] The British government reacted sharply. On 15 November the Foreign Office issued a 'public warning' to Poland that appealed to wartime values. 'The victory of freedom just attained,' it stated, 'will be of little avail if the world is to see the will of force, so recently vanquished, re-incarnated in other forms no less repugnant to the principles of liberty.'[26] The Foreign Office unequivocally warned that continued disorder would force Western democracies 'to wait in patience and enforced inactivity' and thus be prevented from 'promot[ing] their reconstruction'.[27] Jews were encouraged by Balfour's action, possibly feeling their faith in British 'values'

---

[21] Wolf /Moshowitsch Papers, R. Leeper to Wolf, 26 June 1918.
[22] Ibid., Wolf /Moshowitsch Papers, Letter from 'The Council of the Polish Community in Great Britain', 2 August 1918.
[23] *Times*, 6 December 1918, p.7.
[24] Board of Deputies (BoD) ACC/3121/C11/4/2, letter from Foreign Office, 4 December 1918 (London: Metropolitan Archive).
[25] Weisgal, Meyer W., (ed.) *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizman*: Vol.9, Series A, October 1918–July 1920 (Jerusalem: Transaction Books, 1977) p.9: Weizman to Jacob de Haas, 4 November 1918; Wolf /Moshowitsch Papers, Marshall to Wolf, 11 November 1918.
[26] *Jewish Chronicle*, 22 November 1918, p.5.
[27] Ibid.

vindicated.[28] However, while the British government were publicly proclaiming their firm stance on the issue of persecuted minorities, the continuing *de facto* recognition of the PNC gave little incentive for Polish politicians to rein in violent anti-Semitic forces.

The Polish Information Committee, representing a broad political spectrum,[29] thought 'reports of pogroms' were 'invented' or 'exaggerated by German agents' to serve Poland's 'enemies'. Anti-Jewish movements, they argued, were 'not the work of the Polish people'.[30] It was an ominous development that defence of the emerging Polish state required the denial or marginalisation of claims of anti-Jewish violence. Although E.H. Carr of the Foreign Office was initially unconvinced about pogrom reports the events at Lemberg occasioned a rethink.[31] This was particularly due to the influence of Lewis Namier who wrote of one account that it was 'obviously genuine.' A colleague called 'for the immediate dispatch of a commission of enquiry.'[32]

The government were already planning to send a 'semi-official, semi-diplomatic intelligence mission' to Poland under Colonel Wade.[33] The object was to 'form a provisional link between the de facto authorities in Poland and H.M.G.'[34] He was instructed also to 'ascertain the truth of the allegations now being made against the Poles by the Jewish Societies.'[35] Calls for military intervention were rejected in favour of this fact-finding mission. As will be seen, however, the reactionary views of the personnel in the mission subsequently influenced British responses.

---

[28] The telegrams from Eastern Europe displayed the same belief in the values trumpeted by the Allies. Ibid., 15 November 1918, p.8.
[29] For example Annan Bryce, William Joynson Hicks, Home Secretary in the second Baldwin administration 1924-1929 and R.W. Seton-Watson, East European Advisor to the government.
[30] Joint Foreign Committee Minutes (JFC) 17 September 1918, 14 November 1918 (London: Metropolitan Archives).
[31] Ibid., Carr was a junior member of the Russian Department in the Foreign Office who was relatively sympathetic to Wolf.
[32] Foreign Office Papers (FO) 371/3281/201809, 13 December 1918. (Kew: National Archives). Lewis Namier, a Galician Jew and East European expert.
[33] FO371/3282/199551, 1 December 1918. Lieutenant-Colonel H. A. L. H. Wade, formerly British Military Attaché at Copenhagen was accompanied by Mr. Richard Kimens, Vice-Consul at Warsaw and Red Cross Commissioner in Russia, and Mr. Rowland Kenny. *Times*, 11 December 1918, p.7.
[34] FO371/3282/199551, FO note to Lord Hardinge, 6 December 1918.
[35] FO371/3282/199551/W55, 17 December 1918.

In the wake of the Balfour Declaration British officials gave increased weight to Zionist representations. After the Lemberg pogrom Weizman requested an interview with the Foreign Secretary. His approach was more confrontational than that of official Anglo-Jewry. He bluntly reiterated his intention 'to give the widest possible publication' to the pogrom and promised '[m]ass Meetings all over this country, possibly in France and Italy, and certainly in America.'[36] His threat met with some success. He persuaded Sir George Clerk of the Foreign Office to facilitate a fact-finding mission to Poland by Israel Cohen.[37] Clerk did not want to 'discourage any attempt of the Zionists to furnish us with such information' on the basis that he go as 'special Commissioner of the "Times", an idea which had apparently already commended itself to that Journal.'[38] Lord Hardinge agreed '[i]f the "Times" can be satisfied as to the veracity of Mr. Cohen's reports it would be better that his mission should have no official character.' This view however, seems to have been expressed on the proviso that 'the "Times" makes it quite clear that their Commissioner is a Jew and a Zionist.'[39] Balfour acceded to this advice.[40]

Meanwhile moderate Poles attempted to diffuse the tension suggesting problems between Poles and Jews had been distorted. August Zaleski, whom Wolf thought to be liberal minded, telegraphed the Anglo-Jewish leadership stating that the violence was mostly the work of recently released 'criminals', that the Polish authorities had re-established order, appointed a committee of enquiry and was going to pay damages to those affected. Consideration was also being given to an 'International Commission of Enquiry.'[41] The 'Zaleski-oriented' Polish Information Committee claimed relations between the Poles and the Jews were 'good'.[42] However, tension was still evident. Count Wladyslaw Sobanski of the PNC deprecated reports of anti-Jewish violence in a

---

[36] Weizman, *Letters and Papers*, Weizman to Sir Eric Drummond, 25 November 1918, p.37.
[37] Clerk was soon to be private secretary to Lord Curzon, Acting Foreign Secretary from January 1919. Cohen was an author, journalist and General Secretary of the World Zionist Organisation in London. He left for Poland on 6 December 1918. Weizman, *Letters and Papers*, Weizman to Nahum Sokolow, 5 December 1918, pp.56-7.
[38] FO371/3281/199154, 29 November 1918.
[39] Ibid. Baron Hardinge of Penshurst, previously Viceroy of India, in 1918 Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office.
[40] FO371/3281/199189, Balfour to Weizman, 2 December 1918.
[41] JFC, 3 December 1918.
[42] *Jewish Chronicle*, 29 November 1918, p.9. Levene, *War*, p.200.

letter to Lord Swaythling of the Board of Deputies.[43] He suggested that Jewish protests had provoked 'a not unjustifiable indignation' in Polish circles and they were proof of an attempt to discredit Poles 'on the eve of the Peace Conference.'[44] The London Polish press echoed these views.[45] Zionist bureaus in Stockholm and Berne had embellished the figures of those affected by violence. These were seized upon as representing the views of *all* Jews. Sensitivity to Jewish protests, combined with Polish fears of the erosion of Western support, led English-based Poles and their supporters to sanitise reports of violence. The exaggerations of the Zionist bureaus were countered by equally misleading Polish remonstrations. However, in Britain the reputation for distorting the truth tended to fall on Jews. Sobanski complained that 'anti-Jewish disorders' had received undue attention in the press.[46] However, from the beginning the press had scant sympathy for the Jewish cause.

The Times provided most coverage of violence in Eastern Europe. Its first major article cast doubt on the veracity of reports.[47] The 'massacres' of 'Belgians by Germans', 'Armenians by Turks' and 'Jewish Bolshevists upon non-Bolshevist Jews, as in Russia'[48] were invoked to demonstrate how anti-Jewish violence in Poland differed from other recent atrocities that had roused widespread indignation. Whereas these were recognised as state-sanctioned, violence in Poland was characterised as spontaneous and to some degree excusable. The notion that the eruption of violence was 'unofficial' and a response to Jewish 'provocation' was henceforth widely adopted by British commentators. Not only was the proportion of Jews in Poland stated to be 'far higher than any people can digest', but the paper warned of the Jewish 'tendencies' which it said often brought 'the Jewish name into disrepute.'[49] The implication was that large numbers of Jews living in extreme poverty made them susceptible to Bolshevism and therefore anti-Semitism was a natural consequence.[50] Leading Jews were exhorted to take a 'strong stand' against alleged troublesome Jewish elements. British and Polish

---

[43] Wolf /Moshowitsch Papers, Sobansky to Lord Swaythling, 30 November 1918.
[44] Ibid.
[45] *Tygodnik Polski*, 1 December 1918.
[46] Wolf /Moshowitsch Papers, Sobansky to Lord Swaythling, 30 November 1918.
[47] *Times*, 2 December 1918, p.9.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid., 4 December 1918, p.7. Henry Wickham Steed, editor of *The Times*, held this view as did others. Wickham-Steed, Henry, *The Hapsburg Monarchy*, (London, Constable and Company, 1914); *Contemporary Review*, January 1919, p.58.

Jews were bifurcated and the 'Jews of Lemberg' were cast as 'the antithesis of our British Jews'.[51] They were implicated in 'questions of usury, food profiteering, and betrayal of Poles'.[52] *The Times* reinforced fears that Poland was 'a corridor by which Bolshevism may creep into the very centre of Europe'[53] by reporting that Bolsheviks, facilitated by Germans, were sending Jewish agents into Poland. On this basis the Jews were a 'great provocation to the Lemberg populace'.[54] It was suggested that during the war even 'in London itself, under provocation, shops have been wrecked.'[55] In other words if the English had been incited to violence presumably the Polish response was explicable.

Poles by contrast were cast as gallant. The battle for Lemberg was portrayed as a heroic tale of an unorganised 'army' of youthful Poles who fought bravely against the invading Ruthenians initially using little but their fists.[56] The Warsaw correspondent suggested everything had now returned to normal and Lemberg was like 'any European city on a Sunday.'[57] Pogrom stories were therefore '[m]uch exaggerated' and an '[e]ffort to discredit Poles.'[58] Atrocity stories were apparently designed 'to prejudice the new Polish *régime* in the world's eyes, for purposes which the Germans and Bolshevists know best.'[59] With Lemberg's Jews firmly established as in league with Britain's (and Poland's) ideological enemies, *The Times* adopted a seemingly balanced and disinterested stance calling for 'improvement' in Polish-Jewish relations, but this depended 'on the disappearance of this frantic anti-Polish propaganda…abroad' which would otherwise 'embitter the population.'[60] Those wishing to protest against Polish violence were, by implication, siding with allegedly malevolent Jewish forces. *The Times* set the tone for British press coverage.

---

[51] *Times*, 4 December 1918, p.7.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid., 16 December 1918, p.7.
[54] Ibid., 4 December 1918, p.7 The account of the Polish military commander in Lemberg differed little from the German version of the Belgian atrocities. BoD, ACC/3121/C11/4/2, Telegram from Zionist Bureau to *Jewish Chronicle*, 6 December 1918. The implicit acceptance of this version of events by *The Times* is noteworthy because these explanations vis-à-vis Belgium were largely rejected as an excuse for 'frightfulness'.
[55] *Times*, 4 December 1918, p.7.
[56] *Times*, 3 December 1918, p.8. Ruthenians were Ukrainians. They had reached agreement with Austria to take control of Lemberg.
[57] Ibid., 4 December 1918, p.7.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid., 7 December 1918, p.7. Article 'The Jews of Poland. Evils of Bolshevism'.

Lucien Wolf was encouraged by a report in the *Daily Telegraph* on 4 January 1919 claiming Poles were engaged in 'a savage war of extermination against the Jews' which was viewed with 'indifference' by Polish intelligentsia who were accused of using all means to 'conceal' and 'deny' them.[61] However the general trend of the *Telegraph* and *The Times* was to emphasise the threat to Poland from the 'moral disease' of Bolshevism, which was manifested in the 'awfulness' of Bolshevik atrocities.[62] Both continued to stress the dangers for Poland of a joint attack from Germany and Russia. *The Englishwoman* agreed and the Liberal *New Statesman* suggested Britain had 'the duty to protect Poland' from Bolsheviks and portrayed the Jews as in league with Germany to keep Poles subjugated.[63] The Liberal *Contemporary Review* published an article eulogising Dmowski as 'the most adroit [Party Leader] in Poland' who would not compromise for 'Teuton or for Israelite'. Such 'convictions', it stated, were rare but they were 'Dmowski's strength.'[64] Pogrom reports 'spread by Jewish international agencies' were 'exaggerated' but alleged Jewish 'control' of a disproportionate amount of trade and the separateness of the Orthodox community meant 'the outbreaks' were 'not surprising.'[65] There was an increasing tendency in some publications to pick out certain 'undesirable' aspects of Jewish communities and to give the impression they could be universally applied.[66] In this atmosphere a visit to Poland by Joseph Prag, a member of the Board of Deputies, was refused because the Foreign Office, acting on a tip from the new Polish Premier Ignacy Paderewski, believed he would spread Bolshevik propaganda.[67] Colonel Wade's fact-finding mission had reached Poland in late December. They quickly associated themselves with Paderewski.[68]

Wade's reports dovetailed with some of the anti-Jewish prejudices being vented in the press. Nevertheless, they were taken seriously and acted upon by the government. On 14 January 1919 he telegraphed that Poland needed help 'within five weeks' or it would be 'surrounded and crushed and [the] last barrier between Bolsheviks and

---

[61] *Daily Telegraph*, 4 January 1919, p.5.
[62] Ibid., 8 January 1919 p.10; *Times*, 7 January 1919, p.8.
[63] *The Englishwoman*, February 1919, pp.58-9; *The New Statesman*, 4 January 1919, p.270 and 1 February 1919, p.366.
[64] *Contemporary Review*, January 1919, p.54.
[65] Ibid., p.56.
[66] See *Spectator*, 18 January 1919.
[67] Levene, *War,* p.214.
[68] *Times*, 31 December 1918, p.8.

Western Europe' would 'dis-appear.' He advised 'sending material and advance guard of General HALLER's army.'[69] Wade and his American counterpart Major Foster arranged 'unrestricted passage to the Polish troops' into German occupied territory.[70] This was to dramatically effect the war with Russia and the treatment of Jews in Polish territory. The Prime Minister read Wade's reports and further promptings led the government to send 12,000 rifles and 5 million rounds of ammunition to assist the Poles.[71]

On 16 January Wade turned his attention to Lemberg. Rather than clarifying the facts concerning the anti-Jewish violence, Wade's report, written in Warsaw, stressed a state of confusion and hinted at Jewish culpability. General 'confusion and pre-occupation with pursuit of [the] enemy' provided a muddied context for violence and robbery in the Jewish quarter. Seventy-two Jewish deaths had occurred in 'incessant street fighting' in which 'Jewish armed Police appear to have fought on the side of Ukrainians.' Jewish deaths were thus portrayed as legitimate casualties of war. He reassured Whitehall that an impartial judge was investigating and that Paderewski had 'urged toleration for Jews'.[72] Britain's representative in Poland, working within the official pro-Polish paradigm and perhaps under pressure of time relied more on the testimony of Polish officialdom than that of Jewish victims. Wade formulated a picture that coincided with the views of the British press. Furthermore, by disconnecting the outbreak from those who gave orders, the possibility of achieving justice was undermined. The pogrom lost the status of a deliberate atrocity executed by an identifiable set of perpetrators. Nobody was prosecuted.

A later communiqué provides insight into the ideology that underpinned the tenor and content of Wade's reports. His chief concern for German Poland was 'the relentless ill-will of the German Nation, German Jews, and Socialists.' He suggested, Jews 'fear a loss of opportunities for trade and profit-making' in a united Poland. Furthermore Bolshevik propaganda among the Polish working classes in German Poland was 'being conducted by Jews.' Poles by contrast 'behaved with exemplary patience and self-control'. He believed the German press especially responsible for disseminating

---

[69] FO608/61, Wade to Rumbold, 14 January 1919.
[70] *Times*, 20 January 1919, p.8.
[71] FO608/61, Wade to FO, 12 January 1919.
[72] FO608/66/259, Wade to FO, 16 January 1919.

pogrom 'propaganda' in order to show Poles as an 'uncontrolled and intolerant people, to whom the care of alien minorities can never be entrusted'.[73] Wade's ultimate fear was that a territorial and ideological amalgamation of Germany and Russia would create a powerful and aggressive force that would destabilise Europe unfavourably for Britain. The subversive presence of Jews linked both dangers. Only 'the strong national sentiment of the Poles' stood in the way 'for the present...between Russian nihilism and Western civilisation.'[74]

To what extent did Wade's reports chime with the views of Whitehall? Not everyone at the Foreign Office was convinced of his strident pro-Polish attitude. Namier, sometimes with the support of his supervisor, Sir James Headlam-Morley, continually lobbied against the acceptance of Wade's reports as the basis for conducting policy and bemoaned the want of 'someone with actual knowledge of the Galician question'.[75] However, he accepted it was difficult to criticise 'the man…on the spot.'[76] Namier's single-minded focus on the subject eroded his status within Foreign Office circles. Polish leaders became concerned about his influence and he was prevented from taking over from Sir Esme Howard in Paris.[77] Anti-Jewish violence also created nervousness among the junior ranks. E.H. Carr, for example, in response to an appeal on behalf of the Jewish Committee of Help for the Victims of Pogroms in Lemberg, expressed his confusion. 'It is hard to say which is cause', he wrote, 'and which effect'.[78]

Nevertheless, more senior officials were convinced of the need to support Poland in the face of a Bolshevik threat from Russia and Germany. For Howard, Carr's superior, 'German propaganda' had adversely affected public opinion against Poland believing 'it is too often taken for granted that the Poles are to blame.' He shared Wade's fear of the danger of Germany and Russia becoming 'conterminous' and urged action 'rapidly to establish an independent Poland.'[79] Eyre Crowe had suggested it was in the nature of Jews to gravitate towards 'revolutionary and terroristic movements,' whereas, Balfour was sceptical of the connection linking Jews to both Bolshevism and imperialism.[80]

---

[73] FO608/61, Wade to FO, 8 February 1919.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Headlam-Morley, *Memoir*, 12 February 1919, p.21.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid., 12 February 1919, p.29.
[78] FO608/66/300, Carr note, n/d.
[79] FO608/61/10, Howard note, 3 February 1919.
[80] FO371/4369 P.I.D. 547/547, 18 November 1918.

However, he questioned the loyalty of newly minted Jewish citizens and deemed it 'feeble compared with their loyalty to their religion and their race.'[81] He acknowledged the extensive role of persecution in Jewish history, but suggested it had produced 'undesirable' self-protecting qualities.[82] In a nod to anti-Semitism which attached itself to Zionism he implied that the civil qualities that bound a community 'to the land it inhabits by something deeper even than custom' were missing from Jews who choose not to live in Palestine.[83]

It was perhaps inevitable that these views coloured Balfour's approach to Poland's Jewish minority and, consequently, a significant proportion of his more senior subordinates. The majority view in the Foreign Office appears to have been a suspicion of East European Jews. When this was added to the overarching belief in the nation-state idea and its ramifications for Poland in the face of Bolshevist 'threats' from Russia and Germany, it created a set of assumptions that worked against Jewish appeals for support. Hence when Cohen wrote to *The Times* in early February detailing his perception of the excesses they were dismissed by Lord Robert Cecil, the outgoing Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs as 'exaggerated'.[84] This was partially based on 'information given…by Colonel Wade'.[85] Keen to promote their view to the British public and control potential indignation, Howard suggested that a statement emanating from the Polish Ministry of Interior that Jews had the same rights as Poles be placed in *The Times.*[86] For their part, the press continued to suggest that Polish Jews were the authors of their own persecution, being responsible for the privations of the rest of the population.[87] The timing of these manoeuvres was crucial because the British Government were, at this moment, giving serious consideration to granting official recognition to Poland. On 6 February Wade telegraphed Balfour directly to push for endorsement of the new state.[88] Carr, apparently convinced that recognition of the Polish government under Paderewski would bring much needed stability urged it

---

[81] Sokolow, Nahum, *History of Zionism 1600-1918* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1919) Introduction by A.J. Balfour p.xxxi-xxxiii.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid., Wolf suggested of Balfour that it was 'difficult to say where the anti-Semite ended and the Zionist began'. Wolf, *Diary,* 28 February 1919.
[84] FO608/66/308, Lord Robert Cecil note, n/d.
[85] Ibid.
[86] FO608/66/308, Howard note, 2 February 1919.
[87] *Times*, 11 March 1919, p.9; *The Nineteenth Century and After*, March 1919, p.617.
[88] FO608/61, Wade to Balfour, 6 February 1919.

'at once.'[89] Highly sensitive to the possibility of public clamour in reaction to the violence, Britain moved quickly to recognise Poland.[90]

Official recognition, far from providing stability heralded fresh outbreaks of violence. Robberies, beatings and intimidation were regularly reported in the Anglo-Jewish press. According to Rowland Kenney, Red Cross Commissioner and one of Wade's team in Warsaw, a 'Pogrom atmosphere' still prevailed.[91] The Foreign Office received irrefutable evidence that Poles were being advised to wear a Polish flag in public 'to avoid the unpleasant consequence of being mistaken for something other than a Pole.'[92] On 5 April in Pinsk, over thirty Jews, members of the local Food Distribution Committee, were summarily executed by order of Major George Luczynski, the Polish commander, on suspicion that they were Bolsheviks. Richard Kimens, British Vice-Consul in Warsaw and a member of Wade's commission, submitted favourable reports of the Polish action. Nevertheless, Foreign Office officials questioned the consistency and veracity of the evidence. Howard suggested the 'regrettable incident' was the result of 'nerves.' He thought it possible 'that there was some Bolshevik plot' and suggested 'some interallied [sic] officers…go to Pinsk & clear up the matter'.[93] Balfour endorsed this approach, believing it 'in the interests of Polish Government itself.'[94] A subsequent report concluded the mass execution was 'justified' because Jewish 'behaviour gave grounds for grave suspicion' and there was the 'probability of a Bolshevik rising and the destruction of the Polish garrison.'[95] H.J. Paton suggested 'the meeting may have been perfectly innocent' but there were 'grounds for suspicion'. In any case he was confident that Major Muczynski [sic] was justified in his action',[96] and concluded 'there is nothing more to be done.'[97] Foreign Office personnel and their representatives in Poland clung to the hope that violence was non-systematic and that the recently endorsed Polish government would control their more extreme elements. In the

[89] Ibid., 10 February 1919.
[90] *Times*, 22 February 1919, p.9.
[91] FO608/66/269, Kenny Report, March 1919.
[92] FO608/66/290, Kenny Report, March 1919.
[93] FO608/66/428, Kimens to FO, 15 April 1919.
[94] FO608/66/426, Balfour to Kimens, 16 April 1919.
[95] FO608/66/447, Paris to FO, n/d.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.

meantime methods of control condemned in the war as 'frightfulness' were tolerated on the basis that the Jews were an inherent threat.[98]

Although the *Jewish Chronicle* published an account of the Pinsk massacre, it barely registered in the mainstream press.[99] Why then did the Anglo-Jewish community not try to exploit the issue to raise British indignation? Firstly, information on the Pinsk shootings was initially sketchy and therefore it was impossible to construct a concrete case. Secondly, the prevailing attitude within official Anglo-Jewry played a role. Wolf's views carried considerable weight within the community. He was at the Peace Conference when confirmation of the shootings became available. He discussed them with an outraged Cyrus Adler of the American Jewish delegation. On 23 April he was granted an interview with Paderewski. Wolf's explanation provides an insight as to the parameters within which he felt constrained to work. The Polish Premier was, for Wolf, 'a man of moderate views, and is a great contrast to Dmowski with whom, at the present moment, he is not on good terms.'[100] He believed that more extreme action over 'the Jewish Question' might destabilise Paderewski's position and 'open the door for anti-Semitic extremists like Dmovski to seize power.'[101] Wolf sought to exploit Polish divisions by fostering closer relationships with those whom he considered moderate.[102] He therefore shunned public protests.

When Samuel Daishes of the Board of Deputies proposed a mass protest meeting over the Pinsk murders Wolf acted to avert it. He used Foreign Office contacts to urge that Paderewski write 'deploring the massacre and assuring…there will be a vigorous investigation and stern punishment of the guilty'. This, he believed, would 'pacify our London friends and avert the holding of an indignation meeting which would only embitter Polish-Jewish relations and jeopardise my negotiations with Paderewski.'[103] Despite a letter from Zaleski maintaining a Polish commission of investigation had

---

[98] For an eye-witness account by left wing journalist Henry Brailsford just prior to the massacre which undermines Polish assertions see Brailsford, Henry Noel, *Across the Blockade: A Record of Travels in Enemy Europe* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1919) p.73.
[99] Coverage was small and favoured Polish interpretations. *Daily Express*, 18 June 1919, p.1.
[100] Wolf, *Diary*, 23 April 1919.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid. To the annoyance of Louis Marshall, President of the American Jewish Committee.
[103] Ibid., 6 May 1919.

already concluded 'that illegalities had been committed',[104] Paderewski's letter to Wolf was not so forthcoming. 'In the case of Pinsk' he wrote, 'Bolshevick [sic] attacks' on the Polish Army 'rendered it necessary to act with special severity'.[105] His reply can be interpreted as evidence of the need to pacify strong reactionary elements in Polish politics. Wolf however believed the Paris negotiations were at a crucial stage and therefore apparently could not 'afford at this moment to have any open rupture with the Poles or to antagonise Paderewski.'[106] Within his own paradigm Wolf had a point because work was just getting started on the New States Committee in Paris that was to 'consider what guarantees have to be found for the protection of Jews and other minorities'.[107]

British Zionists felt no such restraint. A public protest had been arranged at the Queen's Hall in London on 9 April. It was chaired by Lord Parmoor and attended by Lord Bryce, the central figure in the discourse on German war atrocities.[108] The event was more connected to Cohen's report than events at Pinsk. As well as confirming Wade's figures for Jewish dead at Lemberg, his report, published in April, listed 131 towns and villages allegedly affected by varying levels of violence and looting between 2 November 1918 and 28 January 1919.[109] Cohen made no secret of the fact that the figures of those affected by the violence had initially been exaggerated by Zionist bureaus. Yet he was equally certain of a deliberate Polish attempt 'to discredit the stories of the pogroms' and of complicity by 'their friends in Western Europe'.[110] Cohen confirmed pogroms 'could manifestly not have been organised by any central authority'.[111] He also highlighted the bravery of individual Poles.[112] The *Morning Post* responded with an editorial entitled 'Apocryphal Pogroms.'[113] It was suggested that 'Mr. Cohen's account of the alleged pogroms…does not bear the test of even a cursory

---

[104] Ibid., 7 May 1919.
[105] AJC., Cyrus Adler Correspondence (Chronological Files), 1919 (June-Dec), Box 7.
[106] Wolf, *Diary*, 8 May 1919.
[107] Headlam-Morley, *Memoir*, 8 May 1919, p.99.
[108] Bryce's presence was played down in most of the British press.
[109] Cohen, Israel, *A Report on the Pogroms in Poland* (London: Central Office of the Zionist Organisation, April 1919) pp.11-20.
[110] Ibid., p.7.
[111] Ibid., p.8.
[112] Ibid., p.21.
[113] *Morning Post*, 11 April 1919.

examination…the true object of the meeting was to discredit Poland and to help Germany.'[114]

Fresh reports of Polish atrocities arrived at the Foreign Office. It was reported that Polish victories at Lida and Vilna were accompanied by the deaths of fifty-four Jewish civilians.[115] Homes and synagogues were looted with hundreds taken prisoner. The Anglo-Jewish leadership decided to change their approach, eschewing reticence for pro-active protest. This came about for four reasons. Firstly, negotiations surrounding the Minorities Treaty were virtually complete releasing Wolf from fears of offending influential Polish negotiators.[116] Secondly, Wolf and other Jewish leaders were genuinely shocked at the apparent escalation of violence in the Eastern European war zone.[117] Thirdly, Anglo-Jewry were stung into action 'by foreign criticism of its 'supineness'.[118] Finally, Wolf was increasingly concerned about a victory of the White Russian forces believing it would 'be followed by huge butcheries of Jews if we do not make an example of the Poles in good time.'[119] Poland was perceived as the key to violence elsewhere because the British refusal to recognise either Soviet Russia or the Ukraine as valid states limited both the flow of information from stricken areas and the practicality of intervention.

Anglo-Jewish leaders tried to coordinate a response with American and French Jewish representatives. They also bombarded officials with telegrams and encouraged Foreign Office contacts to confront their Polish counterparts. Protests spilled over into the press. Israel Cohen and Henry Brailsford wrote to *The Times*, which also reported a huge pogrom protest by New York Jews.[120] The paper acknowledged the Poles had treated the Jews 'abominably' but undermined the idea that Jews were victims by suggesting 'they are numerically very strong…and even stronger in ability and

---

[114] Ibid.
[115] On 10 May 1919 the Jewish deputies of the Polish Diet wrote to Paderewski giving details of these and many more instances of pogroms. Marshall Correspondence Peace Conference, Paris, 1919 (1) Boxes 5-6.
[116] Wolf, *Diary*, 22 May 1919. Sir Eyre Crowe wrote to Harding stating that Headleam-Morley had swallowed Wolf's bait 'hook, line and sinker.' FO608/51/114/1/20, 30 May 1919.
[117] Wolf, *Diary*, 19 May 1919.
[118] Fink, *Defending*, p.222.
[119] Wolf, *Diary*, 22 May 1919.
[120] Brailsford was criticised by Captain B. Crewdson, Chief of the British Mission, Warsaw. FO608/67/145, Crewdson to FO, 7 July 1919.

energy'.[121] Jewish leaders also primed sympathetic MPs to ask questions in the Commons. When questioned on the 'massacre' at Pinsk, Cecil Harmsworth, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs replied that the victims had 'been implicated in a plot to seize, disarm, and kill a small Polish outpost stationed on the Polish eastern frontier.'[122] Harmsworth failed to mention Foreign Office doubts about the action of Polish troops and sidestepped a subsequent request to have the relevant reports published.

Reports from Vilna, provided by Wolf, were causing the Foreign Office to doubt official communiqués. Paton believed 'favourable accounts from English and American officers' lacked 'full and necessary evidence'.[123] Wolf's information was backed up by British sources. Sir Percy Wyndam in Warsaw confidentially reported that Josef Pilsudski, the Polish Head of State, had confessed in a meeting with the American Minister to Poland that General Haller was disposed to 'ma[k]e life miserable for Jews and this was causing [a] renewal of such acts by [the] civilian population.'[124] Haller's culpability was also suggested in the press.[125] British intervention in facilitating the passage of Haller's troops made this a sensitive point. Foreign Office discomfort was increased by a Parliamentary question, which raised the issue of Haller's troops joining 'the mob in attacking Jews.'[126]

A telegraph from the Foreign Office sent to Wyndham on 12 June pointed to the 'growing agitation' in Britain over 'Jewish excesses in Poland' and suggested his recent reports did 'not assist us adequately in meeting criticisms'.[127] It highlighted a number of inconsistencies, omissions, and unsubstantiated assumptions, which made it 'hard to make [a] case for [the] Polish authorities'.[128] The Anglo-Jewish campaign was starting to unsettle the Foreign Office who had 'been approached' by leading British Jews to hold a Mansion House protest meeting, but they had 'not felt in a position to

[121] *Times*, 22 May 1919, p.13.
[122] *Jewish Chronicle*, 23 May 1919, p.9 and 30 May 1919, p.9.
[123] FO608/67/55, Paton note, 9 June 1919.
[124] FO608/67, Wyndham to FO, 1 June 1919.
[125] *Times*, 3 June 1919, p.11.
[126] Ibid., 6 June 1919, p.6.
[127] FO608/67/81, FO to Wyndham, 12 June 1919.
[128] Ibid.

place any obstacle in the way of the meeting being held.'[129] In the end they exploited internal divisions within the Anglo-Jewish community to refuse the request.[130]

The Anglo-Jewish leadership pressed ahead with its campaign to alert the public. An *ad hoc* committee was appointed to organise a demonstration along the lines of the recent New York protest.[131] They arranged for a Jewish National Day of Mourning for 26 June. British Jews refrained from work to process silently through London and attended services of prayer and mourning. The press was either indifferent or opposed outright. Days before the protest *The Times* and the *Morning Post* made their antagonism clear. They published letters that denied the pogroms, blamed the Jews, more specifically 'Jewish temperament',[132] or derided 'mourning festivities.'[133] Disingenuous articles were published to stoke fears of a German armed renaissance in which the Jews were '*agents provocateurs*'[134] in a '[p]lot [a]gainst Poland.'[135] German blast furnaces were said to be 'working night and day' to manufacture 'munitions to be used against the Poles' and the public was asked whether it realised the 'now impending...massacre of the Polish nation?'[136] Poland was portrayed as 'traditionally devoted to the British cause of national freedom.'[137] On the day of the protest the *Westminster Gazette* refuted pogrom reports as '[e]xaggerated' and claimed Polish action had been warranted because of the aggressive behaviour of the Jews in Vilna and Pinsk.[138] The protest was afterwards portrayed in distinctly anti-Semitic tones and British Jews as in thrall to suspicious 'foreigners'.[139]

Balfour drew Paderewski's attention to 'the strong feeling which has been aroused in England and parts of the British Empire' and asked him to impress upon Poles the 'necessity of adopting a conciliatory attitude' towards Jews whilst giving 'the strictest

---

[129] Ibid.
[130] Ten prominent Jews, prompted by persistent charges that connected all Jews with Bolshevism, had written to the *Morning Post* in April to dissociate themselves and others from the movement. One member of this elite group, Sir Phillip Magnus intervened directly with the Foreign Office and 'gained support for the denial of the venue for the purposes of a protest meeting.' *Jewish Chronicle*, 13 June 1919, p.14.
[131] *Jewish Chronicle*, 6 June 1919, p.8.
[132] *Times*, June 1919, p.8.
[133] *Morning Post*, 23 June 1919, p.8.
[134] *Times*, 24 June 1919, p.8.
[135] *Morning Post*, 25 June 1919, p.8.
[136] Ibid., 27 June 1919, p.3.
[137] Ibid., p.6.
[138] *Westminster Gazette*, 26 June 1919, p.4.
[139] *Morning Post*, 27 June 1919, pp.3 and 6.

orders to officers of the army to refrain from any action which may be considered as showing an Anti-Semitic bias.'[140] He was careful though to avoid causing offence by suggesting reports of violence were 'exaggerated.'[141] Paderewski accused Polish Jews of *Franc-Tireurs* tactics.[142] The Government had exploited similar accusations when mobilising anti-German sentiment during the war so it was significant that these charges remained uncontested by British officials and politicians. The Polish premier also suggested that over-stated reports of atrocities were part of wider systematic attempts to undermine Poland's territorial claims. This particular claim contained a disturbing dimension. He suggested '[c]ertain pogroms in neighbouring countries have in one single day made fifty times as many Jewish victims as all the rioting and disorders in Poland during the last eight months.'[143] Unchecked anti-Jewish violence in Russia and the Ukraine was invoked to demonstrate that Polish 'reprisals' were relatively restrained. *The Times* and the *Morning Post* welcomed Paderewski's 'reassuring' statement.[144]

Members of the British military mission in Poland persisted in defending Haller. Captain Crewdson, the senior officer in Warsaw, suggested a recent riot in Cracow 'owed its origin to overcharging by a Jewish shop-keeper' rather than Haller's troops who had 'retaliated by giving him a thoroughly good hiding.'[145] He also accounted for some of the day-to-day persecution suffered by Jews. '[Polish soldiers] have a playful habit', he stated, 'when excited of catching a Jew and shaving his beard off.' This, he reasoned, was 'natural' because of the plethora of 'low class' Jews who were 'dirty and disgusting'. Crewdson thought the name 'Jew' was 'synonymous with that of profiteer', furthermore 'nearly every Jew' was 'armed' and it was 'their habit' to 'work the revolution through hands other than their own'.[146] Paton agreed '[t]hese anti-Semitic excesses may easily have an economic origin' but conceded Poles were 'strongly affected by racial and probably also by religious feeling.'[147] Esme Howard suggested 'animosity' was 'mainly economic,' but also 'due to the distinctly anti-

[140] FO608/67/96, Balfour to Paderewski, 25 June 1919.
[141] Ibid.
[142] FO608/67/128, Paderewski to Balfour, n/d.
[143] *Times*, 25 June 1919, p.11 and *Morning Post*, 25 June 1919, p.10.
[144] *Morning Post*, 25 June 1919, p.10.
[145] FO608/67/145. Crewdson to Sir William Goode, 3 July 1919.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid., Paton minute, 4 July 1919.

national or anti-Polish attitude of many Jews', who could not 'disguise their feelings for the Germans.'[148] When it came to understanding 'reasons' for the violence, the propensity for British officials to believe their agents in Poland coloured their judgement. Nevertheless, the escalation of anti-Jewish brutality caused them increasing concern. Doubts about the impartiality of British representatives in Poland eventually surfaced in Parliament but were refuted by insinuations that Jews were prone to Bolshevism.[149]

Public pressure in America led the U.S. government to send a three-man team, headed by Henry Morganthau, to investigate anti-Semitic disorders.[150] Ostensibly, requested by Paderewski, the idea probably emanated from Herbert Hoover and Hugh Gibson.[151] The move outflanked Jewish leaders. Wolf felt that 'as Paderewski has challenged an enquiry we could not well refuse our assent to it.'[152] Louis Marshall, President of the American Jewish Committee, had 'advocated such an investigation' since the Lemberg pogrom.[153] However, he and Wolf foresaw considerable pitfalls. As a result of placing a Jew at the head of a very large and visible commission, American Jewish protests subsided.[154] However, the pro-Polish attitude of the remaining two members was also to have a crucial effect on the findings. The mission departed for Poland in mid-July. The British government was refused permission to send a British representative.[155]

In July Parliamentary pressure increased and accounts of Polish violence gained credence in the press. This did not dent an overwhelming sense of optimism regarding the new state of Poland, which was now guaranteed by Article 93 of the Peace Treaty. A *Times* editorial pointed out that if the Poles treated their minorities (by which they meant Jews) 'loyally' they would be 'able to resist…outside influences'; it also called

---

[148] Ibid., Howard minute, 7 July 1919.
[149] *Times*, 12 August 1919, p.14.
[150] Morganthau had been the American Ambassador to Turkey during the war when he spoke out against the 'Race Murder' of the Armenians.
[151] FO608/67/14, 26 May 1919. Hugh Gibson had, in April, been made American Minister to Poland and was to be influential in forming an approach to the Polish problem which would be echoed in the British Foreign Office. Gibson had not been in Poland long before he put his name to a report which revealed his susceptibility to an anti-Semitic outlook. Hardinge pointed to 'exaggerations' confirmed 'by the authority of an American Officer who was present'. Carr dismissed it as the ramblings of an 'inexperienced diplomatist' who had been affected by the 'Polish atmosphere'.
[152] Wolf, *Diary,* 9 July 1919.
[153] AJC., Marshall Correspondence, Marshall to Robert Lansing, Secretary of State, 6 June 1919.
[154] Wolf, *Diary*, 10 July 1919.
[155] FO608/67/289, telegram to F.O.

on Polish minorities 'to be loyal subjects of the new Polish State and to identify themselves with this new and proud nationality.'[156] Jews, in other words, were called on to lose their distinctiveness. British officials continued to express their disquiet. A telegram to Balfour stated '[t]here is still a strong feeling in the country and Parliament about the treatment of Jews in Poland. One cause seems to be complete inefficiency and corruption of [the] Polish police.'[157] These concerns combined with frustration at the unreliability of information from Poland, public displays of dissatisfaction by the Anglo-Jewish community and fear that 'outside influences' would jeopardize the Polish state, prompted the Foreign Office to action. They decided to send a mission of their own.

On 9 August Wyndham was notified of the government's intention. He reported that the proposal 'met with the strongest opposition'[158] from Paderewski and was only eventually granted 'with great reluctance.'[159] Eyre Crowe had 'always been against these missions'[160] later confirming his views to Curzon. He reinforced his opinion by quoting Hoover who not only believed the pogroms were 'immensely exaggerated', but that Jews were guilty of 'profiteering to the limit of their opportunities'. He also 'expressed surprise at the restraint and moderation displayed by the Polish troops' who were protecting Jews from 'the infuriated Christian population.'[161] Significantly, there was high-level liaison between American and British diplomats. The similarities between the ways in which both missions were construed and presented their findings suggest they were not entirely independent of each other. *The Times* announced on 23 August that the mission was to be headed by Sir Stuart Samuel. The *Morning Post* saw the mission as part of a 'great conspiracy against Poland'[162] and launched a personal attack on Samuel. What escaped the notice of critics was the appointment by Duncan Gregory at the Foreign Office of Captain Peter Wright as Assistant Commissioner.[163] Wright was an associate of Dmowski.[164] Another important appointment was Sir

---

[156] *Times*, 15 July 1919, p.13.
[157] FO608/67/215, telegram to Balfour, 16 July 1919.
[158] FO608/67/296, Wyndham to FO, 19 August 1919.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid.
[161] FO608/67/310, Crowe to Curzon, 17 September 1919.
[162] *Morning Post*, 30 August 1919, p.6.
[163] Gregory was a staunch supporter of the Polish aristocratic 'ancient social order' Levine, *War,* p.190.
[164] Ibid.

Horace Rumbold on 3 September as Britain's First Minister to Poland who had 'been the Foreign Office's link with the Polish nationalists' whilst stationed at Bern.[165] Rumbold, Wright and Gregory were to have a significant effect on the outcome.

Samuel was instructed by Curzon to inquire into the pogroms, the attitude of the Polish authorities, the general condition of Jews and to assess means of 'reconciliation' between 'Christian[s]' and Jews.[166] He was told not to 'represent the mission as an interference in the domestic concerns of the Polish State.'[167] Samuel was concerned that the timing in the immediate wake of the American mission 'may lead to complications.'[168] The Foreign Office refused to provide Samuel with a secretary and Polish displeasure led to some practical problems. The Polish press accused him of pro-Germanism and of representing Jewish finance and nationalism.[169] From the moment the mission was announced in July 1919 to the report's publication twelve months later the British government continued to prevaricate in Parliament using the mission as a smokescreen for inactivity.[170]

The Morgenthau Commission returned to Paris in late September 1919. They were divided in their views. Morgenthau was keen to play down divisions between Poles and Jews. He tried unsuccessfully to compromise with his fellow commissioners leaving himself open to criticism from two sides. The *Jewish Chronicle* denounced him for blaming the violence on Polish Jews.[171] Fellow commissioners, Homer Johnson and Brigadier General Edgar Jadwin, refused to sign Morgenthau's report and in their 'supplement' exonerated the Poles and impugned the Jews.[172] Marshall wrote to William Phillips, the Assistant Secretary of State that '[t]he entire document is redolent of the stock arguments in which anti-Semites have indulged for centuries.'[173] The report stood. Sir Stuart Samuel was to encounter similar problems.

---

[165] Entry for Rumbold, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35866?docPos3.
[166] Wolf, *Diary*, 8 September 1919.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Ibid.
[169] *Jewish Chronicle*, 3 October 1919, p.11.
[170] *Times*, 31 July 1919, p.17 and 18 November 1919, p.17.
[171] *Jewish Chronicle*, 30 February 1920, p.9.
[172] AJC., Marshall Correspondence, Jadwin Johnson Report.
[173] Ibid., Marshall to Phillips, 26 November 1919.

The beginning of 1920 saw little respite in the daily intimidation and violence suffered by Polish Jews.[174] Anti-Jewish bias was increasingly evident in the press and periodicals. The British Catholic press also aligned itself with Polish anti-Semitism.[175] Although a small number of MPs sporadically raised Poland in Parliament,[176] Lewis Namier became steadily more isolated in his attempts to advocate stronger support for Polish Jews. On one folder entitled 'Alleged Polish outrages in White Russia' Sir Percy Lorraine had scribbled 'this is the sort of thing that Mr. Namier buttons on. No action required'.[177] Rumbold added 'Let us hope he enjoys his fodder.'[178] The growth of British anti-Semitism and Samuel's high profile role in the mission meant concern over anti-Semitism in Poland abated.

In April Polish-Soviet antagonisms became full-scale military conflict. The advent of war meant anything other than advocacy of Poland, largely portrayed as the Western bastion against marauding Bolsheviks, became increasingly untenable. Poland benefitted from its status in the British imagination as a 'small nation'. The Prime Minister stated to Parliamentary acclaim that the Poles were surrounded by 'enemies' and 'hatreds', that they were a 'gifted' race but found themselves facing 'catastrophe' before they had reached maturity.[179] Although the commission returned in December the government delayed publication of its findings. In May Harmsworth announced Parliament would not see the report until the League of Nations had because the investigation of the Jewish position in Poland lay strictly within the province of the League as custodians of the minority clauses of the Treaty. This ignored the government's role in instigating and paying for the mission. At this stage the report consisted of two submissions. Samuel wrote one, Wright, the other. They differed vastly in tone and structure. Samuel's report is notable for its restraint, Wright's for its patent anti-Semitism.

A letter dated 8 May from Gregory to Rumbold is revealing both in terms of government tactics and the ideology behind them. Gregory believed 'the mission ought

---

[174] An article in *The Cornhill Magazine*, January 1920, pp.23-29 was described in *The Times* as by 'a lady of Jewish blood' 'studying the deplorable conditions of the Jews under the new [Polish] rule.' *Times*, 1 January 1920.
[175] *The Tablet: A Weekly Newspaper and Review*, 17 January 1920, p.70.
[176] *Times*, 24 February 1920, p.11 and *Jewish Chronicle*, 30 April 1920.
[177] FO688/6/156, 31 March 1920.
[178] Ibid.
[179] *Times*, 11 August 1920, p.11.

never to have gone' and lamented '[i]t was started when I was away last year and was a 'fait accompli' when I got back.'[180] The momentum of the previous summer, which partly underpinned the decision to send the mission, had dwindled. The Foreign Office was left with a potential embarrassment at variance to its support for the Polish government. By implication a damage limitation exercise was needed. Gregory therefore asked Rumbold to supply a 'mollifying coverer'.[181] Wright was increasingly considered an expert regarding 'outrages on Jews'[182] and Gregory therefore stated 'Wright has even gone so far as to sketch out the sort of lines we expected or hoped your despatch would follow.'[183] Importantly, in view of the contrasting reports, Wright's views were given precedence. Gregory then alluded to the delay in publication. 'After prolonged discussion we decided that Parliamentary pressure requires immediate publication. Then all of a sudden I thought of the League of Nations trick – and this has so far succeeded.'[184] Nevertheless, he continued, 'Harmsworth does not think…that we are entirely safe, as, even when the League of Nations have pronounced…the thing may not be completely dead.'[185] He concluded

> there is everything…to be said against publication…But I think it is only a small fraction in the House which would really press us to publish. This would be a hopelessly inopportune moment and would be sheer Bolshevik propaganda.[186]

This reflected the heightened sensibilities wrought by the war. Moreover, it showed that at this point British Jews, no matter how respectable, were susceptible to anti-Semitic slurs. The file containing Gregory's letter had been seen and either tacitly or explicitly approved by Foreign Secretary Curzon. Meticulous attention to detail meant it was now safe for Lloyd George to announce that the report would be made available after all.[187] The report was published on 3 July 1920.

---

[180] FO688/6/482-3, Gregory to Rumbold, 8 May 1919.
[181] Ibid.
[182] FO688/6, Rumbold to Palaint, 21 July 1920.
[183] FO688/6/482-3, Gregory to Rumbold, 8 May 1919.
[184] Ibid. See page 119.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.
[187] *Times*, 29 June 1920, p.9.

In its published form Samuel's account was sandwiched between Rumbold's letter and Wright's report. It was a commentary on the violence and day-to-day trials faced by Polish Jews based on witness statements. He outlined the effects of the economic boycott, the pernicious role of the National Democratic Party and the xenophobia of the Polish Press. Samuel drew a distinction between the interpretation of the word 'pogrom' in Britain, where it was associated with state-sponsored or state-sanctioned terror, and on the continent where the authorities were not necessarily culpable. Crucially, he concluded that the occurrences at Lemberg, Lida and Vilna 'come under the head of pogroms in the sense generally understood in England.' He estimated the total number of deaths as not 'less than 348' but underlined the widespread and regular low-level intimidation and violence to which Jews were subject and in which the larger manifestations had their roots. He believed the Polish government would exert a 'sobering influence' over Poles and that 'Jews must have patience in order to give time for this to become effective.'[188] In this sense his report was balanced, something that could not be said for Wright's.

Whilst using dispassionate language, Wright's commentary was conspicuous for its prejudice. Most of his report was geared towards providing 'context' for the troubles rather than focusing on the violence. For him, Judaism was 'primitive' and 'not civilised in our sense of the word' therefore Jews were educated but in 'what was not worth knowing'. Jewish practices were portrayed as an attack on reason. He claimed Jews were complicit in German efforts to 'to squeeze and drain Poland.' Jewish support for so-called German methods meant Polish violence was typified as reprisals. Bolshevism in Poland was 'almost purely a Jewish movement' and their espousal of this ideology was driven by 'big profits.' Poverty-stricken Jews were therefore 'capitalists' with a tendency to exploit local peasants and the Polish peasant soldier was merely taking what 'the Jew has so long extracted from him.' It was an even contest in which '[t]he Jew claims a right to all the profits, and the Poles to kick the Jew whenever he feels the inclination.' Charges of ritual murder were characterised as a myth which had its root in Jewish difference, but he contradicted this by citing a case in Lida where 'a Polish soldier was murdered by a Jew, and with those horrible mutilations practised by Jewish Chassidim murderers and which is one of the main

[188] Report by Sir Stuart Samuel on his Mission to Poland, Cmd.674 Miscellaneous No. 10, (1920) pp.5-15.

ways in which they do not seem to be European.' When it came to the number of Jewish casualties Wright was 'more astonished at their smallness than their greatness.' That the Jews 'have been an oppressed and persecuted people', he stated, 'has every merit as a theory except that of being true.'[189]

Wright consistently used an English framework to clarify his points. Soldiers were 'the Polish Tommy', and beard cutting was 'mere rough fun.' His portrayal of Lemberg, the site of the first major pogrom, was designed to appeal to British xenophobia. It was equated with an imaginary version of Birmingham. Here, he postulated, Jews would predominate numerically, all the 'printed inscriptions' would be in Hebrew, with shops and factories Jewish owned. These Jews would be different from Englishmen not only in their dress and the cut of their hair but when speaking to each other they would not only use 'a foreign tongue, but that foreign tongue itself [would be] the language of an enemy.' For Wright Polish Jews were nationalists and meeting their demands would be the equivalent of surrendering a number of seats in Parliament. There would be separate Jewish law courts that used 'Yiddish as well as English in the King's Bench and Chancery Division' and 'Bank of England notes [would be] printed in Yiddish as well as in English.' Finally, Wright saw value in the idea that 'anti-Semitism has been the shield of Poland' and furthermore, that if the government were to tackle the problem of popular anti-Semitism it would 'violate the very first principle of its [democratic] constitution'.[190] As has been shown Wright provided the draft for Rumbold's covering letter.

Rumbold used a tone of reasoned diplomacy. He differentiated between eighteen murders in 'Poland proper' and '330' in 'war zones'. The absence of established Polish authority meant excesses 'los[t] the character of pogroms'. Polish violence was therefore distanced from so-called frightfulness. That Jews comprised a 'larger percentage of the population' was cited as a mitigating factor in their persecution. Jews, he believed 'devoted themselves exclusively to commerce' as opposed to Poles who were 'either engaged in war or settled on the land'. In fact, Jews were actively prevented from either joining the army or hampered by a widespread economic boycott. Jewish association with Germany meant Polish authorities were justified in

[189] Ibid., pp.19-33.
[190] Ibid., pp.21-31.

'relieving many Jews…of their offices, and not reinstating them.' Rumbold singled out Samuel's observations for criticism. Close comparison between his first draft and the finished article shows emphasis was carefully and particularly applied. The overall impact of the changes reveal a deliberate and calculated choice to isolate Samuel, limit leeway for Anglo-Jewish reaction and relativize anti-Jewish violence in Poland.[191] His 'mollifying coverer' ended with a rebuke for the Anglo-Jewish community. The condition of Polish Jews was 'far better than in most of the surrounding countries', furthermore,

> the massacres of Jews by Ukrainian peasant bands can find, in their extent and thoroughness, no parallel except in the massacres of the Armenians in the Turkish Empire… It is giving the Jews very little real assistance to single out as is sometimes done, for reprobation and protest, the country where they have perhaps suffered least.[192]

This passage was misleading. Attempts by Anglo-Jewish leaders to intercede on behalf of the persecuted in Russia or Ukraine had been rebuffed. The result gave the impression that agitation on behalf of Polish Jews was politically or ideologically motivated.

The majority of the press chose to ignore Samuel's account. The *Daily Mail*, Britain's largest selling newspaper, emphasised the 'Germanised' nature of Polish Jews.[193] The *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Express* and *Daily News* gave prominence to Rumbold's letter.[194] The *Morning Post* was confident that the government paper 'sufficiently disposes of the exaggerated reports' of anti-Jewish violence by Poles and praised Wright's contribution as 'one of the most illuminating documents of the subject which has yet appeared…which is not only a political statement but a valuable ethnological treatise.'[195] *The Times* drew readers attention to Wright's commentary as 'a most interesting disquisition' which

---

[191] FO688/6/449-454, Rumbold, draft.
[192] Report by Sir Stuart Samuel, p.4.
[193] *Mail*, 5 July 1920, p.8.
[194] *Telegraph*, 5 July 1920, p.8; *Daily Express*, 5 July 1920, p.7; *Daily News*, 5 July 1920, p.6.
[195] *Morning Post*, 5 July 1920, p.6.

> shows the extraordinary difficulties presented by the existence in Poland of a large population which perpetuates in itself an archaic polity, curious customs, and as meticulous observance of its religious ordinances as was that of the Pharisees 2,000 years ago. It is a foreign body in the very heart of the State, an Oriental civilization hitherto racially insoluble, which now under the guidance of nationalist leaders seeks to erect itself into a close politico-religious corporation with the widest powers while yet remaining in Poland.[196]

The Guardian refrained from comment and more or less limited itself to a verbatim reproduction of Rumbold's letter.[197] Only the *Daily Herald* chose to emphasise the anti-Jewish nature of the violence.[198]

The Board of Deputies decided to take no action with regard to the report. However, this was only agreed on the basis that a 'précis of the history of the appointment of the Commission and of the presentation of the two reports be entered on the Minutes.' It was asserted that Wright was appointed 'without any previous consultation with Sir Stuart Samuel'. Additionally, '[i]t was afterwards discovered that Captain Wright was a personal friend of M. Dmovski, the Polish anti-Semitic leader, and that he had other anti-Semitic associations.' He 'gave very little assistance' to Samuel and up to the moment of writing 'there had been no hint of any differences of opinion between the Commissioners, nor did Captain Wright propose to discuss any differences with a view to arriving at an identic [sic] report.'[199]

Why then did the Anglo-Jewish leadership choose not to respond publicly? The answer lies in the unprecedented surge of anti-Jewish feeling in Britain. In July 1920 anti-Semitism manifested itself in ways previously unimagined. The Samuel report was published on 3 July; on 8 July the Dyer debate prompted unparalleled anti-Jewish scenes in Parliament and on 12 July the first instalment of the serialised *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* was published in the *Morning Post*. The *Church Times* criticised the *Morning Post* for publishing the Protocols. However, it warned of

---

[196] *Times*, 5 July 1920, p.19.
[197] *Manchester Guardian*, 5 July 1920.
[198] *Daily Herald*, 5 July 1920, p.1.
[199] JFC Minutes, 29 July 1920.

'Jewish bigotry' in Eastern Europe and added 'Russian Hebraism needs watching'.[200] In addition the Board of Deputies was still attempting to refute accusations of Jewish complicity in the Tsar's murder. These originally appeared in the government White Paper *Russia No.1*. In August *The Times* published a series of articles that amounted to a fabrication of Jewish complicity.[201] The combined effect of the American and British missions to Poland had created a Western consensus on anti-Jewish violence. The Anglo-Jewish community were forced onto the defensive. A letter to Lord Rothschild from the Chairman of the Press Committee of the Joint Foreign Committee of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Anglo-Jewish Association, shows Jews in Britain saw the violence in Eastern Europe as fundamentally connected with anti-Jewish agitation in the United Kingdom. He wrote:

> The fate of Eastern Europe depends to such an extent on the sympathy and goodwill of the allied nations that no political party in those countries can afford to ignore their public opinion, particularly the public opinion of all-powerful Great Britain. The Anti-Semites are well aware of that. It is precisely for this reason that they are strenuously endeavouring to permeate allied public opinion with their own spirit, making particular efforts to win the sympathy of Great Britain. This is why London is now enjoying the doubtful privilege of being made the chief base for the anti-Semitic propaganda in Allied countries. These efforts have already been crowned with considerable success. An important portion of the British Press is already serving diligently the purposes of Anti-Semitism, turning British public opinion in a direction which a little time ago would appear unthinkable. In no other Allied country have the Anti-Semites so far obtained such results.[202]

Anglo-Jewish leaders channelled their energy into refuting the propaganda, expressing confidence in Britain's 'traditional respect for truth and justice'.[203] Frustration at the

---

[200] *Church Times*, 30 July 1920. Press cutting in American Jewish Committee Archives General Correspondence 1906-1946, Chronological File 1906-1930, Box 1.
[201] *Times*, 13 August 1920, p.11.
[202] Wolf /Moshowitsch Papers, Letter to Rothschild, July 1920.
[203] Ibid.

inability to influence opinion led to the Anglo-Jewish community focusing on Eastern European relief work.[204]

The attitude of Britain to Jewish persecution in Eastern Europe was markedly different from wartime German atrocities or the 'race murder' of the Armenians. In the case of the East European Jews, the qualities that helped the British characterise themselves as the benevolent protector of the defenceless were largely cancelled out by a number of opposing forces. For a period in the summer of 1919, at a moment that coincided with the official creation of Poland, strong pro-Polish forces in Britain felt confident enough to give Jewish advocates a hearing. This did not last. In this instance Britain's traditional commitment to a sense of fair play did not take root in the public imagination. In Britain, Jews were left with a legacy of mistrust.

[204] Moses Gaster Papers, 14/389, 6 July 1922, (London: University College Archive).

Chapter Four.

The Abyssinian Crisis: The Battle for British Foreign Policy

Italy's invasion of Abyssinia provoked the largest outbreak of peacetime humanitarian outrage in Britain since the 1870s Bulgarian agitation. The Abyssinians were unlikely recipients of British compassion. Harold MacMillan wrote 'Abyssinia…was a country without any powerful central Government or any advanced civilisation. It was…a wild land of tyranny, slavery and tribal war''.[1] Yet the perceived 'savagery' of the natives became reason to pity them when faced with the modern war machine of Fascist Italy. Moreover, their fate, in the British public imagination, was intimately bound to that of the League of Nations.

There was widespread public commitment to the League Covenant. For many it was firmly associated with memory of the war. Its premise was that '[a]s a remedy for the war of some against some there was to be in the last resort a war of all against one. It was hoped that this would prevent the war from beginning or, at worst, make it short and comparatively bloodless.'[2] Failure to implement the Covenant in the 1931 Manchurian dispute heightened indignation at the treatment of Abyssinians and meant many feared for the League's future.

Baldwin's National government wanted to extricate Britain from commitment to the Covenant, or more specifically, the parts requiring action. They saw the Abyssinian crisis as the means to achieve this. As Duff Cooper wrote with more candour than other main protagonists, or indeed subsequent chroniclers, could ever muster, the 'opportunity of finally dissolving the ties that bound us to the decaying corpse of the League of Nations was unique.'[3] Other Britons saw the League as very much alive and believed the values enshrined within the Covenant harmonized with a tradition of British altruism.

Portrayals of 1930s Britain tend to show National government politicians as desperate to rearm in the face of a stubbornly pacifist public. This is false. Many were

---

[1] MacMillan, Harold, *Winds of Change 1914-1939* (London: MacMillan, 1966) p.418.
[2] McCallum, R.B., *Public Opinion and the Last Peace* (London: Oxford University Press, 1944) p.2.
[3] Cooper, Duff, *Old Men Forget: The Autobiography of Duff Cooper* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954) p.191.

'pacificist'.[4] In other words, they wanted peace but understood a League with teeth was necessary to defend it in the last resort. Senior government figures wanted to rearm, but were not prepared for it to happen under the auspices of a League they distrusted. The League of Nations was *anathema* to Baldwin's vision of England. According to his friend Tom Jones '[h]e did not like foreigners of any kind' and 'never went to Geneva'.[5] The Prime Minister was determined rearmament should occur only within a 'nation state' framework. For those in power, the Covenant was, at a moment when international affairs preoccupied the British, in danger of becoming *realpolitik*. As Keith Fieling, Chamberlain's biographer, later admitted 'Britain's foreign policy had come to depend upon public opinion'.[6] Old-fashioned 'common sense' foreign policy needed to be restored. The government therefore committed to re-educating the public. This required moral justification that stretched the bounds of political or moral credibility. The course of action was facilitated by leadership frustration with democratic principles when faced with Continental dictatorships, which seemed to have endless room for manoeuvre.

The foreign policy difficulties faced by the government in the latter 1930s should not be underestimated. However, uncovering the subtle political and ideological machinations requires focus on two main factors and their interaction. Firstly, the extent to which the inner Cabinet and the Foreign Office colluded to manipulate public opinion to regain the ideological initiative. Secondly, the extent to which the public were compassionately moved on behalf of a small East African country. The country turned outwards. Committing to the League Covenant was seen by a majority as an opportunity to fulfil long-held ideals of British compassion abroad. This was linked to cherished notions of national character.

The Abyssinian affair is often seen either as a precursor to the period of high appeasement or an issue that diverted British attention away from German machinations. This chapter argues it was central to British reactions to parallel or subsequent foreign crises. Firstly, politicians and senior officials were as captivated by foreign affairs as the British public. Secondly, it disorientated the British public who

---

[4] Ceadel, Martin, *Pacifism in Britain 1914-1945: The Defining of a Faith* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).
[5] Middlemas, Keith (ed.), *Thomas Jones, A Diary With Letters 1931 – 1950* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), p.xxxiii.
[6] Fieling, Keith, *The Life of Neville Chamberlain* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1947) p.248.

found themselves questioning the League rather than the government that helped pull it down. Thirdly, re-instituting a policy that favoured the protection of the 'national interest' and the creation of international alliances increased international distrust between democracies. This helped fragment the international community at a time when a corporate response was most needed. This therefore links the Abyssinian crisis with the growing German menace because Britain's effective withdrawal from the parts of the Covenant requiring action left the central framework for foreign relations in the interwar period an empty shell.

International relations during the interwar period were largely governed by the Covenant. Legally binding to over fifty countries, it had been devised after the Great War to prevent further conflicts.[7] Of its twenty-six Articles, Article XVI was crucial. This stated, any member who resorted to war in disregard of the Covenant would immediately be subject to the 'severance of all trade and financial relations'. It would also be cut off from communicating with 'the nationals of any other State'.[8] Military sanctions could be applied along with expulsion from the League. Britain's responsibility to uphold the Covenant had been enhanced by America's refusal to join.

During the Manchurian crisis in 1931 and 1932, in which Japan effectively annexed the Chinese province, the British government and the majority of the population effectively accepted Japanese aggression as a *fait accompli*. This was partly down to the dreadful conditions created by the Great Depression, and partly because pro-Chinese voices were decidedly in the minority. As Sir Robert Vansittart, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, stated, 'nobody in Britain thought seriously of sacrificing her sons for yellow men. In such matters unavowed racialism prevailed.'[9] Leading politicians snubbed American attempts to create international consensus against Japan. Lord Lytton was the author of a widely respected report, which concluded that Manchukuo, the new name for Manchuria, was 'indistinguishable from a Japanese protectorate'.[10] By this time any signs of protest had been snuffed out.[11] Nevertheless, as it became

---

[7] FO371/19130/63-66, R.J Campbell memorandum, 25 August 1935, (Kew: National Archives).
[8] FO371/19127/112. Text of Article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.
[9] Vansittart, *The Mist Procession: The Autobiography of Lord Vansittart* (London: Hutchinson,1958) p.523.
[10] Lord Lytton, 'The Problem of Manchuria: Address given at Chatham House on October 19th 1932', *International Affairs*, November 1932.
[11] Eden actively discouraged M.P.s from reading the report. Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.269, Col.831, 25 October 1932.

clear that Japan had every intention of exploiting its gains and in doing so threatened British interests in the Far East, discontent grew. In June 1933 Conservative M.P. Vyvyan Adams deprecated attempts to 'identify the words "pacifist" and "conscientious objector" and advocated the use of Article XVI against Japan because 'the young would be ready to fight "in a just war"'.[12] A growing sense of European threat, Government inaction, and evidence that Japan had deliberately flouted the agreed system of international security caused momentum to build behind League principles. This found manifestation in the 1935 'Peace Ballot' and the Abyssinian Crisis.

The Japanese took a progressively more belligerent attitude in China. The 'Open Door' policy in which British interests were protected was perceived to be under threat.[13] In May, Lytton criticised the government for failing 'to appreciate the obligations of League membership'.[14] In particular he condemned as 'insincere' the claim that Britain had fulfilled its League obligations because of the false implication that 'the League is an entity apart from the States that compose it.'[15] This distinction became integral to the rhetorical and ideological argument concerning Britain's League commitment. Lytton believed Britain's traditional role as 'friends of Japan', status as 'principal naval power' and interests in China meant they were 'better qualified…than any other State' to take a lead. He also condemned the failure to reciprocate America's advances.[16] The defection of a recognised authority on international affairs who commanded cross-party respect is significant.

Public opinion responded to ominous European developments by defining its commitment to 'pacificism' rather than 'pacifism'. Two events illustrate this. Firstly, the Labour Party isolated its pacifist section by recognising in 1934 that force was necessary to sustain the Covenant. It pledged, with little dissent, 'unflinchingly to support our Government in all the risks and consequences of fulfilling its duty to take part in collective action'.[17] Secondly, and more importantly, in late 1934 the influential

---

[12] Vyvyan Adams Papers, 12 June 1933, (London: London School of Economics Archive).
[13] For example, Low, David, *Years of Wrath: A Cartoon History, 1932-1945* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1949) p.15.
[14] The Earl of Lytton, *The League the Far East and Ourselves* (London: Pelican Press, 1934), 'The Ludwig Mond Lecture in the University of Manchester, delivered on May 17, 1934', pp. 9-12.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Taylor, A.J.P., *The Trouble Makers: Dissent over Foreign Policy 1792-1939* (London: Panther, 1969) p.167.

cross-party League of Nations Union (LNU) that promoted the League in Britain, embarked on a national campaign to measure public commitment to 'collective security'.[18] Despite cross-party support, the refusal of the Conservative and Unionist Associations to help facilitate the vote reflected muted disapproval from senior party figures.[19] The Ballot appealed to the popular imagination with over 11 million people voting. It constituted a shot across the bows of a government determined to sideline the League. News of the impending crisis in Ethiopia was received in this context.

Senior government ministers were aware of an Italian threat to Abyssinia long before it became public knowledge.[20] On 13 September 1934 Foreign Secretary, Sir John Simon privately signalled his concern over Italian troop movements in East Africa, especially near 'the important wells at Walwal and Wardair'.[21] A minority familiar with the terrain knew Italy had significantly encroached on Abyssinian territory.[22] Furthermore, the government believed the French viewed Italian colonial ambition sympathetically. On 24 September Simon pointed out to Sir George Clerk, the British Ambassador in Paris, that Italy could depend on a French 'attitude of benevolent neutrality.'[23] Events became so ominous that diplomat Geoffrey Thompson, recalled Simon saying in January 1935 '[y]ou realise, don't you, that the Italians intend to take Abyssinia?'[24]

On 5 December 1934 a 'serious encounter'[25] took place between Italian and Abyssinian troops leaving 107 Abyssinians dead. Italian losses were never quantified. Ethiopian casualties were sizeable because the Italians, clearly prepared for action, were 'supported by aeroplanes and tanks'.[26] Not long afterwards, at the Stresa Conference in April 1935, Britain was negotiating with France and Italy to reaffirm the Locarno Treaty and create a 'front' to counter German air force expansion. British representatives failed to challenge Italian expansionism. Conservative MP Leopold

---

[18] 'Collective security' became common terminology for upholding the Covenant. Its supporters saw the ballot as 'above party politics'. Livingstone, Dame Adelaide, *The Peace Ballot: The Official History* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., June 1935) p.5. Its detractors believed smaller nations could drag Britain into war, see W.P. Crawford Greene in the *Worcestershire Daily Times*, 26 January 1935.
[19] Although Stanley Baldwin, was honorary President and Austen Chamberlain sat on the Executive Council, Neville Chamberlain called the ballot '[t]erribly mischievous'. Fieling, *Chamberlain*, p.262.
[20] Abyssinia joined the League in 1923.
[21] Cabinet Papers (CAB) 16/121, Simon to Murray (Rome), 25 September 1934, (Kew: National Archives).
[22] *Times*, 21 February 1935, p.8. Letter from Colonel R.P. Cobbold-Sawle.
[23] CAB16/121, Simon to Clerk, 25 September 1934.
[24] Thompson, Geoffrey, *Front-Line Diplomat* (London: Hutchinson, 1959) p.95.
[25] CAB16/121, Simon, Commons statement, n/d.
[26] *Times*, 31 December 1934, p.11.

Amery commented that their 'silence' was 'incomprehensible and inexcusable.'[27] Although the Abyssinian question was not on the agenda, Thompson met his Italian counterparts and in a frank exchange was informed bluntly that they 'could not exclude the possibility of force'.[28] The government did nothing through the collective apparatus of the League to dissuade them. In fact, the instructions from London to Sir Sidney Barton, the British representative in Addis Ababa, was to guard against giving the 'impression' that the Emperor, Haile Selassie, could rely on Britain's support against Italy 'and/or' the French.[29] *The Times* supported the government.

The Times's role was significant in the upcoming crisis. Initially, the editor, Geoffrey Dawson, a close ally of the National government, took a pro-Italian stance.[30] A report of the Walwal incident on 17 December portrayed the Italians as heroically opposing Abyssinian 'aggressors'. After the initial fracas the Ethiopian government asked that the incident 'be referred to arbitration under Article V of the Italo-Abyssinian Treaty of 1928.' Instead the Italians demanded a public apology from the Harrar Governor who was also to salute the Italian flag, the guilty were to be 'punished' and 'indemnities paid for the dead and wounded.'[31] *The Times* praised Mussolini for his 'conciliatory spirit'.[32] Abyssinians were portrayed as 'slave-hunters', prone to committing atrocities.[33] Attempting to placate public concern over impending Italian aggression, *The Times* suggested it was 'too soon to assume' that Italian action was 'more than precautionary and defensive.'[34] Italy was only 'defending her own rights and national dignity' and represented 'ordered and productive civilization against a sterile and anarchical regime that tyrannizes over enslaved peoples'.[35] It set the tone for many themes later used by pro-Italians in Britain.

In June 1935 two events shaped British responses to the Abyssinian crisis. Firstly, a change of Prime Minister and secondly, declaration of the Peace Ballot results. On 7

---

[27] Amery, L.S., *My Political Life, Volume Three, The Unforgiving Years 1929-1940* (London: Hutchinson, 1955) p.167.
[28] Thompson, *Front-Line Diplomat*. p.97.
[29] CAB16/121/394, FO to Barton, 5 October 1934.
[30] For Baldwin's subtle use of Dawson's allegiance for propaganda purposes see Martel, Gordon, (ed.) *The Times and Appeasement: The Journals of A.L. Kennedy, 1932-1939* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 14 June 1935, p.180.
[31] *Times*, 17 December 1934, p.11.
[32] Ibid., 12 January 1935, p.13.
[33] Ibid., 12 February 1935, p.12.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid., 10 May 1935, p13.

June Baldwin swapped places with Ramsey MacDonald. Most saw this as a seamless change.[36] However, in the realm of foreign affairs generally and Abyssinia particularly there was a significant difference in ideological emphasis. Despite personal suspicions of the League, MacDonald had seen the Covenant as a method of gaining a 'new mentality of peace'.[37] For him, 'alliances and war' were something he would always prevent.[38] Cabinet colleagues blamed him for a perceived dearth in Britain's defensive capability but the Socialist Prime Minister was not averse to the notion of collective security.[39] According to David Marquand, MacDonald could only 'question his [foreign policy] assumptions, not abandon them altogether.'[40] Whilst publicly endorsing its continuance, Baldwin's accession signaled a decisive break with Britain's League commitment.

Baldwin saw America's lack of involvement as fatal to the successful implementation of the Covenant.[41] It is no coincidence that an embryonic form of the Hoare-Laval agreement, which advocated transferring vast areas of Abyssinia to Italy, surfaced after the change of government. Thompson accompanied Eden and William Strang, head of the Foreign Office's League of Nations Section, to Rome to offer Mussolini a ''rectification' in Italy's favour of the undelineated border between Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland' which included 'a sort of Danzig corridor' later ridiculed in the *Times* as a 'corridor for camels'.[42] Mussolini rejected it.

There was anxiety on opposition benches that government ministers were cutting a deal with Mussolini at Abyssinia's expense. Labour leader, George Lansbury sought clarification but was castigated in *The Times* for raising the issue in a 'public assembly', as '[t]he only result of Mr. Lansbury's representations might well be a return to the methods of secrecy which he and his party have so frequently

---

[36] Eden, Anthony, *The Eden Memoirs: Facing the Dictators* (London: Cassell, 1962) p.216; Mowat, *Between the Wars*. p.479.
[37] Cited in Robbins, Keith, 'Labour Foreign Policy and the League of Nations' in Robbins, Keith, *Politicians, Diplomacy and War in Modern British History* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1994) p.268.
[38] Cited in ibid.
[39] Fieling, *Chamberlain*, p.249.
[40] Marquand, David, *Ramsey MacDonald* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1977) p.757.
[41] See, for example, speech to Conservatives in Glasgow on 22 November 1934. Toynbee, Arnold J., *Survey of International Affairs 1935: Volume II: Abyssinia and Italy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936) p.50.
[42] Thompson, *Front-Line Diplomat*, p.103.

condemned.[43] This was both disingenuous and arrogant. It was the government who were being secretive. Yet advocating more open government was portrayed as justification for increasing secrecy. The most positive criticism of this attitude is that it was paternalistic. Viewed less sympathetically, it suggested subversion of the democratic process.[44]

The 'Peace Ballot' results were announced on 27 June by the LNU.[45] For Baldwin, this was an event of major political significance and one that forced him to change his mind in public, but not in private, about collective security until the following April when he reverted to his familiar anti-League mantra. On 23 July, the Prime Minister told a deputation from the LNU that he viewed the result as a 'national declaration'. Moreover, he asserted 'that the League of Nations remains…the sheet-anchor of British policy.'[46] Baldwin's public change is understandable if the notion of Baldwin's desire to rearm in the face of an unwilling public is taken at face value.[47] However, it was not that British people were unwilling to rearm. In the words of Baldwin's 'favourite'[48] newspaper the *Birmingham Post*, a clear majority 'still believe[d] in a need to resort to arms, in the last event, to prevent or defeat aggression.'[49] Churchill concurred that the British people were 'willing, and indeed resolved, to go to war in a righteous cause' under the auspices of the League.[50] For Baldwin and his government, the Abyssinian crisis was not about Abyssinia or Italy, it was an ideological battle over *the terms* on

---

[43] *Times*, 2 July 1935, p.17.
[44] For Baldwin's frustrations when compared with European dictatorships see Crowson, N.J., (ed.) *Fleet Street, Press Barons and Politics: The Journals of Collin Brooks 1932-1940* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1998) p.111. For other aspects of the debate on apparent limitations of democracy see Griffiths, Richard, *Fellow Travellers of the Right: British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany 1933-9* (London: Constable, 1980) p.14.
[45] Especially pertinent was question 5, which was divided into two parts. It asked 'Do you consider that, if a nation insists on attacking another, the other nations should combine to compel it to stop by (a) economic and non-military measures? (b) if necessary, military measures. For the latter, over 6.5 million voted yes over 2 million voted no and there were over 2 million abstentions. 'One of the first expressions of opinion outside the League of Nations Union was passed by the National Peace Congress [Attended by 1100 members and 400 visitors representing 350 national and local organizations] in London June 28 – July 2, 1935, urging His Majesty's Government to influence both disputing parties to fulfil their obligations.' Hiett, Helen, *Public Opinion and the Italo-Ethiopian Dispute: The Activity of Private Organizations in the Crisis*, Geneva Special Studies, Vol.VII, No.1, February 1936 (Geneva: Geneva Research Centre, 1936).
[46] Toynbee, *Survey*, pp.52-3.
[47] League advocates argued that commitment to the Covenant undercut the need to rearm, on the basis that any war would be 'all against one'.
[48] Middlemas, Keith and Barnes, John, *Baldwin: A Biography* (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1969) p.836.
[49] *Birmingham Post*, 28 June 1935.
[50] Churchill, Winston S., *The Second World War: Volume I: The Gathering Storm* (London: Cassell & Co. Ltd., 1948) p.132.

which Britain should be prepared to rearm. This ideological battle has remained hidden beneath the 1930s rhetoric concerning the 'Peace Ballot' and 'pacifism' in general.[51] The Prime Minister already had a mandate to rearm but he could not agree with its non-nationalistic premise. Therefore it was decided to wrest the internationalist initiative from League supporters and 're-educate' an overwhelmingly pro-Covenant public genuinely moved by Italian aggression and African suffering.

A memorandum dated 25 July 1935 from the influential Head of the Civil Service, Warren Fisher provides an indication of the rationale behind government thinking.[52] The sole addressees were Baldwin and Chancellor of the Exchequer, Neville Chamberlain. Fisher suggested, if Britain's aim in the crisis was 'championship' of the League then it was guilty of ignoring policy precedent because 'England [did] not intervene by force on behalf of China when Japan seized Manchuria.'[53] The League, he suggested, was not and never could be 'an effective instrument for world peace.' Specifically, he believed '[w]hatever happens about Abyssinia, there is bound to be a further setback for the League,' but crucially added this did not mean desisting 'from affirming and re-affirming the principles which it represents.'[54] Fisher provided a 'moral' justification for positive-sounding pronouncements on League *principles* by senior government figures whilst allowing the facility to deny the practical measures that its originators, and moreover the British public, saw as essential. In an echo of Bonar Law in 1922 that would not have been lost on Baldwin, Fisher suggested it could not become 'the effective conscience and policeman of the world'. Its role should instead be 'as a world rostrum which can be used for the assertion of moral principles in the international sphere'.[55] Chamberlain wrote in his diary that same day, if the League was ineffectual in stopping the war 'it would be practically impossible to maintain the fiction that its existence was justified at all.'[56] All subsequent pronouncements by senior figures in the National government only make sense in the light of this ideological stance. It was adopted as unofficial policy.

---

[51] For contemporary and subsequent evidence of this tendency see *Times*, 27 July 1935; Eden, *Facing the Dictators*. p.237. Rhodes James, Robert, (ed.) *Memoirs of a Conservative: J.C.C. Davidson's Memoirs and Papers, 1910-37* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969) p.407.
[52] On Fisher's considerable influence see www.oxfordnb.com/view/article/33144.
[53] Coll Misc 0461/2, Warren Fisher to S.B and N.C., 5 July 1935 (London: School of Economics Archive).
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Fieling, *Chamberlain,* p.265.

Abyssinia increasingly preoccupied the public. On 7 August 1935 Lord Robert Cecil, Vice-President of the LNU wrote to *The Times* asking for clarification of government policy. An editorial attempted to brush it aside as 'untimely'.[57] *The Times* was sensitive because government secrecy left the impression of policy drift. This created a political vacuum, which was filled with increasing indignation. A letter from Lord Oliver to *The Times* provides an indication of the way opinion was moving. He condemned claims that Italy would be a civilizing force in Ethiopia and reflected widespread British fears of aerial warfare, transposing this onto the Ethiopian arena. The Abyssinians were recreated as potential victims because 'as the Abyssinians wear no shoes, the soles of their feet will be burnt away by thermite diffused from the air…so they will not be able to fight.'[58] He believed Britain should not renege on their 'promise in treaty or covenant' which was bound to 'our honour as a nation and our humanity as a civilised people'. Oliver drew attention to the potential 'fate of the League' and thought that the danger of 'bloodshed' spreading to Europe should be no barrier for Britons to be 'unconcerned' about 'the assured butchery and subjugation of Abyssinia.'[59]

Others endorsed Oliver.[60] Lord Noel Buxton, a veteran of pro-Armenian campaigns, also attacked Italian 'civilizing' arguments by suggesting that Italian provocation was responsible for Ethiopia's failure to reform by diverting resources to defence.[61] Abyssinia's apparent connection to Christianity was rediscovered. Abyssinia, according to James L. Cox:

> cradles some of the earliest Christian memories…she may be a wild and undisciplined people otherwise, but any barbarities she may have committed in the past will sink to utter insignificance against the indiscriminate and horrible massacre of women and children now being organized.[62]

Knowledge of the Abyssinian slave trade was widespread in Britain having been accentuated by Right wing Italian supporters, but it was 'trumped' by the Christian

---

[57] *Times*, 7 August 1935, p.11.
[58] Ibid., 23 July 1935, p.10.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Lord Oliver's view was said to have met with 'almost universal approval.' Ibid., 27 July 1935, p.8.
[61] Ibid., 24 July 1935, p.15.
[62] Ibid., 29 July 1935, p.10.

connection.[63] Italy's 'aggressive regime' was consequently seen as a greater threat than Germany, whose rearmament was 'justified' due to the 'vindictive peace' of Versailles.[64] Germany's treatment of their Jewish citizens, widely reported in the British press, had been in progress for over two years, yet German repudiation of Versailles was favourable compared to Italy's 'flouting of the Covenant'.[65]

Most newspapers printed maps of 'Abyssinia And Surrounding Territories.'[66] Demand was so great they had to be reprinted.[67] Perceptions of nineteenth century benevolent imperialism pervaded humanitarian responses. George N. Barnes looked 'wistfully to the days of Palmerston and of Gladstone' for someone to rally the population.[68] He was convinced there was the same sense of justice and fair play now as there was then…the mass of our people would respond if it were made a question of right or wrong'.[69] The nation's 'compassionate' past meant Britain's stewardship of the Suez Canal made the country especially responsible. To allow Italy the 'convenience' of using the waterway for shipping arms would give them an 'unspeakable advantage'. Not only did this distort the 'humane purpose of its construction', but it facilitated 'those very calamities which it is the duty of the League to prevent.'[70] The advanced state of Italian rearmament meant the ostensibly fair arms embargo on both countries was 'incompatible with all canons of British justice.'[71] British guarantees to Belgium, which sparked involvement in the Great War, were compared unfavourably with the government's seeming vacillation.[72] On 18 August Hoare acknowledged to Chamberlain that 'public opinion' was 'greatly hardening against Italy.'[73] He admitted

---

[63] Right wing supporters attempted to present Italian 'civilizing' action as 'humanitarian', *The Nineteenth Century and After*, August 1935, p.185. The use of gas by Italian forces undermined these arguments.
[64] *Times*, 11 July 1935, p.10.
[65] Ibid., 12 July 1935, p.10.
[66] Ibid., 20 August 1935, p.8.
[67] Ibid., 28 August 1935, p.10; 29 August 1935, p.12.
[68] Barnes, Minister Without Portfolio in the War Cabinet in 1918 and strong defender of the Treaty of Versailles.
[69] Ibid., 12 August 1935, p.11.
[70] Ibid., 21 August 1935, p.6.
[71] Ibid., 13 August 1935, p.8. American agents warned British officials of impending Italian use of poison gas. For 1925 Geneva protocol, signed by Italy, banning use of poison gas, see http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/full/280?opendocument. For Foreign Office concern that use of gas would 'alienate world opinion' see FO371/19126/192, Memorandum from the Military Attaché in Rome, 20 August 1935.
[72] *Times*, 23 August 1935, p.11.
[73] Hoare, Samuel, *Nine Troubled Years* (London: Collins, 1954) p.164. According to Hoare, even the right wing *Morning Post* was 'restive at Italian arrogance' and he also cited a poll in the *Yorkshire Post*

privately to Sir George Clerk that 'the people were deeply stirred and…[t]his was the opinion not so much of extremists or sentimentalists or fanatical people, but rather the general body of opinion [which] regarded the League and the Covenant as an instrument of this policy of collective security'.[74]

The impending crisis created tension in the Church. On 19 August 1935 Lansbury called for a 'Truce of God'.[75] He was supported by Canon H.R.L Sheppard, founder, in 1936, of the Peace Pledge Union who believed any war was 'a denial of Christianity' and 'a crime against humanity.'[76] This 'Christian pacifism' was a minority view and was quickly challenged by the 'pacificism' of Cosmo Lang, Archbishop of Canterbury, who called for 'organized action'.[77] On 20 August 1935 William Temple, the Archbishop of York was more forthright, claiming that to undermine the League 'would be sheer wickedness involving indelible disgrace'. Britain had 'a responsibility for leadership' to 'make operative the terms of the Covenant'.[78] In an address broadcast on 1 September he added, if upholding the Covenant 'involves the use of armed forces, we ought to be prepared to use them. There is nothing un-Christian in that.'[79] He later condemned Christian pacifism as 'heretical'.[80] He was not alone. 'How long', asked one *Guardian* correspondent 'are we to treat aggression, injustice, and cruelty with purely spiritual weapons…For how many centuries did Armenia and the Balkans endure the foulest oppression and wrong.'[81] The use of force was perceived as compatible with traditional 'British' humanitarianism. Opponents of the League had difficulty comprehending the idea that so-called pacifists could favour military intervention.[82] Most were in favour of strict adherence to the Covenant and prepared to countenance both economic and military sanctions.

'declaring that 75% of the north of England is behind the Covenant'. FO371/19126/201 'Record of conversation between Sir Samuel Hoare, Mr. Eden and Mr. Lloyd George, 21 August 1935.'

[74] CAB16/121/71, Hoare to FO 'Record of Anglo-French Conversation…on Tuesday, September 10, 1935'.

[75] Cited in Toynbee, *Survey*, p.58.

[76] *Manchester Guardian*, 16 October 1934.

[77] Toynbee, *Survey*, p.59.

[78] Ibid., p.58.

[79] *Daily Herald*, 2 September 1935, p.6.

[80] *Times*, 25 September 1935, p.8.

[81] *Guardian*, letter from L.R. Strangeways, 11 September 1935, p.18.

[82] Conservative M.P. Cuthbert Morley Headlam, was typical in stating 'I view with grave alarm the war spirit among our pacifists'. The *Daily Mail* regularly published cartoons festooned with 'bellicose pacifists'. Sir Norman Angell identified the strange phenomenon of 'Die Hards' and 'Pacifists', by

Harold Nicolson's diary entry for 21 August captures the mood of foreboding. He wrote '[t]he posters of the evening papers bear headlines, ''Ramsey MacDonald says Worst crisis since 1914"…Opposition consulted…A general crisis atmosphere.'[83] Hoare and Eden sought the advice of Lloyd George, Lansbury, ex-Foreign Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain, leader of the Liberal Party, Sir Herbert Samuel and Winston Churchill.[84] All of them counselled, with varying degrees of emphasis, that action should be taken within the auspices of the League.[85] It is a measure of the impact of the LNU on public opinion that Eden's conversation with Lord Robert Cecil drew the greatest response from the Foreign Office. It forced them to confirm, as policy, what had been expressed as principle by Fisher. The interview was innocuous enough, with Lord Robert Cecil assuring the government of LNU support 'in any efforts…to carry out the Covenant.'[86] Lord Robert Cecil was keen for the government to 'declare in unmistakeable terms its obligations under the Covenant'.[87] Eden countered by suggesting this might embarrass Pierre Laval, the French Prime Minister. Lord Robert Cecil was not deterred. He suggested a 'circular dispatch' including a formal diplomatic commitment to the Covenant should be sent to all League members, the United States and Japan 'without mentioning Italy or Abyssinia'.[88] He believed this would have 'an immense effect' if stated 'with all the force of a first class state proper'.[89] Lord Robert Cecil cited previous such declarations which had been made 'long after the attitude of the United States was known.'[90] Thus he challenged the central argument of Baldwin and senior officials.

R.J. Campbell of the Foreign Office responded by composing an extraordinary document effectively outlining government policy over the following months. Foreign Office officials were not in a position to dictate policy but the writer was acting within an ideological framework imposed by his political leaders. The imposition of this policy, running counter to public opinion, sounded the death knell for the League of

---

which he meant Christian pacifists, sharing a common perspective on a crucial international issue. Toynbee, *Survey*, p.62.

[83] Nicolson, Harold, *The Harold Nicolson Diaries 1907-1963* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2004) p.129.

[84] Eden was Minister for the League of Nations.

[85] FO371/19126/201; FO 371/19126/117; FO371/19126/196, 22 August 1935; FO371/19126/194, 22 August 1935; CAB 16/121/142, 27 August 1935.

[86] FO371/19126/114, 21 August 1935.

[87] Ibid.

[88] FO371/19130/67, Lord Robert Cecil to Hoare, 22 August 1935.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid. He was referring to the Locarno Treaty in 1925 and the Kellogg Pact of 1928.

Nations and was the root of Hoare's December resignation. On 22 August the Cabinet had decided to make a 'public declaration of their position' in Hoare's maiden speech at the League Assembly. Campbell directly countered Lord Robert Cecil's contention by reiterating Baldwin's view that America's absence rendered the League 'conspicuously incomplete', and that obligation to the Covenant would cause war, not prevent it. 'Far from expressing these doubts' he continued, the government had 'repeatedly asserted their intention of standing by their obligations under the Covenant' therefore it was 'incumbent upon them' in the case of Abyssinia '*to show every disposition* to give to the existing procedure of the League in its present form an honest chance to prove itself.' He therefore proposed Britain 'stand by their undertaking' at Geneva but in the meantime 'decide whether they wish at this moment permanently to commit themselves for the future to the League and its rules as they now stand. This was deemed 'inadvisable'. Public opinion, he contested, was confused because 'the sanctity of the principles has been extended to the methods and still attaches to these after they have been vitiated.' If the public 'understood' their error then it was 'doubtful' whether support for upholding the obligations of the Covenant would hold. There was, he continued, 'a strong case for correcting public misapprehension of the position; for separating our obligations under the head of principles from those under the head of methods.' Commitment to the League was deemed responsible for introducing

> into the solution of international questions an element alien to the issue which injects an artificial criterion into their treatment and prevents their solution strictly on their merits.[91]

This undermined the efficacy of the Covenant. The League was no longer to have any means of enforcing its precepts. The new toothless body that replaced the League would facilitate the restoration of its 'universal character' because legal requirements would be replaced by a mere moral imperative. Although British popular opinion held that adherence to the old treaty system had been responsible for the outbreak of the Great War, international relations would return to their pre-war state and the government would be free to decide whether under existing treaties the Italian government had actually transgressed.

---

[91] FO371/19130/63-66, R.J. Campbell memorandum, 26 August 1935. My italics.

Strang believed '[w]e ought not to nail our colours to a mast at a moment when the mast, under crucial test might come crashing down.' He advocated expending every effort to upholding the League's principles, but, conspicuously, not the methods. However, if that did not work, he advocated Britain 'withdraw from the League altogether' or 'remove' Article 16 and the active part of Article 10 'from the Covenant'.[92] It is significant that the document was '[s]een by Mr. Eden.'[93] Eden is perceived by most historians of the Abyssinian crisis as, perhaps, the most stalwart government defender of the League. He offered no word of objection. It is inconceivable that Baldwin would not have been aware of the implications of this document. Those primarily responsible for upholding British commitment to the Covenant, a responsibility exacerbated by Britain's status as its leading and most powerful member, were intent on destroying its precepts. All that was required was that inflamed public opinion be re-educated.

On 24 August Hoare wrote to Sir George Clerk to avail him 'very confidentially of the background of our present position'. He argued that the 'general feeling of the country' was the 'determination to stick to the Covenant and of anxiety to keep out of war.' This misrepresented pubic opinion. Like Campbell, he believed such sentiments 'self-contradictory' adding that '[a]t present at least the country believes that they can be reconciled.' '[I]t is essential' he asserted 'that we should play out the League hand in September', because the League must be seen to declare sanctions as impracticable, 'not the British Government'. The blame should either be placed on League members who 'will not play their full part' or non-members whose absence, he believed, made the application of sanctions futile. The intention was to deliberately create a set of circumstances in which Baldwin's overall view of the League could be vindicated. In other words, a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy that was designed to ensure League failure did not reflect badly on the government. No wonder Hoare emphasized to his Paris-based ambassador that he should 'treat this letter as entirely between you and me.'[94] Hoare was relying on world moral condemnation of Italian action to prevent the

---

[92] Ibid. Article 10 stated 'The Members of the League undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the League. In case of any such aggression or in case of any threat or danger of such aggression the Council shall advise upon the means by which this obligation shall be fulfilled', http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp#art10.
[93] FO371/19130/63-66, R.J. Campbell memorandum, 26 August 1935.
[94] FO371/19120/6, Hoare to Clerk, 24 August 1935.

invasion. His stereotypical picture of the Italians as a 'mercurial people' contributed to his view that once they had 'gained a victory and avenged Adowa' they would halt their military advance.[95] By any stretch of the imagination, this could not be called *realpolitik.*[96]

Eden was already actively facilitating the right public impression. A memorandum in mid-August of a conversation between the League of Nations minister and A.L. Kennedy of *The Times* states Eden was 'convinced' of public commitment to the Covenant.[97] However, knowing the government had no intention of fulfilling its obligations, he asked Kennedy if *The Times* could help 'convince' the Italians that it was not 'bluff or selfishness or electioneering' on the government's part. This would render 'the Government a great service'.[98] The government was indeed attempting to bluff the Italians but in doing so they were misleading the British public.[99]

Senior officials were preparing for a crucial meeting of the League Assembly in Geneva in early September. Vansittart, who would 'pay almost any price' to align all Europe against Germany and believed the League had been dead since 1925, conducted his negotiations with military leaders and Ministers accordingly.[100] The Admiralty was nervous of military engagements without the assurance of military support from France. However, although they pressed for time to prepare it is significant that they never mentioned the possibility of defeat by Italian forces.[101] At this point Vansittart conjured the idea of 'the risk of a mad dog coup by Mussolini',[102] a phrase that meant a sudden Italian attack on Britain or its interests. This theme became well established in arguments relating to the readiness of British forces although not taken seriously by the

---

[95] Ibid. FO 371/19126/64, Hoare to Osborne, 20 August 1935. On 1 March 1896, the Italian army had been defeated by the Abyssinians at Adowa. This was part of Mussolini's justification for the invasion.
[96] The government based their approach on an obscure proposal to the League Assembly in the early 1920s, never ratified, that sought to add an extra layer of negotiation to the settlement of potential disputes. FO371/19120/6, Hoare to Clerk, 24 August 1935.
[97] On Kennedy's preoccupation that public opinion should be 'managed' by *The Times* see Kennedy, *Journals*, p.2.
[98] Ibid., p.184.
[99] Clerk informed the Foreign Office that 'Laval is convinced that signor Mussolini is long past bluffing.' FO371/19127/205, 27, August 1935. Five days later Clerk informed Hoare that the Italians were aware the government's concern was 'electioneering'. CAB16/121, C. Clerk (Paris) to Hoare, 30 August 1935.
[100] Eden, *Facing the Dictators*, p.241; Vansittart, *Mist Procession*, p.438.
[101] Churchill agreed Britain would 'have been successful in any naval battle…Moreover, Mussolini would never have dared to come to grips with a resolute British Government.' Churchill, *Gathering Storm*, p.138.
[102] CAB16/121/175, Vansittart to Hoare, 7 August 1935.

Foreign Office or Neville Chamberlain.[103] Even more pertinent was an intelligence report indicating that an Italian attack on Abyssinia would 'decrease her potential military value in the event of any major European crisis.'[104] Safeguarding against Italian desertion from the 'Stresa Front' became a principle justification for the eventual imposition of half-hearted sanctions, yet their Abyssinian deployment clearly undermined potential European involvement.

The Italians rejected versions of the Hoare-Laval plan in August as they had in June. Thompson, in Paris with the rest of the negotiating team including Eden, Vansittart, Strang and Clerk, later recalled that Vansittart effectively persuaded Eden to mobilize the Home Fleet.[105] Rather than pursue the matter through the League, Britain took a unilateral decision to protect its interests in the Mediterranean. This created a public impression that Britain was at last acting like a Great Power by providing leadership to other League nations.[106] Buoyed by the sudden show of Naval strength the British public were enthused by the prospect of the September meeting in Geneva.[107] Hoare was due to make his maiden speech to the League Assembly at a moment of 'first class international crisis'.[108] Vansittart was intrinsically involved in the construction of the speech.[109] Hoare met Baldwin and Chamberlain on 5 September for a 'quiet discussion'[110] and it is inconceivable that the speech was not discussed and probable that it was the principle topic of conversation.[111] What was less well known, because it was deliberately kept secret, was that on the day prior to the speech Hoare had informed the Italians through Laval that his speech would display 'moderation' on the 'Abyssinian question' but 'resolution as regards the principles of the League' thus he would 'go as far as possible in the way of conciliation and would avoid provocation.'[112]

---

[103] FO371/19126/203; Fieling, *Chamberlain*, p.273.
[104] CAB16/121/154, Dispatch from Colonel R.G. Stone, Military Attaché in Rome, 13 August 1935.
[105] Thompson, *Front-Line Diplomat*, p.107.
[106] Ibid., pp.108-9.
[107] It was anticipated by widespread press coverage. For the Churches' joint call to prayer see Toynbee, *Survey*, p.59.
[108] Thompson, *Front-Line Diplomat*, p.107.
[109] Vansittart, *Mist Procession*, p.533.
[110] Hoare is said to have stated 'I regard this talk as absolutely necessary. So also does Neville…for various reasons I should greatly prefer the talk with our three selves, and with none of our other colleagues' Middlemas and Barnes, *Baldwin*, p.855.
[111] Eden later wrote on Hoare's Geneva speech 'Neville Chamberlain in particular had been through the text with him paragraph by paragraph. The Prime Minister had also read and endorsed it.' Eden, *Facing the Dictators*, p.261.
[112] CAB16/121/68, 10 September 1935.

He would not contemplate military sanctions.[113] In a communication to his cabinet colleagues on the Anglo-French dialogue Hoare admitted he had proposed that 'the word "sanctions" need not be used. He himself had never used it in his speeches.'[114]

Hoare's speech caused a sensation. He pronounced,

> In conformity with its precise and explicit obligations the League stands, and my country stands with it, for the collective maintenance of the Covenant in its entirety, and particularly for steady and collective resistance to all acts of unprovoked aggression. The attitude of the British nation in the last few weeks has clearly demonstrated the fact that this is no variable and unreliable sentiment, but a principle of international conduct to which they and their Government hold with firm, enduring and universal persistence.[115]

Reports in Britain emphasized Hoare's apparent unequivocal support for the Covenant. In fact, the speech was, in many ways, a masterstroke of political rhetoric. It was laced with caveats and compromises. He implicitly criticized the British people who although usually showing 'a sound instinct upon the big issues', in this case had 'clung to their ideal' of collective security and were 'not prepared to abandon it.'[116] He criticized the League for 'lack of universality' which he suggested created 'uncertainty' in garnering full international consensus.[117] He gave the impression of leadership by suggesting Britain would be 'second to none in their intention to fulfill, within measure of their capacity, the obligations which the Covenant lay upon them.'[118] Hoare used language throughout that implied one thing whilst meaning something entirely different. Its tone and structure, the mood of public expectation and the emphasis given by Hoare in a subsequent broadcast to Britain from Geneva showed domestic opinion was convinced of a ringing endorsement of League principles and crucially, the methods laid down in the Covenant.[119] Hoare later admitted the speech was a bluff.[120] Mussolini was not taken in, but the British public was.[121]

---

[113] See, for example, Cranborne statement cited in Toynbee, *Survey*, p.184.
[114] CAB16/121/71, Hoare to FO, 11 September 1935.
[115] FO371/19133/76, Text of Hoare's speech to the Assembly of the League of Nations delivered on 11 September 1935.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid.
[119] FO371/19134/13, n/d. For domestic reaction see *Spectator*, 20 September 1935, p.418.

The 'British' tone of the speech was lauded by *The Times*, *Manchester Guardian* and *News Chronicle*. It was a 'note of quiet firmness in the face of the threatened crisis',[122] 'without rhetoric'[123] and its tenor was one of 'studied moderation'.[124] *The Times* and *Daily Telegraph* hailed the speech as 'momentous'.[125] The *Manchester Guardian* had until this point been a fierce critic of government 'drift' but now confidently stated there would be '[n]o foreign master, then, for Abyssinia, and no conquistador, under the Covenant'.[126] The Labour-owned *Daily Herald* and the anti-government *News Chronicle* both carried front-page banner headlines suggesting Britain was now providing a lead to the world and would countenance military action under the auspices of the Covenant.[127] The *Star* suggested '[n]ever, even in the great days of Palmerston, had the voice of England been heard in the councils of Europe to finer effect than it was at Geneva'.[128] Periodicals and regional papers carried the same message. The *Nottingham Guardian* saw it as a refutation of the 'old system of alliances'.[129] One correspondent to *The Times* captured the extent to which national identity and memory of the Great War was intertwined with the ideals of justice enshrined in the Covenant. This was:

> a second chance to uphold that principle of right which in 1914 our peoples believed themselves to be defending…A chance to administer defeat to this philosophy of violence, and register a victory for the principles and ideals which

---

[120] Hoare, *Nine Troubled Years*, p.166.
[121] Baldwin participated in the charade by sending a dispatch to Corbin, the French Ambassador on 5 October. He invoked the cases of Napoleon and Wilhelm II to reinforce the notion that when 'dictatorships…poke[d] their noses beyond their own frontiers', Britain would 'intervene in order to free the world from the danger of the dictatorships.' Middlemas and Barnes, *Baldwin,* p.857. Conservative M.P. Headlam stated in a diary entry the same day that 'at Bournemouth yesterday Mr. B. made a speech which one expected of him – it is tolerably clear that the Govt. has no intention of being foolish.' Ball, Stuart, (ed.) *Parliament and Politics in the Age of Baldwin and MacDonald: The Headlam Diaries 1923-1935* (London: The Historians' Press, 1992) p.341. Baldwin was giving one message to the French and the British public whilst ensuring that the Conservative party faithful were assuaged in preparation for an imminent election campaign.
[122] *Times*, 12 September 1935, p.12.
[123] *Guardian*, 12 September 1935, p.8.
[124] *News Chronicle*, 12 September 1936, p.8.
[125] *Times*, 12 September 1935, p.12; *Daily Telegraph*, 12 September 1935, p.6.
[126] *Guardian*, 12 September 1935, p.8.
[127] *Herald*, 12 September 1936, p.1; *News Chronicle*, 12 September 1936, p.1.
[128] Cited in *Times*, 13 September 1935, p.18.
[129] Cited in Ibid.

> the Covenant enshrines. On this issue one surely hears "the trumpets sounding from the other side."[130]

Most responses were framed with perceptions of national identity, drawing on a long-standing tradition of honourable behaviour rooted in perceived national characteristics. Senior members of the National government became associated with this. Whereas before the speech Eden was the only one credited with these values, '[n]ow the Foreign Secretary [had] taken his stand beside his younger colleague; and behind both is that most typical of Englishmen, Mr. Baldwin.'[131]

Political opponents heaped praise on the government. Labour leadership contender Herbert Morrison, declared the speech had the 'overwhelming support' of public opinion.[132] Lloyd George was 'confident that the country…without distinction of party' would support the government in any step to 'implement the Covenant'.[133] Churchill, who until very recently had been at odds with the government over the India Bill, was 'stirred' by the speech.[134] Hoare wrote afterwards that he was 'amazed' at the reaction.[135] He had underestimated public enthusiasm for the League and the lengths to which most countenanced firm resistance to Italian aggression. However, if it caught him by surprise, he did nothing to disavow the impression he had given. In fact senior government members seized on its reception and incorporated Hoare's apparent proclamation of loyalty to the League as its central election message.[136]

Newly found 'loyalty' to the League made some right wing colleagues uneasy. Leo Amery expressed misgivings to Hoare who told him it had been 'too late to change the policy when he took office' adding 'we might get out by the failure of others to support us'.[137] A few days later he described Chamberlain's attitude as 'like Sam's' and added 'there was no question of going beyond the mildest of economic sanctions…If things became too serious the French would run out first, and we could show that we had done

---

[130] *Times*, 20 September 1935, p.8.
[131] *The Fortnightly*, October 1935.
[132] Toynbee, *Survey*, p.61.
[133] *Times*, 13 September 1935.
[134] Churchill, *Gathering Storm*, p.135.
[135] Hoare, Samuel, *Nine Troubled Years* (London: Collins, 1954) p.169.
[136] Fieling, *Chamberlain*, p.266. Diary entry, 2 August 1935; Stannage, Tom, *Baldwin Thwarts the Opposition: The British General Election of 1935* (London: Croom Helm, 1980) pp.153-4 and 172-3.
[137] Amery, *Unforgiving Years*, pp.173-4.

our best.'[138] Fear of French betrayal had dogged senior government figures and many on the Right since the Chanak crisis. Middlemas and Barnes suggest Baldwin 'remembered the Chanak incident vividly' and reminded the Cabinet that the League was not trustworthy. 'We must be careful' he stated 'not to be drawn into a quarrel with France as well as Italy, as a result of what is happening at Geneva.'[139] Austen Chamberlain was similarly concerned that if the government assented to sanctions under public pressure that 'Chanak…would be repeated'.[140] Lord Rothermere, proprietor of the *Daily Mail*, and vociferous supporter of Mussolini, boasted to Beaverbrook, proprietor of the *Daily Express*, that a ballot organized by the *Mail* was overwhelmingly anti-League. Beaverbrook's reply was telling. He stated: 'Ah, people you've trained to be Rothermereites…The people aren't with you this time. Over Chanak when you pushed Ll.G. in 1922 they *were* with you. This time you haven't a doggone man with you.'[141] Right wing writer Douglas Jerrold frustrated by the failure of the Hoare-Laval plan and pro-Abyssinian public opinion stated '[i]t was left, as it had been left in the Chanak crisis of 1921 [sic], to the heads of the fighting services and the right wing of the conservative party to fight the battle of sanity.'[142] Those on the right recognised that British opinion had changed since 1922. It was no longer inward looking. The public imagination had been captured by events abroad and believed that within the League Britain could now be the 'policeman of the world'.[143]

The Italians invaded Abyssinia on 3 October, accompanied by widespread British indignation.[144] It is significant for demonstrating both the strength of public outrage and the extent that establishment figures wished to control it that the day before the widely anticipated invasion, the *Times* printed an apology to its readers. The number of letters was, it wrote 'so great that it is impossible to find room for more than a very small proportion of them.'[145] The LNU declared 'the whole force of the League should be

---

[138] Ibid., p.174.
[139] Middlemas and Barnes, *Baldwin*, p.862.
[140] Vyvyan Adams Papers, Chamberlain to Adams, 3 September 1935.
[141] Brooks, Collin, *Fleet Street*, p.129.
[142] *English Review*, January 1936, pp.7-8.
[143] See Chapter Two.
[144] British representative in Berlin Eric Phipps explained to German military authorities that public opinion was not driven by 'anti-Fascism.' Johnson, Gaynor, (ed.) *Our Man in Berlin: The Diary of Eric Phipps, 1933-1937* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), diary entry 8 October 1935, p.119.
[145] *Times*, 2 October 1935, p.10.

used to stop the war.'[146] Leaders representing mainstream Christianity in Britain condemned Italy's 'act of aggression' and set out their belief that the Covenant was 'a practical application of the principles of Christianity.'[147] Moral and spiritual leaders ranged themselves against aggression and gave the Covenant divinely ordained status. Widespread distaste of war increased sympathy for the Abyssinians because they were perceived as defenceless. Archibald Murray wrote 'it is almost unbearable to those who know what war means under modern conditions to think of the battlefields of Abyssinia and to visualize wounded without any medical services.'[148] Indignation was transferred into practise. A national appeal was launched for the British Ambulance Service in Ethiopia by Lang, Lansbury, Lord Lothian, Lord Lugard and supported by the Archbishop of Westminster. On 11 October the executive Committee of the National Railwaymen's Union instructed its members to refuse to transport any war supplies for Italy.'[149] On 14 October '[t]hree hundred representatives of hotel and catering trades demonstrated in London…against the employment of Italian labour in hotels and restaurants in the city.'[150]

After an *ad hoc* meeting at the Brighton Labour Party conference the National Council of Labour passed a resolution, which 'deeply deplored' war in Abyssinia and expressed 'abhorrence' at the Italian initiation of hostilities.[151] Reports of the Conservative Party conference, running concurrently, show a conspicuous absence of comment on the situation. Baldwin merely referred to 'grave reports…regarding the movement of troops and aircraft' in Abyssinia.[152] The Prime Minister was aware of discontent in the Conservative party concerning the leadership's apparent enthusiasm for the League.[153] It was important not to show division in the party before the exigencies of a general election forced dissidents to toe the leadership line.[154] A mass meeting held at the

---

[146] *The League Nations Year Book 1936* (London: League of Nations Union, 1936).
[147] *The War in Abyssinia: A Statement by the Archbishop of Canterbury* (London: The Stanhope Press, 1935).
[148] *Times*, 8 October 1935, p.8.
[149] Hiett, *Public Opinion*, p.9.
[150] Ibid.
[151] *Times*, 5 October 1935, p.12. The National Council of Labour represented the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, the National executive of the Labour Party and the Parliamentary Labour Party.
[152] Ibid.
[153] For evidence of Tory unrest see Brooks, *Fleet Street*, p.130. Amery led a deputation of Conservatives from both houses to Baldwin about Abyssinian policy on 15 October. For his confusion over Chamberlain's 'conversion' to and 'zeal for Article XVI', *Times*, 17 October 1935, p.16.
[154] On the widely known election date (before official announcement) see Brooks, *Fleet Street*, p.134.

Albert Hall on 30 October by the LNU and attended by senior representatives of all parties gave the impression of cross-party pro-League consensus.[155]

In the light of evidence showing that unofficial policy was to leave the League or render it impotent, Eden's speech on 5 October is instructive. He stated to his constituents in the Warwick and Leamington Division, that '[t]he real issue is whether or not the League of Nations can prove itself an effective instrument in this dispute and whether its members are prepared to respect and uphold the Covenant…[t]he present dispute is a test case.'[156] He was setting the League up for a fall. The phrase 'test case' was regularly employed over the next few months.[157] *The Times* also sought to prepare informed opinion for the inevitable, arguing that if League members were:

> prepared to tolerate inactively a concrete and unequivocal act of unprovoked aggression, then the Covenant and the Pact of Paris are dead. If they are dead, the world specifically abandons its greatest effort for the restraint of war…British opinion has a firm grasp of this truth.[158]

Although *The Times* argued that the public were 'neither alarmist nor alarmed' at the prospect of League failure, the majority of the correspondence to *The Times* that they had decided to publish, suggested otherwise. In October Hoare made a speech in the Commons, which, whilst not advocating any change in policy to that pronounced at Geneva, was decidedly different in tone and emphasis. He suggested that the 'breathing space' before sanctions were applied should be used to 'attempt…a settlement'. Italy was still, after all, a 'fellow member' of the League as well as an 'old friend, and former ally.'[159] He emphasized his pro-Italian credentials by reminding the House that he was 'the first public man…outside Italy who admitted the Italian case for expansion and economic development.' Eden concurred adding '[t]here is no question of a bargain in some unknown way.'[160] These arguments, made on 22 October, were lost on MPs

---

[155] Attendees included the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Robert Cecil, Sir Austen Chamberlain, Lady Violet Bonham-Carter and Mr. Herbert Morrison.
[156] Toynbee, *Survey*, p.201.
[157] For example see Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.305, Col.305, 23 October 1935.
[158] *Times*, 4 October 1935, p.15.
[159] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.305, Cols.31-32, 22 October 1935. Hoare later admitted his distaste for Abyssinia. Hoare, *Nine Troubled Years*, p.150.
[160] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.305, Cols.31-32, 22 October 1935; Col.305, 23 October 1935.

and the public who were more concerned that an election date of 14 November was to be announced the following day.

During the election campaign all main parties advocated commitment to the Covenant. As Mowat points out, not only was foreign policy the 'chief concern' during the election but 'Baldwin's campaign left the Liberals and Labour party at a disadvantage. He had stolen their clothes, and they could only protest that he would never wear them.'[161] The National government won by a landslide. Baldwin's personal appeal was a significant factor and was summed up by the *Daily Telegraph* who wrote 'the average Englishman is satisfied that Stanley Baldwin is John Bull's principal alias.'[162] Toynbee confirmed that for many Britons 'who differed from him in politics, Mr. Baldwin had hitherto typified the English character as it pleased the English to picture it to themselves: the character of a man who might not be a genius, but who was unmistakably free from guile.'[163] This cherished image was about to be destroyed.

In line with the government's professed 'double line' policy of commitment to the League and attempt to reach a negotiated settlement, Maurice Peterson, head of the Foreign Office Abyssinian Department, arrived in Paris on 21 November to complete negotiations, which had effectively started in June.[164] Hoare and Laval had previously agreed 'that until the British General Election had taken place…neither the original Paris plan nor the consequent British amendments should be disclosed to the League Council.'[165] Negotiations were reaching a crucial stage. The Committee of Eighteen, which was coordinating the imposition of sanctions was due to meet on 29 November 'with the aim of putting into practice Proposal No. 4 A'. This related to the extension of existing embargos on exports to Italy, already agreed in principle, including oil. Its imposition would have effectively ended the Italian advance.[166] The British and French colluded to postpone the meeting to 'a date not earlier than the 11th December.'[167] Hoare, encouraged by Vansittart and Eden, went to Paris to finalize negotiations on 7

---

[161] Mowat, *Between the Wars*, pp.553-4.
[162] *Telegraph*, 2 December 1935, p.10.
[163] Toynbee, *Survey*, p.317.
[164] *Times*, 6 December 1935, p.17.
[165] Robertson, James, C., 'The Hoare-Laval Plan', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.10, No.3 (Jul., 1975) p.437. For the development of the plan see pp.433-6.
[166] Hitler's interpreter, Dr. Schmidt, later revealed that Mussolini stated to Hitler that if the League 'had extended economic sanctions to oil, I would have had to withdraw from Abyssinia within a week.' Eden, *Facing the Dictators*, p.297.
[167] Toynbee, *Survey*, p.279.

December.[168] The news that Hoare had agreed with Laval for Italy to annex virtually all Abyssinian territory that had so far been occupied by force, in contravention of the Covenant, broke over the following week, although, not before the Cabinet had agreed its content and put pressure on the Abyssinian government to accept the terms. They were faced with an unprecedented outburst of public indignation.

Newly elected M.P.s and newspaper editors were deluged with expressions of protest.[169] Before looking at these, the role of *The Times* deserves a mention. It had, up until Hoare's Parisian *faux pas*, been a staunch supporter of the government line. The nature of its coverage suggests Dawson was kept well informed on policy decisions and agreed with the underlying motives. For reasons, which remain unclear, Dawson decided to desert the government at this crucial moment.[170] His sudden about turn, though short-lived, especially the editorial 'A Corridor for Camels' galvanized widespread resentment over the treatment of Abyssinians.[171]

Letters sent to national newspapers and to Conservative M.P., Vyvyan Adams reveal public indignation can be broadly divided into three themes. Firstly, dismay that the principles of democracy had been betrayed. Promises made during the election campaign regarding the League constituting the foundation of foreign policy, especially by Baldwin, had been false. One correspondent could not believe that Baldwin 'of all men' should endorse 'proposals which are a deliberate betrayal of Abyssinia, the League and the honour of our own country.' He added that if such proposals had been made 'immediately before the General Election instead of after it, he would have been swept (politically) out of existence.'[172] In fact, Baldwin and others, emphasizing a powerless version of the League to which they could be committed had maintained a

---

[168] Robertson, 'The Hoare-Laval Plan', p.439.
[169] 'Baldwin's own postbag was full'. Dawson received 'a volume of letters.' Middlemas and Barnes, *Baldwin*, p.890; *The Times*, 13 December 1935 p.14, reported that one member had 'received no fewer than 400 letters'; *The Daily Herald*, 14 December 1935, p.1 reported that '[t]he storm of public indignation still rises. M.P.s of all Parties are being inundated with letters of protest'; *The News Chronicle*, 14 December 1935, p.1 ran a headline stating that Tory M.P.s were being 'bombarded this week with letters of protest'. In the House of Commons on 19 December Attlee read out extracts from protest letters of lifelong Conservatives. Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.307, Cols.2019-2020; Daniel Waley contends that it was not the number of public letters that forced Hoare out of office but their quality. Waley, Daniel, *British Public Opinion and the Abyssinian War 1935-6* (London: Maurice Temple Smith, 1975).
[170] Although, as *Times* coverage of Chanak showed, the paper was not above changing policy half way through a crisis. See Chapter Two.
[171] *Times*, 16 December 1935, p.15. It was a reference to the 'make-weight' granted to the Abyssinians of a strip of land giving access to the coast but debarring the building of a railway.
[172] Vyvyan Adams Papers, 13 December 1935.

form of inner logic. This had been hidden from the electorate. The National government manifesto had stated '[o]ur attitude to the League is dictated by the conviction that collective security by collective action can alone save us from a return to the old system which resulted in the Great War.'[173] The government had been caught out attempting to manipulate an issue that was central to the memory of the last war. The 'old system' was precisely what they were trying to recreate. New M.P.s, dismayed by, what was for them, unprecedented levels of public protest required a sacrifice. This was to be Hoare. Secondly, many felt personal shame over Britain's 'national humiliation'.[174] One letter addressed to M.P. Geoffrey Ellis from 'two ordinary citizens…unacquainted with the finer points & details of foreign affairs and diplomacy' stated they were:

> tremendously concerned that the eternal principles of truth and justice should be vindicated in international affairs, as they are in individual matters. Being very jealous of our country's honour – for it is our own…[175]

Many echoed this sentiment. Ideas of national honour were intrinsically linked to the precepts of the Covenant. This was anathema to Baldwin and his inner circle. For them these two ideals were mutually exclusive. Thirdly, there was a massive sense of betrayal concerning League principles. Hoare had correctly stated in his September speech that '[t]he ideas enshrined in the Covenant, and in particular the aspiration to establish the rule of law in international affairs…have become a part of our national conscience.'[176] The decision to play politics with such forces cost him his job. Baldwin admitted the strength of public feeling in Parliament:

> I know that something has happened that has appealed to the deepest feelings of our countrymen, that some note has been struck that brings back from them a response from the depths.[177]

However, although crass handling lost the government this battle, it still won the ideological war. Despite Baldwin's protestation that the Hoare-Laval 'proposals are

---

[173] Stannage, *Baldwin Thwarts the Opposition*, p.155.
[174] *Guardian*, 14 December 1935, p.8.
[175] Vyvyan Adams Papers, Letter to Geoffrey Ellis, 12 December 1935.
[176] FO371/19133/76, Text of Hoare's speech to Geneva.
[177] Waley, *British Public Opinion*, p.69.

absolutely and completely dead',[178] the fight back started with Hoare's resignation speech.

Hoare reasserted his credentials to the Commons, by stressing the same ideology that had swept the Conservatives into office in 1922. He was 'terrified' to give the impression that 'the League could do more than it can' and feared Abyssinia would be 'destroyed altogether'. He could not

> help thinking of the past in which…we have given, and rightly given, all our sympathies to some threatened or down-trodden race, but because we had been unable to implement and give effect to those sympathies all that we had done was to encourage them, with the result that in the end their fate was worse than it would have been without our sympathy.[179]

Hoare was invoking the plight of the Armenians. He was interpreting the Abyssinian crisis in a way that would have found favour with anti-humanitarian forces that were prevalent during the Chanak crisis. The Armenians were remembered by an ex-Cabinet minister who sought to use the example of 'pernicious' western influence in the Near East to justify non-intervention in Africa whilst countenancing Italian aggression. The allusion was not lost on new Labour leader Clement Attlee who replied that 'to give immense concession to the wrongdoer at the expense of the victim is not British justice' it ran 'contrary to the British idea of fair play; that to betray a weak and backward people who trust us is an affront to the good name of this country'.[180] Attlee and Hoare appealed to a perceived British tradition of aiding the weak. It was based on a perception of the past, of memory of British altruism. This was central to the debate. However, Hoare's speech 'won the sympathy of the House'.[181] Its effect was, with regard to humanitarian foreign policy, to start the realignment of the new Parliament along party lines. Lord Halifax came closest to admitting the government had no intention of surrendering its policy of undermining the Covenant. He believed 'that in the long run these events may even serve to win a new loyalty to the better international

---

[178] Cited in Toynbee, *Survey*, p.319.
[179] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.307, Cols.2007-2017, 19 December 1935.
[180] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.307, Col.2018, 19 December 1935.
[181] Rhodes James, Robert (ed.) *'Chips' The Diaries of Sir Henry Channon* (London: Phoenix, 1993), p.48. Diary entry 19 December 1935.

order that we seek to create'.[182] He was talking about national loyalty as against League loyalty. The government were increasingly charged with lack of leadership. In truth the government were leading but not in the way that most perceived. They were leading Britain out of commitment to a Covenant, which held within it the possibility of humanitarian ideals and back towards the pre-war system of international arrangements based on self-interest. The cost, in the short term, was Abyssinian lives. In the long term, lack of a strong League facilitated loss of Spanish, Chinese and Jewish lives.

Government humiliation meant Italian wartime conduct came under greater scrutiny. Italian forces had, throughout December, been bombing defenceless towns including Red Cross installations. They were also using poison gas. *The Times* gave more space than before to the appeal for Red Cross work in Abyssinia. A Red Cross appeal at Mansion House coincided with the Hoare-Laval revelations. Austen Chamberlain noticeably strayed from the party line. He did not wish to impute 'any barbarity of thought or deed to the Italians' but stressed the inequitable nature of conflict.[183] The *Daily Herald* claimed they had '[p]roof that Italians Bombed Red Cross'[184] devoting a page of pictures to Abyssinian air raid victims. *Punch* published a cartoon in which Italy was characterised as an armoured knight spraying poison gas into the eyes of a stereotypical Abyssinian holding only a spear. Entitled 'When Knights Are Bold', the Italian knight states '[i]ts your own fault. A civilised man must protect himself – and what's more, its beginning to rain.'[185] The latter comment referred to a growing perception that Italy's progress was slowing due to adverse weather conditions. *The Spectator* suggested in a nod to Campbell-Bannerman's resonant Boer War rhetoric that 'methods of barbarism were deliberately adopted.'[186] The *New Statesman* alluded to Italian 'frightfulness'.[187] Thus familiar phrases were invoked designed to resonate with public opinion. This caused indignation on the political right. Douglas Jerrold suggested to little effect that 'the mobilisation of opinion in this country bears a painful likeness to that organization of hatred against Germany which we witnessed in the years from 1914 to 1918.'[188] However attempts by Italians to influence public opinion

---

[182] Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 5th Series, Vol.99, Col.286, 19 December 1935.
[183] *Times*, 13 December 1935, p.14.
[184] *Herald*, 17 December 1936, p.1.
[185] *Punch*, 15 January 1936, p.59.
[186] *Spectator*, 3 January 1936, p.1.
[187] *The New Statesman and Nation*, 4 January 1936, p.2.
[188] *English Review*, January 1936, pp.7-8.

failed. They circulated 'anecdotes of the Boer War, Amritsar…&c.'[189] A book was published for the English market by C.G. Baravelli entitled *The Last Stronghold of Slavery*.[190] *The Spectator*'s review described it as 'propaganda pure and simple and only worth mentioning for its disingenuousness.'[191] This reaction was typical. However, the effect of apparent government retreat over Hoare-Laval ultimately undermined public outrage. It gave the impression that humanitarian values had regained the upper hand in Parliament. It was also affected by the death of King George V on 20 January 1936.

Eden, now Foreign Secretary, attended a meeting at Geneva on 2 March. He was better than Hoare at maintaining a pretence that the government was in favour of tightening sanctions to include oil. Having agreed, after a telephone call to Baldwin, that, in accordance with French suggestions, there should be a further attempt to mediate between Italy and Abyssinia, Eden 'launched his proposal for an oil sanction' in the form of 'an afterthought'.[192] This was consistent with the strategy agreed in August that an extra layer of negotiation be imposed on the agreed Covenant.[193] Having accepted the French proposal Eden had more latitude to sound bombastic but it had no effect. The resulting resolution called on 'both belligerents' to open negotiations 'within the framework' and 'spirit' of the Covenant to end hostilities.[194] The phraseology was unjust to the Abyssinians who were raised to the status of co-belligerent despite having to defend their territory against an aggressor. Its content was no less biased, providing no deadline for the conflict to end giving the Italians the breathing space to finish the war and license to continue atrocities. The nature of this failure was overshadowed in Britain by Germany's annexation of the Rhineland on 7 March 1936.

Widespread and continued use of gas in March led to increased public condemnation of Italy. T.A. Lambie, of the Red Cross, claimed 'no adjective' could 'describe the hellish' use of gas.[195] Public response over the following weeks showed the horror was fully understood. Sir Henry Hesketh Bell suggested that wherever *The Times* was read 'sentiments of horror and indignation will have been aroused by the account given in

---

[189] *Spectator*, 17 January 1936, p.96.
[190] Baravelli, C.G., *The Last Stronghold of Slavery* (Rome: Societa Editrice di Novissima, 1935).
[191] *Spectator*, 10 January 1936, p.58.
[192] Toynbee, *Survey*, p.338.
[193] See footnote 96.
[194] Toynbee, *Survey*, p.338.
[195] *Times*, 25 March 1936, p.15.

today's issue.' He believed Abyssinians would feel 'everlasting hatred' because of tortures inflicted on them by 'white men' bearing 'terrible weapons and promising them the blessings of civilization and of true Christianity' and asked:

> what excuse can the Italians offer for the deliberate blinding and maiming of women and children merely because they are the wives and offspring of the men who are bravely dying in scores of thousands in defence of their country and liberty?[196]

Lord Robert Cecil read out extracts from Sir Henry's letter in the Lords on 30 March. He also emphasised 'the protocol signed on 17 June 1925' banning the use of poisonous gases in warfare and suggested if it went unchallenged it would set a precedent for potential British conflicts.[197] He described the use of gas and the bombing off unfortified towns as 'perhaps as horrible and shameless a thing as has ever been done, even in the bloody annals of warfare'. Lord Halifax summed up the debate by pointing out that criticism and condemnation of Italy came from across the political spectrum, even from 'those accustomed in other debates to take a somewhat different point of view.'[198] The *New Statesman* wrote, the 'bombing of Harrar seems to have struck people's imagination in England.'[199] All united in condemning the atrocities, which were fully comprehended.

Evidence for atrocity was so overwhelming that pro-Italian Lord Mottistone could not deny them but instead was driven to cloud the issue by suggesting 'whatever is said is a lie on both sides.' That public feeling found expression in the Lords rather than the Commons is indicative of government inertia facilitated by an insurmountable majority. When questioned in the Commons as to what 'action' was being taken to protest against atrocities,[200] Eden legalistically referred to 'continuous use by Italy of asphyxiating gas and similar gases' in violation of the Hague Convention and Geneva Protocol, merely adding these matters were for consideration by the 'Committee of Thirteen'.[201] There was no separate government condemnation. On 6 April, Eden 'informed the Cabinet

---

[196] Ibid., 30 March 1936, p.13.
[197] Parliamentary Debates, Lords, 5th Series, Vol.100, Cols.340-359, 30 March 1935.
[198] Ibid.
[199] *New Statesman*, 4 April 1936, p.514.
[200] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.307, Col.1603, 30 March 1936.
[201] Ibid.

that the military situation of the Abyssinians was desperate.'[202] Eden was to speak in a foreign affairs debate that afternoon and in the same meeting colleagues 'suggested that to point out the ineffectiveness of the League to prevent a breach of a Convention of this kind would be a good way of introducing' his speech.[203] The consistency of the government in the face of public opposition in pursuing anti-League policy was remarkable.

The Times had now returned to government orthodoxy. In spite of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, its commentary on the Lord's debate emphasised the 'hope' that allegations of atrocities were 'unfounded' and moreover '[e]very one indeed will cling to this hope as long as possible.'[204] It cited 'excitement or genuine error on the part of the airmen'[205] and days later suggested reports were only 'second hand' and that the 'use of poison-gas' had 'not been witnessed by an authoritative British observer.'[206] If gas was being used then '[w]herever the League fails to check one dictator in his disregard of treaty obligations, there is…a direct encouragement to others to follow his example.'[207] Thus just as Eden had done in the Commons and Halifax had done in the Lords,[208] *The Times* saw fit to bifurcate the League from British responsibility and blame it for inaction.

Pro-Abyssinian newspapers responded by publishing British eye-witness reports. The *Daily Herald* ran the front page headline 'Italians Shower Liquid Fire on Abyssinians – Doctors Confirm Use of Gas Bombs'.[209] Captain Townshend Stephens of the Red Cross reported that gas sprayed from the air was indiscriminately affecting 'men, women and children' who were 'victims of the horrible festering boils and sores', often resulting in death.[210] Graphic descriptions were thus given emotional emphasis. On 7 April an '[i]mpressive' protest was published in the *Manchester Guardian* on behalf of twenty two national women's organizations and twenty eight individual women including

---

[202] Hardie, Frank, *The Abyssinian Crisis* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1974) p.217.
[203] Cited in Ibid., p.218.
[204] *Times*, 31 March 1935, p.17.
[205] Ibid.
[206] *Times*, 1 April 1936, p.16.
[207] *Times*, 31 March 1935, p.17.
[208] Ibid.
[209] *Herald*, 4 April 1936, p.1.
[210] Ibid.

M.P.s 'deeply moved by the terrible sufferings of the Ethiopian men, women and children'.[211]

Ethiopians were cast as the 'plucky underdog' as a way of aligning them to British values. Other cherished forms of Englishness were also bestowed upon them. One periodical suggested 'Ethiopia is an ancient empire, and its sins, such as brutal imprisonment and slave trade, are the sins we practised ourselves scarcely a century ago.'[212] The Ethiopian Royal Family were described as 'articulate' and the Emperor had picked out 'the cleverer young men' and instilled in them a cosmopolitan, Christian education. Ethiopians generally had 'a certain independence of mind free from any truculence'.[213] Britain's failure to live up to its 'traditional' role of defending the weak and protecting small nations was contrasted to Abyssinian suffering and heroism. One correspondent wrote 'the Great British Empire, Defender of the Faith, Protector of the Weak, champion of the oppressed, stands by supinely, inert, indifferent whilst helpless men, women and children are slaughtered, maimed and blinded by a vicious aggressor.'[214] Another added '[a]re we to wait until the brave little people defending (as we would do) their country against a foreign invader are quite exterminated.'[215] Although the government was criticised, they were no longer subject to accusations of subverting democracy. Significantly, public anger was no longer directed towards government failure to implement the Covenant. In fact a growing number now blamed the League. One asked '[h]as the League lost all regard for its responsibilities?'[216] Although there was a continuing sense of shame, what was noticeably different from December's protest was lack of cross-party consensus.[217]

At the April meeting in Geneva, Eden asked 'how can we have confidence that our own fold, despite all solemnly signed protocols, will not be burned blinded and done to death in agony hereafter?'[218] He then suggested that if the authority of the League had been fatally shaken 'then we should each of us have to consider the policy which in that

---

[211] *Guardian*, 7 April 1936, p.24.
[212] *Contemporary Review*, April 1936, p.547.
[213] *New Statesman*, 4 April 1936, p.517.
[214] *News Chronicle*, 9 April 1936, p.9. This letter was part of extracts from 200 letters sent to this newspaper.
[215] Ibid.
[216] Ibid.
[217] Hugh Dalton Papers, 7 May 1936. (London: London School of Economics Archive). For example one constituent wrote 'I am nearly ashamed to call myself an Englishman'.
[218] Toynbee, *Survey*, pp.351-2.

situation it would be our duty to pursue.'[219] While in Geneva, Britain's chief representative for foreign affairs hinted at withdrawal from the League. Eden was presenting one image to the British public, that of a pro-League, pro-humanitarian and another to Britain's League partners. Chamberlain was more forthright arguing, '[t]he League's weapons to-day will not shoot'.[220] The Committee of Thirteen appealed to 'the Italian and the Abyssinian Government', condemning atrocities.[221] Addressing it to both, when Italians were known to be the guilty party, once again undermined the Abyssinian cause on the international stage. Eden was complicit in this process suggesting 'to both parties that they should not employ poison gas.'[222] A few days later, Eden was to receive Baldwin's support.

Most historians see the ending of the Abyssinian affair in Britain as occurring on 10 June 1936 when Chamberlain openly criticized the continuance of sanctions as 'the very midsummer of madness'.[223] In fact, it can be traced to Baldwin's April speech to the Bewdley Division Unionist Association in Worcester Guildhall. Like most leaders who wish to make defining statements he chose his own constituency. Having deliberately changed his public stance concerning the Covenant the previous June after learning the result of the LNU ballot, the Prime Minister, after regaining control of his party, returned to his previous anti-League incantation. He reiterated his view that the absence of America, Germany and Japan undermined the effectiveness of sanctions.[224] He condemned the Covenant by stating that not only had the League been unable to 'prevent the war' but that taking the 'prescribed collective steps in imposing certain sanctions' showed there was no 'effective machinery' for stopping war if one party does not submit to arbitration.[225] Baldwin would say 'nothing' on 'the use of gases in Abyssinia', claiming breaches on 'both sides'. He was more concerned that:

---

[219] Ibid.
[220] *Guardian*, 8 April 1936, p.8.
[221] *Times*, 11 April 1936, p.12.
[222] Ibid.
[223] *Times*, 11 June 1936, p.10; *Telegraph*, 11 June 1936, p.17.
[224] *Times*, 20 April 1936, p.8.
[225] Ibid.

> if a great European nation, in spite of having given its signature to the Geneva protocol against the use of such gases, employs them in Africa, what guarantee have we that they may not be used in Europe?[226]

Eden and Baldwin were acting according to inner Cabinet policy. Consequently, their statements echo one another. Both were falsely claiming the League had no machinery for dealing with the invasion of Abyssinia by Italy. However, Article Eleven of the Covenant stated that 'any war *or threat of war*,[227] whether immediately affecting any of the Members of the League or not, is hereby decreed a matter of concern to the whole League, the League shall take action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations.'[228] The *Manchester Guardian* highlighted the relevant clause but very few people realised the import of Baldwin's speech. Because of the intellectual paradigm elucidated by Warren Fisher and R.J. Campbell that separated League principles from League methods, Baldwin was still able to say without hint of irony but not without cynicism that '[w]e want the Covenant of the League to become the law of the world'.[229] He was saying one thing and doing another. *The Times* did not make a habit of printing all his speeches, however, it is no coincidence that this speech was published. Establishment figures in Britain had successfully combined to create the illusion that the League but not its principal member had failed.

Throughout the crisis political leaders had been regularly accused of lacking leadership. Lloyd George, in what Churchill felt was his best ever Commons performance, condemned the government for just that.[230] The government was leading all along but not in the direction that most people thought. From the end of April senior Conservative figures whose presence had signalled essential cross party consensus started either to resign from the LNU or undermine the policy of sanctions.[231] 'All the talk in the lobbies and smoking rooms' of the Commons, according to *The Spectator*, was 'centred around "the reform of the League," or in other words, decent burial of Article XVI.'[232]

---

[226] Ibid.
[227] My italics.
[228] *Guardian*, 20 April 1936, p.10.
[229] *Times*, 20 April 1936, p.8.
[230] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.313, Col.1221-32, 18 June 1936.
[231] Lord Queensborough, Treasurer and Chairman of the Finance Committee of the LNU resigned on 28 April, Toynbee, *Survey*, p.456. On 6 May, Austen Chamberlain 'won almost universal cheers from the Government's supporters in declaring the futility and the danger of continuing sanctions.' *Times*, 7 May 1936, p.16. On 12 June the Duchess of Atholl resigned from the LNU. *Daily Mail*, 12 June 1936, p.14.
[232] *Spectator*, 1 May 1936, p.779.

Politicians on all sides had been adequately prepared and on 6 May Eden confessed under pressure from Hugh Dalton that 'without doubt, a blow' had 'been struck at the structure of the League and the conception of collective security.'[233] At the beginning of May it was widely rumoured that Sir Samuel Hoare was to return to the Cabinet as First Lord of the Admiralty. [234] '[S]urely' Collin Brooks correctly predicted, this 'heralds the abandonment of the Sanctions policy.'[235] Hoare restated his political credentials by announcing government policy to the Unionist Canvassing Corps. 'The time had come', he stated,

> when the British Government might make it quite clear to the world what questions they regarded as vital, for which they were certainly prepared to fight…they should judge a situation as it arose. It would be both futile and fatal if they made specific commitments upon issues that were not vital Imperial issues…[236]

Eden concurred, the 'manifest failure of the League, which has rightly been tried out to the uttermost' he misleadingly stated, 'must be admitted and remedied "in a spirit of candid realism."'[237] Lord Robert Cecil admitted defeat because 'the chance of any fruitful reform of the League may well be destroyed if it has to be undertaken under the shadow of complete failure by the League to discharge its obligations to one of its members'.[238] The following day Chamberlain condemned the continuation of sanctions because it 'would divert our minds as practical men from seeking other and better solutions.' Because of the internal logic adopted by the 'inner Cabinet', he was able magnanimously to suggest that the League and the 'ideals' for which it stood should not be abandoned.[239] It was instead to be a moral influence.

The Italian victory on 5 May had created a *fait accompli*. Protesters were faced with a stark choice, either for militarily ousting Italian forces or not. Pro-sanctionist arguments became vulnerable to attack. The government was free to return to pre-war

---

[233] Toynbee, *Survey*, p.456.
[234] *Spectator*, 1 May 1936, p.779. '[A] post which was not only eminent in itself but was also concerned – more intimately than any other Cabinet office except the Foreign Secretaryship itself – with the shaping of Anglo-Italian relations.' Toynbee, *Survey*, p.466.
[235] Brooks, *Fleet Street*, p.164. Diary entry 5 June 1936.
[236] Toynbee, *Survey*, p.457.
[237] *Times*, 8 June 1936, p.15; *Telegraph*, 11 June 1936, p.14.
[238] *Times* 10 June 1936.
[239] Ibid., 11 June 1936, p.10.

foreign policy. It could now decide, without being encumbered by humanitarian considerations, external forces, or other nations what it was prepared to fight for. There is a clue to the direction favoured by Baldwin in Eden's diary of 20 May. He wrote '[t]alk with S.B. in evening. Did not get much out of it save that he wants better relations with Hitler than Musso – we must get nearer to Germany.'[240] On 21 June Baldwin announced the end of sanctions. In the papers of Vyvyan Adams there are more letters of protest relating to this than there were in December.[241] However, it was too late. Just before the Commons voted to drop sanctions, Baldwin stated, "I understand that hon. Members opposite are going to launch a great campaign against this Government on what we have done in regard to the League of Nations…I welcome it…the country will be educated. That is wholly to the good.'[242] The government had regained the initiative.

Although public compassion had played its biggest role yet in British politics, the resignation of the Foreign Secretary was a diversion. Baldwin's ideological stance was stated with relative clarity when he wrote to Thomas Jones '[o]ne thundering good thing we have got out of it is the realisation of what sanctions mean. They mean that we have got to be much more self-contained.'[243] Self-containment meant freedom from foreign influence, which Baldwin inherently mistrusted. Rearmament, for him, could only be approached on that basis. Middlemas and Barnes suggest that Hoare's resignation was 'the first major defeat of the British tradition of pragmatic foreign policy'.[244] To call this type of foreign policy 'pragmatic' grants it an insurmountable status. It was much more subtle than that. For a while the Covenant of the League looked like it might constitute 'common sense', which it was for many millions of Britons. The Abyssinian crisis became a successful attempt to wrest from the British public the initiative in establishing what constituted *realpolitik*. However, had the public been led in the way that many wanted, then British foreign policy could have gained a more humanitarian emphasis.[245] In addition future calls for international

---

[240] Eden, *Facing the Dictators*, p.374.
[241] Vyvyan Adams Papers. Also plenty of examples in Rathbone, Eleanor, (ed.) *The Tragedy of Abyssinia: What Britain Feels and Thinks and Wants* (London: League of Nations Union, 1936).
[242] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.313, 23, Cols.1728-9, June 1936.
[243] Middlemas and Barnes, *Baldwin*, p.897.
[244] Ibid., p.899.
[245] For the popularity of the League of Nations Union and adherence to its precepts see Helen McCarthy, 'Democratizing British Foreign Policy: Rethinking the Peace Ballot, 1934-1935', *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (April 2010), pp. 358-387.

condemnation of atrocities would have actually meant something. Certainly, when it came to the Final Solution, calls for international condemnation were used as a smokescreen for inactivity. If Britain had made a meaningful stand over Abyssinia by providing a strong lead to the League it is feasible that Hitler would have taken a different route after 1935. Eric Phipps, British Ambassador to Berlin stated in 1937 that in the early 1930s Germany's avowed aim was:

> an understanding with England…It was in deference to English public opinion…that the persecution of Jews and political prisoners was mitigated. Such concessions…were regarded here as very important and they were made to no other nation. British influence and prestige reached its height towards the end of 1935 when, for a brief space, it was thought that England at the head of the League, might succeed in stopping Signor Mussolini's Abyssinian adventure...The German began to ask himself whether it was necessary to conciliate a Power, without whose favours Italy seemed to be doing very well.[246]

[246] Phipps, *Our Man in Berlin,* 13 April 1935, p.200.

Chapter Five

Spain and China: Unlikely Victims

The Spanish Civil War had an unprecedented impact on Britain's political, social and economic life. Its ideological resonance was felt at all levels of society and impacted on all shades of political opinion. For some, events in Spain were the key to preventing Bolshevism from entering Europe via the back door.[1] For many others they confirmed the seemingly relentless march of fascism. As such the issue elicited passionate debate in an ideologically polarized atmosphere. As Helen Graham states,

> Spain was the focus of European anxiety, the centre of its disequilibrium. Her civil war, both in terms of its domestic origins and internationalization, held up a mirror to class tensions and imperialist rivalries in Europe.[2]

Yet in the first year of the conflict British reactions to Spanish atrocities proved to be one factor that was more powerful than deeply entrenched, widely expressed principles. In the early stages of the civil war, atrocities committed by forces loyal to the Spanish government confirmed, for the majority, the moral rectitude of the British government's apparently neutral policy. As it became clear that atrocities committed by the Spanish rebels were part of a deliberate policy of terrorization, there was a broad shift in public opinion. The first part of this chapter tracks the trajectory of this steady but unmistakable swing in British sympathy away from Spanish Nationalists, towards the Republicans. It culminates at the bombing of Guernica, when the Western world was confronted with a new terror: the decimation of innocent civilians from the air. For a period British opinion was, almost without exception, united in indignation. The force of public outrage shook the pro-Franco British government.

---

[1] Little, Douglas, 'Red Scare, 1936: Anti-Bolshevism and the Origins of British Non-Intervention in the Spanish Civil War', *Journal of Contemporary History,* Vol.23, No.2, Bolshevism and the Socialist Left (April, 1988) pp.291-311.
[2] Graham, Helen, 'Spain and Europe: the View from the Periphery', *The Historical Journal*, 35, 4 (1992) p.969.

One of the main reasons why the public became less focused on Spain in the summer of 1937 was the commencement of the Sino-Japanese war. Once again the atrocity discourse was decisive for British understanding. On the surface it appeared from the moment Japan invaded Chinese territory that Britain was united in condemnation of this blatant act of international aggression. Influential voices on the Left believed the Far Eastern conflict would be more effective than Spain at alerting ordinary Britons to the dangers of fascism. However, the government resolved that whilst offering limited assistance to China it would not allow itself to be manoeuvred into a position where a schism developed with the Japanese government. As with the Spanish conflict, the interaction of government policy and its efforts to mollify public opinion played a key role in the outworking of the international crisis in Britain. The chapter brings to light a largely forgotten national campaign on behalf of the Chinese.

In each case the atrocity discourse was played out within the context of peculiarly British reactions to foreign acts of violence. Memory of previous atrocities combined with specific ideas of whom the British thought themselves to be. 'Frightfulness', a term with specific connections to wartime Germany, was increasingly employed, showing that myth and reality could exist side by side in 1930s Britain. Versions of Britishness were superimposed on the victims of atrocity whether they were Basques or Chinese. Actual distance from events did not dim indignation. What is clear is that British compassion in both cases was genuine and manifested in real actions that had identifiable outcomes at a moment in modern history when the intransigence of senior politicians was arguably at its most impenetrable.

This chapter is concerned with showing that foreign atrocities touched the British imagination right up to the outbreak of the Second World War. Although Spain was indeed deemed to reflect tensions in Europe, there was a noticeable sense of myopia to the dominant threat in Europe, which, of course, was Germany. That Germany supplied the bombers for Guernica was almost overlooked. Indignation over Spanish deaths on both sides showed that the mistreatment of one set of civilians by another within a sovereign state was a legitimate focus for British concern. When it came to Jews in Germany most commentators, whether on the Right or Left, were keen to distance themselves

from ‘interference’ in the internal affairs of another county this; did not count for Spain. The government were certainly concerned about threats to British interests in the Far East and this, together with the experience they had built up over Abyssinia and Spain, helped them to get better at channelling and mollifying public indignation. This experience certainly helped officials when it came to anti-Jewish atrocities in Germany. By emphasising the response of opinion formers and the British public to the suffering of Chinese civilians, this chapter also shows that years of stereotyping ‘the yellow peril’ was no barrier to compassionate expression. Therefore it draws a stark comparison with attitudes towards European Jews who were often seen as the cause of their own misfortune.

The Spanish Civil War began on 17 July 1936. The spark was a failed coup by a coalition of disparate Right wing forces against the recently elected left wing government. The Spanish military was the main rebel contingent. As Franco’s Army of Africa moved northwards from Morocco to Madrid, their advance was marked by a ‘horrific trail of slaughter…[i]n one town after another, the occupying troops raped working-class women and looted their houses.’[3] Government-controlled zones were also marked by widespread violence. Ideological opposition to an oppressive social system found expression in the murder of those who were perceived to uphold it. Priests, policemen, the wealthy and their agents were victims of revolutionary fervour. However ‘there were also criminal acts, murder, rape, theft and the settling of personal scores.’[4] The violence committed by Nationalist forces also had an ideological element. Those perceived a threat to the cause were identified and killed. However, its wider purpose was to instil terror into Spaniards not yet under their control. Violence in government areas was without official sanction. Brutality in the Nationalist sector was sponsored by the leadership or allowed to go unchecked.

Initially British representations of the conflict did not reflect Spanish realities. British officialdom was already ideologically inclined towards the rebels. General Franco, eventual leader of the Nationalist cause, was seen as

---

[3] Preston, Paul, *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution and Revenge* (London: Harper, 2006) p.120.
[4] Ibid., p.232.

representing the social traditionalism and fiscal orthodoxy of the pre-Republican order. Strong connections between British commerce and the Spanish aristocratic and upper-middle-classes reinforced shared social, cultural and political assumptions.[5] Thus when reactionary elements within the British diplomatic corps reported harrowing Republican atrocities they found ready acceptance in ministerial and bureaucratic circles.[6] There was a predisposition to believe they were witnessing a Spanish Kerensky-style government, impotent when confronted by the anarchy they associated with Bolshevik revolution.[7] Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden shared these views.[8] However, British ministers could not be seen to question the legitimate democratic outcome of the Spanish elections. The government was wary of the force of public opinion so soon after the Abyssinian crisis, so instinctive support for an invading force against an existing regime had to remain hidden from the public. Therefore the Cabinet opted for a policy of 'non-intervention', which was in fact 'tacit neutrality whose central aim was to avoid all direct or indirect help to the disowned government side and any hindrance to the rebels'.[9]

Public debate on Spain was dominated by atrocity stories.[10] Initially, because victims included representatives of the Catholic Church this reinforced the idea in Britain that the government was 'anti-God', whilst the rebels represented Christianity and civilizing values. This created a problem for Left wing commentators, who tended to sympathize with the Spanish government. They therefore deprecated atrocity stories altogether, suggested both sides were equally to blame, invoked stereotypical images of Spanish propensity for violence or accused the Right wing press of exaggeration. Labour supporters passed an emergency resolution in favour of Spanish workers on 20 July. The

---

[5] Graham, 'Spain and Europe', pp.971-2.
[6] Preston, *Spanish Civil War*, p.140.
[7] Moradiellos, Enrique, 'British Political Strategy in the Face of the Military rising of 1936 in Spain', *Contemporary European History*, Vol.1, No. 2, (July 1992), p.125; Nicolson, Nigel, (ed.) *Harold Nicolson Diaries and Letters 1907-1964* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004) p.144.
[8] Eden, Anthony, *The Eden Memoirs: Facing the Dictators* (London: Cassell, 1962) pp.399-400.
[9] Moradiellos, Enrique, 'The Origins of British Non-Intervention in the Spanish Civil War: Anglo-Spanish Relations in Early 1936', *European History Quarterly*, Vol.21, No.3, (July 1991), p.358.
[10] Mowat, Charles Loch, *Britain Between the Wars 1918-1940* (London: Methuen, 1978.) pp.576-7.

Labour Party National Executive and the TUC General Council followed suit.[11] However, Labour leaders, influenced by fear of a communist threat to their own movement, moved to ensure pro-Spanish initiatives did not stray beyond those with strictly humanitarian emphases.[12]

On 21 July the *Daily Express* printed unsubstantiated gossip that thousands had been killed by Republicans in Barcelona. Sefton Delmer's article 'set the tone for much early reporting from the Republic zone.'[13] Atrocity reports reinforced Right wing fears that Spain had the potential to become the epicenter of a pan-European epidemic of communism. On 22 July, Collin Brooks, editor of the *Sunday Dispatch* and close associate of Lord Rothermere, noted in his diary that atrocities committed against 'nuns and priests' were causing 'increasing excitement' and expressed fears that the 'contagion' would spread to France.[14] The *Daily Mail* aligned itself with outraged Catholic opinion publishing uncorroborated stories of a pseudo-sexual nature in which 'nuns [were] stripped, tortured and outraged', prisoners 'crucified' and dismembered. This 'daily magnification of atrocities' was condemned as 'sinister'.[15] Flagrant atrocity propaganda by the *Daily Mail* led to widespread criticism and reduced its impact on the national debate.

More influential on informed British opinion was pro-Nationalist coverage in *The Times*. Dawson initially attempted to portray the paper as neutral, condemning atrocities on both sides. However, as Spain's importance grew in the British political discourse there was a perceptible change in tone, which did not go unnoticed. Between the 20 and 30 July, Julian Huxley conducted a study of the language used to portray the rival factions in Spain. The 'descriptive terminology', he concluded, 'changed in a way which sets the insurgents in a better, and the constituted authority in a worse, light.'[16] This was an accurate

---

[11] Buchanan, Tom, *The Spanish Civil War and the British Labour Movement* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991) p.48.
[12] Many Labour activists joined with Communists in pro-Republican ventures. Ibid., p.18.
[13] Preston, Paul, *We Saw Spain Die: Foreign Correspondents in the Spanish Civil War* (London: Constable, 2008) p.8.
[14] Crowson, N.J., (ed.) *Fleet Street, Press Barons and Politics: The Journals of Collin Brooks 1932-1940* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1998) p.172.
[15] *The Political Quarterly*, August 1936, pp.578-9.
[16] *New Statesman and Nation*, 1 August 1936, p.145 and p.187.

observation. By early August *The Times* was providing a pro-Nationalist commentary, portraying atrocity as intrinsic to anti-Fascist ideology. Violence in Barcelona was a 'war of extermination…a necessary stage in the consolidation of the anti-Fascist revolution.'[17] Spanish officials were said to be either 'collaborating',[18] or 'enforced' to yield by 'Marxists'.[19] In other words, the elected government was portrayed as either sanctioning terrorism or too weak to hold a mandate. At a moment when the British establishment expected an early insurgent victory, stereotypes relating to Spanish propensity for violence and death were invoked to demonstrate they were unready for British-style democracy.[20] The war was therefore portrayed as 'a struggle between two extremes' in which the Republic 'must inevitably perish.'[21] Correspondents were given ample space to point out the inappropriateness of terms such as 'rebel' or 'insurgent' when describing Franco's forces, which, they alleged, stood for 'law and order.'[22] The Nationalist generals were, according to one *Times* editorial, 'not known to possess political acumen or ability'.[23] Therefore, in a choice between two 'dictatorships', that of the Right was granted benign status.[24] The role of women and children in Republican violence was highlighted to emphasize the breakdown of familial structures and the radicalization of society under Left-wing extremism.[25]

Just as *The Times* helped reinforce widespread support for the official government policy of non-intervention, 'neutrality' was advocated by other publications. *The Spectator*, for example, stated intervention would be 'folly' because of the risk of provoking Italy and Germany to 'counter-measures.'[26]

---

[17] *The Times*, 1 August 1936, p.12.
[18] Ibid.
[19] *Times*, 5 August 1936, p.12.
[20] *Times*, 10 August 1936, p.11. Some individuals with strong government connections argued influential elements 'on General Franco's side…admire the English parliamentary system and…these men may be counted upon to make their influence tell.' *Nineteenth Century and After*, September 1936, p.292. Article by 'a distinguished diplomat'.
[21] *Times*, 5 August 1936, p.12.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] See also *Contemporary Review*, September 1936, p.277; Moradiellos, Enrique, 'The Gentle General: The Official British Perception of General Franco during the Spanish Civil War', Preston, Paul and Mackenzie, Ann L. (eds.) *The Republic Besieged: Civil War in Spain 1936-1939* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996).
[25] *Times*, 6 August 1936, p.10.
[26] *The Spectator*, 7 August 1936, p.225.

Winston Churchill argued for 'strictest neutrality'.[27] Events at Badajoz disturbed the growing momentum behind these views.

On 14 August Nationalist forces massacred at least 2000 people at Badajoz on the Spanish-Portuguese border. The *News Chronicle* reported 'mountain[s] of corpses' and a 'blood stained wall at the Commandancia, perforated with bullets…where some 2,000 men were executed by the insurgents.'[28] The story represented the first significant blow to the view that both sides were equally committing atrocities. Moreover, it undermined assertions that Right wing forces in Spain stood for Christian and civilized values. Franco's deployment of North African troops further undermined his credibility. Left wing critics in Britain exploited the issue using racial, religious and historical stereotypes. Badajoz marked a turning point in the nature of coverage in *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*. Their attempts to appear impartial became more studied.

On 19 August *The Times* published a letter from a host of eminent opinion formers.[29] They believed political liberty and Parliamentary democracy to be Britain's 'noblest' contribution to 'European civilization'. They asserted,

> [a]t any other time during the last 150 years of our history the sympathies of practically all classes in this country and of our Government would have been with the Spanish people and its Government in such a struggle of democracy against military despotism, and of freedom against Fascism.

It was therefore 'a matter of grave concern' that in 'many quarters', especially the popular press, attempts were being made 'to enlist the sympathies of Britain for the military rebels'. This, they wrote, was based on misrepresentation of the Spanish government as 'Communist'. The signatories belonged 'to various political parties, or to no party' but were all committed to 'the British ideals of political freedom and democracy'. They hoped that the British government

---

[27] *Evening Standard*, 10 August 1936.
[28] *News Chronicle*, 17 August 1936, p.1. *The Times*, 17 August 1936, p.11 merely stated '[t]he insurgents have advanced in the West, and at great cost have captured Badajoz.'.
[29] Among others these included Norman Angell, C. Day Lewis, E.M. Forster, Margery Fry, G.P. Gooch, J.B.S. Haldane, Julius S. Huxley, Gilbert Murray, Henry Nevinson, R.H. Tawney, H.G. Wells, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Leonard Woolf and Virginia Woolf. *The Times*, 19 August 1936, p.6 and *New Statesman*, 22 August 1936, pp.250-1.

would return to the 'traditional British policy of sympathetic benevolence.'[30] The appeal is notable for including all shades of opinion, for its passion and for its evocation of widely held 'British' values.

Critics of non-intervention were slow to come to terms with the demise of the League of Nations. Clinging to the wreckage of the League after the deliberate destruction of its credibility during the Abyssinian affair had arguably placed government opponents at a disadvantage in the Spanish debate because they wasted energy advocating its importance. Furthermore, by paying it lip-service ministers were able to maintain the appearance of action whilst achieving little. Kingsley Martin, editor of the *New Statesman*, was one of the few to notice. For him, the shattered League created a central dichotomy within 'Liberal opinion in England', which he believed was created by the 'incompatibility of pacifism and the desire to help the oppressed'. With the League's breakdown, '[e]ither they must sponsor a policy which carries with it a threat of war or they must abandon any attempt to keep their word and to aid the victims of aggression.'[31] Martin expressed the reasoning behind growing dissatisfaction with government policy:

England has become less unsympathetic to the Spanish Government as the danger and methods of Fascist intervention have proved more apparent. General Franco's terrible declarations about not taking prisoners, about completely depopulating any district that held out against him, about grinding to powder the bones of his opponents – these coupled with the actual savagery of his methods, the massacres at Badajoz and elsewhere, have estranged British sympathy but not in any way changed British policy.[32]

Over the next few months there was increasing activity in the 'centre' ground of British politics on behalf of victims of the Civil War in general and atrocity in particular. The genesis of change in the way atrocities were to be represented and blame apportioned can be traced to late summer 1936.

The mounting uncertainty of those previously inclined to support the rebels is evident in a policy change by the newsreel companies, predominantly under

---

[30] Ibid.
[31] *Political Quarterly*, August 1936, p.575.
[32] Ibid., p.587.

Right wing ownership. Anthony Aldgate suggests whereas Spain 'occupied key positions' in newsreels until August, by September it only appeared in the 'middle ground'.[33] The previously pro-Franco *Daily Express* now printed details of Nationalist killings. Significantly, their correspondent, Harold Pemberton, believed the Communists to be committing atrocities whilst the rebels were 'killing wholesale – mathematically and methodically – as a military expedient.'[34] He thus drew a crucial distinction between the methods of the two sides. A schism was appearing in the Right wing press undermining pro-Nationalist consensus. [35]

On 8 September *The Times* admitted 'the ruthless cruelty' of the Nationalists 'has equaled, if…not surpassed the worst excesses perpetrated by the other side.'[36] On 12 September the pro-Franco *Morning Post* announced their correspondent had been expelled from Nationalist territory for an incidental reference to 'insurgent frightfulness'.[37] Metonymic terminology for officially sponsored terrorism was being used in an environment normally sympathetic to Franco. On the British Right, apart from an increasingly limited number, though more vocal, ardent pro-Nationalists, this creeping suspicion that the side they had been championing was engaged in terroristic methods grew into outright belief in the following months.[38]

The Labour Party conference on 5 October revealed tensions in Left-wing politics. The leadership won a vote supporting non-intervention. Yet following a 'deeply moving speech' by Isabel de Palencia, better known as La Passionaria, they were forced to reconsider.[39] Clement Attlee and Arthur Greenwood, leader

---

[33] Aldgate, Anthony, *Cinema and History: British Newsreels and the Spanish Civil War* (London: Scolar Press, 1979) p.128.
[34] *Daily Express*, 23 August 1936; Atholl, *Searchlight on Spain* (London: Penguin, June 1938) p.131.
[35] This divide was also reflected in the Catholic press. *The Tablet* and the *Catholic Herald* were perceived to be more balanced than the *Catholic Times* and the *Universe* by their critics.
[36] Cited in Mowat, *Between the Wars*, pp.576-7.
[37] Cited in Atholl, *Searchlight on Spain*, pp.129-30.
[38] Rising concern on the part of Francoists regarding the general direction of public sympathy was evident in their increasingly desperate attempts to advertise Republican atrocities. Hence in October they published *A Preliminary Official Report on the Atrocities Committed in Southern Spain in July and August, 1936, by the Communist Forces of the Madrid Government*. Issued by authority of The Committee of Investigation Appointed by the National Government at Burgos, (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1936).
[39] Dalton, Hugh, *The Fateful Years: Memoirs 1931-1945* (London: Frederick Muller Ltd, 1957) p.99.

and deputy respectively, were dispatched to discuss the Spanish situation with acting Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain. Before going, the Labour leader warned delegates of the danger of a European war if non-intervention ended.[40] However, when Parliament reassembled on 29 October the Labour Party changed its position, opposing non-intervention because 'the policy was not bringing fair play.'[41]

As insurgent forces battled to take Madrid, Franco's employment of bombers received wide publicity in Britain. In November a cross-party group of MPs led by the Liberal Wilfred Roberts visited the Spanish capital. The subsequent report, 'signed by two of the three Conservatives in the group, was authoritative in its account of the aerial bombing of Madrid' and 'drew attention to the humanitarian crisis in the city.'[42] Newsreels gave it extensive coverage and raised concerns about potential aerial threats to London.[43] Even a *Daily Mail* correspondent 'testified to the deliberate and repeated bombing of hospitals by the insurgent troops.'[44] At this point, as Brian Shelmerdine points out, 'pro-Republican commentators were able to develop the impression of victim and aggressor. Regular bombing of Madrid…added a new dimension – that of innocent civilian casualties.'[45] In light of the failure of the Non Intervention Committee, an Anglo-French initiative to prevent materials reaching either side, and the official recognition by Italy and Germany of the Nationalist regime on 18 November, Spanish government forces were increasingly portrayed as the plucky underdog.[46] The *New Statesman*, for example, reported the defenders of Madrid, including 'practically every able-bodied man (and many women) capable of handling any sort of weapon, have pushed the enemy back at several points.'[47] The arrival of British volunteers created an additional complication for

---

[40] Ibid.
[41] Mowat, *Between the Wars*, p.575; Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.316, Col.59, 29 October 1936.
[42] Buchanan, *British Labour Movement,* pp.27-8.
[43] Aldgate, *Cinema and History*, p.143.
[44] *New Statesman*, 21 November 1936, p.808.
[45] Shelmerdine, Brian, *British Representations of the Spanish Civil War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006) p.126.
[46] Foreign Office officials were fully aware that the Non-Intervention Committee (NIC) was 'humbug'. Edwards, Jill, *The British Government and the Spanish Civil War* (London and Basingstoke: The MacMillan Press, 1979) p.137.
[47] *New Statesman*, 14 November 1936, p.757.

pro-insurgent opinion. By 23 November the Nationalist attack was repulsed. The Badajoz massacre gained in notoriety because the possibility of a Nationalist victory in Madrid raised fears of a 'similar massacre'.[48] In a subsequent Lords debate, Badajoz was used to demonstrate the difference between the two sides. Lord Faringdon, for example, compared the efforts of the Spanish government to denounce and suppress brutality with the tendency of the rebels to glory in them.[49] Rebel methods increasingly coincided with popular understanding of 'frightfulness.'

Meanwhile the Cabinet was giving serious consideration to *de facto* recognition of Franco's administration by granting him belligerent rights. Eden later portrayed himself as being the sole voice against this proposal. However on 23 November he announced the introduction of legislation 'rendering the carriage of arms to Spain illegal' and warned British shipping accordingly.[50] This was followed by the decision in January to forbid, under the Foreign Enlistment Act, the recruiting of British subjects for service in Spain. His fastidiousness in attempting to close down normal trade with the elected Spanish government was striking, especially with German and Italian arms being amply supplied to the rebels. The divergence between government action and shifting public opinion perhaps explains Sir John Simon's comment in December that 'the Spanish Civil War is getting troublesome from a domestic point of view.'[51] Roberts's group of MPs returned from Spain in December and on 6 January formed the nucleus of the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief (NJCSR).[52] By 16 January they were reported as representing a 'large variety of different bodies'.[53] The *New Statesman* claimed, '[f]ar more British help for the Spanish people is being

---

[48] *Times*, 10 November 1936, p.8.
[49] Ibid., 27 November 1936, p.7.
[50] Eden, *The Eden Memoirs*, p.415. For secret trade negotiations between Britain and the insurgents 'regulating' economic relations with the rebels see Moradiellos, Enrique, 'British Political Strategy in the Face of the Military rising of 1936 in Spain', *Contemporary European History*, Vol.1, Part 2, July 1992, p.135.
[51] Cited in Edwards, *British Government*, p.199. *The Spectator* reported that Eden's justification for the enforcement of the Foreign Enlistment Act was 'by no means to the full satisfaction of the House' *Spectator*, 22 January 1937, p.109.
[52] The NJCSR was formed in November 1936 in response to a visit to Spain by a cross-party group of M.P.s. It was established as 'an all-party, non-political, non-sectarian body to co-ordinate relief work and to undertake certain specific pieces of work not being done by other organisations.' Buchanan, Tom, *Britain and the Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p.97.
[53] *New Statesman*, 16 January 1937, p.107.

locally and unofficially organized than the casual reader of the press would imagine.'[54]

It was becoming increasingly untenable to portray Nationalists and Republicans respectively as pro and anti-God. One critic argued that in Britain the 'ordinary man' believed the Catholic Church 'was on the side of the insurgents.' The Pope's 'comparative silence', was likened to the Vatican's response to Abyssinia.[55] Catholics were criticised for supporting 'the heathen African troops…instead of her own erring, Christian, Spanish children.'[56] William Inge, the retired Dean of St. Pauls, criticised Catholics for pro-Francoism because of alleged Nationalist atrocities against evangelical workers. Catholic and Protestant leaders responded to this schism by endorsing a 'Neutral Relief Fund for Spain' along with Chief Rabbi Joseph Hertz and Austen Chamberlain. They promised that any funds would only be used 'with equal impartiality'.[57] Non-political aid was seen as a way of channelling widespread concern over victims of atrocity and dissipating tension.

A group of Anglican and Free churchmen visited Spain between 29 January and 9 February. Their influential report finally quashed serious claims that government forces represented a threat to religion *per se*. It quoted a well-informed Catholic 'English observer of dispassionate views' stating '[t]here is a strong anti-clerical movement but no anti-God movement in Spain.'[58] Confirmation from such a 'dispassionate' and 'Catholic' source in a Christian report added validity to other reports that insurgents were using Churches as munitions stores and vantage points for firing on crowds. *The Spectator*, called it 'a restrained and convincing document.'[59] The report drew a distinction between established religion in Spain and the Catholic Church in Basque territory. The former was said to be viewed with contempt because the hierarchy had ingratiated itself with an oppressive social system; the latter was notable for its

---

[54] Ibid., The aid Spain campaign, although not without political and ideological aspects, was notable for its widespread and sacrificial generosity. See Fyrth, Jim, *The Signal Was Spain: The Aid Spain Movement in Britain 1936-39* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1986).
[55] *Nineteenth Century*, November 1936, p.542.
[56] Ibid., p.543.
[57] *Times*, 7 January 1937, p.13.
[58] Ibid., 16 February 1937, p.18.
[59] *Spectator*, 19 February 1937, p.297.

policy of 'Catholic social justice' where 'the clergy have lived in close sympathy and contact with their people'.[60] The Basques generally were already well respected in Britain. There were strong economic links between Basques and Britons. Basque's were seen as self-sufficient and democratic, in the British style. It is significant for British compassionate responses that both the Basque authorities and the region's Catholic Church had elected to support the government.

The momentum behind humanitarian action grew in March. For example, the International Association of Writers organised a Book Exhibition and Auction to which E.M. Forster, Rose Macauley and H.G. Wells, among others, contributed. This kind of activity was in sharp contrast to the increasingly shrill protests of pro-insurgent opinion. Broadcasts by Nationalist General Queipo de Llano, declaiming atrocities, were clearly at odds with the strained refutations of Franco's British supporters. Douglas Jerrold, one of Franco's leading protagonists, wrote to *The Times* on 22 March complaining that in the previous night's Commons debate 'many speakers, including some members of the Government' endorsed estimates which pointed to significant Italian military involvement in Spain.[61] This sparked a 'flood' of correspondence to *The Times*, which included the signatures of Attlee, Lloyd George, H.G. Wells and the Archbishop of York.[62] Pro-Republican activists reinforced public sympathy. T. Lee wrote to Mass Observation of a meeting in Liverpool at which 'all kinds gathered'. He could 'hear people' talking 'of the awful things the Spanish Government had to put up with because the [British] National Government refuse to protect women and children.'[63] The account reveals something of the pro-Republican energy and organization that was affecting ordinary Britons and moreover the strategy of eliciting sympathy through images of innocent suffering. Advocates of Franco had no comparable impact at grass roots level. Increasing cynicism at non-intervention and a mounting belief that Nationalists

---

[60] *Times*, 16 February 1937, p.18.
[61] Ibid., 22 March 1937, p.8.
[62] *New Statesman*, 27 March 1937, p.510.
[63] Mass Observation (MO), March Bulletin 1938, '"Crisis" reports.' T. Lee, Liverpool. Report of meeting held on Sunday April 10 1938. (Brighton, University of Sussex: Mass Observation Archive).

were responsible for systematic slaughter provided the backdrop for the public response to the rebel blockade of Bilbao and the bombing of Guernica in April.

Franco's decision to implement the Bilbao cordon split the Cabinet. The majority believed unsubstantiated reports that sea approaches were mined and guarded by Nationalist ships.[64] Hoare, First Lord of the Admiralty, implied British merchant vessels *en route* to Spain would receive no protection from the Royal Navy. There was considerable dissent in the Commons and Sir Archibald Sinclair declared that it was 'Abyssinia all over again'.[65] Another church delegation incorporating Anglicans and Catholics reporting from Bilbao reinforced humanitarian arguments. They witnessed 'the dropping of the [Nationalist] bombs over Durango',[66] whilst highlighting the inconsistency of Franco's claims that Communists had dynamited three churches. They also claimed food shortages were 'real and desperate' and Basques were suffering by 'fighting our battles.'[67] When the British merchant vessel, the *Seven Seas' Spray*, broke through the blockade with some ease, amidst widespread publicity, the government's position became untenable. Hoare now confirmed British shipping would be protected up to the limit of Spanish territorial waters. Subsequent voyages became headline news in the *Daily Express*. In one case the simplicity of the story, which undercut more sophisticated political arguments, combined with understated British heroism to give the report greater resonance.[68] The headline read 'British Ships Reach Bilbao as Airplanes Bomb City.'[69]

On 26 April German aircraft under Franco's command bombed the Basque town of Guernica and strafed the fleeing population. The response represented the moment when Britain was most united in condemnation of Spanish atrocity.

---

[64] Sir Henry Chiltern, the pro-Franco British Ambassador to Spain unquestioningly sent back false information provided by the Nationalists on the mining of the approaches to Bilbao. Preston, Paul, 'No Simple Purveyor of News: George Steer and Guernica', *History Today*, May 2007, pp.14-15.
[65] *New Statesman*, 17 April 1937, p.621.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.
[68] The *Daily Express* reported on Captain "Lofty" Allen and Captain "Shorty" Ward. The former stated 'its a simple story. We left and we arrived'. *Express*, 26 April 1937, p.11. It also reported on the arrival of the British steamer *Backworth* which the recipients had 'christened 'Senor Lloyd George's ship, as Britain's wartime Premier gave £250 towards the cost of chartering it.' *Express*, 29 April 1937, p.2.
[69] Ibid., p.11.

George Steer's *Times* report was seminal for British opinion. Just as it had caught the public mood by departing from its editorial policy of government support and highlighting the injustice of the Hoare-Laval plan, *The Times* managed the same feat over the unprecedented bombing of the undefended town. It was a testament to the continuing influence of *The Times* and moreover showed that, given an appropriate lead, the British public could respond with overwhelming indignation to foreign atrocity. Steer acknowledged the bombing was part of a systematic policy of terror and hinted at something more sinister by suggesting the object was 'the destruction of the cradle of the Basque race.' He emphasised the victims' innocence and self-sacrifice of Catholic priests. Whilst pointing to the hypocrisy of the Nationalists, the intrinsic qualities of the Basques were accentuated. The restrained tone added authenticity. Significantly *The Times* supported Steer's report with a favourable editorial that invited comparison between British and Basque values. Their tradition, institutions and historical sense of identity were contrasted with 'ruthless mechanical destruction.'[70]

Newspapers, which had until the previous day been fervently pro-Franco, reported events unquestioningly. The *Daily Mail* reported in bold print '[m]ore than 800 civilians were killed in three and a half hours' bombing by German airplanes.'[71] Noel Monks of the *Express* who subsequently visited the town with Steer wrote 'Guernica was to these people what Westminster is to the Englishman.'[72] The editorial admitted it had '[s]teadfastly' advocated 'neutrality' but now believed 'there are some things that pass all bounds and cry for protest. The bombing of Guernica is one.' It described the Basques as 'devout Catholics' who had met to pray,

> [t]hey were not under arms. They were not the destroyers of churches or the murderers of priests or the ravishers of nuns. The insurgent air-

[70] *Times*, 28 April 1937, p.17.
[71] *Daily Mail*, 28 April 1937, p.13.
[72] *Express*, 28 April 1937, p.1.

raiders have added a new word to the vocabulary of massacre – **GUERNICA.**[73]

The bombing captured the British imagination and trumped all previous Republican atrocities.

The impact on British opinion must be understood in context. The bombing of unfortified open towns was unknown in Europe until 1937. It was classified, not as a legitimate act of war, but as an atrocity. It was widely recognized as contravening international law. The *News Chronicle* called it an 'exhibition of frightfulness' that exceeded 'in its sickening horror even the worst that the Italians perpetrated in Abyssinia.'[74] One element that sparked this convergence of opinion over Spain was that airborne terroristic methods were so imaginable over British towns. The Left-leaning *News Chronicle* saw the bombing as 'merely a foretaste of what will happen to other cities, larger and nearer home'.[75] While the *Daily Mail* declared '[a]ir [t]error' showed the '[n]eed of [d]efence'.[76] Although leading English supporters of Franco such as Jerrold, Arnold Lunn and Robert Sencourt attempted to undermine Steer's credibility, they were largely deserted by the Conservative Press. The *New Statesman* also suggested that in Parliament pro-Franco opinion immediately after the bombing 'scarcely raise[d] its head and support [was] coming from all sides for the Basques.'[77]

Seven thousand people at a meeting of the LNU on 30 April approved a resolution expressing horror over Guernica. Lord Robert Cecil, a leading dissenter in the Abyssinian affair, condemned the 'wholesale slaughter' as 'a threat to civilisation'.[78] Representatives of all major Protestant denominations joined the protest. The appeal to 'Christian' values that had previously permeated pro-Nationalist arguments now pervaded pro-Republican arguments. The Archbishop of York pointed out that earlier atrocities against the Church 'inclined our sympathy towards the insurgents' but after Badajoz and Guernica

---

[73] Ibid., p.10.
[74] *News Chronicle*, 28 April 1937, p.10.
[75] Ibid.
[76] *Mail*, 28 April 1937, p.5.
[77] *New Statesman*, 8 May 1937, p.763.
[78] *News Chronicle,* 29 April 1937, p.1.

they had alienated themselves from British sensibilities.[79] Spanish atrocities were condemned from pulpits in much the same way as German atrocities in World War One.[80] Anglican and Methodist ministers held a special service at Birmingham Parish Church and the Bishop of Winchester spoke of 'a cruel deliberate, cold-blooded act against the laws of God and against every law of civilization.'[81]

The *Daily Mail* gave prominence to a picture of the bombed town, published the Archbishop of York's and Lord Robert Cecil's protests, and allowed only limited space to 'Franco's Denial'.[82] In a report on by-elections in Wandsworth and West Birmingham, the latter widely recognized as 'Chamberlain country', the *Mail* affirmed that the 'great and decisive factor' was the bombing of Basque towns, '[e]very meeting and every canvasser on both sides found the electors reacting to it.'[83] The force of public opinion affected even the ardent pro-Franco press.

Memories of the Great War and German 'frightfulness' provided a framework in which the atrocity could be understood. One correspondent to *The Times* wrote that Steer's report 'rekindled all the anger I felt 21 years ago' when he had been torpedoed in 'an act of coercive frightfulness'. He felt compelled 'to cry aloud yet once again that never will "frightfulness" achieve its avowed object of killing human determination to preserve its freedom.'[84] It is remarkable that prevailing memories of the war were challenged and that *The Times*, a zealous advocate of appeasement, printed these views. *The Spectator* emphasized the 'sickening butchery at Guernica' which 'took rank among crimes which their very hideousness prints indelibly on history.'[85] The *New Statesman* characterized it as '"frightfulness" which has left the world aghast.'[86] A joint statement by the General Council of the Trades Union Congress and the

---

[79] *Times*, 30 April, 1937, p.13.
[80] *News Chronicle*, 29 April 1937, p.1.
[81] *Manchester Guardian*, 3 May 1937.
[82] *Mail*, 30 April 1937, p.14.
[83] Ibid., 29 April 1937, p.9.
[84] *Times*, 30 April 1937, p.12.
[85] *The Spectator*, 30 April 1937, p.785 *The Spectator* could not bring themselves to believe that 'Herr Hitler [was] capable of condoning a crime so damnable'.
[86] *New Statesman*, 1 May 1937, p.701.

National Executive of the Labour Party denounced the bombing as 'an outrage upon humanity and a violation of the principles of civilization.' It also blamed 'rebel forces and their Nazi and Fascist accomplices', specifically condemning Hitler for his cynical declaration of May 1935 in which 'the German Government opposed the use of air craft for the destruction of open towns and the bombing of non-combatant women and children.' They stated that '[t]his example of frightfulness' called for 'instant action' by the League of Nations.[87]

Guernica dominated Parliamentary debates. The Commons was 'deeply moved' by Steer's account.[88] The use of poison gas by Italians in Abyssinia was an immediate point of reference.[89] Josiah Wedgewood believed '[i]t beats anything that happened in Abyssinia.'[90] Eden, attempted to mollify outrage by announcing he had received assurances from both sides in Spain that they would refrain from using poison gas. Geoffrey Mander asked if 'poison gas' would 'be much worse than' recent rebel activity.[91] Eden's subsequent statement was notable for its refusal to mention Germany and the attempt to blame both sides for aerial bombardments.

The role of the German air force had been widely recognized and the government trod a delicate line attempting to refrain from a diplomatic schism with the German government. As a result of its coverage, the German government censured *The Times*. Privately, Dawson did 'his utmost' to refrain from printing 'anything that might hurt [the Germans'] susceptibilities'.[92] He wrote to Lord Lothian in May 1937, 'I spend my nights…dropping in little things which are intended to soothe them'.[93] Publicly, the paper defended itself. In an editorial entitled '*The Times* Bombs Guernica' it complained about being unable to 'tell the simple truth' without 'incurring charges of Machiavellian villainy?'[94] It was caught between the need to remain credible and the desire to

---

[87] *Times*, 29 April 1937, p.8.
[88] Ibid., p.16.
[89] *News Chronicle*, 29 April 1937, p.1.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.323, Cols. 315-6, 28 April 1937.
[92] Coote, Colin R., *Editorial: The Memoirs of Colin R. Coote* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1965) p.169.
[93] Ibid., p.167.
[94] *Times*, 5 May 1937.

advocate appeasement. After further evidence of German involvement the paper reverted to type, suggesting there were 'delicate hints…that the atmosphere is propitious for a fresh effort in the direction of an Anglo-German *rapprochement.*'[95]

On 6 May, the opposition used the proposal to adjourn for a full-scale Parliamentary debate. Eden struggled, in the face of overwhelming sympathy for the Basques, to maintain his 'neutrality'. However, as Herbert Southworth has shown Eden knew 'more than he revealed' about Guernica's destruction.[96] MP David Grenfell endowed the Basques with British characteristics to drive his point home. 'In that ancient country' he stated, 'the foundations of our democratic system were laid long ago'.[97] The bombing was 'an example of…frightfulness',[98] and supported by other MPs, he pressurized the government to agree to an impartial investigation. Archibald Sinclair pointed out that Francoists were employing 'air power as an instrument of massacre and terrorism.' The Liberal leader received support from the Conservative Duchess of Atholl. Phillip Noel-Baker asked Eden to use diplomatic channels to inform Franco 'that public opinion' in Britain was 'more deeply stirred by this matter than it has been by anything for many years.'[99] Eden prevaricated. He refused the request, and suggested an international inquiry would be impossible due to a lack of consensus.

The debate moved seamlessly from expressions of horror to the proposed evacuation of Basque children, which had been formally submitted to the Foreign Office on 28 April by the NJCSR. Massive public outrage prompted the government to give their 'fullest approval'.[100] It was a grudging gesture by a government determined not to offer financial assistance. However, this gesture and the reluctant decision to escort British shipping to Bilbao represented a definable climb-down for an administration sympathetic to Franco's cause and

---

[95] Ibid., 17 May 1937, p.9.
[96] Southworth, Herbert Rutledge, *Guernica! Guernica! A Study of Journalism, Diplomacy, Propaganda and History* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1977) p.212.
[97] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.323, Cols.1332-7, 6 May 1937.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid., Cols. 683-4, 30 April 1937.
[100] *Mail*, 29 April 1937, p.14.

ideology. Chamberlain privately acknowledged protests had been 'savage'[101] and Eden later bemoaned government criticism.[102] Noel-Baker was correct when he told Steer that his report had helped challenge government policy by helping to formulate and capture the mood of outraged public opinion.[103]

There was an immediate humanitarian response. Leaving Spain on 21 May the Royal Navy escorted nearly four thousand people, predominantly children, to Southampton. It was the largest single influx of refugees in British history. Their arrival caused considerable local and national interest. The journal *John Bull* stated 'so long as their need remains, we may presume the British public will not be found wanting in generosity.'[104] National relief efforts were echoed by local fund-raising schemes and individual gestures. The Catholic authorities and the Salvation Army provided hundreds with homes. The Labour movement offered considerable support. For Buchanan the case of the Basque children is significant because it showed that the TUC bureaucracy was 'capable of acting with initiative and imagination in an environment in which it would not feel politically compromised.'[105] Newsreel companies emphasized the humanitarianism of the evacuation.[106]

Yet the action was not without opposition. Prime Minister Baldwin expressed 'grave doubts' on 'practical grounds'.[107] Sir George Mounsey, Assistant Under-Secretary with responsibility for Spain, protested at length.[108] Labour M.P., Leah Manning, highlighted official inertia suffered by activists.[109] Nevertheless, the initial response was overwhelmingly positive. In *The Spectator*, Goronwy Rees gave an account of his personal involvement, demonstrating how his imaginative conception of Guernica drove humanitarian action. Whilst traveling on the train to the refugee camp at Southampton,

---

[101] Cited in Edwards, *British Government*, p.196.
[102] Eden, *Facing the Dictators*, p.443.
[103] Preston, 'No Simple Purveyor of News', pp.17. Noel-Baker claimed to have used Steer's dispatch 'at length in at least ten big meetings throughout the country, and it everywhere makes a tremendous impression.' Preston, *We Saw Spain Die*, p.263.
[104] Cited in Kushner, Tony and Knox, Katherine, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide: Global, National and Local Perspectives during the Twentieth Century* (London: Frank Cass, 1999) p.121.
[105] Buchanan, *British Labour Movement*, p.164.
[106] Aldgate, *Cinema and History*, p.162.
[107] Cited in Kushner and Knox, *Refugees*, p.107.
[108] Bell, Adrian, *Only For Three Months* (Norwich: Mousehold Press, 2007) p.30.
[109] Kushner and Knox, *Refugees*, pp.107-8.

> a flight of aeroplanes appeared in the sky…the bombers overhead made me realize even more sharply what I was going to see at Southampton, the 4,000 children from Bilbao, the Catholic refugees from General Mola's guns and Germany's aeroplanes.[110]

The Basque children were eventually spread around the country. Regionalized humanitarianism was motivated by perceptions of atrocity and the blamelessness of the refugees. An appeal from the Bolton and District United Trades Council on behalf of the Basque Children suggested '[t]hey are unable to help themselves. Innocent victims of brutal and in many cases fiendish atrocity'.[111]

During the summer of 1937, for several reasons, Guernica as an event but not as a symbol gradually faded from the public discourse. Firstly, hard-core pro-insurgent opinion launched a counter-attack on the facts surrounding Guernica. Secondly, Bilbao's fall on 19 June enabled Franco's supporters to argue civilians were no longer in danger.[112] Thirdly, pro-Republicans in Britain seem to have been affected by the inevitability of Franco's relentless military victories. One contributor to Mass Observation stated that Spain was the first item he looked for in the news. When he saw that Franco's troops were 'still advancing' he '[f]elt depressed and could not bear it'. Moreover on reading 'of government successes' he could not bring himself to believe it.[113] The same respondent also alluded to the final reason why Guernica faded in the public discourse after reading of 'fighting between Japan and China'. Although unsure why there was 'fighting', he decided he 'must really try and find out what it is all about.'[114] Japanese aggression in China vied with Spain over the next eighteen months as a focus for humanitarian concern in Britain.

Tension between China and Japan had existed since 1931 when Japan forcibly annexed Manchuria. The Chinese government, weakened by internal feuding between Nationalists and Communists, made a truce with Japan. Following this the Japanese exploited the situation in a demilitarized zone south of Peking,

---

[110] *Spectator*, 28 May 1937, pp.984-5.
[111] MO, Worktown Box 8, W8/G, Spanish Aid.
[112] Bell, *Only For Three Months*, p.111.
[113] MO, G. Warrack Diary, 12 July 1937.
[114] Ibid.

encouraging powerful movements for local autonomy. Japanese troops, far exceeding the agreed amount, were provocatively deployed in manoeuvres close to Chinese territory. On 7 July this sparked a military exchange outside Wanping. It ignited into full-scale war. Savage Japanese tactics provoked nationwide British sympathy for the Chinese.

Government policy towards the Sino-Japanese war was driven by economic interest and the desire to protect British citizens. Britain had long taken the lead in a policy of 'extraterritoriality' in China, compelling China to open up ports for trade and erecting the system of imperialism. By 1937 British investment in China was significant. However, Britain's military presence in the Far East was comparatively weak and undermined by European tensions. Therefore challenges to British interests had to be met with the help of other powers, but a legacy of suspicion between Britain and America originating in the Manchurian Crisis, meant cooperation was unlikely. The British government was ideologically opposed to collaborating with the Soviet Union. The Foreign Office therefore adopted 'a middle course' giving 'moral support and limited material aid' to China but which 'aimed to prevent a breakdown in Anglo-Japanese relations.'[115] As one Foreign Office official stated '[w]e are after all pledged to consider means of supporting the National Govt. (so long as it remains the constitutionally recognized Govt. Of China); but this does not necessarily mean incurring serious friction with Japan.'[116]

British perceptions of China underwent a radical shift in the 1930s. In the mid nineteenth century John Stuart Mill had been influential in portraying China as 'a symbol of recalcitrant backwardness'.[117] This image dominated until the late 1920s and popular allusions to the Chinese as the 'Yellow Peril' lasted well into the 1930s. The Manchurian crisis helped rehabilitate China. Up to 1931 the Japanese had been viewed as a force for law and order and a bulwark against Bolshevism that would protect British Far Eastern interests; the Chinese were seen as divided and ungovernable. This changed as the 1930s progressed. In the

---

[115] Lee, Bradford A., *Britain and the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1939: A Study in Dilemmas of British Decline* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973) p.212.
[116] FO676/933/10, FO to H.M. Ambassador in China, 24 April 1938.
[117] Levin, Michael, *J.S. Mill on Civilization and Barbarism* (London: Routledge, 2004) p.104.

light of atrocities in Abyssinia and Spain, the Manchurian dispute grew in stature in the public imagination being the identifiable point at which the British government was perceived to have reneged on the British tradition of resisting aggression. Continual Japanese encroachment into Chinese territory meant by the time war broke out China was increasingly cast as a victim. Despite its size it benefitted from Britain's traditional compassion for small nations and the oppressed. Attempts by the British government to come to terms with Japanese expansionism before the war were doomed because a conversation between Yoshida Shigeru, the Japanese ambassador to London, and Eden 'gave rise to fears that Britain was planning a Far-Eastern 'Hoare-Laval Agreement.'[118] Although Neville Chamberlain considered an accommodation with Japan acceptable, the Foreign Office did not want to 'aid and abet Japan's 'spoliation' of China'.[119] Nevertheless, when questioned in Parliament in July 1937 about Japanese aggression in North China, Eden's evasiveness was seen by the Japanese press as evidence of British indulgence. They hoped Britain would demonstrate the same flexibility as that allowed to Mussolini and Hitler. Government views were backed by *The Times*, which commented that 'Britain was fully prepared to recognize the obvious fact of Japan's "special position" in regard to China.'[120] An article by Freda Utley, soon to be an influential pro-Chinese activist, stated there was 'little doubt that preparations' for a deal with Japan would 'secure for her virtually all she wants in China.'[121] The Japanese bombing of undefended Chinese saw rumblings of discontent snowball into a nationwide campaign.

By mid-August Japanese forces had advanced south to Shanghai, the location of substantial British commercial interests. Japanese aerial bombardment severely affected British property and they deliberately targeted British gunboats. The British Ambassador to China, Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, was severely injured after Japanese forces shot at his car. This event signalled a change in tone by the Right wing press in Britain. The *Daily Express* wrote 'Japan is

---

[118] Olu, Agbi, S., 'The Foreign Office and Yoshida's Bid for Rapprochement with Britain in 1936-1937: A Critical Reconsideration of the Anglo-Japanese Conversation', *The Historical Journal*, Vol.21 No.1 (Mar., 1978), p.173.
[119] Ibid., p.174.
[120] *Times*, 3 May 1937, p.15.
[121] *New Statesman*, 22 May 1937, p.840.

invading China exactly as Mussolini invaded Abyssinia.'[122] *The Times* lectured Japan that their Chinese ambitions did not 'include licence to play havoc with the lawful interest of Great Britain.'[123] It accused Japan of launching a 'full-dress invasion of China without even declaring war.'[124] On 24 August the National Council of Labour denounced Japan's 'invasion…as a further lawless act of aggression.'[125] The Communist Party Executive issued a resolution linking Japanese action with German Fascism and suggesting world peace depended 'upon the success of the heroic Chinese people.'[126] Condemnation of Japan came from across the political spectrum. After weeks of prevarication Japan reluctantly apologized for the shooting. However, the Japanese were roundly criticized for their impudence and failure to punish those responsible.

Consensus over condemnation hid significant differences of opinion about how Britain should respond. *The Times*, for example, consistently advocated moral condemnation but criticized calls for economic sanctions. The *New Statesman* drew attention to the hypocrisy of *The Times* and *Daily Telegraph*, which had excused the invasion of Manchuria but were now 'solemnly lecturing Japan.'[127] One aggression after another throughout the 1930s fuelled indignation. It warned the British public not to be lulled by government protestations to Japan and claimed that:

> the story of Manchuria, Abyssinia and Spain is being repeated in China. Deceived by a Liberal tradition of support for the victim of aggression rather than for the aggressor, the Englishman imagines that his Government is opposed to Japan's new invasion and this impression is confirmed by British warnings to the Japanese not to damage our interests in China.[128]

---

[122] Liddell Hart Papers (LH) 15/3/351-2, Cutting, *Express*, 17 August 1937, (London: King's College Archive).
[123] Utley, Freda, *Japan's Gamble in China* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1938) pp.198-9.
[124] LH15/3/351-2, Cutting, *Times*, 27 August 1937.
[125] *Times*, 25 August 1937, p.14.
[126] Clegg, Arthur, *From Middlesbrough to Manchuria: The Story of the Haruna Maru* (Teeside Communist Party, n/d.).
[127] *New Statesman*, 11 September 1937, p.368.
[128] Ibid., 28 August 1937, p.299.

There was growing clamour for the imposition of economic sanctions and the journal accused the Right wing press of attempts to 'deliberately obscure' Japan's weaknesses so as to stave off the threat of public pressure to impose them. The blanket bombing of Shanghai in mid-September placed pressure on Right wing opinion to advocate firmer action. In the belief that moral condemnation would be enough to mitigate Japanese aggression the high Tory press increased their invective.

On 20 and 21 September *Times*' headlines announced Japanese air attacks on Shanghai and Nanking respectively.[129] The *Telegraph* suggested 'the conscience of civilisation' was 'deeply stirred' by the 'devastation' in Nanking and Canton which were 'well outside the actual war zone'.[130] No doubts were expressed as to the veracity of reports. The unanimous critique was laced with appeals to civilized values and human morality. International law was invoked to show that Japanese action was outside the accepted code of ethics for war conduct.[131] *The Spectator* reinforced the view that Japan's 'recourse to any barbarity' was predetermined and systematic.[132] The *Morning Post* appreciated 'Japan's legitimate grievances' but suggested opinion would be alienated by 'a policy of sheer frightfulness.' It drew comfort from the idea that 'atrocities' were not 'condoned by the vast majority of her people.'[133] The *Times* summed up the overwhelming feeling with an editorial simply entitled 'Frightfulness.'[134]

It drew attention to the gap between Japan's words and deeds. Japanese protestations of innocence were followed by a description of how a submarine near Hong Kong had 'systematically destroyed by gunfire…a fishing fleet of junks' making no attempt 'to rescue the men, women, and children'. Clearly, bombing was not the only atrocity that affected British sensibilities. Japan had resorted to 'a campaign of promiscuous and indiscriminate terrorism' to 'break the spirit of the civilian population.' Conversely, the Chinese were portrayed as stoic in the face of terrorism. Their fighting qualities had been reinforced by a

[129] LH15/3/351-352, Cuttings, *Times*, 20 and 21 September 1937.
[130] Ibid., Cutting, *Telegraph*, 24 September 1937.
[131] The *Daily Telegraph* referred to 'the rules of the Hague Convention of Jurists appointed under the Washington Conference of 1922'. *Telegraph*, 24 September 1937.
[132] *Spectator*, 24 September 1937, p.498.
[133] LH15/3/351-352, Cutting, *Morning Post*, 25 September 1937.
[134] Ibid., Cutting, *Times*, 28 September 1937.

new sense of nationhood. The Chinese communist forces' 'voluntary self-enlistment' in the nationalist cause 'epitomize[d] the unifying effects of Japanese aggression.' Echoing the old pro-Boer mantra, *The Times* suggested that Japanese impatience meant recourse to 'tactics of barbarism.' *The Times* thus used familiar historical phrases and images to reinforce condemnation of Japanese atrocities and to elicit sympathy for Chinese victims. The only caveat was the bifurcation of Japan's 'acknowledged agents' in China and 'the vast majority of her people' who were characterised as chivalrous and humane.[135]

The government responded to indignation by issuing '[v]ery strong representations' through Sir Robert Craigie, their Ambassador in Tokyo.[136] Craigie however favoured appeasement. His official reproach dealt predominantly with damage to British property.[137] Chinese attempts to elicit material and moral support at the League of Nations were scuppered by the British. On 22 August, Charles Orde of the Foreign Office, stressed the dangers of war with Japan and suggested Britain obstruct moves toward sanctions at Geneva even if it meant 'humiliation for the League and a diminution of its potential power for the future.'[138] The Foreign Office agreed and along with the Secretary-General Joseph Avenol and French Foreign Minister Yvon Delbos, convinced Wellington Koo, the Chinese Ambassador in Paris to refer the matter to the Far Eastern Committee of the League. At a meeting of the Committee in September Lord Cranborne, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, denounced 'the indiscriminate slaughter of civilians'. Conspicuously, he suggested it was a matter that went 'far beyond the interests of any single nationality', thus advocating an international response in the full knowledge that the League had been effectively disempowered during the Abyssinian dispute. On the other hand, it had been argued in 1935 that the League's moral influence was a valid tool of international diplomacy. Cranborne's denunciation was consistent with this approach when he added that the effect of terroristic methods 'on world opinion is...a factor which those responsible would do well to

---

[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid., Cutting, *Times*, 27 September 1937.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Lee, *Britain and the Sino-Japanese War*, p.52.

take into account.'[139] At the end of September, Eden responded to 'growing pressure of public opinion'[140] attempting to garner American support for 'some form of economic boycott'.[141] Chamberlain scuppered his initiative. In public the government were keen to show that they were reflecting public indignation, in private they were ensuring that manifestations of condemnation remained purely verbal.

The National Council of Labour sharpened its position by calling for international cooperation, especially with the United States, calling on 'British subjects at once…[to] express their detestation of Japanese barbarism by refusing to buy Japanese goods'[142] and demanding the government 'prohibit British citizens from selling war materials to and lending money to Japan.'[143] They were joined by the British Youth Peace Council, who despite holding onto the 'old pacifist idea' of the League as an instrument of conciliation rather than coercion, called for a protest against Japanese aggression.[144] The formation of the China Campaign Committee (CCC) provided a focus for national protests. Under the Chairmanship of Victor Gollancz, it included Margery Fry, well-known campaigner for prison and penal reform, Kingsley Martin, his partner Dorothy Woodman and Arthur Clegg. Its first public meeting was held on 30 September at Whitfield's Tabernacle in London, and included speakers such as Lord Robert Cecil, Harold Laski, Ellen Wilkinson and leading British Sinologist Lady Dorothea Hosie. Its stated aim was to 'rouse public sympathy and practical support of the British people for the people of China'.[145] Within four months the CCC had organised hundreds of meetings and distributed over three-quarters of a million pamphlets nationwide.[146]

---

[139] *Times*, 28 September 1937, p.14.
[140] Harvey, John, (ed.) *The Diplomatic Diaries of Oliver Harvey 1937-1940* (London: Collins, 1970) p.48. In response to letters from Sir Francis Acland, the Bishop of Bristol and J.M. Keynes *The Times* wrote '[i]t is understood that Ministers are much impressed by the rising feeling in this country against the methods which are being adopted by Japan'. *Times*, 30 September 1937, p.13.
[141] Eden, *Facing the Dictators*, p.524.
[142] LH15/3/351-2, Cutting, *Times*, 30 September 1937. Hugh D. McIntosh, Managing Director of Black & White Milk Bars, a popular nationwide chain cancelled an order for a million Japanese straws.
[143] Clegg, *From Middlesbrough to Manchuria.*
[144] Ibid.
[145] *New Statesman*, 2 October 1937, p.484.
[146] Edwards, Ruth Dudley, *Victor Gollancz: A Biography* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1987) pp.272-3.

When the *News Chronicle* announced a national protest meeting at the Albert Hall, the *New Statesman* saw this as evidence of the rising 'tide of popular indignation' against 'the massacre of non-combatants'.[147] It printed an interview with a publican's wife, described as an 'old-fashioned Conservative'. Mrs Tompkins stated of the Japanese bombing 'I couldn't sleep at night for it' and referring to a photograph in the press declared 'I could just hear that little child screaming'.[148] Japanese atrocities permeated the British imagination irrespective of political allegiance. There was general support from the popular Right wing press. The Rothermere papers referred to the Japanese as 'sub-human' and the isolationist Beaverbrook-owned *Evening Standard* stated Britain would 'not be interfering in other people's business if we boycotted Japanese goods.'[149] *The Spectator* stated '[t]here are signs that British public opinion is not incapable of being moved today as it was by the Macedonian atrocities in the time of Gladstone.'[150]

On 5 October three events unmistakably highlighted growing public indignation. Firstly, President Roosevelt's speech in Chicago gave what appeared to be a clear intimation that the United States would join with other nations in direct action over Japan.[151] The declaration was quickly ingratiated into pro-Chinese rhetoric.[152] Secondly, at their Bournemouth conference, the Labour party adopted a strongly worded resolution, proposed by Attlee, against 'the massacre of helpless Chinese people'.[153] Thirdly, the national protest meeting at the Albert Hall took place with significant publicity.

The *News Chronicle* headlined 'Voice of Britain Heard at Albert Hall.'[154] The event was patronized by an impressive array of opinion formers. It was presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Lytton stated, 'by tolerating that crime

---

[147] *New Statesman*, 2 October 1937, p.473.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Ibid.
[150] *Spectator*, 1 October 1937.
[151] What Roosevelt actually meant by his 'Quarantine Speech' remains a moot point.
[152] However, this became the signal for *The Times* to pull back from its recent stridency. It argued that economic sanctions might be interpreted as hostile; raised fears that sanctions would have a radicalizing effect; and suggested aid for China be channelled through organizations strongly linked to those who controlled British business interests in China. In doing so it probably hoped to marginalize the more left-wing CCC. LH15/3/351-2, Cutting, *Times*, 5 October 1937.
[153] Ibid.
[154] *News Chronicle*, 9 October 1937, p.6.

[Japan's invasion of Manchuria] we had invited another.' He asked the audience to 'remember that the Japanese army is modelled on the Prussian pattern and that frightfulness is a Prussian theory'. To 'loud applause' Lady Violet Bonham-Carter proclaimed the meeting was 'a call to action.' Lloyd George, Winston Churchill, Sir Archibald Sinclair, Gilbert Murray and Ben Tillet sent messages of support. The 'remarkable' platform included Lord Allen of Hurtwood, ex-Liberal minister Sir Francis Acland, Canon F. Lewis Donaldson, Archdeacon of Westminster, Lord Robert Cecil, Lord Rennel, Lady Gladstone and Viscount Samuel. It showed the film 'Bombs on China' and added:

> [t]he audience probably the greatest single film audience ever assembled watched in silence the tattered remnants of buildings in Shanghai, the litter of wounded and dying in the streets, the hopeless flight of refugees. There were occasional bursts of applause, occasional half-smothered cries of sheer horror.[155]

The Spectator wrote the 'spirit' of the meeting represented 'the feeling of a vast majority of the British people.'[156] A public meeting organized by the CCC the following day was a send-off for the first consignment of medical supplies for China. On 10 October two thousand people demonstrated in Trafalgar Square and *The Times* announced Gilbert Murray had been appointed president of the CCC. Herbert Morrison stated 'I have never known so great a wave of spontaneous moral indignation sweep across the British people as that which the war in China has called forth.'[157]

Daily Telegraph correspondent Pembroke Stephens, continued to send graphic descriptions of Chinese suffering at the hands of Japanese forces who, he claimed, were now using '[p]oisonous and searing gases'.[158] The *News Chronicle* reported the Japanese used dum-dum bullets and flame-throwers.[159] The 'Lord Mayor's Fund' received 'many generous subscriptions'. *The Times* encouraged its readers to sacrifice expenditure on Christmas to contribute to the

---

[155] *Spectator*, 8 October 1937, p.569.
[156] Ibid.
[157] *Times*, 11 October 1937, p.16.
[158] LH15/3/351-2, Cuttings, *Telegraph and Morning Post*, 11 October 1937.
[159] Ibid., *News Chronicle*, 15 October 1937.

Mansion House fund.[160] Positive Chinese stereotypes permeated the Press. They were 'ancient courageous [and] peace-loving'.[161] The Chinese soldier was 'under-trained and under-armed; and he still…carries an umbrella'. Yet his bravery and stoicism meant he could stand a bombardment that 'would have dislodged any modern infantry under similar conditions.'[162] It was a peculiarly inter-war English image of 'muddling through' against the odds, one that would have been familiar to many because of its similarity to Strube's 'domesticated' 'little man'.[163] Noel-Baker stated in Parliament, '[i]n this country there are divisions about Spain. There are none about China.' There was a feeling on the Left that China might mobilise the British against the threat of Fascism in a way that Spain could not. One *New Statesman* correspondent stated, the Chinese campaign brought 'the anti-Fascist side large numbers of people who can see in China what they did not feel sure about in Spain.'[164]

Calls for an economic boycott grew amidst evidence of Conservative unease in Parliament. Tory MP, Mr. Moreing considered 'the Far East' was of 'utmost importance to the men and women of this country' and advocated 'a firmer attitude than in the past.'[165] Sir A. Southby believed Japan's 'horrible methods' stunk 'in the nostrils of the entire world.'[166] Vyvyan Addams advocated 'effective action.'[167] Chamberlain however, was 'anxious to avoid the position which had been reached with Italy over Abyssinia.'[168] At no stage did Eden specifically condemn the Japanese. Instead he steered the debate round to the idea of a meeting involving the parties to the Nine-Power Treaty of 1922.[169]

---

[160] *Times*, 26 October 1937, p.17.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid., 28 October 1937, p.17.
[163] Mandler, Peter, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (London: Yale University Press, 2006) p.178.
[164] *New Statesman*, 8 January 1938, p.42.
[165] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.327, Col.90, 21 October 1937.
[166] Ibid., Col. 140, 21 October 1937.
[167] Ibid., Col. 155, 21 October 1937.
[168] CAB 23/89, Cabinet Conclusions, 6 October, 1937, cited in Lee, *Britain and the Sino-Japanese War*, p.53.
[169] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.327, Cols.63-65, 21 October 1937. Eden had been instrumental in referring Chinese representations to the Far East Advisory Committee of the League. After Chinese complaints of British inaction Cranborne sponsored a resolution condemning Japanese bombing. Only when Wellington Koo, the Chinese representative to the League, tried to force the issue of sanctions did Cranborne block his move by endorsing a conference of Pacific powers. Lee, *Britain and the Sino-Japanese War,* p.53.

In public the government were confident the Brussels Conference would provide a settlement to the Sino-Japanese conflict. Privately, however, it was 'at a loss to envisage how the war could be ended.'[170] After some jostling for position between Britain and America over sanctions, Eden explained to the British Embassy in Washington that British policy was designed to 'steer a middle course between [the] two dangers of seeming eager to adopt sanctions and of appearing to lag behind the Americans.'[171] In fact, Eden and Norman Davis, the head of the American delegation, although perhaps the keenest on a sanctions policy, were held back by opposition in their own government departments and their leaders. Although Chamberlain believed the conference 'had been a complete waste of time', by building up anticipation of a peaceful settlement the government curbed momentum behind public protests.[172] Furthermore, Japanese bombing was reported as being less intense than it had been in late September.

On 3 November, three days after the Brussels conference the Italians joined the German-Japanese Anti-Commintern Pact. On 1 December it was announced that Japan recognised the Franco regime and that Italy recognised Manchukuo. Evidence of *rapprochement* between Right wing states encouraged officials who advocated appeasement to greater efforts. Craigie pushed for a settlement favourable to the Japanese. He suggested Britain should stop arms traffic to China. Eden sided with his advisor H.H. Thomas who suggested that Japan's 'expansionist and aggressive mood' would make it 'impossible' for Anglo-Japanese friendship.[173] This crisis seems to have created more tension within government circles than Abyssinia or Spain.

Influential pro-Chinese voices started to express concern that concentration on the Far East was damaging public support for Spain. The *New Statesman* pointed out that the 'daily press had diverted its attention to China' because of long-term ramifications for the Far East, that British capital had 'a stake six times as large as its investment in Spain' and 'unjustifiable defeatism over the prospects of the

---

[170] Lee, *Britain and the Sino-Japanese War*, p.62.
[171] Ibid., p.69.
[172] Ibid., p.77.
[173] Olu, Agbi, 'The Pacific War Controversy in Britain: Sir Robert Craigie versus The Foreign Office', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol.17, No.3 (1983), p.500.

Spanish Republic'.[174] Both campaigns suffered. The CCC continued to aim at garnering public support. They arranged a protest meeting at the Queen's Hall for 6 November. The *New Statesman* called it 'remarkable' not just because it was 'packed and enthusiastic', but mainly because Chinese speakers 'can talk to an English audience at once and be appreciated. They have the same kind of humour as we have and are not too emotional in their approach.'[175] Chinese speakers spoke regularly at public meetings and Chinese artists were employed to perform to raise funds for humanitarian efforts.[176]

In December as the Japanese approached Nanking, British and American ships were attacked, one Briton and eighteen Americans died on the *Panay*. The House of Commons, according to *The Times* 'showed that restiveness which is a sure sign of deep feeling.'[177] As the paper admonished the Japanese, pointing out how 'curious' it was 'that a country most jealous of its national honour should set so slight a value upon the elementary decencies of international conduct', Japan's army readied itself to attack Nanking.[178]

After routing the Chinese army, Japanese troops engaged in weeks of wholesale slaughter and rape of the civilian population of Nanking. A few westerners stayed in the city and created an international safety zone for Chinese refugees. They struggled to get messages out of the city, which was under severe Japanese censorship. The violence received scant attention in the British press, which was preoccupied with Japanese offences against British vessels. One report in *The Times* gave 'eye-witness' accounts testifying that 'the streets were littered with bodies'. However, the article played down the violence by euphemistically classifying the terror as 'mopping up', suggesting most victims were soldiers and implying that the worst was over.[179] In reality, Japanese forces shot and bayoneted civilians with alacrity. Thousands of men were shot merely on suspicion that they had fought with the Chinese army. Women were raped in

---

[174] *New Statesman*, 4 December 1937, p.908.
[175] Ibid., 13 November 1937, p.787.
[176] Clegg, *From Middlesbrough to Manchuria.*
[177] LH15/3/351-2, Cutting, *Times*, 14 December 1937, p.16.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Ibid., *Times*, 18 December 1937, p.12.

their hundreds and homes looted and destroyed.[180] A respected member of Nanking's foreign community, 'noted for his fairmindedness' wrote on 15 December that 'the terror is indescribable'.[181] A second *Times* submission, published on 20 December, deprecated atrocity 'tales' in the *New York Times.* It commented that such stories 'while they have no direct relation to that of the sinking of the *Panay*, tend to reinforce it and to carry the public mind beyond any isolated incident, directly affecting the national pride, into a wider field of concern.'[182] By focusing on the sinking of an American warship, it undermined the veracity of the reports by diverting the readers mind from the specifics of Nanking. The fate of Nanking reappeared at the end of January 1938.

On 28 January the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post* revealed 'the full extent of the atrocities…at Nanking'. It referred to 'wholesale executions, rape and looting', giving some details. The article filled two complete columns but was not centrally placed. This was followed up by an article in the *Manchester Guardian* headlined 'Terror in Nanking.' Its correspondent, H.J. Timperley, detailed some of the brutalities, suggesting this was 'only a fraction of the total'.[183] Why then, did these reports fail to inspire public protest?

Firstly the *Manchester Guardian* gave the impression that the violence was under control. The situation was said to have 'now improved' and discipline 'restored.' It explained this was less due to the goodwill of 'callous' generals than to 'the anxiety of the diplomatists' concerned about the eventual failure of censorship.[184] Neither the *Guardian* nor the *Telegraph* followed up with an editorial, thus demoting its importance as a news item. Significantly, on the same day *The Times* gave details of a rebuke by General Matsui, the Japanese Commander-in-Chief, to his subordinates in Nanking regarding 'excesses'. This was said to be 'unprecedented' and his 'frankness' would be 'widely

---

[180] Estimates of the number of non-combatant deaths range from 260,000 to 350,000 Chang, Iris, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (London: Penguin, 1998) p.4.
[181] Timperley, H. J., *What War Means: The Japanese Terror in China A Documentary Record* (London: Victor Gallancz Ltd, 1938) p.20.
[182] LH15/3/351-2, Cutting, *Times*, 20 December 1937.
[183] *Manchester Guardian*, 7 February 1938, p.10.
[184] Ibid.

recognised.'[185] Secondly, the Japanese Foreign Minister, Koki Hirota, made a conciliatory speech in the Japanese Diet, which senior Foreign Office officials responded to positively.[186] Thirdly, the Foreign Office stifled information about the massacre, despite being fully informed by Reverend C.L. Boynton of the National Christian Council who sent a daily account of Japanese atrocities. Officials had no difficulty in believing the account, with one calling Japanese action 'unpardonable.'[187] Yet, referring to the two newspaper reports he added that there was 'nothing to be gained by more publicity,' particularly as conditions had 'improved'.[188] Details of the atrocities continued to filter through to the Foreign Office in March. Nigel B. Ronald of the Far Eastern Department was 'glad that the English press has not written up these dreadful tales, for their dissemination' would cause 'unnecessary bitterness' and advertise 'our own impotence'.[189] In the meantime after 'privately' approaching Japanese authorities, a 'special military officer' was sent to Nanking to investigate. Matters, it was reported, had 'shown considerable improvement.'[190] Fourthly, the government's response to Parliamentary questions by Arthur Henderson deliberately played down Japanese violence. The first draft of Eden's reply referred to 'many atrocities…by Japanese forces'.[191] The actual reply failed to directly implicate Japanese forces and contained the more neutral phrase, 'considerable lawlessness and numerous cases of unrestrained violence'. When Henderson asked Eden if he was aware of the *Daily Telegraph* account of Nanking, Eden merely replied 'Of course. I have seen it.'[192] Finally, the bombing of Barcelona by Nationalist aircraft stole the headlines at the end of January just as reports of Nanking became available. The *News Chronicle* headlined with '350 Civilians Killed in Barcelona Raids'[193] and the *Daily Telegraph* reported 'Hundreds Missing After Barcelona Air Raids…Bomb Falls

---

[185] LH15/3/351-2, Cutting, *Times*, 8 February 1938 p.13. For official reassurances of Japanese behaviour by British representatives see FO317/22146/189, Telegram from Howe in Shanghai, 9 February 1938.
[186] Dilks, David, (ed.) *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan 1938-1945* (London: Cassell, 1971) p.40.
[187] FO371/22146/195, (Shanghai), Note by A. Scott, 18 January 1938.
[188] Ibid.
[189] FO371/22146/224-5, 19 April 1938.
[190] FO371/22146/219-221, 14 March 1938.
[191] FO371/22146/185, 7 February 1938.
[192] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.331, Col.645, 7 February 1938.
[193] *News Chronicle*, 31 January 1938.

on Children at Play in Nursery'.[194] Newsreels extensively covered the 'Horror of Barcelona' and in some cases attached stories on air raid precautions in Britain.[195] Public outrage forced Chamberlain to make a Commons statement expressing his 'horror and disgust at the indiscriminate bombing' in Barcelona.[196] *The Spectator*, finally withdrew its support for the policy of non-intervention. The bombing of Barcelona became a major topic of concern because of its high profile in the press, fears of aerial bombing and because it destroyed hopes that a bombing truce could be reached between the two sides.

In mid February all stories were eclipsed by Eden's resignation. Responses to Mass Observation on the 'Eden Resignation, Austrian Crisis and Spain' are notable on two counts. Firstly, it is apparent that the vast majority closely followed international events. Secondly, the overwhelming reaction was one of disenchantment over Spain. One respondent stated 'I cannot be more disillusioned than I am about it', another believed '[w]e can do nothing about it because when we do raise an outcry there is no notice taken'. Yet another bemoaned that public opinion was 'conditioned' to forget 'quickly and easily.' One Communist admitted 'it is too late for Spain.'[197] Some perceived Eden's departure as the death knell for the League of Nations because Chamberlain made a speech that was widely interpreted as a confirmation of how little faith he had in its machinery.

After the furore over Barcelona had died down, the Far East continued to vie with Spain for public attention. In early February the International Peace Campaign Conference was held in London. Associated public meetings 'filled the Covent Garden Opera House and the Adelphi theatre simultaneously.'[198] *The Times* devoted a column to reporting its deliberations. H.L. Stimson, Secretary of State during the Manchurian crisis sent a message urging an 'unofficial boycott of Japanese goods'.[199] *The Spectator* recognised fear of war was the reason why governments had generally refrained from instigating an official

---

[194] *Telegraph*, 31 January 1938, p.11; see also *New Statesman*, 5 February 1938, p.193.
[195] Aldgate, *Cinema and History*, p.172.
[196] Cited in Watkins, K.W., *Britain Divided: The Effect of the Spanish Civil War on British Political Opinion* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1963) p.121.
[197] MO, Directive Replies 1938, Box 3, Eden Resignation, Austrian Crisis and Spain, 23 February 1938.
[198] *Spectator*, 11 February 1937, p.258.
[199] Ibid.

economic boycott and instead suggested consumers should 'unostentatiously but stedfastly [sic], refrain from buying Japanese products.'[200] Pro-China activist Freda Utley, claimed '[t]here is hardly a single considerable line of export which does not show a decline in recent months.'[201] One Mass Observer stated he 'would like to go to protest meetings, but they are too far off.'[202] This implies the Far East was still a live issue even for those unable to take part in public protest. Parliamentary pressure continued to be applied to the government both in the Commons and the Lords.[203]

By equating the Chinese plight to an English framework, supporters of China managed to successfully facilitate understanding of foreign suffering. Winifred Galbraith pleaded for the plight of Chinese refugees, asking:

> What would you do if, up for your first term at Cambridge, you heard that an invading army had taken London, destroyed your home on, say Streatham Common, and taken possession of the telegraph and post office so that you could not get into touch with your people? Then repeated air-raids destroy your College (Pembroke), and the approach of the army northward breaks up the University since the enemy is said to kill all professors and students out of hand in case they are Communists. You make your way on foot to, say, Nottingham, which is being fortified as a front line town. What would you do next? This is the question that hundreds of thousands of young men and women and school boys and girls have to decide today in China.[204]

Furthermore, Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist movement, which had until a few years previously been the perceived cause of anti-British agitation in China, was now portrayed as 'a kind of Puritan national resurrection movement, a revised Confucianism-cum-Y.M.C.A. ideal, rather than a Fascist movement.'[205]

---

[200] Ibid.
[201] Utley, *Japan's Gamble in China*, pp.258-9.
[202] MO, M. Friend Diary, 28 February 1938.
[203] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.333, Cols.1386-7, 24 March 1938 and Cols.2183-4, 31 March 1938; Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.334, Col.18, 8 March 1938 and Cols.318-9, 6 April 1938.
[204] *Spectator*, 29 April 1938, p.741.
[205] Utley, *Japan's Gamble in China*, p.99.

Attributed to Chiang were the characteristics of self-discipline, 'determination', 'loyalty', 'simplicity, modesty and lack of display'.[206] Furthermore, his devotion to Christianity meant even 'at the front, even when under artillery fire one could always see [his] copy of the Bible on his desk'.[207] He had '[a]lmost overnight' welded China into a 'united nation'.[208] China was no longer a divided, stagnating and anarchic country. 'Japanese aggression' had 'produced in China a new unity and a national consciousness more profound than any in its modern history.'[209]

In May two more instances occurred to reinvigorate public indignation over China. Firstly, the Japanese were seen by British forces to execute unarmed Chinese prisoners at Amoy. In Parliament, Noel-Baker accused the Japanese of violating the Hague Conventions. The Foreign Office was convinced that reports were correct because of 'what the Japanese did at Nanking'.[210] R.A. Butler, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, condemned the action but refused a request to make a formal protest to Tokyo.[211] Instead Cadogan spoke to the Japanese Ambassador, and fearing mutual 'recriminations' agreed to 'let the matter rest.'[212] Public opinion was again being carefully managed. Away from public scrutiny the Foreign Office resolved not to let atrocity reports detract from their policy. One official commented that so long as diplomatic relations with China's government continued then recognition of their sovereignty over occupied areas should continue. However, this did not prevent them

> from accepting the fact of Japanese occupation & making the best arrangements we can with the de facto authorities for the protection of our interests on a de facto basis. There is nothing unfamiliar about the problem: it is Spain all over again.[213]

---

[206] Tong, Hollington K., *Chiang Kai-shek: Soldier and Statesman* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1938) pp.583-592.
[207] Ibid., p.595.
[208] Ibid., p.xi.
[209] Utley, *Japan's Gamble in China*, p.viii.
[210] FO371/22147/2, 27 May 1938.
[211] Parliamentary Debates, (Commons), 5th Series, Vol.336, Col.371, 18 May 1938.
[212] FO371/22147/2, 27 May 1938.
[213] FO676/933/16, 21 May 1938.

The resumption of Japanese bombing over Canton was the other factor provoking renewed public outrage. On 31 May the Archbishop of Canterbury, was prompted by missionaries working with the Church Missionary Society in China, to write to Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax because the bombing had 'moved them to indignation.' Cosmo Lang was against further public protest because when he had taken part in the Albert Hall meeting in October it had caused 'considerable anxiety among Japanese Christians.'[214] Halifax duly instructed the British Ambassador in Tokyo to protest and wrote back to Lang that previous protests had had 'a good effect', arguing that the Japanese had since 'confined themselves almost entirely to military objectives until the recent bombings at Canton.'[215] He failed to mention the atrocities at Nanking.

In response to dogged Parliamentary questioning from Henderson the Foreign Office suggested four lines of defence. Firstly, queries over Japanese atrocities were merged with questions over the bombing of 'British ships in Spanish waters', thus diffusing the focus on specific atrocities. Secondly, Butler was encouraged to refer to an 'interdepartmental survey' which would give him leeway pointing out 'the great difficulties in the way of making any rapid progress.' Thirdly, he should point to previous government protests and finally refer to relevant 'League Resolutions', any British speeches at Geneva on 'Spain or China' and 'endeavours to enlist the good offices of other Governments'.[216] All were designed to fudge the issue.

Officials only showed indignation when the Japanese government attempted to blame the Chinese for the raids, suggesting the presence of anti-aircraft guns drove the bombers so high that they were 'not able to identify their targets with reasonable certainty'. A. Blunt, stationed in Canton, pointed out that if they made no protest then, 'if ever there were an air attack on London' then Britons could suffer from this strategy. 'The Japanese contention' he wrote, was

> the old, old argument that because circumstances make it difficult or impossible for the rules to be observed therefore they may be ignored.

---

[214] FO/676/393/7, Archbishop of Canterbury to Halifax, 31 May 1938.
[215] FO/676/393/10, Halifax to Archbishop of Canterbury, n/d.
[216] FO/676/393/14, Memorandum from P.N. Loxley, 2 June 1938.

> This is the argument which the Germans put forward in the war to justify their unrestricted submarine campaign.[217]

Halifax endorsed this view and informed British military chiefs. Chamberlain was forced to admit 'most of the bombs fell on places which cannot be considered as of military importance.' When accused of merely 'holding up their hands in horror', the Prime Minister replied '[i]f we could hold up in horror the hands of other people we would certainly do so', thus placing the blame on a lack of international cooperation, which he had, in fact, done little to encourage.[218]

As *The Spectator* re-invoked the accusation of 'frightfulness' against Japan, the CCC organised a week of protest.[219] This included a 'Protest and Boycott Parade' on 13 and 14 June. On 15 June there was a 'Great Protest Meeting' at Queen's Hall held jointly with the International Peace Campaign and the LNU including speakers Lord Robert Cecil and Harold Nicolson, followed by a march to the Japanese Embassy. On 16 June, MPs were lobbied in the Commons and on Sunday there was a 'Mass Demonstration' in Trafalgar Square.[220] This was followed by an attempt to present a resolution to the Japanese Embassy, 'vigorously' protesting against the barbarous bombardment of Canton.[221] The Japanese Ambassador refused to accept the resolution stating that the bombing of Canton was being carried out 'to demoralise the Chinese and to prevent reinforcements coming from there.'[222] The following week a protest meeting against the bombing of Spain and China was held in Stevenson Square in Manchester. It was organized jointly by the Manchester Spain and China Committees and presided over by the Chairman of the Manchester Borough Labour Party.[223]

---

[217] FO/676/393/27, Telegram from A. Blunt in Canton, n/d.
[218] FO371/22037/232, Parliamentary Report, 3 June 1938.
[219] *Spectator*, 10 June 1938, p.1041.
[220] Events were advertised in *The Spectator* and *New Statesman* on 10 and 11 June 1937.
[221] Clegg, Arthur, *Aid China: 1937-1949 A Memoir of a Forgotten Campaign* (Beijing: New World Press, 2003) p.66.
[222] FO/676/393/114, 15 June 1937. The Foreign Office were alerted about 'processions in London, under clerical leadership' but dismissed the CCC as 'a body of Leftist but not extreme complexion'.
[223] Clegg, *Aid China*, p.66.

On 14 August the CCC called another day of protest against Japanese bombings. Special services of intercession were held in St. Paul's, Westminster Abbey, Westminster Cathedral, St. Martin in the Fields, the City Temple, the Methodist Central Hall and Kingsway Hall as well as others throughout the country. On 15 August a deputation led by Canon Lewis Donaldson, Archdeacon of Westminster, the Reverend S.W. Hughes, Secretary of the National Free Church Council and Arthur Clegg of the CCC visited the Japanese Embassy. This was followed by a parade along Oxford Street and a meeting in Hyde Park.[224] The event was widely covered in the national and London press, especially because the Assistant Japanese Military Attaché assaulted Mary Jones, the Assistant Secretary of the CCC. By September the CCC had held more than one thousand meetings throughout the country and distributed over a million Aid China leaflets. Although there were signs that the Far East was regaining momentum in the public sphere, events in Czechoslovakia finally diverted attention.

Despite the British government's pro-Nationalist sympathies, after Guernica British opinion remained predominantly on the side of the Republican cause, especially when it became clear that it was the underdog. It is telling that ardent pro-Francoist and Conservative MP Henry 'Chips' Channon wrote in his diary in the Spring of 1938 that 'Franco advances – victory is clearly his. He has been so misunderstood, so misrepresented in this country that to champion him as I have done, is dangerous from a Constituency point of view.'[225] For a constituency that had voted for one of the most reactionary individuals in Parliament this admission was significant. It arguably shows the effect of Spanish atrocity on the British mind. On the issue of China it appeared that both the British government and their supporters in the press had learnt lessons over Spain about how to control and channel public indignation. One of the most interesting aspects of the combinatory effect of Spain and China is that the World War One myth that the Germans were in fact innocent of atrocities was finally challenged, if not altogether refuted. The metonymic expression 'frightfulness' once again became

[224] Ibid., p.74.
[225] Channon, Henry, *'Chips': The Diaries of Sir Henry Channon* (ed. Rhodes James, Robert) Diary entry for 29 March 1938 (London: Phoenix, 1996) p.113.

common parlance but still there was resistance to the notion that Germans were capable of such behaviour.[226]

[226] For 'frightfulness' see for example footnote 134; for resistance to the notion that Germans were capable of 'frightfulness', see Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.276, Cols. 1913-6, 30 March 1933; see also the debate on Vansittartism, pp. 246-49; see Chapter One for the genesis of this discussion.

Chapter Six

Jews Under German Rule: Hierarchies of Compassion

In Germany during February and March 1933 the Nazi Party launched a nationwide campaign against Jews. Stormtroopers smashed Jewish businesses, beat up individual Jews, and used 'naked terror to force the dismissal or suspension of Jewish office workers and civil servants.[1] This marked the beginning of twelve years relentless anti-Jewish measures. Nazi inspired violence was fully understood in Britain from the earliest weeks of the regime. Yet compared to other atrocities of the same period, violence against German Jews had little impact in Britain. Other atrocities, although not uncontested, impacted on the prevailing political and ideological consensus. This was because in these cases public indignation gathered enough momentum to become a force to be reckoned with. In the case of Jews, countervailing forces cut across compassion.

When Hitler came to power there was a strong pro-German consensus in Britain. Atrocities committed by German troops during the war had become a 'myth'. Most people believed the atrocity stories were either fabricated or embellished. Worse, Britain was held responsible for this travesty. This view was accepted on all sides of the political spectrum throughout the 1930s and deep into World War Two. It was one reason why the Versailles Treaty was vilified and why Hitler was given such leeway. It was also a factor obstructing sympathy for the Jews. The 'myth' of German atrocities combined with another fiction; that Jews invariably exaggerated their own suffering. For those in power or close to it, recent events in Poland contained ample practical evidence.[2] If English Jews wished to protest against German brutality they either had to show 'English' restraint or galvanize Britons to make their case. The inertia they encountered was considerable.

The gradual escalation of violence against the Jews interspersed with Hitler's periodic 'protestations of peaceful intent to induce a sense of security abroad', might give the

---

[1] Graml, Hermann, *Antisemitism in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) p.88.
[2] See Chapter Three.

impression that it was difficult for foreign observers to react with certainty to events.[3] It is also argued, presumably with the 'Final Solution' in mind, that the magnitude of atrocity made it difficult to comprehend. Both cannot be true. Its incremental nature was more likely to facilitate understanding of brutality than undermine it. Furthermore, when the British public united to condemn the bombing of Guernica or Shanghai it did not mean they had to imagine the complete destruction of the Basques or the Chinese. In the same way, when the British reacted to anti-Jewish brutality in 1933 or 1938 it did not require them to envisage the Final Solution. When news of the destruction of European Jews was officially acknowledged, mainstream newspapers were quick to place it in the context of ten years increasing violence. In other words, contemporaries placed the terrible events within a familiar frame of reference. It is therefore arguable that before the war the nature of Jewish persecution came well within the grounds of comprehensibility and during the war this prior knowledge facilitated understanding of what was happening in the Final Solution. Furthermore, the reactions to atrocities in Abyssinia, Spain and China show that the British public was no stranger to death on a massive scale.

Many commentators, including Andrew Sharf, Walter Laqueur and Tony Kushner have wrestled with the seeming intransigence of the British conscience when confronted with anti-Jewish violence.[4] Kushner's argument that the illiberal nature of Nazi violence could not penetrate the British liberal imagination has been particularly influential. By highlighting the acceptability or otherwise of 'diversity' and the terms upon which 'difference' was accommodated as of 'central importance in British and American confrontations with the Jewish crisis', Kushner points towards the generic flaws in liberalism as the major reason for lack of compassionate response. Yet by placing reactions to anti-Jewish violence in the wider context of British responses to other contemporary atrocities the strength of Kushner's paradigm becomes questionable. British reactions to other man-made humanitarian crises in the same period were extensive and intense. They often took on the characteristics of a national

---

[3] Dispatch by Rumbold in April 1933, which became known in the Foreign Office as the 'Mein Kampf' dispatch. Read by Ramsey MacDonald and circulated to the Cabinet. Cited in Kershaw, Ian, *Making Friends With Hitler: Lord Londonderry and Britain's Road to War* (London: Penguin, 2005) p.41.
[4] Sharf, Andrew, *The British Press and the Jews Under Nazi Rule* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964); Laqueur, Walter, *The Terrible Secret: Suppression of the Truth About Hitler's "Final Solution"* (London: Penguin, 1982); Kushner, Tony, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination: A Social and Cultural History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

campaign with indignation spreading well beyond those who had an immediate or vested interest. Either the liberal imagination prevented understanding and compromised compassionate action for *all* foreign victims, or it cannot serve as an overall framework for exploring responses.

Reactions to foreign atrocity in the 1930s show many Britons believed in a tradition of compassionate concern for the oppressed; that it was part of the national character. Evidence suggests identification with victims was paramount. Response to foreign atrocity was deeply connected to a shared sense of British identity. National 'characteristics' were conferred on a disparate set of victims, who then became worthy causes. In the case of Jews, this rarely, if ever occurred. Moreover, this belief dictated action. Responses were certainly complex and were in some cases ambivalent. Overall, however, Jews were subject to a hierarchy of compassion and the whim of memory. Atrocities against Abyssinians, Spaniards and Chinese evoked stronger and wider responses than the Jews. In the narrower context of Germans and Jews, the former evoked more persistent understanding and sympathy than the latter, partly because of the misappropriated memory of earlier atrocities. In order to verify that memory of German atrocities, a hierarchy of compassion and perceptions of Englishness worked together to condition responses to Jewish persecution, evidence and sources will be examined over a period of ten years.

During early March 1933 London press offices received irrefutable evidence of escalating violence in Germany.[5] Agents of the Nazi Party were known to be instigators. Victims included Communists, Socialists, pacifists and Jews.[6] *The Spectator* reported Germany was under 'martial law and the tyranny of gunmen'. Many feared a 'massacre of Jews and "Marxists."'[7] The same journal took issue with a London-based German correspondent who attempted to 'repel the charges' of brutality. If correct then the reports of British correspondents had been 'consistently misrepresenting the situation', whereas the 'facts' stood 'incontestable.'[8] *The Times*, confirmed accounts of 'violence and intimidation' everywhere came in 'from official

[5] *New Statesman and Nation*, 4 March 1933, p.241.
[6] Karl Schleunes suggests that by March, Jews were top of the SA's list of potential victims. Schleunes, Karl, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz: Nazi Policy Toward German Jews 1933-1939* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990) p.71. See also, Evans, Richard, *The Coming of the Third Reich: How the Nazis Destroyed Democracy and seized Power in Germany* (London: Penguin, 2004).
[7] *The Spectator*, 3 March 1933, p.279.
[8] *Spectator*, 10 March 1933, p.321.

and trustworthy private sources.'[9] Events were widely reported, the facts verified and the nature of the terror was clearly understood. The press was the main channel through which the British public comprehended events.[10] It was in a unique position to forge opinion through the dissemination of information and comment. Yet alongside disapproval, press coverage contained countervailing discourses that diminished the impact of anti-Jewish violence on public opinion.[11]

Since the war Germans had been recast in the British imagination as civilised and the victims of injustice.[12] For most, it seemed unbelievable they were confirming wartime interpretations of their character. For example, Lieutenant-Colonel Acland-Troyte questioned in Parliament whether 'events show that the mentality which caused the Belgian atrocities in 1914 still exists in Germany?'[13] As a minority view it was ignored. Commentators of all political hues searched for other explanations, arguing the situation was temporary and a 'democratic Germany' would 're-emerge.'[14] Underlying this was an unshakable belief in the German character. The *Daily Express* predicted 'the disciplined intellect' of Germany would 'assert itself, modifying the forces of reaction'.[15] The *News Chronicle*, believing most Germans found the brutality 'repugnant', optimistically predicted 'sober opinion' and the 'sobering effect' of office would prevail.[16] Germans were generally bifurcated into moderates and extremists and the former were expected to prevail. German leaders were similarly divided. Hermann Göring's inflammatory speeches cast him as the latter,[17] while Nationalists were potentially a 'moderating influence'[18] along with Hitler.[19] A.L. Kennedy of *The Times* stated, a 'struggle is beginning between Goring & Goebbels, the extremists, against Hitler, Backed [sic] by Rosenberg, who are moderates.'[20]

---

[9] *The Times*, 11 March 1933, p.9.
[10] Kershaw, *Making Friends With Hitler*, p.26.
[11] Sharf contends '[f]rom 1933 to 1945 the British Press was virtually unanimous in its denunciation of what was happening to Jews under Nazi rule.' Sharf, *The British Press*, p.155.
[12] For example, *Spectator*, 10 March 1933, p.337.
[13] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.276, Cols. 1913-6, 30 March 1933.
[14] *Spectator*, 3 March 1933, p.273.
[15] *Daily Express*, 6 March 1933, p.10.
[16] *News Chronicle*, 11 March 1933, p.2; 22, March 1933, p.8.
[17] For example *Daily Telegraph*, 21 March 1933, p.11.
[18] *New Statesman*, 11 March 1933, p.277.
[19] Ibid., 18 March 1933, p.309 and *Times*, 15 March 1933, p.15.
[20] Martel, Gordon, (ed.) *The Times and Appeasement: The Journals of A.L. Kennedy 1932-1939*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 2000) p.87. Kennedy added 'I must try to write just favourably enough to Hitler to get him to allow the articles to be quoted in the Ger: Press.'

The Times selectively reported Hitler's speech on 10 March to stormtroopers, emphasising moderate aspects and omitting passages designed to incite.[21] The Nazi government's claim that upheaval was 'inevitable' was 'not…unreasonable' because of the impossibility of drawing 'fine distinctions' in 'national revolution'.[22] Instead, '*provocateurs*' were partly blamed.[23] It was 'difficult' to control 'irresponsible elements' in 'so big a movement'.[24] Thus the first editorial on the 'Hitler Revolution' was apologetic.[25] Referring to the myth of unimpeachable wartime conduct by the German military,[26] it stated, Hitler's 'young' troops 'never learnt discipline in the old Army', but 'sedulously imitated the methods of their chief opponents'.[27] *The Times* therefore deflected charges of brutality towards Nazi dissenters. The transitory nature of the violence was reinforced by the claim that Hitler's 'seizure of power' was 'almost complete'. In any case '[n]o one expects revolutions to be made with rose-water', and Hitler had now enforced 'the strictest discipline'.[28] That Germany was in the throws of a 'revolution' provided mitigation.[29] Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald told the German Ambassador in April 1933, 'he had not believed' excesses had occurred and 'he understood very well the character of and circumstances attending a revolution.'[30]

Although the *Manchester Guardian* was the most critical of Nazi violence, the *Daily Telegraph* also highlighted its anti-Jewish nature.[31] However, sympathy for the Jews took its place in a hierarchy of issues, above which many of the press and the public felt more strongly. The end of Parliamentary democracy by the Enabling Law was one

---

[21] For details of the speech see Evans, *Coming of the Third Reich*, p.348. The *New Statesman* and *News Chronicle* also gave it guarded praise. *New Statesman*, 18 March 1933, p.309 and *News Chronicle*, 18 March 1933, p.6.
[22] *Times*, 11 March 1933, p.9.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid., 15 March 1933, p.15.
[26] See Chapter One.
[27] *Times*, 15 March 1933, p.15.
[28] Ibid. A.J.P Taylor wrote that *Times* editor, Geoffrey Dawson, was 'ruthless for reconciliation with Germany. He turned *The Times* into a propaganda sheet and did not hesitate to suppress, or to pervert, the reports of his own correspondents.' Taylor, A.J.P., *English History 1914-1945* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1965) p.418.
[29] *The Observer*, 19 March 1933, p.16 and 9 April 1933, p.16; *Telegraph*, 1 April 1933, p.11; *News Chronicle*, 1 April 1933, p.3; *Spectator*, 15 April 1938, pp.674-5; *New Statesman*, 17 June 1933, pp.786-7.
[30] Cited in Griffiths, Richard, *Fellow Travellers of the Right: British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany 1933-9* (London: Constable, 1980) p.116.
[31] *Telegraph*, 18 March 1933, p.12; For the *Manchester Guardian*'s Jewish advocacy see Gannon, Franklin Reid, *The British Press and Germany 1936-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) p.76; Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p.35.

of these.[32] Commentators found it hard to believe German 'sober opinion' endorsed Hitler's violent political control. The *News Chronicle* thought the matter should be settled internally.[33] Having recognised the 'Funeral of a Parliament',[34] the liberal *Chronicle* distanced itself from active protest. Its editorial comment lacked the crusading zeal, which later characterized its response to crises in Abyssinia, Spain and China.

News of American Jewish protests marked a change.[35] Right and Left wing papers embellished the extent to which Jews could influence international finance. On 24 March, the *Express*, in tried and tested fashion, reported that globally Jews had 'banded together as one man to declare war' on Germany. Germans would be forced to pay dearly because it was 'a heavy borrower in foreign money markets, where Jewish influence is considerable.'[36] The Left wing *Daily Herald* gave front-page coverage to a ''Jews' World boycott of Germany'.[37] 'Jewish financiers' were 'now "working" the money market' until persecution ceased.[38] The *News Chronicle* wrote of a 'Jewish Storm Against Hitler'. German exporters were '[a]larmed' and their government forced into a '[d]enial of [t]ortures'.[39] This angle was not limited to the popular press. The *Observer* believed Hitlerism would 'pay dear' if persecution continued.[40] A cross section of newspapers portrayed a battle between two great forces with Jews wielding ultimate power through financial control. Jews in western Europe and the U.S. did have some economic and political levers, but their power was puny and the contest unequal, although facts never got in the way of exaggeration, stereotype and myth. This undercut the idea of Jews as victims.

---

[32] Ibid., 22 March 1933, p.12 The *Daily Mail and Morning Post* welcomed these developments. For the Enabling Law see Noakes, J., and Pridham G., (eds.) *Nazism 1919-1945, A History in Documents and Eyewitness Accounts, Volume I: The Nazi Party, State and Society 1919-1939* (New York: Schocken Books, 1983-1984) p.161; Friedlander, Saul, *The Years of Persecution: Nazi Germany and the Jews 1933-1939* (London: Phoenix, 1997) pp.17-18.
[33] *News Chronicle*, 22 March 1933, p.8.
[34] Ibid., p.8.
[35] For 'reluctant' American Jewish protests, Friedlander, *Years of Persecution*, p.21.
[36] *Express*, 24 March 1933, p.1.
[37] *Daily Herald*, 24 March 1933, p.1.
[38] Ibid., 27 March 1933, p.1 The same day it published a detailed report of the nature of the violence against Jews. This was accompanied by an editorial 'Do Not Be Deceived' into believing the violence was over. However, the German police were portrayed as a sanctuary from the attentions of 'the Nazi Storm Troops.'
[39] *News Chronicle*, 25 March 1933, p.13.
[40] *Observer*, 26 March 1933, p.16.

Despite the reported indignation of the Anglo-Jewish community,[41] the Board of Deputies protested in a restrained 'English' manner.[42] President, Neville Laski asserted that their quarrel was 'not with Germany', even conceding 'no revolution is without its excesses.'[43] They were also highly sensitive to charges that atrocity reports had been embellished and concerned lest exaggerations made things worse.[44] This was on the back of intelligence from Bernard Kahn, Director of the Joint Reconstruction Fund, representing the German Jewish community. He described Hitler as a 'moderate' and warned Anglo-Jewish leaders to be careful of 'exaggerated' reporting for fear of repercussions.[45] The Zionist Organization in London urged Stephen Wise, President of the American Jewish Congress, to 'dispel wild exaggerations'.[46] As a result, Jewish representatives undermined the potential for raising indignation. However, less restraint would have laid them open to the charge of conforming to popular pre-conceptions. They were caught in a double blind. Effectively, Anglo-Jewry gambled on calibrating their response to the much-lauded British tradition of compassion. Laski hoped a mass protest meeting 'representative of all phases of English public life' would be held.[47] It did not happen in the way he envisaged.

In March, Parliament debated German events.[48] Foreign Secretary, Sir John Simon denied the treatment of German Jews had any bearing on international relations as defined by the League of Nations Covenant. In fact, League rules could have been applied but unlike the Abyssinian crisis, lack of public pressure to intervene meant the government could interpret the relevant article of the Covenant as they wished.[49]

---

[41] *News Chronicle*, 25 March 1933, p.13.
[42] A vocal section clamoured for a more demonstrative response to persecution. Gerwitz, Sharon, 'Anglo-Jewish Responses to Nazi Germany 1933-39: the Anti-Nazi Boycott and the Board of Deputies of British Jews,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 26, No.2 (April, 1991).
[43] Board of Deputies (BoD) ACC3121/A/26, Daily News Bulletin of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 27 March 1933, (London: Metropolitan Archive).
[44] Ibid.
[45] Wolf-Mowshowitch Papers, Record Group No. 348, Microfilm No. MK. 02/Folder No.5, Notes of Conversation with Dr. Kahn of Afternoon of Saturday, 31 March 1933, (New York: YIVO).
[46] Ibid., Zionist Organization to Stephen Wise, 27 March 1933.
[47] BoD ACC3121/A/26, Daily News Bulletin, 27 March 1933. Kahn also suggested that to have any chance of having an effect in Germany, 'any weapon used should be a non-Jewish weapon'. Wolf-Mowshowitch Papers, Kahn Conversation, 31 March, 1933.
[48] Sir John Gilmore, Home Secretary, had already claimed existing legislation would 'protect this country from any undesirable influx of aliens'. *Times*, 10 March 1933, p.7.
[49] Article 11, paragraph 2 stated '[i]t is also declared to be the friendly right of each Member of the League to bring to the attention of the Assembly or of the Council any circumstance whatever affecting international relations which threatens to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends'. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp#art11.

Salford M.P., John Morris tabled a Commons motion on 30 March, expressing Britain's 'ancient tradition, to respect the numerical weakness and defenceless position' of German Jews. MacDonald evaded a full-scale debate citing pressing 'Parliamentary business.'[50] In the Lords, Viscount Cecil encouraged the government to lodge a verbal protest. The Archbishop of Canterbury, whilst stressing he was motivated by 'sincere friendship for the Germans', supported him. Viscount Hailsham, the Secretary of State for War, rebutted these pleas on the grounds that representation might 'defeat the very objects Lord Cecil had in mind.'[51] In other words, if the government intervened the violence might intensify. Effectively German Jews were hostages.[52]

Towards the end of March most of the serious press implied the German leadership was reining in violence.[53] This, together with belief in Jewish power, meant that when the German government announced a boycott of Jewish businesses to counteract 'foreign atrocity propaganda' for 1 April,[54] the press tended to characterise the action as 'reprisals'.[55] Limiting the boycott to one day was interpreted according to a persistent belief in the strength of Jewish finance. Germany's foreign trade would be 'strangled' and Hitler's government unable to service its debt.[56] The *Telegraph* reported 'responsible German statesmen' were aware of 'the dangers of antagonising the strong Jewish influences in the world's money and commercial markets.'[57] The idea of powerful 'Jewish finance' also affected influential economists. John Maynard Keynes stated of Germany '[t]hey're doing something very queer with their money…It may be the Jews are taking away their capital.'[58] Hjalmar Schacht, President of the

---

[50] Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, Vol.276, Cols.1913-6, 30 March 1933.
[51] *Times*, 31 March 1933, p.7.
[52] The 'boycott was indeed presented both to the domestic and to the international public as a reaction to foreign criticism…of events in Germany, so that effectively the hostage principle came into play.' Graml, *Antisemitism*, p.95.
[53] *Telegraph*, 25 March 1933, p.12; '[t[he "isolated acts" deprecated by Herr Hitler do not seem entirely to have ceased…'. *Times*, 25 March 1933, p.12.
[54] Accounts of the boycott and its devastating aftermath in Friedlander, *Years of Persecution*, pp.17-26; Schleunes, K., *Twisted Road*, pp. 62-91; Barkai, Avraham, *From Boycott to Annihilation: the Economic Struggle of German Jews* (University of New England Press, 2006); Kaplan, Marion, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) pp.21-23.
[55] *News Chronicle*, 28 March, 1933, p.9; *Express*, 28 March 1933, p.1, 'Germany's Answer To The Jews – An Eye For An Eye'; *Spectator*, 31 March 1933, p.447; *New Statesman*, 1 April 1933, p.401 German action was 'retaliatory'.
[56] *News Chronicle*, 1 April 1933, p.1.
[57] *Telegraph*, 3 April 1933, p.12.
[58] Oliver, Anne and McNeillie, Andrew, (eds.) *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, Vol. IV, 1931-1935 (London: Hogarth, 1982) p.235.

Reichsbank, and Foreign Minister Konstantin von Neurath pressured Hitler to halt the boycott for fear of stoking anti-German feeling abroad.[59] The real threat to the German economy emanated from the possibility of Jewish protests spilling over to non-Jews. *The Times* echoed the *Telegraph*, lauding Hitler for ordering restraint which was 'obeyed almost everywhere'.[60] *The Times* believed Nazi leaders wanted an 'excuse' to end the boycott to salvage prestige and maintain unity.[61] By distancing Nazi leaders from the violence, the myth that they were motivated by rational values was maintained. Vernon Bartlett, *News Chronicle* correspondent and later admirer of Republican Spain's stoicism under the Fascist onslaught, in an article for *The Listener* expressed 'astonishment' at Nazi restraint believing 'moderate Germans' were 'disgusted' by the anti-Jewish campaign.[62]

Letters defending the new regime reinforced imbalance in the public debate. Eleanor Rathbone, Independent MP for the Combined Universities and staunch Jewish advocate, expressed frustration about letters to the Press from 'responsible Germans' which showed Germany was 'not yet disillusioned' with Nazism.[63] Many drew attention to atrocity propaganda during the war. The *Daily Telegraph* and *News Chronicle* published a letter from sixteen London-based German journalists complaining that 'false rumours and reports' about atrocities were reviving the 'general psychosis created during the war.'[64] The *Spectator* backed 'British correspondents on the spot'.[65] This prompted a barrage of protests. These cited the 'painfully reminiscent…campaign of defamation which is one of the most inglorious pages of the Great War',[66] and the 'embittered atmosphere of mutual recrimination'.[67] Patrick du

---

[59] Kershaw, Ian, *Hitler 1889-1936 Hubris* (London: Penguin, 2001) p.473 .
[60] According to Leonard Stein, a member of the JFC, *The Times* also suggested 'the result of Jewish indignation must produce an effect upon German trade…'. BoD ACC3121/A/26, 18 June 1933.
[61] *Times*, 3 April 1933, p.15.
[62] *The Listener*, 12 April 1933. For Bartlett's Republican sympathy see Preston, Paul, *We Saw Spain Die: Foreign Correspondents in the Spanish Civil War* (London: Constable, 2008) p.16.
[63] *Times*, 11 April 1933, p.10. Rathbone warned that although the German people were 'imperfectly informed concerning individual acts of persecution and violence' they had 'deliberately chosen' the new regime 'in full knowledge of the Nazi programme of ruthless suppression of all opinion with which its leaders do not agree and of those leaders' maniacal anti-Semitism.'
[64] *Telegraph*, 1 April 1933, p.11; *News Chronicle*, 1 April 1933, p.3. The former replied that the British press had 'no wish to circulate stories which discredit her present rulers', while the latter 'sympathise[d] entirely with the letter'.
[65] *Spectator*, 7 April 1933, p.490. Although in the same issue the German correspondent cast doubt on the durability of Hitler's regime.
[66] Ibid., p.501.
[67] Ibid., 14 April 1933, p.535. Also cited was the 'baneful influence of Jews upon German public life'.

Val from Cambridge was angered by the publication of Louis Raemakers' 'anti-German cartoon', asking 'is it not time to drop the cry of German atrocities' which had been 'hastily believed.'[68] The *Spectator*'s fragile attempt to highlight persecution was overshadowed by a feature article by ex-editor Evelyn Wrench, who claimed eye-witness status. As well as highlighting as 'fact' the disproportionate number of Jews in the medical profession, he pointed to the Black and Tans as evidence that 'Governments often do what large sections of the Community disapprove of'. This gave weight to the notion that violence was temporary and replicated 1920s arguments, which saw German 'frightfulness' sidelined in British atrocity discourse. For Wrench, criticizing German violence was hypocritical as there was little difference between German and British governments.[69]

The press invoked the spectre of the last war. The *News Chronicle* editorialized that reporting of Jewish treatment was 'sensational' and 'distorted', warning that feelings in Britain 'unpleasantly resemble the sort of feelings aroused during the war.'[70] According to the *Telegraph* the 'new Nazi "frightfulness" was not even frightful. It was called off before it reached that dangerous pitch.'[71] Atrocities against Jews were specifically designated as exaggerated and the 'unjustified' nature of British responses to wartime German atrocities was invoked as common sense. These myths intertwined to dampen indignation.

On 4 April *The Times* reported 'growing anxiety' amongst M.P.s. Two early day motions called on the government to make friendly representations to Germany.[72] A Parliamentary debate on 13 April reflected increased concern over Germany's ambitions, if not their treatment of Jews. The Labour opposition wanted the government to challenge what they saw as the threat to democracy in Europe through the machinery of the League of Nations. Ex-Foreign Secretary Austen Chamberlain, speaking in the Commons, refused to discuss 'internal happenings of Germany',

---

[68] Ibid., 26 May 1933, p.764.
[69] Ibid., 14 April 1933, pp.527-8. He changed his view by 1940 condemning German 'racial intolerance and persecution…and Government-inspired hate.' Cited in Burleigh, Michael, *The Third Reich: A New History* (London: Pan, 2001) p.282.
[70] *News Chronicle*, 1 April 1933, p.6.
[71] *Telegraph*, 2 April 1933, p.10.
[72] One was instigated by Conservative J.P. Morris and supported by '50 other back-bench members' who according to *The Times* were mainly Jews. The other was placed by Commander Oliver Locker-Lampson, John Buchan, and ten others. *Times*, 5 April 1933, p.9.

limiting his criticisms to 'foreign affairs.' He challenged the government to refrain from meeting German demands for revision of the Versailles Treaty, being more concerned about the fate of Poles living in the 'Polish Corridor' who might 'come under the heel' of a Germany 'afflicted by this narrow, exclusive, aggressive spirit'. He used Germany's Jews as an example of what might happen if Britain acquiesced to German demands.[73] Chamberlain's focus on threats to European stability and the potential fate of Poles earned him the acclaim of the House. His reference to the suffering of Jews was marginal but encouraged some M.P.s concerned at their plight.[74] Simon's reply emphasised Parliamentary feeling represented 'not a Jewish outlook' but an 'Anglo-Saxon outlook.'[75] He effectively distanced the government from Jewish protests. Despite Churchill's assertion that it was 'a matter for public opinion to bring itself to bear on the course of events in Germany', the debate marked the zenith of British indignation in 1933, not the spark for a public crusade.[76]

Anglo-Jewry attempted to galvanise support for broad-based public protests. Laski asked the Lord Mayor of London for permission to hold a protest meeting at the Guildhall. He was told that 'sympathetic consideration' would only be given if agreement came from 'influential quarters'.[77] This referred to the Foreign Office who did not acquiesce. One official stated such meetings would cause 'moderate people' who viewed Germany's 'doings with disfavour, to rally to its support.'[78] Jewish-led meetings, Laski urged, should show 'dignity and restraint' and he especially welcomed meetings of 'a non-Jewish character' as one of these 'was worth all the Jewish meetings which could possibly be held'.[79] Non-Jews did attend some meetings, for example the Bishop of Birmingham, the President of the Methodist Church and the Lord Mayor of Manchester, but support was patchy. Leo Amery suggested, of a

---

[73] *Times*, 15 April 1933, p.5. The 'Polish Corridor' had been surrendered by Germany as part of the Versailles settlement.
[74] Eleanor Rathbone 'recalled this debate as a rare moment of agreement' in the House. Pederson, Susan, *Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience* (London: Yale University Press, 2004) p.271.
[75] *Times*, 15 April 1933, p.5.
[76] Ibid.
[77] BoD ACC3121/C11/6/4/1, Joint Foreign Committee Minutes (JFC), 6 April 1933.
[78] Fox, John, 'Great Britain and the German Jews 1933', *Wiener Library Bulletin*, 26, Nos.1-2 (1972) p.41.
[79] BoD ACC3121/C11/6/4/1, Report of BoD meeting, 15 May 1933.

meeting in Birmingham that support 'was not specific Jewish sympathy but [a] general feeling about fair play…influenced the audience.'[80]

The Board of Deputies convened a 'sub-committee' to co-ordinate meetings and produce a pamphlet to enlighten the public about Germany's treatment of Jews.[81] Twenty-five thousand copies were to be sold at newsagents. It was also circulated in the Commons and Lords and to 'learned Societies, Lord Mayors and Mayors, Clubs, Libraries, Labour and Women's organisations, public men and public institutions' as well as the national, regional and religious press.[82] The sub-committee had some success claiming to have arranged '[n]umerous public meetings' at which condemnation of the persecution was 'received from all quarters, non-Jewish as well as Jewish.'[83] This information was passed to the Foreign Office. The Board acted as a prompt and a conduit.[84] During a short period after the boycott, Anglo-Jewish leaders acted on the possibility of a real manifestation of British indignation. This suggests a degree of optimism existed in Anglo-Jewish circles in 1933 based on belief in Britain's compassionate tradition. This was perhaps reinforced by the creation of the High Commission for German Refugees and in May the Academic Assistance Council 'to accommodate refugee scholars'.[85] Optimism however, was largely unfounded. Unlike the subsequent Abyssinian affair and the response to atrocities against civilians in Spain and China, there was little spontaneity or momentum behind expressions of support.

With regard to the content of meetings, messages of support were tempered by acceptance of Nazi explanations of violence, sympathy for Germany, overriding confidence in the German character and fear of war. The Bishop of Birmingham 'was sure' brutality 'during the recent revolution' was 'gravely regretted' by most Germans. He 'expected from the German people a generosity of temper such as we ourselves,

---

[80] Barnes, John and Nicholson, David (eds.), *The Empire at Bay: The Leo Amery Diaries 1929-1945*, (London: Hutchinson, 1988) p.292.
[81] *The Persecution of the Jews in Germany* (London: 1933).
[82] BoD ACC3121/C11/6/4/1.
[83] Ibid., 15 May 1933.
[84] For one list see BoD ACC3121/C11/6/4/1, 15 May 1933.
[85] Overy, Richard, *The Morbid Age: Britain Between the Wars* (London: Allen Lane, 2009) p.279. The initiative for the High Commission was taken by a group of prominent British scholars including J.M. Keynes, Gilbert Murray, H.A.L. Fisher, George Trevelyan and the economist Josiah Stamp. By October 1933, 177 refugees had been found academic positions. However, the organization 'remained sensitive to the charge that it was only designed to help Jews.'

after periods of excitement, could display.'[86] By referring to past British atrocities he arguably invoked a sense of shame and reinforced sensitivity to charges of hypocrisy in Britain. Furthermore, the Bishop made favourable comparisons between Germans and Britons. Just as the British had argued that atrocities in India and Ireland had been aberrations, so German violence was cast as temporary because it was alien to the national disposition. Lloyd George, a prominent and effective critic of the government's handling of the Abyssinian crisis, addressed the Women's National Liberal Federation at Scarborough. He suggested two questions needed answers, firstly 'the abominable treatment of the Jews in Germany' and secondly, 'the abominable treatment of Germany by the Allies' over disarmament.[87] It is a measure of public feeling that the principal British author of the Versailles settlement responded to the majority view by displaying sympathy for Germany. It is also significant he mentioned Jewish and German suffering at the same time. Privately he believed Hitler had 'not shown half the ferocity which Cromwell showed towards the Irish Catholics.'[88] Lloyd George's reaction was typical of other public figures.

Hitler's first foreign policy speech was less virulent than feared. It affected British responses. *The Times* claimed it showed that '[b]ehind the demagogue and showman' was a 'statesman'. His speech was said to be 'earnestly and moderately worded', could have been 'spoken by any of his recent predecessors' and represented the views of both 'official Germany' and 'the German people.'[89] The presence of nationalists in the German Cabinet reinforced the view that Hitler was influenced by moderates and speaking for the German majority. Hitler demanded revision of Versailles but affirmed countries surrounding Germany had a right to exist and appeared to reject military action.[90] *The Times* uncritically accepted this despite violence and on-going legislative oppression. The editorial helped to create a benign sense of continuity between Germany past and present.

Despite Anglo-Jewish warnings that the German government was excluding Jews from mainstream life by 'administrative chicanery', the Foreign Office perceived a change

---

[86] *Times*, 16 May 1933, p.16.
[87] Ibid., 17 May 1933, p.9.
[88] Taylor, A.J.P., (ed.) *Lloyd George A Diary by Frances Stevenson* (London: Hutchinson, 1971) p.287.
[89] *Times*, 18 May 1933, p.15.
[90] Gilbert, Martin, *Sir Horace Rumbold: Portrait of a Diplomat, 1869-1941* (London: Heinemann, 1973) p.381.

of heart within the German hierarchy.[91] Sir Horace Rumbold had on 26 April filed a despatch stating it would be misleading to expect 'a return to sanity or a serious modification' of Nazi views. On 11 May he maintained Hitler was 'responsible' for German anti-Jewish policy.[92] Yet on 16 May, the day before Hitler's speech, he reported the regime was 'steadily consolidating itself' with 'signs lately of a saner and more responsible attitude…[by] Hitler, Goebbels and Göring.'[93] At the end of May, in a letter to Vansittart, Rumbold interpreted Hitler's speech as 'a volte face' compared to 'the last thirteen years'.[94] In under a month, Rumbold seems to have forgotten his previous warning. He now implied Hitler's restraint would increase in proportion to the security of his position. Indeed, he suggested 'Hitler has even given way a little where his pet racial theories are concerned. The stronger Hitler becomes at home, the more he can afford to be conciliatory abroad.'[95] Presumably, Hitler's alleged compromise on his 'racial theories' was the shift from outright violence to legislative persecution.[96] Although he acknowledged Hitler would 'not shrink from downright brutality…to stay in power',[97] Rumbold's despatch arguably encouraged torpor. Vansittart submitted Rumbold's 'illuminating analysis' to the Foreign Secretary.[98] It was ominous for all persecuted groups that the respected British Ambassador saw the strengthening of Hitler's position as crucial to peace. Hitler became a man with whom Britain could do business. Yet consolidating diplomatic relations with the Nazi government meant Jewish protests became an irritant. For example, a resolution supporting Jews by the London Textile Trade was dismissed on the basis they were 'under close Jewish control'.[99]

Articles 'explaining' Nazism featured in the press. For example, Enid Bagnold in *The Times* provided snippets of interviews with Germans who predominantly backed Hitler. She sympathetically explained German anti-Semitism with a Jew providing the only

---

[91] BoD ACC3121/A/26, 15 May 1933. For the anti-Jewish 'core' of The Law of the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service and supplementary decrees and hounding of Jews out of German public life see Friedlander, *Years of Persecution*, pp.23-30.
[92] Gilbert, *Rumbold*, pp.378-81.
[93] Foreign Office Papers (FO) 371/16724/5, Rumbold to Simon, 16 May 1933 (Kew, National Archives).
[94] FO371/16724/163-72, Rumbold to Vansittart, 30 May 1933.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Friedlander, *Years of Persecution*, p.20.
[97] FO371/16724/163-72, Rumbold to Vansittart, 30 May 1933.
[98] FO371/16724/174, Vansittart to Rumbold, 9 June 1933.
[99] FO371/16724/80, 22 May, 1933.

note of dissonance.[100] Bagnold's overall impression was that Nazism gave hope and purpose to ordinary Germans.[101] Sympathetic pieces also appeared in Liberal and Left wing publications. The *New Statesman* published a long letter by Clifford Sharp, another visitor to 'Hitler's Berlin'.[102] Sharp highlighted the 'injustices and stupidities' of Versailles and post war Allied 'blunders'.[103] Although recent events were seen as a '[r]evolution', the regime was portrayed as electorally legitimate. He advised readers to accept an 'era of Hitlerism as long as' those of Mussolini, Stalin, or Kemal. Sharp acknowledged the prospects for Jews were 'bad' and that legally-based persecution would 'continue indefinitely' but 'without further violence'. He mitigated German anti-Semitism, suggesting that Jews had taken advantage of German post-war difficulties and provoked 'popular hatred as food profiteers, usurers, anti-national intriguers, and so on.'[104] It appeared therefore that German opinion had a point about Jews who brought violence on themselves. Sharp claimed Hitler would probably establish a constitutional monarchy similar to that of Britain. He therefore connected Germanness and Englishness. Both allegedly preferred gradual change and venerated institutions. Sharp's letter did not provoke editorial comment and prompted only one adverse response and that was from a Jew.[105]

The *News Chronicle* sent Liberal M.P. Robert Bernays to Germany. Bernays was from an old Jewish family, long since Christian. His report on 'the Jewish problem' acknowledged that violence had largely ceased but noted 'atrocities to-day are more calculated and systematic.'[106] Indignation, however, gave way to an analysis of German anti-Semitism. Jews had 'flaunted their riches', adopted 'a mocking, cynical, destructive kind of outlook' and 'made vast profits out of the inflation.' However, their 'real crime' was to be 'cleverer' than Germans and therefore 'so inflamed [their]

---

[100] *Times*, 2 June 1933, p.15.
[101] Ibid.
[102] *New Statesman*, 17 June 1933, pp.786-7.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.
[105] The 'London Diary' section suggested Ellen Wilkinson's pamphlet *The Terror in Germany* would dispel doubts about violence. *New Statesman*, 17 June 1933, p. 782. However, as Lord Marley stated in the foreword 'As far as possible we have given [precedence] to cases of non-Jewish victims, simply because their plight has not been so well known.' Wilkinson saw Jewish suffering as a Jewish issue, stating 'Jews seeking help from our committees are put into touch with their own people'. Wilkinson, Ellen, *The Terror in Germany* (London: 1933).
[106] FO371/16756, Cutting, *News Chronicle*, June 1933.

inferiority complex that they have converted it into a persecution complex.'[107] German Jews were portrayed as not just distinct from Germans but parasites that undermined a vulnerable nation. Moreover, a hierarchy of compassion is evident in Bernays' critique. Whereas Germans were not unlike the English in preferring simplicity, so-called Jewish extravagance ran counter to this.[108] This reinforced the notion that Jews brought persecution upon themselves. Although he advocated a 'relief fund' for Jews, more generally he believed 'moral pressure' should be applied to Germany. In other words, he recognised Jewish suffering, but he echoed something of old liberal imperialism, a belief in the superiority of Britain's 'voice'. The *News Chronicle*, which played such an effective part in the campaign to aid China, thus undercut indignation.[109]

In June the Board of Deputies reported, '[t]he German situation is tending to lose its novelty and so its news value.'[110] This was acknowledged by Vansittart, who in an interview with Laski on 29 June at the Foreign Office, noted that the press 'except for the *Manchester Guardian*' were 'less prolific' about Germany.[111] At a subsequent meeting on 18 July the Permanent Under-Secretary insisted any form of boycott should be 'a personal and quiet matter'. When Laski mentioned that a planned protest meeting was to be held on 27 July, Vansittart stated '[h]e would view with anxiety and alarm any fiery speeches' suggesting 'speeches should be carefully edited beforehand.'[112]

Jewish leaders hoped this meeting, to be held at Queens Hall, would reflect the indignation associated with British traditions of altruism. Their inability to secure a venue symbolic of national feeling such as Mansion House or the Albert Hall reflected official obduracy and lack of public interest. News of the meeting was covered in the

---

[107] Ibid. Highlighted in the original. When his article was republished in *The Contemporary Review* in November 1933, *The Times* repeated Bernays' assessment of pernicious Jewish influences in Germany. *Times*, 1 November 1933, p.17.
[108] Peter Mandler implies simplicity of living was part of English self-perception. Mandler, Peter, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (London: Yale University Press, 2006) pp.165-6; See also Santayana, George, *Soliloquies of England* (London: Constable, 1937: First published 1922); Baldwin, Stanley, *On England* (London: Penguin, 1938. First published 1926); Buchan, John *Memory Hold the Door* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1940) pp.168-9.
[109] FO371/16756, Cutting, *News Chronicle*, June 1933.
[110] BoD ACC3121/A/26, 18 June 1933.
[111] Wolf/Mowshowitch Papers RG348, MK. 502/Folder No.95, 29 June 1933.
[112] Ibid.,18 July 1933. At a further meeting on 13 August 1934 amidst continuing American Jewish protests Vansittart warned that 'the aggressively Jewish flamboyant and narrow character of the anti-German propaganda carried on by certain Jewish quarters in America was having results which were very nearly provocative anti-Semitism on a large scale…People were…tired of having "Jew" dinned in to their ears.' BoD ACC3121/C11/6/4/1, n/d.

national and local press although without achieving headline status. Members of both houses were invited, as were a selection of scholars, authors and journalists.[113] It is unclear how many actually attended. Most major church groups were represented and the main speaker was the Archbishop of Canterbury who concluded that 'it was not only the Jewish community who were suffering. It was increasingly their fellow Christians in Germany.'[114] The resultant resolution pleaded for tolerance and equality for Germany's Jewish minority but disclaimed 'any right or desire to interfere in the internal affairs of another country' and appealed for 'friendly relations' between Britain and Germany.[115] Prominent humanitarians denied the centrality of Jewish suffering. Expressions of protest were laced with deference to Germany. The accompanying editorial in the *Manchester Guardian* attacked Germany's 'morbid racialism' but also stated that Jews had achieved 'more than [their] proper place'. Furthermore, it could not be 'denied that there are unpleasant elements in Jewish culture like those which have displayed themselves in [a dispirited] Germany in the last dozen years.'[116] Pro- and anti-Semitic arguments mingled with empathy for the Germans and created a case detrimental to inspiring sympathy.

Two other protest meetings occurred in 1933. One was organised by British Jews who disagreed with Laski's restraint, the other by the non-Jewish Refugee Assistance Committee.[117] The latter was held at the Albert Hall on 3 October. Albert Einstein was the key speaker. The content and tenor of the meeting weakened rather than raised public indignation. The *New Statesman* commented, the meeting 'was quite unpolitical…In no speech was there an appeal to passion against the Nazis…No political attack on Hitler was permitted: the urgent question of what the world is to do about Nazi barbarism was not raised.'[118] Editor, Kingsley Martin received criticism for his coverage on the basis that there was 'much too much about the Jews.'[119] The Beaverbrook and Rothermere press disparaged the meeting. The *Evening News*, for

---

[113] '45 M.P.s, 10 Lords, 12 L.C.C. members, 8 scholars, 14 from the legal professions, 7 Mayors, 41 authors, editors and [o]thers, 16 women and 21 religious leaders' were invited. *News Chronicle*, 27 June 1933.
[114] *Times*, 28 June 1933, p.16.
[115] Wolf/Mowshowitch Papers RG348, MK. 502/Folder No.158.
[116] Ibid., Cutting, *Manchester Guardian* 30 June, 1933.
[117] *Times*, 21 July 1933, p.13. Report of protest meeting in Hyde Park.
[118] *New Statesman*, 7 October 1933, pp.404-5.
[119] Kingsley Martin Papers, Box 14, 1933, Desmond McCarsley to Martin, October 20, (Brighton: Sussex University Archive).

example, denigrated Einstein's speech which was an appeal to the traditions of European humanism and intellectual freedom and honour, claiming it was 'a piece of alien agitation on British soil.'[120] Austen Chamberlain's vote of thanks included an observation on how un-accommodated refugees could become an irritant. Sir William Beveridge, announced that there would only be room in Britain for scholars who could contribute something Britain needed.[121] Other influential figures were absent. For example, H.G. Wells who later associated himself with the Spanish Republican cause, had, a few days previously, warned his audience at a Foyle's literary luncheon not to let the 'advertising and monopolizing energy' of Jews who were a 'viciously and incurable nationalist race… blind them to the reality of what was happening in Germany. The German affair was not a pogrom. Jews made the most noise, but it was not only Jews who suffered.'[122] The public meetings in late summer 1933 effectively marked the end of public outrage during the first years of Nazi rule.

The Abyssinian crisis in early 1935 sidelined events in Germany. The *Manchester Guardian* commented that the Nuremberg Laws, announced on 15 September 1935, did not receive the attention they deserved.[123] The *New Statesman* denounced the laws as 'medieval' but suggested they offered 'German Jewry the process of law in place of arbitrary bullying and local tyranny.'[124] According to this interpretation the German government were effectively protecting Jews from regional and individual persecution. *The Times*' Berlin correspondent provided 'an inspired commentary on the "Jewish Laws"' claiming 'the relationship between the German and Jewish communities has now been clearly established and for good.'[125] With Britain stirred by Abyssinia, opinion over anti-Semitism in Germany was 'calmed by the legislation, because it created the impression that a legal separation of 'Aryans' and 'non-Aryans' would bring an end to illegal and violent persecution.'[126] Furthermore, 1936 was perceived as a 'quiet' year in Germany especially because of the Berlin Olympics. Pressure on

---

[120] *New Statesman*, 7 October 1933, pp.404-5.
[121] Overy, *Morbid Age*, p.280.
[122] *Times*, 22 September 1933, p.14. Starting in January 1936, Wells wrote a serialised set of articles (for *The Spectator*) from his latest book. It contained an anti-Semitic tirade, which was meant to account for Hitler's animosity to the Jews. Wells. H.G., *The Anatomy of Frustration* (London: The Cresset Press, 1936).
[123] *Manchester Guardian*, 5 October 1935.
[124] *New Statesman*, 21 September 1935, p.362.
[125] *Times*, 17 September 1935, p.15.
[126] Graml, *Antisemitism*, pp.119-20.

German Jews began to escalate during 1937. Nevertheless, after the Abyssinian crisis, Spain and China tended to take centre stage in the British atrocity discourse.

When Germany annexed Austria in March 1938 there was widespread acquiescence in Britain. German troops entered Austria on 12 March. By the evening of the 13th a Law providing for the annexation of Austria had been approved by a reconstituted Austrian cabinet and signed by Hitler, who was driven through the country to wild acclamation. Between 12-13 March, 21,000 'opponents' of the new regime were arrested. A plebiscite held on 10 April resulted in a 'majority' favouring inclusion into the German Reich. Evans states, 'All the various stages of antisemitic policy and action that had been developing over the years in Germany now happened in Austria at the same time, telescoped into a single outburst of rabid hatred and violence.'[127] Jews were subjected to looting, brutality and public humiliation.[128]

As in 1933, the Press set the tone for reactions to the *Anschluss*. The *Express*, keen to play down any talk of war, warned '1914 Is No Parallel'.[129] Its advice was to '[m]ind our own business!'[130] The day after the *Anschluss* a feature article on the editorial page by the respected Australian historian Stephen H. Roberts extolled Hitler.[131] Hitler was portrayed as a dreamer and romantic. According to Roberts 'the brutal sides of his movement passed Hitler by'[132] *The Times* downplayed anti-Jewish measures, predicting that crude anti-Semitism 'now [came] under the administrative anti-Semitism' evident in Germany which 'at least' protected Jews 'from casual theft.'[133] The *Anschluss* was portrayed as inevitable, whilst Jewish persecution, for *The Times*, was an irritant. The task of merging the two countries was hard enough without

---

[127] Evans, Richard J., *The Third Reich in Power: How the Nazis Won Over the Hearts and Minds of a Nation* (London: Penguin, 2006) p.657.
[128] For further descriptions of extreme anti-Jewish violence see Burleigh, *The Third Reich*, p.319; Graml, *Antisemitism*, p.135.
[129] *Express*, 12 March 1938, p.12.
[130] Ibid., 13 March 1938, p.12.
[131] It was an extract from *The House That Hitler Built* (1937) written after months in Germany. The book impressed Beatrice Webb and was criticized by supporters of the Nazi regime. See Bonnell, Andrew G., 'Stephen H. Roberts', *The House That Hitler Built* as a Source on Nazi Germany', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*: Vol.46, No.1, 2000, pp. 1-20.
[132] *Express*, 13 March 1938, p.13.
[133] *Times*, 18 March 1938, p.15. On 15 March *The Times* headlined 'The Rape of Austria', however, its headline belied the content of the anonymous article. The paper was extremely well informed. On 18 March 1938 A.L. Kennedy, witnessed the treatment of Jews in Vienna and wrote an extended description of events in his diary on 24 March 1938. Kennedy, *The Times and Appeasement*, pp.266-268. On the same day *The Times* provided a perfunctory description of these events.

'complicating it by persecuting Jews.'[134] The *Manchester Guardian* believed the *Anschluss* 'as brutal as that of Japan's into China or Italy's into Abyssinia'.[135] However it was a minority voice. The *News Chronicle* argued briefly for a response based on collective security but thereafter coverage was sporadic. However, it pointed out (in bold print) that officials had been axed not 'on racial grounds but…because their "ideology" is not in harmony with the one prevailing now in Austria.'[136] It was difficult to portray Austrians as victims because of belief in widespread acquiescence to Hitler's action.[137] The press diminished the immediate effect of the *Anschluss*.

According to Louise London, the 'government moved rapidly to re-introduce a visa requirement to stem the influx of refugee Jews.'[138] There had been worries that unnecessary or wholesale restriction would occasion 'a strong reaction of public opinion' which would 'find expression' in the Commons.[139] However, Foreign Office staff believed the *Anschluss* played on public fear of increased immigration and now they 'should have no difficulty in meeting any criticism'.[140] Expressing solidarity with Home Office colleagues, they believed German emigration restrictions would keep Jews from leaving and mean that those 'trying to flock to Britain' would 'not be the class about which the Home Office are now concerned.'[141] Hoare's Commons statement expressing the government's 'sympathetic'[142] attitude towards refugees should be seen in this light. He was more concerned over 'a curious story…that the Germans were anxious to inundate this country with Jews', thereby 'creating a Jewish problem in the United Kingdom.'[143]

---

[134] *Times*, 21 March 1938, p.13.
[135] Cited in Gannon, *British Press*, p.158.
[136] *News Chronicle*, 18 March 1938, p.2.
[137] *Manchester Guardian*, 12 March 1938, p.12; *News Chronicle*, 14 March 1938, p.1; *Mail*, 15 March 1938.
[138] London, Louise, *Whitehall and the Jews, 1933-1948: British Immigration Policy, Jewish Refugees and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) p.58.
[139] FO372/3282/4-5, 14 March 1938.
[140] FO372/3282/8, March 1938.
[141] FO372/3282/11, 15 March 1938.
[142] BoD Memorandum 24 March 1938, Wolf/Mowshowitch Papers RG348, MK. 502/Folder No.188, n/d.
[143] FO372/3282/19, Extract from Cabinet Conclusions 14 (38), 16 March, 1938. A Cabinet level committee was established with a brief to have a 'humane' attitude whilst 'avoiding the creation of a Jewish problem in this country.'

Although Eleanor Rathbone described April 1938 as 'the blackest month since 1914', concern over Parliamentary protest proved unfounded.[144] Colonel Wedgewood tabled a motion calling for the admission of refugees but it was roundly defeated.[145] Sympathy for Germans helped. Liberal leader, Archibald Sinclair for example, was indignant about 'the persecution of Jews, Protestants and Catholics' but believed the German people 'had been goaded into supporting it' because of unfair treatment since the war.[146] Hoare's firm stance was largely applauded in the press. Richard Butler, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, reassured the House that '[r]epresentations had been made' in Berlin. This was disingenuous. A 'non-official' approach had been made on the 'personal initiative of the British Ambassador' and the new Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax later added 'there was no question of an official assurance in reply either being expected or given.'[147]

In effect, the official response reflected the stance of the press and the Church. Lord Londonderry, who was highly sympathetic to the Nazi regime, was pleased at press restraint that reflected 'the moderate attitude of [the public] mind'.[148] He expressed satisfaction in the Lords that '[b]y the drastic action of the German Chancellor…bloodshed had been saved'.[149] The Archbishop of Canterbury after advising the best response was 'silence',[150] as evidence of increasing anti-Jewish persecution continued, he stated, people should 'be thankful that it took place without any bloodshed whatever.'[151] The Primate's view coincided with that of Londonderry.

Evidence from Mass Observation suggests differing reasons for lack of public indignation. One observer gleaned a general view that Jewish persecution normally evoked 'a shrug of the shoulders'. A 'Communist' could not understand the 'fuss about

---

[144] Cohen, Susan, *Rescue the Perishing: Eleanor Rathbone and the Refugees* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 2010) p.94.
[145] The *New Statesman* agreed with government refugee policy on the grounds that an 'unrestricted flood of political and racial immigration' would create 'national' resentment. *New Statesman*, 26 March 1938, p.506.
[146] *Times*, 15 March 1938, p.8.
[147] Ibid., 17 March 1938, p.7.
[148] *Times*, 17 March 1938, p.7. Although Londonderry saw the methods of the *Anschluss* as 'regrettable' ultimately he thought it 'justified'. Kershaw, *Making Friends With Hitler*, p.222.
[149] *Times*, 17 March 1938, p.7.
[150] *Express*, 15 March 1938, p.2. Cosmo Lang later reiterated his views in the Lords. He wrote to Hoare lamenting the lack of a suitable place of refuge but acknowledging what he saw as the potential 'difficulties' created by a 'large number' of Jewish immigrants. Sherman, A.J., *Island Refuge: Britain and Refugees from the Third Reich 1933-1939* (London: Paul Elek, 1973) p.92.
[151] *Spectator*, 22 April 1938, p.1938.

Austria' complaining that it had 'been going on in Spain for almost 2 years'. An actress, Elizabeth Crowfoot, reported that her friend had been moved by the plight of an Austrian cellist who had been so badly treated that he might 'never play so well again'.[152] A few days later, her mind had been changed after a conversation with a British businessman and Nazi sympathiser. She now believed the 'expulsion of the Jews had saved Germany from another big financial crash.'[153] The evocation of Jewish stereotypes cut across compassion. Furthermore, everyday conversation about anti-Jewish atrocities seems to have vied with pro-German sympathy. A string of letters to the *Spectator* revealed an entrenched faith in German virtue. Anti-Semitism was said to be 'effected by all-powerful Nazi extremists' or the result of 'persistent propaganda'.[154] The only hope, according to one correspondent was 'the fundamental good-heartedness of the German.'[155] Others saw British criticism of German anti-Semitism as contrary to the British tradition of 'fair-mindedness,'[156] whilst Jews were singled out for expressing 'actual hatred towards Germany'.[157] Only one letter emphasized the plight of Viennese Jews.

Jewish leaders, conditioned in part by public opinion and in part by their assimilationist outlook, which perhaps made them over-sensitive to protests overtly focusing on Jewish suffering, questioned the usefulness of 'mass meetings' and 'resolutions', doubting 'whether an effective platform could in present circumstances be obtained.'[158] Anglo-Jewry was also placed on the defensive as they perceived 'a ceaseless and pernicious anti-Jewish propaganda going on of the most subtle kind, not only in the realm of foreign, but also in domestic politics.'[159] The siege mentality of leading English Jews was demonstrated by Montefiore who stated '[n]ot by their own desire…but by force of circumstances over which they had no control, Jews, alas, had

---

[152] Mass Observation (MO), "Crisis" reports, March Bulletin 1938. (Brighton, University of Sussex: Mass Observation Archive).
[153] Ibid.
[154] *Spectator*, 1 April 1938 p.582; 8 April 1938, p.631, letter from Harriet Acland.
[155] Ibid., 15 April 1938, p.675, letter from R. Whittaker.
[156] Ibid., pp.674-5, letter from G.D.S. Crossman.
[157] *Times*, 12 May 1938, p.12.
[158] BoD ACC3121/A/29, Minutes of Meeting, 21 March 1938. A.G. Brotman, Secretary of the JFC, confirmed 'there was no chance of getting the kind of non-Jewish platform which would carry the necessary weight in the country.' Brotman to the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, 7 April 1938. Wolf/Mowshowitch Papers RG348, MK.502/Folder No.188.
[159] BoD ACC3121/A/26, Report of a meeting of the Board of Deputies in the *Jewish Chronicle*, 25 March 1938.

become front-page news'.[160] He feared highlighting persecution would generate anti-Semitism rather than compassion.

The swiftness and completeness of the *Anschluss* made it a short-lived crisis. One contributor to Mass Observation got 'very excited over crises' but after 'a heavy week, forgot about them' only to find when he read the press, 'it was all over.'[161] Another commented '[e]veryone seems to already have forgotten all about it - & have just accepted the situation.'[162] Victor Cazalet, Conservative M.P. and Zionist advocate wrote to *The Times* in early May after visiting Vienna. He outlined Jewish hardships but suggested the 'worst period' was over.[163] He cited the 'exemplary' behaviour of the German army as reason to take comfort. He believed military personnel were stricken by 'a sense of shame and sympathy'. In any case he wondered 'whether the real facts' reached 'those in the highest places.'[164] By 10 June *The Spectator* was advising that holidaying in Austria was 'perfectly safe' and that despite all the notices forbidding Jews entry, 'an Englishman can take his Jewish friends where he pleases.'[165] Therefore by the time Lord Lytton, Violet Bonham Carter, Dorothy Gladstone and Cazalet, who must have regretted his previous letter, 'reluctantly' protested to *The Times* about on-going persecution, the crisis was seen by most to be finished. There were no public meetings, no letter writing campaigns and no other tangible expressions of outrage comparable to other responses to the demise of a country like Abyssinia or atrocities such as those in Spain and China.

On the night of 10/11 November 1938 the Jewish population of Germany and Austria were subjected to organized pogroms 'carried out in the full glare of world publicity.'[166] The Third Reich 'unleashed a massive outbreak of unbridled destructive fury'. About 90 Jews were killed during the pogrom and hundreds died later in concentration camps.[167] The orders came from the high echelons of the Nazi party. They were a 'response' to the murder of Ernst vom Rath, a Legation Secretary at the German Embassy in Paris. Herschel Grynszpan, whose parents had been deported to

---

[160] BoD Archive ACC3121/A/26, *Jewish Chronicle*, 13 April 1938.
[161] MO, March Bulletin 1938, "Crisis" reports, 29 April 1938, J.B., actor, age 24.
[162] Ibid., G. Warrack, Beckenham, 15-17 April 1938.
[163] *Times*, 6 May 1938, p.12.
[164] Ibid.
[165] *Spectator*, 10 June 1938, p.1051.
[166] Kushner, *Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p.49.
[167] Evans, *Third Reich in Power*, pp.589-590.

Poland under atrocious conditions, had carried out the shooting.[168] Many Britons were shocked at the violence but condemnation was not, as early histories of press responses have argued, unequivocal.[169]

The *Mail* and *Express* tended to privilege the official German version. The 'riots' were characterized as spontaneous and as an attempt to defy authorities who were portrayed as restoring order.[170] The *Manchester Guardian* 'accepted the Nazi Government's claim to be uninvolved in issuing orders' for the pogroms.[171] The *Herald* and *News Chronicle* were convinced of the innocence of ordinary Germans who were alleged to 'feel pity and shame' because 'kindness and brotherhood' were ingrained in the German character.[172] Both suggested German public opinion was instrumental in forcing the Nazi leadership to call a halt.[173] *The Times* and the *Telegraph* accurately reported the violence was planned and officially condoned.[174] The latter's correspondent claimed he saw 'fashionably dressed women clapping their hands and screaming with glee, while respectable middle-class mothers held up their babies to see the "fun"'. However, the assertion that '[r]acial hatred and hysteria seemed to have taken complete hold of other-wise decent people**',** showed their acquiescence was seen as an anomaly.[175] Right and Left wing periodicals also believed that the majority of Germans were not only innocent but condemned the atrocities. *The Spectator* saw 'sufficient evidence' of 'pity and disgust inspired in the ordinary, decent German citizen to make it both unreasonable and unjust to draw an indictment against a nation for crimes that are to be laid at the door of a party.'[176] The *New Statesman* agreed. The

---

[168] Burleigh, *The Third Reich*, p.324.
[169] Assertions by Sharf and Gannon have been repeated by later historians, for example Sherman, *Island Refuge*, p.170, Kushner, *Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p.49.
[170] *Express*, 10 November 1938, p.2; *Express*, 11 November 1938, p.1; *Mail*, 11 November 1938, p.13. The *Mail* portrayed Grynszpan as 'a member of a gang concerned with manufacturing false passports.' In fact Goebbels organized the pogroms under Hitler's instructions. 'The stormtroopers swung into action, the SS and Gestapo were roped in to support the action as well.' Evans, *Third Reich in Power*, pp.580-1.
[171] Gannon, *British Press*, p.228.
[172] *Herald*, 11 November 1938, p.12; *News Chronicle*, 11 November 1938, p.10.
[173] They disagreed over whether the police had either tried '[v]ainly to [p]rotect Jews' or 'stood by with folded arms while frantic crowds…carried on their orgy of destruction.' *Herald*, 11 November 1938, p.1; *News Chronicle*, 11 November 1938, p.10.
[174] *Times*, 11 November 1938, p.14; *Telegraph*, 11 November 1938, p.16.
[175] *Telegraph*, 11 November 1938, p.16.
[176] *Spectator*, 18 November 1938, p.836.

majority of Germans 'were no party to them, and are indeed…aghast at the savagery'.[177]

A string of public figures echoed these pro-German sentiments. A meeting of the LNU in Northampton addressed by Archibald Sinclair passed a resolution condemning the 'criminal and brutal retaliation' against 'innocent people' but added they had no wish to 'charge the German people with this shame.'[178] Lord Rothschild was partially correct when he stated, the idea that the pogrom was 'spontaneous' was 'the grossest defamation of the character of the German people as a whole.'[179] Sir Thomas Inskip, Minister for Defence, spoke of Britain's duty to '[a]id Jews', but struggled 'to believe the German people approve.'[180] A meeting, convened by the Anglo-Jewish community, was held at the Albert Hall on 1 December. Amery who was asked to attend by Conservative Central Office observed the audience to be 'very largely composed of Jews' who were 'anxious to hear our public men speak sympathetically about their co-religionists.'[181] The principle speaker, the Archbishop of York claimed Germany's regime was largely 'the creation of ourselves and our Allies.' He outlined a history of injustices suffered by Germany since the war suggesting the Nazi Press was right in pointing out the 'dark pages in the story of the British Empire.'[182] He 'refused to identify the German people' with the actions of the Nazis.[183] Cardinal Hinsley, the Archbishop of Westminster and Herbert Morrison concurred.[184] The British public initially received mixed messages about anti-Jewish violence, but after a few days the innocence of ordinary Germans emerged as the dominant theme. In reality the extensive brutality had been carried out 'without encountering any meaningful opposition'.[185] There were isolated attempts to ameliorate the guilt of German leaders, but it was increasingly difficult for commentators to find excuses.[186]

---

[177] *New Statesman*, 19 November 1938, pp.816-17.
[178] *Times*, 12 November 1938, p.14.
[179] Ibid.
[180] *Mail*, 17 November 1938, p.12.
[181] Amery, *Diaries*, p.538.
[182] *Times*, 2 December 1938, p.16. The *Telegraph and Times* shared his sensitivity to past British atrocities. *Telegraph*, 16 November 1938, p.16; *Times*, 17 November 1938, p.15.
[183] *Times*, 2 December 1938, p.16.
[184] The meeting was also addressed by The Rev. Dr. Robert Bond (Moderator, Free Church Council) The Very Rev. Dr. Hertz, M.P., Rt. Hon. Sir Archibald Sinclair and Lady Violet Bonham Carter.
[185] Evans, *Third Reich in Power*, p.589.
[186] The *Herald* saw Goebbels' 'elaborate denial' of official culpability as 'a sign that he is ashamed', *Herald*, 12 November 1938, p.2.

Responses to the pogroms were complicated by reaction to the recent Munich agreement.[187] Chamberlain's efforts to avert war over Germany's claims on Czechoslovakia immediately met with resounding plaudits 'at home and abroad, high and low'. The press was 'nearly as enthusiastic; and the vehement defence of the Munich settlement continued until the end of the year.'[188] However, there was also evidence of a hardening of public opinion against Chamberlain's willingness to sacrifice part of Czechoslovakia. The National Council of Labour published a manifesto on 7 September entitled *Labour and the International Situation: On the Brink of War*. It denounced what it saw as a string of capitulations since the Manchurian dispute and argued that the time had come 'for a positive and unmistakable lead for collective defence against aggression and to safeguard peace.'[189] Labour leaders 'organized scores of meetings of protest' nationally.[190] The November pogrom did not evoke such a coordinated reaction.

Nevertheless, there were signs that explicit violence touched a public nerve. Church leaders quickly announced the formation of 'The Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe', although this 'especially' focused on 'Christian refugees.'[191] Furthermore, isolated resolutions condemned the pogroms. The Durham miners called on British leaders to disassociate themselves with the German Government,[192] whilst a letter signed by representatives of religious and political organizations at Oxford University asked the government to 'register its disgust and active opposition' to Germany's 'ruling party'.[193] A deputation from the Executive Committee of the Liberal Party Organization to Downing Street requested greater numbers be given asylum.[194] Established humanitarians wrote to *The Times* on 22

---

[187] Bernays wrote that 'the outrages indicate that Munich was more successful than we had at first realized'. Smart, Nick, (ed.) *The Diaries and Letter of Robert Bernays, 1932-1939: An Insider's Account of the House of Commons* (Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press Ltd., 1996) p.380. R.W. Seton-Watson, an ardent pro-Czech wrote 'we must not renounce our goal of Anglo-German understanding, but we must at the same time make it clear that there are limits not only to territorial concessions, but to the condonation of crime.' Caputi, Robert J., *Neville Chamberlain and Appeasement* (London: Associated University Presses, 2000) p.22.
[188] Mowat, Charles Loch, *Britain Between the Wars 1918-1940* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1978) p.619.
[189] Ibid., p.613.
[190] Ibid.
[191] *Times*, 17 November 1938, p.10. From the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Hinsley, Archbishop of Westminster, James Black, Moderator of the Church of Scotland and Robert Bond.
[192] *Herald*, 15 November 1938, p.2.
[193] *Times*, 17 November 1938, p.9.
[194] Ibid.

November stating, '[w]e wish to record our solemn protest before the conscience of civilization, against the persecution of the Jews in Germany.'[195] Its brevity was notable compared with fervent letters from similar figures relating to previous atrocities. There was no accompanying editorial, no challenges to British authorities, no calls for a public response or financial help and no 'English' characterisations of Jews as worthy victims.

On 15 November a delegation from the Council for German Jewry met the Prime Minister.[196] They believed 'their hand would be strengthened' if a renewed appeal was 'endorsed by distinguished representative men' and hoped, '[i]f the Archbishop [of Canterbury] and the Lord Mayor asked His Majesty's Government for guidance…the Government would feel able to advise agreement.'[197] This suggests the government had some influence over public expression by notable figures. Chamberlain was 'horrified'[198] by Jewish persecution and affected by the delegation, but only took limited steps to relax entry restrictions for refugees to 'ease the public conscience.'[199] This meeting was possibly the genesis of the *Kindertransport* and the Baldwin Fund for Refugees. Authorities struck a balance between anti-refugee public opinion and fear of outrage over the pogroms.[200] They were also guided by concern over Britain's international reputation, an idea pushed at Cabinet level by Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax.[201] The *News Chronicle*, no supporter of the Chamberlain government, was remarkably sanguine about the meeting. Its front page headline announced 'Powers Move to Rescue Victims of Nazi Terror' and in contradistinction to its pessimism when confronted with government action over Spain or China assured readers that the 'cry of the Jewish victims…will not go unanswered.'[202] Measures such as 'finding a place in the Colonial Empire for Jewish refugees' were under consideration and announced by

---

[195] Signatories included Katherine Atholl, Violet Bonham Carter, Lord Robert Cecil, Stafford Cripps, H.A.L. Fisher, Julian Huxley, George Lansbury, Lord Lytton, Gilbert Murray, P.J. Noel Baker, Archibald Sinclair, Ralph Vaughan Williams. *Times*, 22 November 1938, p.10.
[196] It consisted of Viscount Samuel, Viscount Beersted, the Chief Rabbi, Neville Laski, Lionel de Rothschild and Chaim Weismann.
[197] FO371/22536/253, 15 November 1938.
[198] Self, Robert, (ed.) *The Neville Chamberlain Diary Letters, Volume Four, The Downing Street Years, 1934-1940* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005) p.363.
[199] Cited in Self, Robert, *Neville Chamberlain: A Biography* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006) p.345.
[200] Home Secretary, Samuel Hoare was the principle Cabinet opponent of increased admissions 'a stance he claimed had the backing of both public opinion and Jewish representatives.' London, *Whitehall and the Jews*, p.102-5.
[201] Ibid., p.101.
[202] *News Chronicle*, 16 November 1938, p.1.

Chamberlain in Parliament. *The Times* was confident 'that something is actually being done.'[203] Nothing actually transpired, but a public appeal for refugees was launched by ex-Prime Minister, Lord Baldwin.

Baldwin launched his appeal on 7 December via the B.B.C. *The Times* helped facilitate the fund. This caused tension amongst the newspaper's staff. Its correspondent 'lately in China' believed Jewish persecution was 'wholly negligible' compared with Chinese suffering at Japanese hands.[204] On 12 December *The Times* was forced into the first of three editorial apologias because Baldwin's announcement had apparently stimulated anti-Jewish responses. The newspaper attempted to counter the argument that 'rich Jews' should 'provide for their poorer brethren', arguing many refugees were 'not Jewish by religion.' Arguments that the problem was 'too big for private charity' and that 'charity begins at home' were also addressed.[205] Two days later *The Times* refuted the idea that 'subscriptions' from 'prominent' Jews were 'incommensurate' with their 'special responsibility', stating there was 'no foundation' that 'rich Jews have been waiting for others to help Jewish refugees or that they have restricted their own help to refugees of the Jewish religion.'[206] A third editorial argued along similar lines and emphasized 'promising announcements' that refugees would be accepted elsewhere.[207] Christian leaders were also obliged to refute persistent criticisms of Baldwin's Fund by those who saw refugees as 'a Jewish problem', and that Jewry should cope 'without seeking outside assistance.'[208] They emphasised the 'non-Aryan Christian' plight, the generosity of the Jewish community and denied Jewish leaders had requested assistance.[209]

Collections for the fund in cinemas and theatres met with 'widespread Fascist protest'. They interrupted a newsreel appeal by the Archbishop of Canterbury and paraded in the theatre quarter.[210] Two million leaflets were circulated by the British Union of Fascists 'in and around London alone'.[211] This seems to have occurred outside London

---

[203] *Times*, 16 November 1938.
[204] Ibid., 25 November 1938, p.10.
[205] Ibid., 12 December 1938, p.15.
[206] Ibid., 14 December 1938, p.17.
[207] Ibid., 19 December 1938, p.13.
[208] Ibid., 5 January 1939, p.13.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Ibid., 16 January 1939, p.9.
[211] Ibid., 16 January 1939, p.9.

too. In Worthing, physiotherapist Joan Strange reported similar protests.[212] Strange, a refugee activist, was subjected to personal intimidation. In May 1939 she wrote, on 'our front step, path, wall and pavement outside had been written out in tar 'Jews get out', 'Britons before aliens''.[213] 'Fascist' bullying or the threat of it cannot be discounted as a factor preventing pro-Jewish activity. Although the British Union of Fascists peaked in influence in the early 1930s, allegiance to at least some of their central tenets 'stretched much further than outright supporters'.[214] P. Vos, Joint Honorary Secretary for the Fund, was forced to counter protests in the medical profession that it was being used to establish 'foreign medical competitors "in our midst"'.[215] Roger Makins, of the Foreign Office and Lord Winterton,[216] united 'to curtail the effectiveness of Baldwin's appeal.'[217] Donations ultimately amounted to a significant sum but the appeal also encountered considerable opposition.[218]

In addition to the Baldwin Fund, over half a million pounds was raised by the Lord Mayor's Fund for Czech refugees, although, proceeds were not specifically for Jews. The Council for German Jewry also raised a similar amount, predominantly from the Jewish community. Eleanor Rathbone was particularly pro-active. Historians have rightly singled her out for praise for her commitment to persecuted Jews. Her admiration for Jewish contributions to society meant she 'viewed them as deserving of help.'[219] She founded the Parliamentary Committee on Refugees in November 1938. It was designed to act as a pressure group to 'influence the government and public opinion in favour of a generous yet carefully safeguarded refugee policy.'[220] Rathbone, along with Harold Nicolson was part of a deputation of M.P.s who met Sir John Simon

---

[212] McCooey, Chris (ed.), *Despatches from the Home Front: The War Diaries of Joan Strange,* (Eastbourne: Monarch Publications, 1989) Diary entry 14 January 1939, p.2.
[213] Ibid., Diary entry 26 May 1939, p.11.
[214] Kershaw, *Making Friends With Hitler*, p.52; See also Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right*; Stone, Dan, *Responses to Nazism in Britain, 1933-1939: Before War and Holocaust* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
[215] *British Medical Journal*, 21 January 1939.
[216] Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster with additional duties at the Home Office and Chairman of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees.
[217] London, *Whitehall and the Jews*, p.109.
[218] Yehuda Bauer contends it 'was estimated that 90% of the contributors' were Jewish. Bauer, Yehuda, *My Brother's Keeper: A History of the American Joint Jewish Committee 1929-1939* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1974) p.271; Harry Defries argues 'donations came largely from non-Jewish sources'. Defries, Harry, *Conservative Party Attitudes to Jews 1900-1950* (London: Routledge, 2001) p.140.
[219] Cohen, *Rescue the Perishing*, p.10.
[220] Ibid., p.113.

on 19 December pleading for more money for refugees. Although the response was disappointing, the government did streamline procedures for refugee entry.[221] Consular officials in Germany sped up departures to Britain. The Council for German Jewry created a refugee camp in Richborough, Kent.[222] By the end of August 1939, 9,354 children had been rescued from Nazi terror through the so-called *Kindertransport*. Some public figures were involved in the rescue such as Sir Wyndham Deeds, previously Chief Secretary to the British High Commissioner of Palestine and Professor Norman Bentwich who had been Director of the League of Nations High Commission for Refugees from Germany. Disparate groups such as the Y.M.C.A, the Society of Friends and other non-Jewish and Jewish organizations worked together to house the children. However, as London suggests '[a]dmission saved the children's lives. Exclusion sealed the fate of many of their parents.'[223] The British mandated territory of Palestine was effectively closed off as a major escape route in May 1939, although the government had to fend off a 'storm of protest'.[224] Kushner states many 'ordinary people in Britain, especially after 'Kristallnacht' were willing to put themselves out to help the refugees.'[225] However, the level of national outrage associated with other atrocities and more importantly, other victims, was largely missing.

A spate of letters to the press in December showed British sympathy for ordinary Germans remained undiminished. A *New Statesman* correspondent questioned why ordinary Germans had not protested. Replies defended the German people.[226] A letter to *The Times* claimed the 'ordinary German' was 'sympathetic', 'kind', 'helpful, and genial', with 'all the homely virtues. He is hard-working, honest, economical, home-loving, law-abiding [and] religious.' In other words remarkably 'similar' to Britons. It was apparently 'from fear of not doing the right thing that he does the worst thing imaginable'. He predicted that 'decent Germans' would ensure Germany would 'once more become a State of law and justice'.[227] The letter evoked a favourable response,

---

[221] London, *Whitehall and the Jews*, p.114.
[222] Ibid., p.116.
[223] Ibid., p.118.
[224] Ibid., p.140.
[225] Kushner, Tony and Knox, Katherine, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide: Global, National and Local Perspectives during the Twentieth Century* (London: Frank Cass, 1999) p.168.
[226] *New Statesman*, 3 December 1938, p.911; 10 December 1938, p.959; 17 December 1938, p.1051.
[227] *Times*, 15 December 1938, p.17.

the most interesting from R.A. Williams, Schröder Professor of German at Cambridge. He believed there were 'very many' Germans who possessed admirable 'intellectual and moral qualities' but 'capable of approving' Jewish persecution. He explained that for Germans, the State trumped individuality. Therefore,

> persecution will appeal as a tragic necessity laid by fate upon the German nation, but at the same time as a mere accident in the deathless progress of the State…such people see hundreds of thousands of Jews sacrificed to the State, and see it almost with indifference, because they are ready to sacrifice themselves on the same altar.[228]

Williams added to mitigation of violence a sense of heroism and self-sacrifice. Although unbending deference to the State was not necessarily perceived as a British characteristic, readers may have recognized the popular British self-image of stoicism.[229] His argument reflected deep discomfort that ordinary Germans could condone violence. Their loss of civilized values perhaps meant the British might be susceptible to similar forces. If so, his views provide a clue to the fear of latent British anti-Semitism and sensitivity towards past British atrocities.[230]

The Times also published a letter from historian G.M. Young in which he claimed that after the war, 'Germans were most harshly dealt with, and suffered the most galling indignities, at the hands of individual Jews, of Jewish firms, and public authorities in which the Jewish element was dominant.' Furthermore he refused 'to deny' that German recovery had been 'grievously impeded by false views urged in London, Paris, and New York by Jews who only saw in the German lands a promising field for international exploitation.'[231] Young was a 'reluctant' Conservative supporter,[232] yet his views on German Jews and Germans tallied with the liberal left, as expounded, for example, by Bernays in 1933. Many seemed to believe that Nazi arguments about Jews

---

[228] Ibid., 28 December 1938, p.6.
[229] Belief in British 'stoicism' was not uncontested but was persistent through the inter-war years. See Mandler, *English National Character*, p.182.
[230] One respondent who 'set the…tone' to a nationwide survey on anti-Semitism suggested that admitting Jews would lead to them gaining financial dominance in Britain. In which case the country would 'rise against the Jews…and kick them out of the country.' MO, Anti-Semitism 1939-51, Box 1, March 1939.
[231] *Times*, 17 November 1938, p.15. Young was to become Baldwin's biographer.
[232] Williams, E.T. and Palmer, Helen M., (eds.) *The National Dictionary of Biography 1951-1960* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971) p.1093.

had substance and brutality was to some extent understandable. Young's sympathy, like many others, was for Germans, not their principle victims.

There was a persistent tendency in Left wing liberal circles to weaken their compassionate arguments by attempting to 'understand' the 'Jewish problem'. For example, Mary Agnes Hamilton, biographer of Ramsey MacDonald and Sidney and Beatrice Webb, who belonged to what might be termed 'enlightened' society, wrote an article for the *Spectator* arguably reflecting attitudes within her milieu.[233] Predictably, she condemned Nazi outrages but could not deny that most people 'dislike[d] Jews' or 'dread' there being 'too many'. She provided examples of how, when faced with a Jew, most experienced 'instinctive…"shrinking"'. For her, years of persecution explained the 'many' apparently unattractive Jewish attributes such as 'the inclination to cringe before the strong and bully the weak' as well as,

> that general insensitiveness of which tiny, yet unbearable, traits are the butting-in on intimate conversations, button-holing and boring you when you want to get away, standing, the while, too near: involving you in the entire clan when you have accepted the individual, and so on – in a word, taking an ell when given an inch.[234]

Her criticisms applied to the individual and the 'race'. Jewish 'historical' characteristics were exacerbated by clannishness, which inhibited 'any saving self-criticism'. Their self-proclaimed status as a chosen people was a sign that Jews and Nazis were afflicted with the same delusion.[235] Generally, Jewish 'faults' were perceived in the light of common ideas of Englishness. According to Peter Mandler, for interwar Britons, 'the line between 'national character' and 'manners'…was constantly being blurred'. They believed 'gentlemanly' virtue was intrinsic to the national character.[236] Characteristics ascribed to Jews, although not necessarily deemed their fault, were the opposite of how the English viewed themselves. This was a key factor

---

[233] Hamilton was a left wing liberal, former Labour MP and associate of the Woolfs, the Huxleys, D.H. Lawrence and Lytton Strachey. She was formerly Attlee's Parliamentary Private Secretary and a strong advocate of the League of Nations. In 1935 she supported the use of sanctions backed by force against Italy. A letter from 'DR' the following week, stated that though 'a friend of the Jews' her critique played 'right into the hand of the Jew- baiter.' *Spectator*, 2 December 1938, p.951.
[234] *Spectator*, 25 November 1938, pp.898-9.
[235] Ibid. This was a favourite refrain of H.G. Wells and the now retired Dean Inge of St. Pauls. See *Evening Standard*, 8 December 1938, p.7.
[236] Mandler, *English National Character*, p163.

when responding to anti-Jewish brutality. When reacting to other atrocities in broadly the same period, there were invariably successful attempts to project certain English characteristics onto those perceived worthy of empathy. In other words, in order to identify with suffering the British had to see something of themselves in the victims. When humanitarians saw evidence of anti-Jewish violence, their subsequent attempts to understand the 'Jewish problem' led them to the conclusion that it was impossible to endow Jews with 'English' qualities. They remained the 'other', and thus outside this compassionate paradigm. However, Hamilton along with most others found more empathy with ordinary Germans whose 'minds and imaginations' had been 'distorted and poisoned' since 1933. Germans were 'redeemable' having suffered under the Nazi aberration, whereas Jews were less so. Attitudes towards Jews were not so much ambivalent as subject to a hierarchy of compassion. The British were more inclined to be disturbed about persecution *per se*, especially when performed by a German nation that had been reconstructed in the British imagination since the Great War as civilised, than about Jewish victims.

That ingrained prejudice affected the attitudes and actions of humanitarians working on behalf of Jews is evident from a Mass Observation investigation conducted in early 1939. The timing and content of this survey on anti-Semitism, brings the results within the scope of responses to the November pogroms. One commentator recognised the 'almost unanimous' angle of the reports showed how:

> [o]ver and over again the Observer states that the area isn't anti-semitic, goes on to show that secretly he or she is. And this is equally true of working class, middle class and upper class Observers, for all ages, sexes, areas, occupations, political views, educational standards. Many are ashamed of their covert hostility. Many who are openly pro-semitic, Communists, etc., nevertheless confess a secret contempt or dislike.[237]

A '[l]eft-winger' from Bloomsbury shared with his social circle 'a vague general aversion' towards Jews and 'spent much time and thought trying to rationalise it.' Someone from Milford-on-Sea stressed, 'the Jew is as good an Englishman as the rest

[237] MO, Anti-Semitism 1939-51, Box 1, March 1939. Quotes were extracted from a report of six weeks work by a team of full time Mass Observers, helpers, and a questionnaire using a national panel of 2,000 part time Observers.

of us…But, and it is a big but…this opinion has been formed only…by making a conscious effort to be fair and tolerant.' This attitude was summed up by the statement, 'I instinctively dislike Jews but am trying to teach myself not to.' A response from Yorkshire revealed 'an antipathy to Jews, and, while realising that it is unreasonable, I am unable to overcome it'. Clearly, there was wide acceptance that anti-Semitism was wrong. However, this was not enough to overcome 'instinctive' aversion to Jews.

Innate antipathy cut across the activities of humanitarians who traditionally contributed to compassionate causes. One 'enlightened' individual who mixed with others who spent 'their leisure in good works', talked of a 'highly educated and cultured man' who 'deplored the persecutions' but 'could never feel quite the same towards a Jew as a European'. This was due to 'a slight feeling of physical aversion which would make him shrink from close contact.' The root, he believed, lay with the 'undoubted and deeply rooted racial differences which could never be resolved'. An elderly woman of 'exceptional enlightenment and energy' devoted 'to the cause of liberty and democracy' felt similarly. She said 'she could easily imagine herself getting to feel a horror of Jews, if she had been subjected to constant propaganda on the subject.' Empathy for ordinary Germans went hand in hand with a propensity for disliking Jews.

Such attitudes created a hierarchy of compassion. Someone from Sheffield felt 'sorry' about Jewish persecution but did not feel 'the same urge to help the Jewish refugees as I do the Spanish' adding the 'Jews are a wealthy race, let them look after their own people.' Another stated '[t]here does not seem to be very much interest at Cambridge in the Jewish Problem. Occasional appeals…do not arouse the enthusiasm stirred up, e.g. by appeals for Spain.' One commented that in Liverpool '[t]hey get worked up about minorities…but so far as Jews are concerned they do not seem very perturbed'. Another in Cornwall suggested:

> People in the village do not seem to think of the Jewish Question as one affecting English people…Personally I rather admire them and deplore anti-Semitism, but I care less about Jewish than other sorts of refugees and persecutees [sic].

Jewish stereotypes and a perceived lack of 'Englishness' sometimes underlay attitudes. In Portsmouth and Southsea one Observer stated there 'seems to be [an attitude] of

tolerance combined with a certain after-all-they're-not English air of superiority', adding there existed 'a feeling of distant sympathy for their troubles',

> i.e. The Jews are alright – providing they don't interfere with us…I am continually having my judgment distorted by the vision of the traditional Jew – waving hands, bulbous nose, and greasy, crinkly hair. Much as I would like to give the Jews my whole-hearted sympathy, this idiotic Music-Hall charicature occasionally finds its counterpart in real life, with the result that the physical revulsion I feel warps my vision.

Such attitudes had a real impact on the readiness with which the public donated to Jewish causes. Evidence suggests fear of external social pressure sometimes overcame reticence. When a collection was made for Jewish refugees in an Ealing cinema, an Observer noted that although most gave something, many 'probably contributed merely because they did not wish others to think they were ungenerous, while at least one person was heard to remark "I suppose we must give something."' In Reigate, there was 'a surprising indifference among those who are the first to give to charities to the treatment meted out to German Jews – to Baldwin's [Fund]'. Finally, the survey suggested negative attitudes were not dependent on personal contact with Jews. One stated 'I don't mind the thought of the jews [sic] being prosecuted [sic] as a race, but I do mind when I think of them as individuals', whilst a Sheffield Observer claimed 'I have only met an odd Jew occasionally myself and have no particular feeling towards them individually but, at the bottom of my soul I do not like them as a race.'[238]

Overall the evidence suggests instinctive anti-Semitism often compromised compassion. In a period crowded with humanitarian responses to atrocity, those most inclined towards action were hampered by anti-Jewish prejudices. Humanitarian action on behalf of Jews was not only embarked on with greater reluctance but also met with more resistance than other contemporary examples. Discourses on other atrocities, without fail, contained a marked propensity to inscribe aspects of Englishness onto the victims. For the most part, Jews were deemed un-English and often responsible for their own suffering. Tension caused by the juxtaposition of entrenched compassionate traditions and the recognised unacceptability of particular anti-Jewish prejudice meant

[238] MO, Anti-Semitism 1939-51, Box 1, March 1939.

Jewish suffering could become the object of humour. This is perhaps why E.M. Forster wrote,

> People who would not ill-treat Jews themselves, or even be rude to them, enjoy tittering over their misfortunes; they giggle when pogroms are instituted by someone else and synagogues defiled vicariously.[239]

Six months after the survey Britain declared war on Germany. This closed down most escape routes for persecuted Jews. A White Paper detailing pre-war German atrocities published in October 1939 caused an adverse reaction. The 'British public again believed they were being manipulated by the government.' and officials saw the document as a propaganda failure.[240] This was not the only criticism. Strange commented that the information was 'perfectly *horrible*', but 'we know the majority of Germans must hate the camps as we do. We must not work up hatred against the German people.'[241] A letter to Arthur Ponsonby written the day after war broke out from a village in the Midlands observed that 'people don't seem at all excited or bloodthirsty about this war' but were united by an anti-Hitler attitude and 'broad sympathy for the German people who were compelled to follow him.'[242]

During the war reports of increasing anti-Jewish atrocities were quickly transmitted to Britain. *The Times* briefly became more overt about the particularity of Jewish suffering. For example, it commented on a German plan from 'well informed circles', that '[t]o thrust 3,000,000 Jews, relatively few of whom are agriculturalists, into the Lublin region…would doom them to famine. That, perhaps is the intention.'[243] In December after detailing the deportations,[244] it reported a Nazi plan which envisaged 'a place for gradual extermination' which might lead to 'tens of thousands' dead and many more refugees.[245] This type of reporting eventually gave way to interpreting victimhood within a more national framework. In other words, Jews became conflated with other occupied peoples.

---

[239] *New Statesman*, 7 January 1939. Also in Forster E.M., *Two Cheers For Democracy* (Bungay, The Chaucer Press, 1972) p.13.
[240] Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p.124.
[241] Strange, *Despatches from the Home Front*, Diary entry 31 October 1939, p.23.
[242] Overy, *Morbid Age*, p.356.
[243] *Times*, 24 October 1939, p.5.
[244] Ibid., 20 November 1939, p.5.
[245] Ibid., 16 December 1939, p.9. Although it expressed doubt about Nazi's the ability to carry this out.

The Foreign Office was kept informed about conditions for Jews in Poland. However, the Jewish origins of the reports hampered acceptance. Vyvyan Adams, the Conservative M.P., passed eye-witness testimony giving details of the casual approach of German authorities to Jewish murder. Adams felt compelled to point out the Jewish witnesses were 'educated and sensible' and 'by no means hysterical'. The response was a handwritten note stating 'Jewish sources are always doubtful.'[246] Rex Leeper, Director of the Political Warfare Executive, added 'as a general rule Jews are inclined to magnify their persecutions. I remember the exaggerated stories of Jewish pogroms in Poland after the last war which…were found to have little substance.'[247] Leeper was key to the British propaganda effort and well placed to use atrocity reports for galvanizing public opinion. However, the legacy of mistrust attached to the Jews after the Polish atrocities hampered the thinking of those most able to act.

Another factor limiting action was the continuing myopic tendency towards the culpability of ordinary Germans among those perhaps most disposed to indignation. This was evident in a bitter debate sparked by Lord Vansittart's *Black Record*. It was first published in January 1941, broadcast on the B.B.C. Overseas Programme and serialized by the *Sunday Times*. Vansittart claimed most Germans were inherently aggressive and Nazism was 'no more than the extension and popularization of the old imperialism and militarism.'[248] He suggested 'fallacies about "Hitlerite Germany" calmly overlook the last war altogether.'[249] For him, Germany was 'carrying out a policy of racial extermination as systematically as Imperial Germany exterminated the Herreros.'[250] He believed Britain's response to Guernica was 'charity to the Germans' because 'the slaughter…was so utter that many people at first just wouldn't believe it of the Germans.'[251] Such was the backlash against his theory that it was coined

---

[246] FO371/24472/11, 13 April 1940. James G. Nicolson of the American Red Cross in a report to the Foreign Office relativised Jewish suffering, denied the existence of the 'Lublin Jewish Reserve' and suggested not only that Jewish refugees had left their homes 'of their own free will' but that 'all the numbers which one had read in the press were undoubtedly exaggerated.' FO371/21638/61, 24 April 1940.
[247] FO 371/24472/11, 21 April 1940.
[248] Vansittart, Robert, *Black Record: Germans Past and Present* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1941) pp.v-xi.
[249] Ibid., pp.v-xi.
[250] Ibid., p.45.
[251] Ibid., p.51.

'Vansittartism', 'a bogey so revolting' he believed, 'that their consciences may legitimately and vehemently reject it.'[252]

Critics included government officials, M.P.s, Lords, scholars, *The Times*, the *New Statesman*, the *Catholic Herald*, the *Evening Standard* and *The Economist*.[253] Left wing liberals and humanitarians were particularly outraged. Harold Laski wrote, just because Germans had not experienced England's fortunate heritage their 'different' qualities should not be punished. He evoked past British atrocities including 'the rebellion in the Punjab in 1919', and the 'myth' of the 'unspeakable Turk', now a 'solid ally', to show the British were susceptible to the same errors currently attributed to Germans.[254] Laski believed atrocities were the work of 'perhaps ten thousand gangsters' with 'unlimited power'.[255] Journalist, H.N. Brailsford rejected that Nazism was a continuation of Prussianism, rather portraying it as an aberration that had swept away enlightenment values.[256] Allied treatment of Germany post-war had allowed the Nazis to take control.[257] Like Laski, Brailsford effectively argued that liberalism characterized the German nation.

Publisher, Victor Gollancz, wrote an extensive rebuttal to Vansittart, which became *The Times* 'Book of the Week'.[258] For him 'Vansittartism' robbed the 'war-effort of a dynamic as powerful for good as the Nazis' is for evil as surely as it plays into the hands of Dr. Goebbels and so weakens the growing movement of German revolt.'[259] Gollancz used an emotive image of 'ordinary Germans' to show they could not be characterized as barbaric.[260] He drew comparisons with the English to reinforce this. He also pointed to a continuum of liberalism in Germany. Gollancz believed atrocity reports 'almost certainly' exaggerated and claimed 'there is a difference between atrocities committed under the whip of blood-lust and atrocities committed by

---

[252] *The Nineteenth Century and After*, May 1942, p.203.
[253] Vansittart, *Black Record*, pp.v-ix.
[254] Laski, H.J., *The Germans–Are they Human? A Reply to Sir Robert Vansittart* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1941) p.5.
[255] Ibid., p.7. Michael Newman states Laski 'rejected any implication of national stereotypes or national guilt', however this argument erred towards pro-Germanism. Newman, Michael, *Harold Laski: A Political Biography* (London: Macmillan, 1993) p.245.
[256] Brailsford, H.N., *The German Problem* (London: Commonwealth, 1944), Subtitle 'Germans and Nazis: A Reply to "Black Record" by H.N. Brailsford. p.7.
[257] Ibid., p.11.
[258] *Times*, 27 February 1942, p.7.
[259] Gollancz, Victor, *Shall Our Children Live or Die? A Reply to Lord Vansittart on the German Problem* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1942) p.3.
[260] Ibid., p.51.

instruction from above.'[261] Gollancz, one of the most vocal advocates of European Jewry during the War, confused his supporters.[262] He was asked at a lecture whether he meant 'it was wrong to hate the Nazi atrocities in Poland and Russia. Or wrong to hate the German people? Or wrong to hate the Nazis? Or wrong, perhaps, even to hate Hitler?'[263] His advocacy of ordinary Germans cut across efforts to galvanize compassion.

Mass Observer, Edward Stebbing commented on a speech given by Tom Driberg,[264] at a *Daily Express* Centre of Public Opinion. He was 'very glad' that Driberg pronounced himself 'anti-Vansittartite' because,

> the idea of all Germans being irredeemably wicked and of waiting to exterminate [Jews] was as bad as Dr. Goebels' racial ideas. For the idea that the Germans were a very special race on their own and had evil in their blood was simply Nazism inverted – the super-race theory in reverse.[265]

That this was written just as news of the German extermination program was registering with the public is significant. Many could not believe average Germans were capable of outright wickedness or were over-optimistic about the strength of German opposition to Nazism. Michael Balfour, who spent the first half of the war working for the Ministry of Information, handling publicity on the home front, suggests it was the government's aim to bifurcate the Nazis and the mass of 'good Germans' in the mind of the British public.[266] The Vansittart debate indicates that, for the most part, it was an effective policy.

Gilbert Murray, an influential humanitarian voice over Spain and China, was affected by this attitude. The mass murder of the Jewish population of Kiev was reported in *The*

---

[261] Ibid., p.91.
[262] For Gollancz's activism see Dudley Edwards, Ruth, *Victor Gollancz: A Biography* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1987) p.373-77.
[263] Gollancz, *Shall Our Children Live or Die*, pp.64-5.
[264] Driberg, a left-winger who had worked for Beaverbrook, became an M.P. in 1942.
[265] Garfield, Simon, *Private Battles: How the War Almost Defeated Us* (Ebury Press, 2006) p.287. 13 September 1942.
[266] Balfour, Michael, *Propaganda in War 1939-1945: Organisations, Policies and Publics in Britain and Germany* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1979) p.167. A memorandum written in October 1942 by Richie Calder of the Political Warfare Executive entitled 'Splitting the Germans' confirms this view. FO898/422, Richie Calder to 'The Director-General', 1 October 1942.

Times on 7 January 1942.[267] Murray identified the infamous Reichenau 'secret order', recently captured and published by the Russian authorities as a 'villainous document.'[268] However, he also believed it betrayed 'in every paragraph the efforts of a brutal high command to force its methods upon an unwilling or half-willing army…A completely brutalized army would not have needed a Reichenau order.'[269] His argument in mitigation of the conduct of German troops engaged in mass murder shows the strength of feeling in liberal circles regarding the innocence of ordinary Germans, in this case the German army.

Late summer and Autumn 1941 marked the beginning of the Final Solution.[270] With evidence that Germans were pursuing an increasingly aggressive policy towards subject peoples, Churchill and President Roosevelt made a joint statement on 25 October 1941. Notable was its mention of the territories in which Jews were being systematically murdered, but failure to identify Jews as the main victims.[271] Churchill wanted to make '[r]etribution for these crimes…among the major purposes of the war'.[272] However, official and public resistance to 'atrocity mongering' softened the impact. In fact, German atrocities did not receive widespread attention until December 1942.

The Board of Deputies received increasingly lurid details of life and death in the ghettos.[273] The Jewish Labour Bund in Warsaw smuggled out a detailed report of gassings in mobile vans at Chelmno. However, this information was not part of mainstream public debate. British officials were 'very reluctant to make any public statements concerning German atrocities.'[274] M.P. Sidney Silverman believed 'there had been something like a conspiracy of silence in the Press'.[275] As German authorities stepped up mass murder, the British and Allied governments carefully monitored and

---

[267] 33,771 Jews were murdered in the ravine of Babi Yar outside Kiev. Evans, Richard, *The Third Reich at War: How the Nazi Led Germany from Conquest to Disaster* (London: Penguin, 2009) pp.226-7.
[268] For Reichenau order see Evans, *The Third Reich at War*, p.177.
[269] *Times*, 20 January 1942, p.5.
[270] Browning, Christopher R., *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy 1939-1942* (London: Arrow Books, 2005) pp.309-416.
[271] FO 371/26540/284, Cutting, the *Sunday Times*, 26 October 1941.
[272] Ibid.
[273] BoD ACC3121/C11/6/4/1, Memorandum 'The Ghettoes in Poland', 21 April 1942.
[274] Dale Jones, Priscilla, 'British Policy Towards German Crimes Against German Jews, 1939-1945', in Cesarani, David (ed.) *The Holocaust: Critical Concepts in Historical Studies* Volume VI (London: Routledge, 2004) p.95.
[275] Kushner and Knox, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide*, p.195.

controlled both the extent of Jewish involvement in negotiations between Allied governments about German war crimes and the amount and type of information released to the public.

The dissemination of information about war crimes was a subject of serious debate for the government since at least 1941. When Hugh Dalton, of the Political Warfare Executive, urged 'strongly' that 'propaganda' should show that war criminals would not 'go unpunished',[276] he met with stiff opposition in the Foreign Office. R.M. Makins was 'sceptical about the effect of threats' and did not think the government 'should give way to a desire for revenge or stimulate that desire in other people'. He was keen 'to avoid a "Hang the Kaiser" campaign' and believed a 'commitment to hunt down and try thousands of Germans after the war' would be embarrassing and impractical. He also questioned 'how far one can really hold subordinate officials responsible for the acts of their superiors.'[277] After taking soundings from at least one other government figure,[278] Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden endorsed this view and replied to Dalton that 'I am fortified in this opinion by the experience of that ill-starred enterprise at the end of the last war.'[279]

On 13 January 1942 Allied governments-in-exile issued the St. James's Palace Declaration condemning atrocities and making the trial and punishment of Nazi war criminals a 'principal war aim'.[280] Jewish representatives were deliberately excluded from the process on the basis that all representative governments did not 'make any discrimination whatsoever in respect of their citizens.'[281] Jewish leaders could only send 'a communication' which highlighted Jewish suffering.[282] General Sikorski, Polish leader and President of the Inter-Allied Conference on War Crimes, eventually assured Jewish leaders that the 'crimes and excesses committed against the Jews' were covered by the declaration. Britain and America did not sign the document but 'Foreign

---

[276] FO371/26540/23, Dalton to Eden, 25 September 1941.
[277] FO371/26540/14, 29 September 1941, Memorandum by R.M. Makins, 29 September 1941.
[278] Paymaster General, Lord Hankey wrote to Eden. He was 'convinced from bitter experience that we have to be very cautious about making a public declaration' about German atrocities because of the experience during and after the last war. FO371/26540/291, Hankey to Eden, 11 October 1941.
[279] FO371/26540/27, Eden to Dalton, 5 October 1941. Nazi propaganda worked on fears of any pro-Jewish stance. Herf, Jeffrey, *Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust* (London: Harvard University Press, 2008).
[280] Cited in Dale Jones, 'British Policy', p.102.
[281] FO371/30917/85, Potulicki to Lias, n/d.
[282] BoD ACC3121, JFC Report December 1941-January 1942.

Office efforts to maintain a detached attitude towards Nazi war crimes began to crumble'.[283] They drafted in legal experts to help formulate British war crimes policy.[284] However, official reticence to make public declarations remained firm. Once again, the experience of the last war influenced decisions. Officials feared 'getting hopelessly bogged down, with a final dismal repetition of…[the Leipzig trial] fiasco'. This was buttressed by the dominant view that 'German atrocities against Jewish and non-Jewish German nationals and stateless persons were not in any sense war crimes.'[285] Jewish leaders attempted to overcome this inertia by persistently pushing for 'every form of publicity',[286] but they were accused of circumventing agreed processes to further a Zionist agenda.[287]

On 25 June 1942 the *Daily Telegraph* reported that 700,000 Polish Jews had been killed, some by mobile gas chambers.[288] In June and July the government was increasingly pressurized by exiled governments to take pro-active measures to counter German atrocities likely 'to exterminate certain populations.'[289] Churchill 'suggested to Roosevelt the establishment of a United Nations Commission on Atrocities.'[290] A set of principles was drawn up by the President's staff and on 6 July 'approved in principle' by the War Cabinet.[291] The Commission was established partly to help the government 'deal with any pressure from the Allied governments' for further action.[292] It was understood this would be 'a fact-finding Commission similar to the Bryce Committee on Atrocities in Belgium in the last war'.[293] Conclusions would be 'published from time to time' to inform the public of 'the nature' of the enemy and by 'naming their names' thereby letting the guilty know they were 'being watched by the civilized world, which will mete out swift and just punishment on the reckoning day.'[294] This

---

[283] Dale Jones, 'British Policy', p. 102.
[284] The resulting memorandum dated 15 April 1942 stipulated 'only war crimes *stricto sensu* would be prosecutable offences.' Dale Jones, 'British Policy', p. 102.
[285] Ibid., p.119.
[286] FO371/30917/86, A.G. Brotman to Stanczyk, 14 July 1942.
[287] FO371/30917/81, Potulicki to Lias, 27 July 1942; FO 371/30917/86, Lias to Grubb, 30 July 1942; FO371/30917/86, D. Allen memorandum, 13 August 1942.
[288] *Daily Telegraph*, 25 June 1942.
[289] FO371/30917, *Note Verbale* by Allied Governments, July 1942.
[290] Kochavi, Arieh, 'Britain and the Establishment of the United Nations War Crimes Commission' in *Critical Concepts*, p.132.
[291] FO371/30917, Eden Memorandum, 20 July 1942.
[292] Cited in Kochavi, 'War Crimes Commission', p.132.
[293] FO371/30917, 'War Cabinet Committee on Treatment of War Criminals – Proposal for a Fact-Finding Commission – Memorandum by Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs', 20 July 1942.
[294] Ibid.

amounted to a statement of intent with regard to the regularized flow of public information. The Commission was announced in the Lords on 7 October 1942, but the first meeting did not take place until October 1943. Although the 1915 Bryce Commission was cited as a model, its successor was designed to have the opposite effect, to douse, rather than stoke public ire. A Cabinet Committee was established to ensure the body operated 'according to the government's policy on the matter.'[295] It was chaired by Lord Chancellor Viscount Simon who had originally defined the brief of the original Bryce Committee and as Attorney-General had been a member. He quickly changed the original proposals ensuring they 'investigate crimes committed only against nationals of the United Nations, not crimes in general.'[296]

Despite pressure from exiled governments the Foreign Office remained firm in their control of the war crimes process.[297] Dennis Allen reiterated concern over 'another "Hang the Kaiser" campaign'[298] and J.K. Roberts warned publicity for the commission would mean 'a whole host of busybodies in this country would be stirred into action'.[299] It was believed 'making any public declarations', would 'hamper rather than help the practical work that still remains to be done.'[300] Officials finally suggested a compromise. A public statement should be made which would pacify the Allies.[301] Part of their reasoning was that because the Foreign Office had 'taken the lead in all this' it was 'only right that we should get adequate publicity' to be obtained through a House of Commons resolution.[302] Even so, in late August Eden ruled the declaration 'could be left until Parlt. reassembled in a month's time.'[303] The draft declaration made no mention of Jews. Generally the Foreign Office saw the Commission 'as largely a means of neutralizing calls for acts of retribution against the Germans and creating the impression that the issue of War Criminals was being handled.'[304] Taking a lead on the

---

[295] Kochavi, 'War Crimes Commission', p.132. The new Committee also included Sir Stafford Cripps, Anthony Eden, Attorney General, Sir Donald Somervell, Solicitor General, Major Sir David P. Maxwell Fyfe, Sir Alexander Cadogan, and Sir William Malkin of the FO.
[296] Ibid., p.133.
[297] D. Allen feared that 'Adherence to the declaration would be a public act which would for ever after openly comit [sic] H.M.G. to carrying out whatever policy any of the Allied Governments chose to put into effect within the broad framework of the declaration.' FO371/30917/103, 21 August 1942.
[298] Ibid.
[299] FO371/30917/60, J.K. Roberts minute, 6 August 1942.
[300] FO371/30917/103, D. Allen minute, 21 August 1942.
[301] FO371/30917/148, J.K. Roberts minute, 27 August 1942.
[302] Ibid.
[303] Ibid.
[304] Kochavi, 'United Nations War Crime Commission', p.150.

war crimes issue enabled the government to set severe parameters around the public debate which were in part dictated by memory of the last war. This provided the context in which a telegram from Gerhart Reigner, the Geneva representative of the World Jewish Congress, claiming that European Jews were subject to an extermination plan, was received.[305]

After attempting to establish Reigner's credentials, J.K. Roberts stated on 15 August 'I do not see how we can hold up this message much longer, although I fear it may provoke embarrassing repercussions.' It was eventually dismissed as a 'rather wild story' and Silverman was to be told that 'if Jewish organisations themselves wished to give publicity to the story, the F.O. would see no objection, although they could take no responsibility for the story.'[306] The Foreign Office gambled that without official sanction Jewish claims would lack weight with the public.

In July and August Jews in Vichy France were brutally rounded up and deported to Poland to be murdered. Churchill expressed outrage in Parliament specifically mentioning the 'mass deportation of the Jews from France'.[307] Church leaders used B.B.C. broadcasts to denounce Nazi atrocities in early July to a Polish audience.[308] An 'international meeting of protest against Nazi atrocities in Poland and Czechoslovakia' was held on 2 September.[309] It was overseen by the Chairman of the National Executive of the Labour Party, but was not a reflection of British socialist indignation but rather of the international Labour movement. In late August British official, Geoffrey Lias, stated 'public opinion is greatly exercised about the whole subject'.[310] Although *The Times* alluded to the 'extermination' of the Jews, there is no clear evidence that he was right.

---

[305] For other works referring to Reigner's telegram see Wasserstein, Bernard, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945* (London: Clarendon Press, 1979); Laqueur, Walter, *The Terrible Secret* (London: Penguin, 1982).
[306] Ibid. Although it seems Silverman was warned that 'any action taken by the Jewish Associations' might 'annoy the Germans' and render further action 'even more unpleasant than it might otherwise have been.' FO371/30917/97, Scurfield to Ponsonby, 16 September 1942. He was told verbally because Sir Brograve Beauchamp, who was dealing with Silverman, thought '[o]n the whole the less put in writing the better'.
[307] *Times*, 9 September 1942, p.5.
[308] BoD ACC3121/A30, JFC Report, 15 July 1942.
[309] Ibid., JFC Report, August-September 1942.
[310] FO371/30917/177, Lias to Law, n/d.

In response to the French deportations Sir Herbert Emerson, League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, approached America's Ambassador to intervene because the United States maintained diplomatic connections with the Vichy regime. A.W.G. Randall of the Foreign Office, present at the conversation, tersely noted 'H.M.G could…do nothing over this.'[311] Emerson then approached the Home Secretary Herbert Morrison asking that a thousand Jewish children be given visas. J.K. Roberts however, saw 'no reason why Jews as such should receive preferential treatment.'[312] Morrison agreed and pointed to the 'anti-foreign and anti-Semitic feeling which was quite certainly latent in this country (and in some cases not at all latent.)'[313] The Home Secretary agreed to accept a 'handful' who had 'one or both parents' already in Britain.[314] The Cabinet endorsed Morrison's policy on 28 September. When Churchill repeated his Parliamentary protests in Edinburgh about atrocities he caused consternation. The *New Statesman* urged 'self-restraint', fearing that a heated atmosphere would detract from the war effort and was contrary 'to our own rules of civilized conduct.'[315] Edward Stebbing called Churchill's references to atrocities 'boring'.[316]

Nevertheless, there were signs that public figures were becoming increasingly uncomfortable about news from France. Eden received a Labour delegation lobbying on behalf of persecuted Jews on 22 September. They did not call for refugees to be allowed into Britain but to the Belgian Congo following an offer from the Belgian government. The Foreign Office denied knowledge of the offer.[317] As awareness of the plan to exterminate Jews seeped into the public sphere, humanitarians became more active. On 28 October Morrison met an 'illustrious' delegation including Rathbone, William Temple, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Hinsley and 'a number of other eminent churchmen and public figures, representatives from the major refugee and relief organizations, and members of the Commons and the Lords.'[318] The government had already decided on the issue so the Home Secretary was effectively

---

[311] FO371/32680/51, A.W.G. Randall minute, 17 August 1942.
[312] FO371/32680/89, Roberts minute, 15 September 1942.
[313] FO371/32680/81, A.W.G. Randall minute, 21 September 1942.
[314] Later qualified as 'perhaps not more than 20', FO371/32680/127, October 1942.
[315] *New Statesman*, 17 October 1942, pp.249-250.
[316] Garfield, *Private Battles*, 13 October 1942, p.303.
[317] FO371/32680/85, 22 September 1942.
[318] Pederson, *Rathbone*, p.331.

managing the protest. One of the delegates, Margaret Corby Ashby, complained that '[n]o smallest concession was made'.[319]

On the following day some of those who had made up the delegation to the government spoke at an Albert Hall meeting organized by Anglo-Jewish leaders. Although the Prime Minister sent a message of support, the gathering was more international than British. It was also designed to channel public ire into the war effort and evoke restraint not indignation. The Archbishop acknowledged it was 'hard to resist the conclusion that there is a settled purpose to exterminate the Jewish people' but added 'the purpose of their meeting was not to stir up hatred or the spirit of vengeance…and to pledge themselves once more' to the war effort.[320] Temple was perhaps also influenced by Morrison's claim that admitting refugees from France would heighten domestic anti-Semitism. He believed the 'introduction of a large number of Jewish refugees of working or fighting age would make the prospect seriously worse.' He was adamant that 'the only thing that would make a difference would be public action, which, for these people's sake, we must avoid.' His response was also compromised by the belief that 'nothing could be worse for the cause generally than to call public attention to the fact that our government is slow to move.' Reticence to criticize the government in wartime proved to be a decisive factor in the absence of necessary pressure for a more concerted government plan on behalf of refugees. Rathbone recognized the power of this argument, privately admitting that it would be impossible to 'publicly reproach' Morrison for fear of damaging their 'own efforts to persuade other people to do more.'[321] Her desire for a more aggressive protest was not shared within the alliance of interests confronting government policy. It is unfeasible that the government would have been unaware of these divisions.[322] The Albert Hall was not filled to capacity due to 'police regulations.'[323]

---

[319] Cited in Cohen, *Rescue the Perishing*, p.170.
[320] *Times*, 30 October 1942, p.2. On the Church of England campaign led by Temple and the subsuming of Jewish suffering 'within a generalized picture of the totalitarian war on Christianity and universal morality' see Lawson, Tom, *The Church of England and the Holocaust: Christianity, Memory and Nazism* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006) p.168.
[321] Cohen, *Rescue the Perishing*, pp.170-1.
[322] Pederson points to the existence of 'a network of sympathizers…deeply concerned about the fate of the Jews' but that 'different groups and individuals had very different responses in mind.' Pederson, *Eleanor Rathbone*, pp.332-3.
[323] BoD ACC3121/A30, BoD Meeting, 17 November 1942.

On 26 November, M.P.s Silverman and A.L. Easterman called at the Foreign Office to hand over a document received from the Polish government 'detailing the extent of the Nazi persecution of the Jews'.[324] They suggested a Four-Power Declaration denouncing the German plan to exterminate Europe's Jews. The Foreign Office's Richard Law admitted the government would be in an 'appalling position if these stories should prove to have been true and we have done nothing whatever about them.' He was also concerned that unless the government made some kind of gesture it would cause a lot of trouble.[325] On 4 December 1942 *The Times*, having verified the story by 'independent evidence', finally acknowledged there was a '[d]eliberate [p]lan for [e]xtermination'.[326] However, it also stated that 'all peoples and all creeds of Poland have continually suffered under the worst of many forms of terror'.[327] Temple on behalf of the Church of England and Free Church representatives, expressed 'burning indignation at this atrocity.' However, he offered little that would rouse public anger instead suggesting, 'the matter seems to be beyond earthly resources.'[328] Cardinal Hinsley, Britain's leading Catholic, denounced Germany's 'savage racial hatred'.[329] Meetings were arranged at the Commons so Jewish representatives could inform MPs. Harold Nicolson could not understand why 'horrors like this Black Hole on a gigantic scale scarcely concerns us.'[330] He sensed MPs felt 'not so much '[w]hat can we do for such people?' as '[w]hat can we do *with* such people after the war?'"[331] This would seem to echo the Foreign Office's attitude, which was more concerned about prospective Jewish demands at a future peace settlement than considering schemes facilitating immediate relief. Rathbone echoed Nicolson's sentiment. In a letter to Temple dated 3 December she wrote, '[o]ne would think that the mass extermination of "the chosen people," or a few millions of them, was quite a minor incident'.[332]

---

[324] Fox, John P., 'The Jewish Factor in British War Crimes Policy', *English Historical Review*, Vol.XCII, No.362, January 1977, p.98.
[325] Cited in ibid., p.99.
[326] *Times*, 4 December 1942, p.3.
[327] Ibid., 7 December 1942, p.3.
[328] Ibid., 5 December 1942, p.5.
[329] Ibid., 9 December 1942, p.2.
[330] Nicolson, Harold, *The Harold Nicolson Diaries 1907-1963* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004) p. 270.
[331] Ibid.
[332] Cited in Pederson, *Eleanor Rathbone*, p.328.

On 12 December *The Times* published its first editorial on the extermination program. The observation that 'for a full decade the Jewish race had been on Hitler's rack' was somewhat hypocritical given the mollifying nature of its previous coverage. Emigration was advocated but such measures would 'only be palliative'.[333] Only victory would be the 'supreme act of relief'. Moreover, *The Times* suggested the Jewish plight was 'a special case only in its scope, not in its kind' because, the same 'methodical ferocity' had been applied 'since 1939' to the Poles, Czech, Serbs and Greeks.[334] That Jews were principal victims of an extermination policy was both acknowledged and effectively denied in the same passage. The announcement of forthcoming Parliamentary debates gives an indication of the importance of the issue in the scope of Commons business:

> Prominent among the subjects which various groups of members would like to raise if they can on this occasion are the future of civil aviation and German atrocities against Jews and others in the occupied territories. Many members are also concerned at the volume of criticism reaching them from their constituencies about the patchy distribution of fish…[335]

The declaration in Parliament on 17 December by Anthony Eden acknowledging 'Hitler's oft repeated intention to exterminate the Jewish people in Europe' was a result of pressure from Allied governments-in-exile, irrefutable evidence of atrocities, especially from Polish sources,[336] and Churchill's intervention at the Foreign Office.[337] Public information though, about Jewish massacres, had been carefully controlled and modulated. There were expressions of outrage, for example in the form of public meetings, but these were offset by largely successful attempts to mollify public indignation or channel it towards the war effort. To this extent fear of public pressure rather than public pressure itself played a part in the government's decision to make the Parliamentary announcement. That it was an Allied declaration rather than merely British effectively signaled that the mass murder of the Jews had become a 'matter of

---

[333] *Times*, 12 December 1942, p.5.
[334] Ibid.
[335] Ibid., 15 December 1942.
[336] On 10 December 1942, the Polish Foreign Ministry became the first governmental body publicly to confirm the extermination of Polish Jews. Engel, David, *Facing a Holocaust: The Polish government-in-exile, 1943-1945* (London: University of North Carolina Press, c.1990) p.17.
[337] Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, p.172.

international concern'.[338] Although this gave the appearance of greater weight behind potential proposals to help the persecuted, in reality it created a level of diplomacy and bureaucracy that British protesters could barely penetrate. In January the British and Americans agreed to a joint conference 'as a device to hold off pressure for action.'[339] This was to be held in Bermuda. In the meantime a new Cabinet Committee was convened. According to London, the role of these officials was 'largely reactive: they deflected pressure and defended inaction.'[340]

Nonetheless, the Declaration brought the Jewish plight to the attention of the British public. *The Times* described 'a deeply impressive scene' as members of the Commons rose 'spontaneously and remained standing for a minute.' However, to offset indignation it spelt out the help Britain had already given.[341] The *Daily Herald* saw the event as a 'vivid testimony to the sincerity of British war aims' adding,

> [w]e must not deceive ourselves. There is little, very little that we can do to arrest at this stage the campaign of extermination…let us not imagine that we shall help the Jews, or our United Cause, by the simple act of threatening homicidal maniacs with undefined punishment.[342]

The *New Statesman* ridiculed the idea that indignation should be expressed as revenge citing the 'futility' of retribution schemes in the last war.[343] It also speculated about the dearth of British interest:

> [w]hen the first atrocities of the German concentration camps were reported, most of us were first incredulous and then so aghast many of the papers deliberately withheld the details. But familiarity grows with repetition, and contempt with familiarity, so that to-day, "all pity choked with custom of fell

---

[338] Wolf/Mowshowitch Papers RG348, MK. 502/Folder No. 99. 'On 11 January the Cabinet approved a telegram to the United States proposing consultation and a common approach.' Pederson, *Eleanor Rathbone*, p.338. Even those advocating a more pro-active humanitarianism accepted the centre of gravity for the debate had shifted away from Britain to an international sphere. For example, Otto Schiff commented '[w]e hope the United Nations, particularly the Untied States and Great Britain, will arrive at a policy which will enable Jews to be saved'. Cited in London, *Whitehall and the Jews*, p.205. See also Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, pp.214-216.
[339] London, *Whitehall and the Jews*, p.206.
[340] Ibid.
[341] *Times*, 18 December 1942, pp.3-4.
[342] *Herald*, 18 December 1942, p.2.
[343] *New Statesman*, 19 December 1942, p.401.

deed," we shrug our shoulders at horrors which have ceased, by dint of repetition, to be "news."[344]

It counseled against an anti-German campaign suggesting the real perpetrators were 'a special corps of Lithuanians, Latvians and Russian Whites.'[345] The B.B.C. 'failed to report on the atrocities.'[346]

Arthur Balfour's niece, ardent pro-Zionist and close friend of Weizmann, Blanche Dugdale, wrote an article for the *Spectator* entitled 'All Ye That Pass By'. She felt compelled to state that the desire to believe atrocity stories were exaggerated was rooted in 'the instinct to spare oneself pain'. She added 'scepticism cannot much longer serve as excuse for inaction.'[347] General Sir Neill Malcolm complained about the impotency of the Parliamentary declaration and suggested practical action on behalf of Jewish refugees in Spain and Portugal. The *Spectator* responded, it was 'not a problem to be solved by facile gestures.'[348] In the same journal Nicolson argued, the declaration would 'oblige the government to act with generosity' towards refugees and help 'dispel the froth of anti-semitism which always gathers on disturbed or poisoned waters.'[349] He speculated again as to why the news had been met with reservation, suggesting it was 'the calculated magnitude of this present cruelty which arouse[d] skepticism.'[350]

On 25 December 1942 Gollancz wrote a plea for European Jewry entitled *Let My People Go* as part of a publicity campaign by refugee campaigners.[351] The pamphlet was praised in the *New Statesman* for keeping 'strictly to the facts and possibilities.'[352] The *Spectator* commented on Gollancz's 'strikingly temperate tone, having regard to

---

[344] Ibid.
[345] *New Statesman*, 26 December 1942, p.421. This evoked a protest from Dr. Witold Czerwinski, editor of the *Polish Fortnightly Review*, that 'the people "actually engaged in murdering the Jews" are the Germans'. *New Statesman*, 9 January 1943, p.26.
[346] Cohen, *Rescue the Perishing*, p.173.
[347] *Spectator*, 11 December 1942, p.547.
[348] Ibid., 25 December 1942, p.590.
[349] Ibid., p.597.
[350] Ibid., In this analysis of the Parliamentary declaration Nicolson mentioned the Eastern European death camps of Treblinka, Belzec and Sobibor twice each. They were also referred to in a letter to the *Spectator* by Mrs Edgar Dugdale on 11 December. They never became part of the dominant discourse in Britain, unlike, for example, Guernica, which, as Chapter Five shows became a symbol for the potential destruction of European civilisations from the air.
[351] Gollancz, Victor, *"Let My People Go": Some practical proposals for dealing with Hitler's Massacre of the Jews and an appeal to the British Public* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1943).
[352] *New Statesman*, 16 January 1943, p.37.

the fact that the writer is himself a Jew'.[353] The pamphlet had a positive effect with many offering to send money and clothes and others offering a home to Jewish children. The Secretary of State received a 'spate of letters' expressing 'horror' at Jewish persecution.[354] Some offers were notable for their generosity and self-sacrificial nature.[355] Freda Bax, for example, whose husband was in the army, already had 'two children' but 'would welcome a Jewish boy to live with us.' The Foreign Office noted they were 'getting a good many letters of this type now, containing a definite offer to adopt or give a home to a Jewish child.'[356] Eleanor Rathbone attempted to galvanize others to make a coordinated response, urging activists:

> to launch our campaign on Governments, and on public opinion accordingly. It won't do just to mention "an offer to Hitler" and to encourage Archbishops and Bishops to give it limited publicity and then to let it drop.[357]

She appealed directly to the public, and cajoled the government.[358] In early 1943 Rathbone was instrumental in the formation of the unofficial National Committee for Rescue from Nazi Terror. It was 'an alliance of activist clergy, the main Jewish leaders, and the parliamentary advocates for refugees', although its effectiveness was doubtful.[359] Dugdale attended a meeting at the Commons to coordinate the disparate Committees working to rescue Jews. She believed '[l]ittle or nothing will come of this, and the whole idea was so fantastically unthought [sic] out that it was almost funny.'[360]

Church leaders made public appeals and there were many regional endeavours either in the form of resolutions from local organizations or individual financial contributions.[361] However, the idea that ordinary Germans were either ignorant of atrocities or coerced into action held firm in church circles.[362] Far from dissenting from government

---

[353] *Spectator*, 22 January 1943, p.66.
[354] FO371/30917/90, 20 January 1943. The Foreign Office agreed most letters would remain unread.
[355] BoD ACC3121/C11/7/1/5, Memorandum.
[356] FO371/30917/105, 8 February 1943.
[357] Ibid., Memorandum by E.F. Rathbone, 7 January 1943.
[358] For example *New Statesman*, 26 December 1942, p.424.
[359] Pederson, *Eleanor Rathbone*, p.340.
[360] Rose, N.A., (ed.) *Baffy: The Diaries of Blanche Dugdale 1936-1947* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1973) pp.201-2. Diary entry for 9 March 1943.
[361] BoD ACC3121/A30, Executive Committee Report December 1942–January 1943; *Times*, 25 January 1943, p.2.
[362] *Times*, 11 March 1943, p.8.

inaction, senior Church of England figures exhorted the public to 'support the government in the efforts they were now making'.[363]

Over two hundred M.P.s from all parties signed a Commons motion assuring the government of 'support for immediate measures, on the largest and most generous scale' but this needed to be 'compatible with the requirements of military operations and security'.[364] Notwithstanding the idea that deference to war aims allowed for considerable latitude in interpretation, it should not be assumed that M.P.s were entirely united in indignation. Firstly, the number of consenting M.P.s did not constitute a Parliamentary majority. Secondly, the Liberals who only had twenty-one seats were the only mainstream political party to issue a resolution condemning atrocities. Thirdly, evidence from Foreign Office files suggests opposition was active and subtle. David Robertson, M.P. for Streatham, enclosed a letter from six constituents complaining of the government's response to Jewish persecution. He added a cover note stating it was 'perfectly obvious that a campaign' was 'being run by the Jews in this country, and by others'. He therefore agreed to Chair a meeting of the LNU at the South London Liberal Synagogue in order to '[praise] the Government for what they had already done' and agree a resolution that was 'innocuous'.[365]

A deputation of M.P.s met with the Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary, Colonial Secretary and a representative of the Dominions Secretary. It comprised Arthur Greenwood, Rathbone, Professor A.V. Hill, Independent Conservative M.P. for Cambridge University, Quintin Hogg, Silverman, Graham White and H. Holdsworth. It was not a high-profile group and recognized humanitarians were absent. The minutes of the meeting give an overall impression of deference to 'the Government's difficulties'. They specifically, 'deprecated debate at the present juncture' and the 'deputation as a whole expressed their satisfaction that the Government was doing all it could'. They hoped that the response from the other Governments with whom they were in consultation would enable really practical measures to be announced without too long a delay.[366] It was agreed that 'proceedings should be regarded as private' with

---

[363] Ibid., 15 March 1943, p.2.
[364] Ibid., 11 February 1943, p.4.
[365] FO371/30917/97, Letter from constituents, 29 January, 1943, Robertson to Eden, 5 February and Robertson to Eden, 23 February 1943.
[366] FO371/30917/94, 29 January 1943.

only a short communiqué issued to the press.[367] The 'private' nature of the proceedings undermined its public impact. The government put up a high-powered set of representatives, which may indicate the importance they gave the issue. Because no action resulted, it can reasonably be assumed they were drafted in to stifle debate. Not only did a shared perception of the exigencies of war dampen discussion but the contrast between a comparatively low-profile delegation and an unprecedented block of senior ministers perhaps constricted a bold approach. The nature of coalition government itself may have also minimized friction. The cross-party composition of the delegation was offset by the cross-party group of ministers thus emptying the issue of combative party politics.[368]

Correspondence between William Beveridge and the Foreign Office shows the extent to which a consensus existed between those who wished to criticize government policy and its implementers. Beveridge was planning a piece for the *Observer* critically examining government and Allied policy towards European Jews. Submitting it to Richard Law he agreed to meet and discuss its content and 'revise it after our talk.'[369] The draft was criticized for over-estimating the United Nations' ability to receive 'scores of thousands of people'; ignoring that 'the Nazi attack on the Jews is part but not by any means the whole of the German policy of extermination'; for failing to take into account that 'an exaggerated segregation of the Jewish question stimulates anti-Semitism'; and failing to suggest that any offer to Hitler to take Jews would be hampered by lack of shipping capacity.[370] However, the emphasis it laid on 'the Jewish problem being an international responsibility' was 'entirely sound' and would prove 'useful' considering America's 'lack of response.'[371] The modified article was published in the *Observer* and the *Daily Herald* on 4 and 8 February respectively.

The anti-Semitism of scepticism surfaced soon after the Allied Declaration. Olive Bennett wrote to the *Spectator* questioning Nicolson's assertions about the Warsaw

---

[367] Ibid.
[368] The Parliamentary correspondent of the *New Statesman* bemoaned the dearth of a creditable opposition: 'there is at present no national figure on the Opposition benches. One thinks, without going back to the days of Gladstone, how great a moral issue would have been made of this point by almost any former Opposition leader. An Asquith, a Lansbury, even a Baldwin would have compelled the public to see this question as one of simple human decency.' *New Statesman*, 23 January 1943, p.50.
[369] FO371/30917/102.
[370] Ibid.
[371] Ibid.

Ghetto.[372] She believed he had stretched 'the bounds of human credulity in making the statement of 433,000 Warsaw Jews congregated in a ghetto behind a high wall', adding:

> [t]he figures given are twice the number of the whole of the population of Warsaw, and I should like to see the wall enclosing nearly half a million people. From close observation of *The Times* I have discerned that it becomes a wailing wall according to our fluctuating fortunes of war and Jewish atrocities act as a barometer.[373]

By this time some 300,000 Jews had been murdered in Treblinka. Others shared Bennett's attitude. Other forms of prejudice were also evident. One contributor to Mass Observation stated that whilst at a meeting of the Soroptomist Club a Mrs Muir 'was blazing about the H. of Commons standing out of respect for the Jews who were being massacred in Europe. She thought the world was well rid of the Jews.'[374] One correspondent to the *New Statesman* wrote that the extent of anti-Semitism in Britain 'to-day is not yet full realised.'[375] Underlying anti-Jewish attitudes forced pro-Jewish activists onto the defensive. A. Schoyer, Chairman of the Association of Jewish Refugees of Great Britain pointed out that although he did not want to appear 'over-sensitive to criticism. In times like these…Xenophobia is apt to spread'.[376] He was compelled to emphasise the considerable contribution of refugees to the war effort. Professor A.V. Hill tried to defuse increasingly negative attitudes about the 'so-called Jewish problem'. He wrote to *The Times* urging the public to 'be reasonable and trust to arithmetic rather than wild hearsay or vague emotions'.[377] Nevertheless, papers like *The Times* persisted in printing warnings that even a 'small' number of refugees would 'be large enough to present grave problems.'[378]

---

[372] Nicolson had stated on 25 December, '[i]n October, 1940, the Germans interned 433,000 Warsaw Jews in a special area of ghetto which they surrounded with a high wall'. *Spectator*, 25 December 1942, p.597.
[373] Ibid., 8 January 1943, p.34. A letter from Lewis Namier was published the following week refuting Bennett's claims.
[374] Garfield, *Private Battles*, p.336. Entry for 7 March 1943.
[375] *New Statesman*, 13 March 1943, p.174. Letter from G.A. Prowse.
[376] Ibid.
[377] *Times*, 2 March 1943, p.5.
[378] Ibid., 3 April 1943, p.5.

Nearly two months after the Parliamentary declaration Harold Laski wrote an angry and sarcastic article on the growth of anti-Semitism,[379] which, he believed, was 'common knowledge.' Jews, he suggested, caused 'relentless and unceasing uneasiness by their inability to maintain a dignified silence in the presence of massive wrongs.' He mocked the idea that '[p]atriotic Jews would not force the full-scale horror of their sufferings upon the national attention. They would develop that sense of proportion which enables them to be seen and not heard.'[380] If a Jew addressed the issue he was 'likely to breed the conviction that he stands permanently outside the tradition in which he feels all his being involved.' Jews, he argued, could normally receive 'sympathetic consideration' but when looking 'for decisive action as the outcome of sympathy, he is made aware of frontiers within which he must dwell.'[381] Laski's article reveals two things; firstly, his frustration is borne out of the juxtaposition of his ability to imagine the scale of atrocity and the inability to galvanize action; secondly that one of the central problems facing Jews who lobbied for action was that they were simply not English and 'inappropriate' allusion to Jewish suffering reinforced that view.

A letter the following week, whilst pronouncing a 'real and deep regard' for Jews, pointed out Laski had omitted 'the factor which is producing more anti-Jewish feeling than any other…the behaviour of foreign Jews in our midst' adding it was '[s]mall wonder that anti-Semitism, a disgraceful reaction, is growing at a really frightening rate.'[382] The editor of the *New Statesman* added:

> [w]e have received several similar letters from people whose opinions deserve serious attention. They are fully alive to the grave political danger of anti-Semitism and are not themselves anti-Semitic. But they charge some sections of the Jewish community with a number of social faults these, it seems to us, can be summarised by saying that some Jews, particularly in areas where refugees congregate in considerable numbers, have bad, or at least unEnglish [sic] manners, behave inconsiderately and selfishly to their neighbours in shops and

---

[379] For the persistence of anti-Semitism see Kushner, Tony, *The Persistence of Prejudice: Antisemitism in British Society During the Second World War* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989).
[380] *New Statesman*, 13 February 1943, p.107.
[381] Ibid.
[382] Ibid., Letter from Eugenie Fordham, 27 February 1943.

buses and generally make themselves unwisely conspicuous. Xenophobia easily spreads in wartime.[383]

The persistence of this anti-Jewish discourse together with the reluctance of activists to make a public issue out of their attempts to influence policy meant the government could refute rescue suggestions with relative ease.[384] The planned Bermuda conference eventually took place in early 1943.[385] A cable signed by 'religious leaders, members of both Houses of Parliament, Lord Mayors, members of the council of the Royal Society and other scientific leaders, heads of colleges at Oxford and Cambridge, heads of other university bodies, trade union leaders, and a number of well-known men and women' was sent to Eden assuring him in the light of the 'forthcoming Anglo-American conference' of public support for 'any sacrifice consistent with not delaying victory.'[386] This caveat was crucial and so nebulously defined that if invoked as a defence for inaction then it largely remained unquestioned. The magnitude of the atrocities was so vast that it became 'common sense' for the problem to be internationalised. As the Archbishop of Canterbury stated to the Lords 'it is obviously a problem which cannot be solved by this country alone'.[387] Britain's specific role was arguably diffused in the individual and collective conscience.

Whatever its faults, the British liberal tradition could facilitate a strong compassionate response for most victim groups. Therefore generic flaws in British liberalism cannot fully explain comparative lack of compassion for Jews. Unless the inability of the liberal imagination to comprehend violence and 'liberal ambivalence' can be applied to the spectrum of non-English victims, it ceases to become a useful tool for investigating British responses to atrocity. The response to Jewish suffering was particular.

Three major strands came together to influence British reactions to each major manifestation of German brutality. Firstly, German atrocities in the Great War were mis-remembered and had been re-written. The British had 'unjustly' accused Germans

---

[383] Ibid.
[384] Rathbone wrote to Eden in Spring 1943, 'What can we all do but go on making ourselves a nuisance to you and everyone else in authority? We recognize the disadvantages of publicity. But nothing here seems to happen without.' Cited in Cohen, *Rescue the Perishing*, p.193.
[385] Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p.178.
[386] *Times*, 23 March 1943, p.6.
[387] *Spectator*, 26 March 1943, p.282. The Bermuda Conference on refugees took place in mid-April and although it achieved its aim of appearing to take action, it was largely a sham. When it came to announce the outcome, most of its content was not divulged for reasons of 'security'. Ibid., 28 May 1943, p.498.

of committing atrocities. They had transgressed their own rules of fair play. The construction of this myth had as much to do with the way the British saw themselves as how they perceived the Germans. However, not only had German atrocities been forgotten but the belief in the propensity for Jews to exaggerate their own suffering was persistent.

Secondly, from 1933 to 1943 there was widespread faith in the essential and enduring qualities of the German national character. By distancing the majority of Germans from anti-Jewish brutality and blaming a vicious and dominant minority, Britons could maintain the legend that millions of people were brainwashed, coerced or ignorant of persecution and mass murder. Yet in 2001, Robert Gellately stated that this idea 'is so implausible that it should be dismissed out of hand.'[388] But it is a myth that persists. In the decade after the Nazis took power all shades of political persuasion advocated some version of this fiction. It was arguably one of the main pillars of Appeasement. This belief had a particular impact on those likely to respond sympathetically to foreign atrocities. Michael Balfour has pointed out that during the war those most liable to sympathize with Germany over their treatment after the Great War 'were just the ones most inclined to moral indignation at Nazi misdeeds.' This created a paradox for those most disposed towards compassionate action. Humanitarians clung to the notion that 'the great mass of the German people…could be relied on, if they only had a chance, to re-establish freedom, responsible government and the rule of law.'[389] This committed them intrinsically to the war effort because Allied military success would undermine Nazi rule and bring forth an uprising inside Germany. Therefore all priorities, including those for immediate action on behalf of Jews, were subsumed to this end. Furthermore, in order to reinforce this fallacy the government drew a distinction between Nazis, who were readily demonized, and ordinary Germans.

The third strand relates to the tendency of the British in the interwar years to superimpose aspects of their national character onto those deemed most deserving of sympathy. From 1914, Armenians, Turks, Abyssinians, Spaniards, Chinese and Germans rather than Jews were believed to most fit the mould. Jews were not as 'redeemable' as other victims or indeed some perpetrator groups, especially the

---

[388] Gellately, Robert, *Backing Hitler* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) p.259.
[389] Balfour, *Propaganda in War*, p.167.

Germans. Other causes, or more specifically, other victims, provided greater motivation for empathy or humanitarian action.[390] Whereas, for example, Germans, Turks and Chinese could be vilified and then in a remarkably short space of time, rehabilitated, there was a persistence and diversity of countervailing belief about Jews which prevented them becoming 'worthy' victims. There was almost invariably some other group, or some other issue, which trumped overt association with a specifically Jewish cause. Jews were therefore subject to a hierarchy of compassion.

[390] Louise London suggests in the case of Spanish refugees 'it was relatively easy to persuade the British government to make an exception for the Basque children.' London, *Whitehall and the Jews*, p.113.

Conclusion

Five days after Germany occupied Czechoslovakia Victor Gollancz gave a speech at a meeting of the Left Book Club at Chelsea Town Hall. After the false hopes of Munich, the inevitability of war was dawning on the population of Britain. Vera Brittain recorded in her diary that Gollancz:

> used his speech to make the most terrible, emotional, irrational attack on Germany & Fascism which reminded me of the recruiting meetings in 1914. It was full of all the old illusion about a War to end War, smashing German militarism & making the world safe for democracy, & he used hysterical atrocity arguments…quite unworthy of an intelligent person.[1]

Quite apart from Brittain's fervent pacifism, her words convey something of the extent to which the memory of German atrocities in the Great War had found an entirely new resonance. They had been re-written. Her comments also imply that Gollancz's Jewishness was under scrutiny. His alleged emotionalism was, for her, a barrier to indignation. These were long-standing pre-conceptions that had built over time. It is partly for this reason that this thesis has tracked the trajectory of these discourses since the beginning of the Great War.

Building on the work of previous historians who have grappled with British responses to the persecution of the Jews under Nazi domination, this argument deliberately builds a deeper perspective. By taking a generic approach and not restricting the focus to any individual atrocity, it has uncovered the many and complex issues that affected the atrocity discourse in Britain between the wars. It has explored the numerous facets of historical and ideological context and the interplay of contemporary forces. Specifically the interaction of memory, perceptions of national identity, the movements of public opinion and the interaction of political leaders with public opinion. It has also been a comparative study, one that enables contrasts between different responses to be made within Britain itself. It explores the construction and re-construction of different victims of atrocity and in some cases the perpetrators. Moreover, it assesses the effect

---

[1] Bishop, Alan, (ed.) *Chronicle of Friendship: Vera Brittain's Diary of the Thirties 1932-39* (London: Gollancz, 1986) 20 March 1939, p.347.

of these manipulations on compassionate action. It has been shown that it is not viable to examine British responses to any one atrocity without reference to other examples. Building a comprehensive context is vital to most studies that deal with any part of Holocaust historiography. As Mark Mazower states 'the Holocaust…may be better understood in a historical context that stretches back to the age of empire…'[2] Thus, this new approach to British responses to atrocity adds knowledge to the existing historiography.

As well as acknowledging the rich vein of knowledge contributed by other historians, this thesis has engaged with a broad cross section of primary sources. It has attempted to show history 'from above', from leaders and opinion formers, and combine it with history 'from below'. The voice of a variety of individuals from a range of political persuasions and social backgrounds has created a three-dimensional picture in which contemporaries have as far as possible received a 'fair hearing'.[3] For leaders, foreign affairs were in many cases part of their job. For 'ordinary Britons' what has been notable during the course of research is that despite 'artificial censorships, the limitations of social contact, the comparatively meagre time available in each day for paying attention to public affairs', foreign atrocities were very much part of their world.[4] The sources chosen to illustrate each debate construct an appropriate context for the British reaction to the persecution and mass murder of the Jews under German control. The individual chapters come together to create a comprehensive picture of the development of British attitudes.

From 1914 onwards the British were faced with foreign atrocities. During World War One, German atrocities against civilians in newly occupied territories in many ways brought the war home to them and gave it meaning. Many responded by joining the army and ultimately giving their lives in a cause that was, at the time considered worth fighting for. In Britain, German 'frightfulness' may well have been sensationalized in some sections of the press, but to suggest the bulk of the population were manipulated by propaganda does a disservice to what was believed at the time. Atrocities were a grave issue, seriously investigated, cited at public meetings, and reaching into the

---

[2] Mazower, Mark, 'Violence and the State in the Twentieth Century', *The American Historical Review* 107.4 (2002): par.38, <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/107.4/ah0402001158.html>.
[3] Marrus, Michael, *The Holocaust in History* (London: Penguin, 1987) p.157.
[4] Lippman, Walter, *Public Opinion* (New York: Dover Publications, 1922).

home. As Horne and Kramer state '[a]trocity accusations were central to the 'war cultures' which emerged in 1914-15 in all the belligerent societies.'[5] In Britain, this was the start of a long and complex discourse on foreign brutality that infused debate in the interwar years.

Things were complicated almost immediately afterwards by the behaviour of British troops and security forces, especially at Amritsar and perhaps even more pertinent, because closer to home, in Ireland. Atrocities committed by the British were discussed in Parliament and avidly debated in the press. The idea that British subjects were capable of 'frightfulness' was a deep shock. The shock itself was perhaps more pronounced because during the war many had been convinced that they were fighting on the side of 'right', the side of 'civilization'. Moralizing about German atrocities and more pertinently about the propensity of the German character to embrace violence became untenable. This confluence of factors was crucial to the reformation of memory. It paved the way for a new 'myth', that ordinary Germans, like ordinary Britons sought peace and rejected the philosophy of violence. This belief was to have a significant effect on reactions to Germany after the Nazis rose to power.

The Armenians, so long the object of British empathy, were to become another casualty of this propensity to reshape past events. During the war the suffering of Armenians under Turkish rule evoked widespread indignation. National emergency was no barrier to compassion. It is true that many had had enough of war after the armistice. Nevertheless, Britons were faced with a dilemma of how to accommodate the widely believed national characteristic of defending the weak and oppressed. The Coalition government, which believed that a return to wartime patriotic sentiment would galvanize public support in favour of minority protection, was tainted with their role in condoning British atrocities. Political enemies seized upon public doubts and successfully undermined the government by advocating what might be called an 'inward turn'. There were too many problems at home to be embarking on moral crusades abroad. To facilitate this Armenians, Greeks and Turks were reinvented in the public imagination.

---

[5] Horne, John and Kramer, Alan, *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial* (London: Yale University Press, 2001) p.291.

Jews in Poland who became the victims of resurgent Polish nationalism and anti-Semitic forces after the war rarely benefitted from British compassion. As soon as atrocity reports reached Britain, Jews were designated as unworthy of sympathy. They were not merely the victims of *realpolitik*. It was more a question of widespread fear of Bolshevism. The reinstatement of Poland was seen as necessary to create a physical and ideological barrier between Soviet Russia and Western Europe. Jews, especially eastern Jews, were immediately aligned with the Bolshevik cause. They were deemed a subversive element and somehow deserving of harsh treatment. Not only that, but Jews who spoke up in support of the persecuted were held to be prone to exaggeration. The charge stuck. The advent of the Russo-Polish War sealed the marginalization of Jews generally and Anglo-Jewry specifically. They were forced onto the defensive during what was perhaps the most anti-Semitic period in modern British history.

The view that British society was somehow detached or isolated from increasing world tensions between the wars 'has always been a distorted image.'[6] As Stephen Spender commented '[t]he 1930s saw the last of the idea that the individual, accepting his responsibilities, could alter…history'.[7] In reality, the

> public displayed a sustained appetite for information about the European political extremes and debated the issues surrounding them in a cultural and organizational milieu often quite independent of the party political system or party allegiance.[8]

They were informed, they understood, they reacted. Abyssinia, a most improbable focus of tension, became the centre of public and political concern. For a while, especially after Samuel Hoare's defiant, but ultimately misleading speech at the League of Nations Assembly in September 1935, many in Britain thought that the government would again embrace the traditional role of defending the oppressed by providing leadership to the League. Lloyd George spoke for many when he looked back on the crisis in a speech given in June 1936. He said:

> [t]here never has been such a chance in the history of the World of arraying the whole of the nations behind the cause of international right as to-day. Never. It

---

[6] Overy, Richard, *The Morbid Age: Britain Between the Wars* (London: Allen Lane, 2009) p.369.
[7] Spender, Stephen, *World Within World* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977) p.290.
[8] Overy, *Morbid Age*, p.270.

> was a heaven-sent opportunity – fifty nations, great and small. There was an overwhelming force behind justice, a force that no aggressor could stand against if resolutely led.[9]

He spoke with a sense of regret because the government had backed down in the face of aggression. Public opinion was roused on behalf of a small East African nation. The government was rocked to its foundations, and despite the loss of its Foreign Secretary prevailed in resting the ideological initiative away from supporters of the League of Nations. In doing so it destroyed the credibility of the League once and for all. International justice took a severe blow as did the hopes of vulnerable minorities and small nations under threat from predatory dictatorships.

It is now tempting to look back on the Spanish Civil War and believe that the British reaction was somehow inevitable. It was not. Spain was on the margins of Europe but became the core of European tensions. It was also on the margins of the British imagination but evoked perhaps the most widespread and lengthy humanitarian campaign on behalf of another people in British history. Atrocity was at the core of the debate over Spain in the first year of the conflict. The bombing of Guernica stirred the country. For a period it subsumed ideological divisions and most of Britain was united in condemnation. Fear of aerial bombing also contributed to an unlikely outpouring of sympathy on behalf of the Chinese following the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937. As Japanese forces battered Chinese citizens the violence was brought home to the British public who found new qualities in the victims, ones that would enable a greater sense of empathy.

The persecution and mass murder of the Jews under Nazi rule did not evoke the strength, intensity or longevity of public response afforded to other causes. The subject was certainly debated, it also caused discomfort and in some cases Jews were the subject of genuine compassion. The discourse in Britain about atrocities against Jews shows that there were too many countervailing forces cutting across it to evoke the passion displayed elsewhere. The question whether Germans were incapable of violence, whether Jews exaggerated their own suffering, whether Jews evoked 'shrinking', whether Jews could not be seen as victims because of their 'wealth',

---

[9] Toynbee, Arnold J., *Survey of International Affairs 1935: Volume II: Abyssinia and Italy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936) p.480.

whether Jews were just not British, whether other causes were more important or more compelling; all of these and more cut across British compassion. Many historians have argued that the information about anti-Jewish atrocities remained unassimilated in British minds; that they knew but did not *really* know. I argue there was little barrier to understanding atrocity. Atrocities were comprehended, talked about and evoked action. Cathy Carmichael in her study of genocide before the Holocaust comments that '[e]ven when the notion of wiping a whole people out was repudiated in its entirety as morally repulsive, it was still something that could be *conceptualized*.'[10] This was as true for Britain during World War Two as between the wars.

As has been shown throughout this thesis, the British reacted in accordance with a strong tradition of humanitarian concern for the weak and oppressed overseas. There was a strong sense that this form of benevolence was actually something that marked Britons out from others. Springing perhaps from the self-satisfaction emanating from the 'Whig interpretation of history' the British believed they were in a position to help those less fortunate than themselves. This was not something nebulous: it had real ramifications. Overy points to:

> the absence of serious threat or profound discontinuities. Britain was not invaded or occupied during the Great War; its economy survived far better than the other major states in the inter-war years; there was no real prospect of social revolution; no one was tortured or murdered by the state's secret police.[11]

This had an effect on attitudes and the ability to debate openly. However, in order to capture the public imagination, victims were required to become something other than the 'other'. Those who became the object of British compassion were recast in order to endow them with some form of English or British characteristic. On this basis, some could fall from favour, such as the Armenians; others could be brought back into the fold such as the Turks or the Germans; certain groups could be plucked from obscurity and catapulted onto centre stage such as the Abyssinians or the Spanish. When it came to Jews there was a stubbornness about their image which meant they could not be re-imagined.

---

[10] Carmichael, Cathie, *Genocide Before the Holocaust* (Yale University Press, 2009) p.9.
[11] Overy, *Morbid Age*, p.7.

The way past atrocities were incorporated into the discourse on later ones has also been explored. Neil Gregor has shown that:

> 'memory' is no more, and no less, than a metaphor for the ways in which, through their narrativisation, experiences become rendered as stories which circulate through, within and around a society, or section of it, becoming part of that society's 'shared cultural knowledge'.[12]

Some atrocities attained a kind of iconic status, such as Guernica. Japanese bombing of Chinese civilians was understood within the framework of that earlier example. Others were pushed to the background. For example, it became a kind of 'common sense' in post-war Britain that German atrocities were a 'myth'. The role of the word 'frightfulness', a word that now seems antiquated and innocuous, had metonymic connotations between the wars. It stood for the doctrine of violence, for the dragooning of innocents, for the slaughter of civilians. Somehow though, one aspect of its meaning became disembodied from the original context. During the First World War it stood for *German* brutality. After the war it could be applied to anyone *except* the Germans. This illustrates how certain memories could be brought to the fore and others could be sidelined. This was a vital component when reinventing 'worthy victims'.

The movements of public opinion and their interaction with the political processes have been a major part of this thesis. Kushner states that it is 'impossible to understand state policies towards the Jews of Europe in countries such as Britain and the United States without reference to public opinion.'[13] Throughout the interwar period, politicians battled to understand, contain, and manipulate popular conceptions of foreign events. It must be stated that in some senses this thesis is more concerned with processes than outcomes. British governments throughout the interwar years, especially during the 1930s, were particularly inert when faced with overseas crises. Public opinion often became a political issue but rarely, if ever, diverted an incumbent government from its overarching policies. It is the *extent* to which officials had to wrestle with the electorate that has been explored. Therefore attention has been devoted to showing the manifestations of public unrest. This project tracks the movements of public opinion

---

[12] Gregor, Neil, *Haunted City: Nuremberg and the Nazi Past* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008) p.15.
[13] Kushner, Tony, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination: A Social and Cultural History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994) p.275.

and shows that in some instances, such as the Chanak crisis or the Abyssinian affair, the government was susceptible to forces beyond their control. In these cases there were identifiable political casualties. When faced with the reaction over the Spanish Civil War politicians struggled to contain public anger. When it came to China they had become better at dealing with overseas crises and were more adept at making the right noises to help mollify outrage. When Jews were victims, the force of public opinion was less of an issue. To be sure officials sometimes acted out of concern that they *might* become an issue but generally, some mild token taken on behalf of persecuted Jews was enough to silence the majority.

Overall then, I have shown that Britons, whether politicians, officials, journalists, commentators, activists or ordinary members of the public were vexed by a world that after 1914 became dangerous and unpredictable. They did not shut themselves away. Foreign atrocities galvanized massive reactions on behalf of the oppressed. They reacted because they understood only too well what atrocity meant. The memory of past atrocities, national identity, and contemporary political and social forces worked together to formulate circumstances that often led to public outrage that could not be ignored by those in power. Each response was unique, but that sense of uniqueness should not be overstressed. Common strands bound British confrontation with foreign atrocities. What is clear is that a variety of victims were cast and recast in the British imagination, but not the Jews. Reactions to anti-Jewish atrocities were particular. The Jews were low down a hierarchy of compassion. Indeed, reactions to the fate of the Jews between 1919 and 1943 show the limits of British compassion.

Sources and Bibliography

1. Primary sources

1.1 Unpublished primary sources.

American Jewish Committee Archives

Louis Marshall Correspondence, Peace Conference, Paris, 1919.

Cyrus Adler Correspondence (Chronological Files).

Board of Deputies of British Jews Archive (Metropolitan Archive)

Board of Deputies Papers ACC/3121.

Government documents and reports

National Archive, UK, PRO

CAB 16/121, Cabinet Papers, Abyssinia.

FO 371/3281-2, Correspondence, Poland.

FO 371/4369, P.I.D. Code PID File 483-682.

FO 371/16724, Correspondence, Germany.

FO 371/16756, Correspondence, Germany.

FO 371/19120-34, Correspondence, Ethiopia.

FO 371/22037, Japanese air raids on China.

FO 371/22146-7, Political, Far Eastern China.

FO 371/22536, Refugees: international assistance.

FO 371/24472, Situation in Poland.

FO 371/26540, German breaches of rules of warfare.

FO 371/30917, Treatment of war criminals.

FO 371/32680, The present treatment of world Jewry.

FO 372/3282, Correspondence.

FO 608/61-7, Peace Conference: British Delegation, Correspondence and Papers.

FO 676, Foreign Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Various Legations, China: General Correspondence, Series II.

FO 688/6, Foreign office: Embassy, Poland: General Correspondence.

Mass Observation Archive

Anti-Semitism 1939-51 Boxes 1-2, Diaries, Directive Replies, Worktown Box 8.

Parliamentary Archive

Bonar Law Papers,

BL/112, Prime Minister, Special Series Correspondence.

Lloyd George Papers,

LG/F/6, Correspondence.

LG/F/10, Correspondence.

LG/F/12, Correspondence.

LG/F/199, Foreign.

LG/F/206, Turkey.

LG/F/207-9, Turkey and the Chanak Crisis.

LG/F/214, Reparations.

LG/H/15-16, Asquith speeches.

Personal Papers

Vyvyan Adams Papers,

London School of Economics, Record 1.

Hugh Dalton Papers,

London School of Economics, Record 270.

Moses Gaster Papers,

University College London, Jewish Collections.

Liddell Hart Papers,

Kings College, LH15/3.

Kingsley Martin Papers,

University of Sussex, Boxes 11-15.

Gilbert Murray Papers,

Bodleian Library, Ms. 125.

Arnold J. Toynbee Papers,

Bodleian Library, Box 50-54.

Wolf/Moshowitsch Papers,

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, RG348.

Wolf, Lucien, *Diary of Peace Conference*, 11 June 1919. University College London, Jewish Collections.

1.2 Published Primary Sources

A Preliminary Official Report on the Atrocities Committed in Southern Spain in July and August, 1936, by the Communist Forces of the Madrid Government. Issued by authority of The Committee of Investigation Appointed by the National Government at Burgos, (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1936).

Asquith, H.H., The War its Causes and its Message: Speeches Delivered by the Prime Minister August – October 1914 (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1914).

Atholl, Duchess of, *Searchlight on Spain* (London: Penguin, June 1938).

Baldwin, Stanley, *On England And Other Addresses* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1938).

Baravelli, C.G., *The Last Stronghold of Slavery* (Rome: Societa Editrice di Novissima, 1935).

Bennett, E.N., *The German Army in Belgium: The White Book of May 1915* (London: Swathmore Press, April 1921).

Brailsford, Henry Noel, *Across the Blockade: A Record of Travels in Enemy Europe* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1919).

Brailsford, H.N., *The German Problem* (London: Commonwealth, 1944).

Brex, John Twells, "*Scaremongerings" from the Daily Mail 1896-1914* (London, 1914)

Briollay, Silvain, *Ireland in Rebellion* (Dublin: 1922).

Charteris John, *At G.H.Q.* (London: Cassell, 1931).

Cohen, Israel, *A Report on the Pogroms in Poland* (London: Central Office of the Zionist Organisation, April 1919).

Covenants with Death (London: Daily Express Publications, 1934).

Curtis, Lionel, *Ireland (1921) with Introduction: The Anglo-Irish Treaty and the 'Lost World' of Imperial Ireland* (ed.) Pat Walsh (Belfast: B. Clifford, 2002).

Graves, Robert and Hodge, Alan, *The Long Weekend* (London: Faber & Faber, 1940).

Forster E.M., *Two Cheers For Democracy* (Bungay, The Chaucer Press, 1972).

German Atrocities in France: A Translation of the Official Report of the French Commission. Published by *The Daily Chronicle* (London 1916).

Gollancz, Victor, *"Let My People Go": Some practical proposals for dealing with Hitler's Massacre of the Jews and an appeal to the British Public* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1943).

Gollancz, Victor, *Shall Our Children Live or Die? A Reply to Lord Vansittart on the German Problem* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1942).

Henson, Hensley H., *War-Time Sermons* (London: MacMillan, 1915).

Hiett, Helen, *Public Opinion and the Italo-Ethiopian Dispute: The Activity of Private Organizations in the Crisis*, Geneva Special Studies, Vol. VII, No.1, February 1936 (Geneva: Geneva Research Centre, 1936).

Hollington K. Tong, *Chiang Kai-shek: Soldier and Statesman* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1938).

Hunter, William, *Report of the Committee Appointed by the Government of India to Investigate the Disturbances in the Punjab, etc.* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1920).

Joint Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms, Cd. 9109, 1918.

Laski, H.J., *The Germans–Are they Human? A Reply to Sir Robert Vansittart* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1941).

Livingstone, Dame Adelaide, *The Peace Ballot: The Official History* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., June 1935).

Lippman, Walter, *Public Opinion* (New York: Dover Publications, 1922).

Lytton, Earl of, *The League the Far East and Ourselves* (London: Pelican Press, 1934).

Martin, Hugh, *Ireland in Insurrection: An Englishman's Record of Fact* (London: Daniel O'Connor, 1921).

Masterman, C.F.G., *The New Liberalism* (London: Leonard Parsons, 1920).

McCallum, R.B., *Public Opinion and the Last Peace* (London: Oxford University Press, 1944).

Morgan, Professor J.H., *A Dishonoured Army: German Atrocities in France: With Unpublished Records*, Reprinted from The Nineteenth Century, June 1915 (London: Spottiswoode & Co. Ltd, 1915).

Orwell, George, *Homage to Catalonia* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984).

Orwell, Sonia and Angus, Ian, (eds.) *The Collected Essays Journalism and Letters of George Orwell: Volume I, An Age Like This* (London: Penguin, 1970).

Orwell, Sonia and Angus, Ian, (eds.) *The Collected Essays Journalism and Letters of George Orwell: Volume II, My Country Right or Left* (London: Penguin, 1970).

Orwell, Sonia and Angus, Ian, (eds.) *The Collected Essays Journalism and Letters of George Orwell: Volume III, As I Please 1943-45* (London: Penguin, 1970).

Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons.

Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords.

Ponsonby, Arthur, *Falsehood in Wartime: Containing An Assortment of Lies Circulated Throughout the Nations During the Great War.* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co. Ltd, c.1927).

Rathbone, Eleanor, (ed.) *The Tragedy of Abyssinia: What Britain Feels and Thinks and Wants* (London: League of Nations Union, 1936).

Rathbone, Eleanor, *War Can Be Averted: The Achievability of Collective Security* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1938).

Report by Sir Stuart Samuel on his Mission to Poland. (Cmd.674) Miscellaneous No. 10, (1920).

Report of the Labour Commission to Ireland (London: Caledonian Press, 1921).

Robinson, Emily J., *Armenia and the Armenians* (London: 1917).

Santayana, George, *Soliloquies of England* (London: Constable, 1937 First published 1922).

Sokolow, Nahum, *History of Zionism 1600-1918* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1919).

Stopes, M., *Black Breeding: A supplementary indictment to Lord Vansittart's pamphlet "Black Record". The soul of a people can be changed.* (London: Hutchinson, 1942).

The Covenant of the League of Nations. Including Amendments adopted to December, 1924. Lillian Goldman Law Library, The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy.
http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp.

The League Nations Year Book 1936 (London: League of Nations Union, 1936).

The Persecution of the Jews in Germany (London: 1933).

The Treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Falloden Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916).

The War in Abyssinia: A Statement by the Archbishop of Canterbury (London: The Stanhope Press, 1935).

Toynbee, Arnold J., *Armenian Atrocities: The Murder of a Nation* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915).

Toynbee, Arnold J., *Survey of International Affairs 1935: Volume II: Abyssinia and Italy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936).

Toynbee, Arnold J., *Turkey: A Past and a Future* (New York: George H. Doran, 1917).

Toynbee, Arnold J., *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey: A Study in the Contact of Civilisations* (London: Constable, 1922).
Turkey No. 1 (1921) Reports on Atrocities in the Districts of Yalova and Guemlek and in The Ismid Peninsula, Cmd.1478.

Utley, Freda, *Japan's Gamble in China* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1938).

Vansittart, Robert, *Black Record: Germans Past and Present* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1941).

Wells, H.G., *The Anatomy of Frustration: A Modern Synthesis* (London: The Cresset Press, 1936).

Wickham Steed, Henry, *The Hapsburg Monarchy* (London: Constable and Company, 1914).

Wickham Steed, Henry, *Through Thirty Years 1982–1922: A Personal Narrative*, Vol.II (London: William Heinemenn Ltd., 1924).

Wilkinson, Ellen, *The Terror in Germany* (London: 1933).

1.3 Diaries and letters

Amory, Mark, (ed.) *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh* (London: Penguin, 1982).

Ball, Stuart, (ed.), *Parliament and Politics in the Age of Baldwin and MocDonald: The Headlam Diaries 1923-1935* (London: The Historians' Press, 1992).

Barnes, John and Nicholson, David, (eds.), *The Empire at Bay: The Leo Amery Diaries 1929-1945,* (London: Hutchinson, 1988).

Bishop, Alan, (ed.), *Chronicle of Friendship: Vera Brittain's Diary of the Thirties 1932-39* (London: Gollancz, 1986).

Bryant F. Russell, (ed.) *The Coalition Diaries of H.A.L. Fisher, 1916-1922 Volume I 1916-1918* (Lampeter, The Edwin Mellen Press Ltd., 2006).

Cole, Margaret L., (ed.) *Beatrice Webb's Diaries 1912 – 1924* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1952).

Cole, Margaret L., (ed.) *Beatrice Webb's Diaries 1924 – 1932*, (London: Longmans, 1956).

Crowson, N.J., (ed.) *Fleet Street, Press Barons and Politics: The Journals of Collin Brooks 1932-1940* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1998).

Dilks, David, (ed.) *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan 1938-1945* (London: Cassell, 1971).

Garfield, S., (ed.) *Private Battles: How the War Almost Defeated Us* (Ebury Press, 2006).

Goldsmith, John, (ed.) *Stephen Spender Journals 1939 – 1983* (London: Faber and Faber, 1985).

Gordon Lennox, Lady Algernon, (ed.) *The Diary of Lord Bertie of Thame 1914 – 1918*, vol.1, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1924).

Hardy, Henry, (ed.) *Isaiah Berlin: Letters 1928-1946* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Harvey, John, (ed.) *The Diplomatic Diaries of Oliver Harvey 1937-1940* (London: Collins, 1970).

Headlam-Morley, Agnes, Bryant, Russell and Cienciala, Anna, (eds.) *A Memoir of the Paris Peace Conference 1919* (London, Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1972).

Higgins D.S., (ed.) *The Private Diaries of Sir H. Rider Haggard* (London: Cassell, 1980).

Hogg, Anthony, (ed.) *The Hulton Diaries 1832 – 1928 A Gradely Lancashire Chronicle* (Chichester: Solo Mio Books, 1989).

Hooper, Walter, (ed.) *All My Road Before Me: The Diary of C.S. Lewis 1922-1927* (London: Harper Collins, 1991).

Inge, W.R., *Diary of a Dean: St. Paul's 1911-1934* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1949).

Jamieson, Patricia, (ed.) *A Bootle Family: The Diaries of John and Roy Stevenson (1921/22)* (London: Geemjay Publications, 1997).

Johnson, Gaynor, (ed.) *Our Man in Berlin: The Diary of Eric Phipps, 1933-1937* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

MacDonagh, Michael, *In London During the Great War: The Diary of a Journalist* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1935).

Martel, Gordon, (ed.) *The Times and Appeasement: The Journals of A.L. Kennedy, 1932-1939* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

McCooey, Chris, (ed.) *Despatches from the Home Front: The War Diaries of Joan Strange,* (Eastbourne: Monarch Publications, 1989).

Middlemas, Keith, (ed) *Thomas Jones, Whitehall Diary Vol. I 1916-1925* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969)

Middlemas, Keith, (ed), *Thomas Jones, Whitehall Diary Vol. II 1926-1930* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).

Middlemas, Keith, (ed*.) Thomas Jones, Whitehall Diary, Vol.III, Ireland 1918-1925* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).

Minney, R.J., (ed.) *The Private Papers of Hore-Belisha,* (Aldershot: Gregg Revivals, 1991).

Montagu, Venetia, (ed.) *An Indian Diary* (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1930).

Mosely, Charlotte, (ed.) *The Letters of Nancy Mitford* (London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., 1993).

Mosley, Charlotte, (ed.) *The Mitfords: Letters Between Six Sisters* (London: Fourth Estate, 2007).

Nicolson, Nigel, (ed.) *Harold Nicolson Diaries and Letters 1930-39* (London: Collins, 1971).

Nicolson, Nigel, (ed.) *Harold Nicolson Diaries and Letters 1907-1964* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004).

Norwich, John Julius, (ed.) *The Duff Cooper Diaries 1915-1951* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005).

Pearce, Robert, (ed.) *Patrick Gordon Walker: Political Diaries 1932-1971* (London: The Historians' Press, 1991).

Phizackerley, Gerald, (ed.) *The Diaries of Maria Gyte of Sheldon, Derbyshire 1913-1920* (Cromford: Scarthin Books, 1999).

Pottle, Mark, (ed.) *Champion Redoubtable: The Diaries and Letters of Violet Bonham Carter 1914-1945* (London: Phoenix, 1998).

Rhodes James, Robert, (ed.) *'Chips' The Diaries of Sir Henry Channon* (London: Phoenix, 1993).

Riddell, *Lord Riddell's Intimate Diary of the Peace Conference and After 1918–1923* (London: Gollancz, 1933).

Rose, N.A., (ed.) *Baffy: The Diaries of Blanche Dugdale 1936-1947* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1973).

Self, Robert, (ed.) *The Neville Chamberlain Diary Letters, Volume Four, The Downing Street Years, 1934-1940* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005).

Smart, Nick, (ed.) *The Diaries and Letters of Robert Bernays, 1932-1939: An Insider's Account of the House of Commons* (Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press Ltd., 1996).

Smith, David C., (ed.) *The Correspondence of H. G. Wells* Volume 3 (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1998).

Smith, David C., (ed.) *The Correspondence of H.G. Wells Volume 4 1935-1946* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1998).

Smith, Grover, (ed.) *Letters of Aldous Huxley* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1969).

Taylor, A.J.P., (ed.) *Lloyd George A Diary by Frances Stevenson* (London: Hutchinson, 1971).

Wilson, Trevor, (ed.) *The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott 1911-1928* (New York: Cornell University, 1970).

Weisgal, Meyer W., (ed.) *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizman*: Vol.9, Series A, October 1918–July 1920 (Jerusalem: Transaction Books, 1977).

Oliver, Anne and McNeillie, Andrew, (eds.) *The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Vol. IV, 1931-1935* (London: Hogarth, 1982).

1.4 Memoirs

Amery, L.S., *My Political Life, Volume Three, The Unforgiving Years 1929-1940* (London: Hutchinson, 1955).

Angell, Norman, *After All: The Autobiography of Norman Angell* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1951).

Atholl, Katharine, *Working Partnership* (London: Arthur Barker Ltd., 1958).

Buchan, John, *Memory Hold the Door* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1940).

Churchill, Winston S., *The Second World War: Volume I: The Gathering Storm* (London: Cassell & Co. Ltd., 1948).

Churchill, Winston S., *The World Crisis: The Aftermath* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1929).

Clegg, Arthur, *Aid China: 1937-1949 A Memoir of a Forgotten Campaign* (Beijing: New World Press, 2003).

Cooper, Duff, *Old Men Forget: The Autobiography of Duff Cooper* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954).

Coote, Colin R., *Editorial: The Memoirs of Colin R. Coote* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1965).

Cross, Colin, (ed.) Life with Lloyd George: The Diary of A.J. Sylvester, (London: Macmillan, 1975).

Crozier, F.P., *A Brass Hat in No Man's Land* (London, 1930).

Dalton, Hugh, *The Fateful Years: Memoirs 1931-1945* (London: Frederick Muller Ltd, 1957).

Dash, Jack, *Good Morning Brothers!* (London: Mayflower, 1970).

Davie, Michael, (ed.) *The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1976).

Eden, Anthony, *The Eden Memoirs: Facing the Dictators* (London: Cassell, 1962).

Halifax, *Fulness of Days* (London: Collins, 1957).

Hoare, Samuel, *Nine Troubled Years* (London: Collins, 1954).

John, Duke of Bedford, *A Silver-Plated Spoon,* (London: Pan Books Ltd, 1959).

Lloyd George, David, *Memoirs of the Peace Conference*, Vol. I (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939).

MacMillan, Harold, *Winds of Change 1914-1939* (London: MacMillan, 1966).

Muggeridge, Malcom, *Chronicles of Wasted Time: The Green Stick* (London: Collins, 1972).

Muggeridge, Malcom, *Chronicles of Wasted Time: The Infernal Grove* (London: Collins, 1973).

O'Malley, Owen, *The Phantom Caravan* (London: John Murray, 1954).

Pritt, D.N., *The Autobiography of D.N. Pritt: From Right to Left* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1965).

Rhodes James, Robert, (ed.) *Memoirs of a Conservative: J.C.C. Davidson's Memoirs and Papers, 1910-37* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969).

Simon, John, *Retrospect: The Memoirs of The Rt. Hon. Viscount Simon* (London: Hutchinson, 1952).

Thompson, Geoffrey, *Front-Line Diplomat* (London: Hutchinson, 1959).

Timperley, H. J., *What War Means: The Japanese Terror in China A Documentary Record* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1938).

Turner E.S., *Boys Will be Boys* (London: Michael Joseph, 1948)

Vansittart, *The Mist Procession: The Autobiography of Lord Vansittart* (London: Hutchinson, 1958).

1.5 Newspapers and periodicals

Birmingham Post.

British Medical Journal.

Church Times.

Contemporary Review.

Daily Express.

Daily Herald.

Daily Mail.

Daily News.

Daily Telegraph.

English Review.

Evening Standard.

International Affairs.

Jewish Chronicle.

Manchester Guardian.

Morning Post.

News Chronicle.

Observer and West Sussex Recorder.

Pall Mall Gazette.

Punch.

The Cornhill Magazine.

The Englishwoman.

The Fortnightly Review.

The Jewish Quarterly.

The Listener.

The New Statesman.

The Nineteenth Century and After.

The Observer.

The Political Quarterly.

The Spectator.

The Tablet: A Weekly Newspaper and Review.

The Times.

The Westminster Gazette.

Westminster Gazette.

Worcestershire Daily Times.

Yorkshire Evening News.

2. Secondary sources

2.1 Unpublished PhD Theses and Papers.

Holmila, Matti Lauri Antero, *Framing Genocide: Early Interpretations of the Holocaust in the British Swedish and Finnish Press, 1945-1950*. Unpublished PhD thesis Royal Holloway, University of London, October 2007.

Pennell, Catriona, 'Perceiving the Enemy: Popular Understandings of Germany in Britain and Ireland at the Outbreak of the First World War, August to December 1914', Paper at Institute of Historical Research, 26 October 2006.

2.2 Published.

Aldgate, Anthony, *Cinema and History: British Newsreels and the Spanish Civil War* (London: Scolar Press, 1979).

Arslanian, Artin H., 'British Wartime Pledges, 1917-18: The Armenian Case', *Journal of Contemporary History,* Vol.13, No.3 (Jul., 1978), pp.517-530.

Balfour, Michael, *Propaganda in War 1939-1945: Organisations, Policies and Publics in Britain and Germany* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1979).

Banner, Michail, Liedtke, Rainer and Rechter, David, (eds.) *Two Nations: British and German Jews in Comparative Perspective* (Tübingen: M. Siebeck, c1999).

Barkai, Avraham, *From Boycott to Annihilation: the Economic Struggle of German Jews* (University of New England Press, 2006).

Bartov, Omer, Grossmann, Atina and Nolan, Mary, (eds.) *Crimes of War: Guilt and Denial in the Twentieth Century* (New York: The New Press, 2002).

Bassett, R., *Democracy and Foreign Policy: A Case History The Sino-Japanese Dispute, 1931-33* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1968, First Published in 1952)

Beaton, Cecil, *The Wandering Years Diaries: 1922 – 1939* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961).

Bauer, Yehuda, *My Brother's Keeper: A History of the American Joint Jewish Committee 1929-1939* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1974).

Bell, Adrian, *Only For Three Months* (Norwich: Mousehold Press, 2007).

Bennett, Richard, *The Black and Tans* (Staplehurst: Spellmount, 1959).

Berkowitz, Dan, (ed.) *Social Meanings of News: A Text-Reader* (London: Sage, 1997).

Best, Geoffrey, *Humanity in Warfare: The Modern History of the International Law of Armed Conflicts* (London: Methuen, 1983).

Black, Eugene, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry 1880–1920* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1988).

Bloxham, Donald, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

Blythe, Ronald, *The Age of Illusion: England in the Twenties and Thirties, 1919-1940* (London: Phoenix Press, 2001).

Bolchover, Richard, *British Jewry and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

Bonnell, Andrew G., ''Stephen H. Roberts', *The House That Hitler Built* as a Source on Nazi Germany', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*: Vol.46, No.1, 2000, pp. 1-20.

Bourke, Joanna, *An Intimate History of Killing: Face to Face Killing in Twentieth Century Warfare* (London: Granta, 1999).

Bourke, Joanna, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London: Reakton Books, 1996).

Bourke, Joanna, 'Effeminacy, Ethnicity and the End of Trauma: The Sufferings of 'Shell-Shocked' Men in Great Britain and Ireland, 1914-39' *Journal of Contemporary History,* Vol.35, No.1 Special Issue: Shell Shock. (Jan 2000) pp.57-69.

Boyce, D.G., *Englishmen and Irish Troubles: British Public Opinion and the Making of Irish Policy 1918–22* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1972).

Boyce, Robert and Robertson, Esmonde M., (eds.) *Paths to War: New Essays on the Origins of the Second World War* (Basingstoke, MacMillan, 1989).

Boyce, George, Curran, James and Wingate, Pauline, (eds.) *Newspaper History: From the 17th Century to the Present Day* (London: Constable, 1978).

Bracco, Rosa Maria, *Merchants of Hope: British Middlebrow Writers and the First World War, 1919–1939* (Oxford: Berg, 1993).

Brockway, Fenner, *Socialism Over Sixty Years: The Life of Jowett of Bradford (1864-1944)* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1946).

Browning, Christopher, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (London: Penguin Books, 2001).

Browning, Christopher R., *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy 1939-1942* (London: Arrow Books, 2005).

Buchanan, Tom, *Britain and the Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Buchanan, Tom, *The Impact of the Spanish Civil War on Britain: War, Loss, Memory* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2007).

Buchanan, Tom, *The Spanish Civil War and the British Labour Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Burleigh, Michael and Wippermann, Wolfgang, *The Racial State: Germany 1933-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Burleigh, Michael, *The Third Reich: A New History* (London: Pan, 2001).

Cahalan, Peter, *Belgian Refugee Relief in England During the Great War* (London: Garland, 1982).

Campbell, Kenneth J., *Genocide and the Global Village* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

Caputi, Robert J., *Neville Chamberlain and Appeasement* (London: Associated University Presses, 2000).

Carmichael, Cathie, *Genocide Before the Holocaust* (Yale University Press, 2009).

Ceadel, Martin, *Pacifism in Britain 1914-1945: The Defining of a Faith* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).

Cesarani, David, (ed.) *The Holocaust: Critical Concepts in Historical Studies* (London: Routledge, 2004).

Cesarani, David, (ed.) *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

Cesarani, David, and Kusher, Tony, *The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain* (London: Frank Cass, 1993).

Cesarani, David and Levine, Paul A., (eds.) *Bystanders to the Holocaust: A Re-evaluation*, (London: Frank Cass, 2002).

Chang, Iris, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (London: Penguin, 1998).

Cheyette, Bryan, (ed.) *Between Race and Culture.* (Stanford University Press, 1997).

Cheyette, Bryan and Valman, Nadia, (eds.) *The Image of the Jew in European Liberal Culture 1789-1914* (Edgeware: Vallentine Mitchell, 2004).

Clegg, Arthur, *From Middlesbrough to Manchuria: The Story of the Haruna Maru* (Teeside Communist Party).

Clegg, Arthur, *Aid China 1937-1949: A Memoir of a Forgotten Campaign* (Beijing: New World Press, 1989).

Cohen, Stanley, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987).

Cohen, Stuart A., *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1895–1920* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1982).

Cohen, Susan, *Rescue the Perishing: Eleanor Rathbone and the Refugees* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 2010).

Colley, Linda, 'Britishness and Otherness: An Argument' in 'Britishness and Europeanness: Who are the British Anyway?', *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol.31, No.4, (October, 1992) pp.309-329.

Colley, Linda, *Namier* (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1989).

Collini, Stefan, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850 – 1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

Colls, Robert and Dodd (eds.), Phillip, *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920*, (Beckenham, Croom Helm, 1986).

Cookey, S.J.S., *Britain and the Congo Question 1885 – 1913* (London: Longmans, 1968).

Dadrian, Vahakn N., *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007)

Davies, Norman, 'Lloyd George and Poland, 1919 – 20' *Journal of Contemporary History,* Vol. 6, No. 3. (1971) pp.132 – 154.

Davies, Norman, 'Sir Maurice Hankey and the Inter-Allied Mission to Poland, July-August 1920' *The Historical Journal,* Vol. 15, No, 3. (Sept., 1972), pp.552 – 561.

Defries, Harry, *Conservative Party Attitudes to Jews 1900-1950* (London: Routledge, 2001).

Dobkin, M., *Smyrna 1922: The Destruction of a City* (New York: Newmark Press, 1972).

Dudley Edwards, Ruth, *Victor Gollancz: A Biography* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1987).

Edwards, Jill, *The British Government and the Spanish Civil War* (London and Basingstoke: The MacMillan Press, 1979).

Elcock, H. J. 'Britain and the Russo-Polish Frontier, 1919-1921' *The Historical Journal,* Vol. 12, No. 1, (1969), pp.137-154

Endicott, Stephen L., 'British Financial Diplomacy in China: The Leith-Ross Mission, 1935-1937', *Pacific Affairs,* Vol. 46, No. 4, (Winter, 1973-1974), pp. 481-501.

Engel, David, *Facing a Holocaust: The Polish government-in-exile, 1943-1945* (London: University of North Carolina Press, c.1990).

Evans, Richard J., *In Defence of History* (London: Granta Books, 1997).

Evans, Richard, *The Coming of the Third Reich: How the Nazis Destroyed Democracy and seized Power in Germany* (London: Penguin, 2004).

Evans, Richard, *The Third Reich at War: How the Nazi Led Germany from Conquest to Disaster* (London: Penguin, 2009).

Evans, Richard J., *The Third Reich in Power: How the Nazis Won Over the Hearts and Minds of a Nation* (London: Penguin, 2006).

Favez, Jean-Claude, *The Red Cross and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Fein, Helen *Imperial Crime and Punishment: The Massacre at Jallianwala Bagh and British Judgement 1919-1920* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii 1977).

Ferguson, Naill, *The War of the World: History's Age of Hatred* (London: Allen Lane, 2006).

Fieling, Keith, *The Life of Neville Chamberlain* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1947).

Fink, Carol, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878–1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Fisher, H.A.L., *James Bryce (Viscount Bryce of Dechmont, O.M.)*, Vol.II (London: Macmillan and Co., 1927).

Foster, R.F., *The Oxford History of Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

Fox, John, 'Great Britain and the German Jews 1933', *Wiener Library Bulletin*, 26, Nos.1-2 (1972).

Friedlander, Saul, *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews 1939-1945* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2007).

Friedlander, Saul, *The Years of Persecution: Nazi Germany and the Jews 1933-1939* (London: Phoenix, 1997).

Fyrth, Jim, *The Signal Was Spain: The Aid Spain Movement in Britain 1936-39* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1986).

Gannon, Franklin Reid, *The British Press and Germany 1936-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

Gardiner, Juliet, *The Thirties: An Intimate History* (London: Harper Press, 2010).

Gellately, Robert, *Backing Hitler* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

Gerwitz, Sharon, 'Anglo-Jewish Responses to Nazi Germany 1933-39: the Anti-Nazi Boycott and the Board of Deputies of British Jews.' *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 26, No.2 (April, 1991) pp.255-276.

Gilbert, Martin, *Sir Horace Rumbold: Portrait of a Diplomat 1869-1941* (London: Heinemann, 1973).

Gilbert, Martin, *Winston S. Churchill Vol. VI 1916-1922* (London: Heineman, 1975).

Gilbert, Martin, *Winston S. Churchill Volume IV Companion Part 3 Documents April 1921 – November 1922* (London: Heineman, 1975).

Gilbert, Martin. 'British Government Policy Towards Jewish Refugees (November 1938 – September 1939) in *Yad Vashem Studies* XIII (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1979) pp.127-167.

Gilbert, Martin, *Churchill and the Jews* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2007).

Graham, Helen, 'Spain and Europe: the View from the Periphery', *The Historical Journal*, 35, 4 (1992).

Graml, Hermann, *Antisemitism in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992).

Grey, Peter and Oliver, Kendrick *The Memory of Catastrophe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

Green, S.J.D. and Whiting R.C., (eds.) *The Boundaries of the State in Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Gregor, Neil, *Haunted City: Nuremberg and the Nazi Past* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008).

Griffiths, Richard, *Fellow Travellers of the Right: British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany 1933-9* (London: Constable, 1980).

Gullace, Nicoletta F., 'Sexual Violence and Family Honour: British Propaganda and International Law during the First World War', *The American Historical Review* Vol. 102, No.3 (June, 1997) pp.714-747.

Gullace, Nicoletta F., *"The Blood of Our Sons": Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship During the Great War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

Gutman, Yisrael, Mendelsohn, Ezra, Reinharz, Jehuda and Shmeruk, Chone (eds.) *The Jews of Poland Between Two World Wars* (New England: University Press of New England, 1989).

Halbwachs, Maurice, *On Collective Memory* (Trans. Coser, Lewis A.) (London: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

Halloran, James D., *et al., Demonstrations and Communications: A Case Study* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970).

Hamerow, Theodore, *Why We Watched: Europe, America, and the Holocaust* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2008).

Hampton, Mark, *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850-1950* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004).

Hardie, Frank, *The Abyssinian Crisis* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1974).

Hartley, John *Understanding News* (London: Routledge, 1988).

Hatersley, Roy, *Borrowed Time: The Story of Britain Between the Wars* (London, Little, Brown, 2007).

Heffernan, M., and Gruffudd, P., (eds.), *A Land Fit for Heroes: Essays in the Human Geography of Inter-War Britain* (Loughborough University, Dept. of Geography, Occassional Paper No.14, 1988).

Hepburn, A.C., (ed.) *Minorities in History* (London, 1978).

Herf, Jeffrey, *Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust* (London: Harvard University Press, 2008).

Hobsbawm, Eric, *The Age of Extremes The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991* (London: Abacus, 1994).

Horne, John and Kramer, Alan, *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial* (London: Yale University Press, 2001).

Hovannisian, Richard G., 'The Allies and Armenia, 1915-18', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 3, No 1 (Jan., 1968) pp.145-168.

Hovannisian, Richard G., (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1998).

Hovannisian, Richard G., (ed.) *Looking Back, Moving Forward: Confronting the Armenian Genocide* (London: Transaction, 2003).

Howkins, Alun, *Reshaping Rural England: A Social History 1850 – 1925* (London: Harper Collins, 1991).

Jackson, Alan A., *Semi-Detached London: Suburban Development, Life and Transport, 1900-39* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1973).

Jeffery, Keith, *The British Army and the Crisis of Empire 1918–22* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

Jones, Sian, Kushner, Tony and Pearce, Sarah, (eds.) *Cultures of Ambivalence and Contempt: Studies in Jewish – Non Jewish Relations* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1998).

Kadish, Sharman, *Bolsheviks and British Jews: The Anglo-Jewish Community, Britain and the Russian Revolution* (London: Frank Cass, 1992).

Kaplan, Marion, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Left in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Kershaw, Ian, *Hitler 1889-1936 Hubris* (London: Penguin, 2001).

Kershaw Ian, *Hitler 1936-1945 Nemesis* (London: Penguin, 2001).

Kershaw, Ian, *Making Friends With Hitler: Lord Londonderry and Britain's Road to War* (London: Penguin, 2005).

Kirakossian, Arman J., *British Diplomacy and the Armenian Question, from the 1830s to 1914* (Princeton and London: Gomidas Institute Books, 2003).

Koss, Stephen, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain* (London: Fontana, 1990).

Kozerod, O.V., Briman S. Ya., *A.I.Denikin's Regime and the Jewish Population of Ukraine in 1919-1920* (approximate publication date 1980).

Kumar, Krishnan, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Kushner, Tony, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination: A Social and Cultural History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

Kushner, Tony, *The Persistence of Prejudice: Antisemitism in British Society During the Second World War* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989).

Kushner, Tony and Knox, Katherine, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide: Global, National and Local Perspectives During the Twentieth Century,* (London: Frank Cass, 1999).

Landau-Czajka, Anna, 'The Image of the Jew in the Catholic Press during the Second Republic' *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry* Volume Eight (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1994) pp.146-172.

Landau-Czajka, Anna, 'The Jewish Question in Poland: Views Expressed in the Catholic Press between the Two World Wars' *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry* Volume Eleven (London: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1998) pp.263-283.

Liekis, Sarunas, Miliakova, Lidia, and Polonsky, Antony, 'Three Documents on Anti-Jewish Violence in the Eastern Krasy during the Polish-Soviet Conflict', *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, Volume Fourteen, (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001) pp.116-149.

Laqueur, Walter, *The Terrible Secret: Suppression of the Truth About Hitler's "Final Solution"* (London: Penguin, 1982).

Lawson, Tom, *The Church of England and the Holocaust: Christianity, Memory and Nazism* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006).

Lee, Bradford A., *Britain and the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1939: A Study in Dilemmas of British Decline* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973)

Levene, Mark, *War, Jews, and the New Europe: The Diplomacy of Lucien Wolf 1914-1919* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

Levin, Michael, *J.S. Mill on Civilization and Barbarism* (London: Routledge, 2004).

Levine, Philippa, *The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset* (Harlow: Pearson, 2007).

Light, Alison, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991).

London, Louise, *Whitehall and the Jews, 1933-1948: British Immigration Policy, Jewish Refugees and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Low, David, *Years of Wrath: A Cartoon History, 1932-1945* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1949).

Lowe, Peter, *Great Britain and the Origins of the Pacific War: A Study of British Policy in East Asia 1937-1941* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).

Light, Alison, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991).

Little, Douglas, 'Red Scare, 1936: Anti-Bolshevism and the Origins of British Non-Intervention in the Spanish Civil War', *Journal of Contemporary History,* Vol.23, No.2, Bolshevism and the Socialist Left (April, 1988) pp.291-311.

Lloyd, David W., *Battlefield Tourism: Pilgrimage and the Commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia and Canada 1919-1939* (Oxford: Berg, 1998).

McCarthy, Helen, 'Leading from the Centre: the League of Nations Union, Foreign Policy and 'Political Agreement' in the 1930s', *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 23, No. 4, December 2008, pp.527-542.

Magocsi, Paul Robert, *A History of the Ukraine* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996).

Makovsy, Michael, *Churchill's Promised Land: Zionism and Statecraft* (London: Yale University Press, 2007).

Mandler, Peter, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (London: Yale University Press, 2006).

Marquand, David, *Ramsey MacDonald* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1977).

Marquand, David, *Britain Since 1918: The Strange Career of British Democracy* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2008).

Marrus, Michael, *The Holocaust in History* (London: Penguin, 1987).

Marsh, Peter, 'Lord Salisbury and the Ottoman Massacres', *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol.11, No. 2. (May, 1972) pp.63-83.

Marwick, Arthur, *The Deluge* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1991).

Matless, David, *Landscape and Englishness* (London: Reaktion Books, 1998).

Mazower, Mark, 'Violence and the State in the Twentieth Century', *The American Historical Review* 107.4 (2002): par.38, <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/107.4/ah0402001158.html>.

Middlemas, Keith and Barnes, John, *Baldwin: A Biography* (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1969).

Mombauer, Anika, *The Origins of the First World War: Controversies and Consensus* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2002).

Moradiellos, Enrique, 'British Political Strategy in the Face of the Military rising of 1936 in Spain' *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 1, Part 2, July 1992 pp.123-37.

Moradiellos, Enrique, 'The Origins of British Non-Intervention in the Spanish Civil War: Anglo-Spanish Relations in Early 1936', *European History Quarterly*, Vol.21, No.3, July 1991, pp.339-364.

Morgan, Kenneth. *Consensus and Disunity: The Lloyd George Coalition Government 1918 – 1922* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

Mosse, Werner. E., (ed.) *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1991)

Mowat, Charles Loch, *Britain Between the Wars 1918-1940* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1978).

Muggeridge, Malcom, *The Thirties: 1930-1940 in Great Britain* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1940).

Nassibian, Akaby, *Britain and the Armenian Question* (London: Croom Helm, 1984).

Newman, Michael, *Harold Laski: A Political Biography* (London: Macmillan, 1993).

Noakes, J. and Pridham G., (eds.) *Nazism 1919-1945, A History in Documents and Eyewitness Accounts, Volume I: The Nazi Party, State and Society 1919-1939* (New York: Schocken Books, 1983-1984).

Nochlin, Linda and Garb, Tarmar. (eds.) *The Jew in the Text: Modernity and the Construction of Identity* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995).

Olu, Agbi, S., 'The Foreign Office and Yoshida's Bid for Rapprochement with Britain in 1936-1937: A Critical Reconsideration of the Anglo-Japanese Conversation', *The Historical Journal*, Vol.21 No.1 (Mar., 1978) pp.173-179.

Olu, Agbi, 'The Pacific War Controversy in Britain: Sir Robert Craigie versus The Foreign Office', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol.17, No.3 (1983), pp.489-517.

Overy, Richard, *The Morbid Age: Britain Between the Wars* (London: Allen Lane, 2009).

Peatling, C.K., *British Opinion and Irish Self-Government 1865–1925: From Unionism to Liberal Commonwealth* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2001).

Pederson, Susan, *Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience* (London: Yale University Press, 2004).

Porter, Bernard, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Power, Samantha, *"A Problem from Hell": America and the Age of Genocide* (London: Harper Perennial, 2003).

Preston, Paul, 'No Simple Purveyor of News: George Steer and Guernica', *History Today*, May, 2007, pp.12-19.

Preston, Paul, *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution and Revenge* (London: Harper, 2006).

Preston, Paul, *We Saw Spain Die: Foreign Correspondents in the Spanish Civil War* (London: Constable, 2008).

Preston, Paul and Mackenzie, Ann L., (eds.) *The Republic Besieged: Civil War in Spain 1936-1939* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996).

Raymond, John, (ed.) *The Baldwin Age* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1960).

Renshaw, Patrick, *The General Strike* (London: Eyre Methuen 1975).

Ricoeur, Paul, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Trans. Blarney, Kathleen and Pellauer, David) (London, University of Chicago, 2006).

Robertson, James, C., 'The Hoare-Laval Plan', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.10, No.3 (Jul., 1975) pp.433-464.

Robbins, Keith, 'Labour Foreign Policy and the League of Nations' in *Politicians, Diplomacy and War in Modern British History* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1994).

Roessel, David, 'Live Orientals and Dead Greeks: Forster's Response to the Chanak Crisis *Twentieth Century Literature*, Vol. 36, No.1. (Spring, 1990), pp.43-60

Roseman, Mark, *The Villa, The Lake, The Meeting: Wannsee and the Final Solution* (London: Penguin, 2003).

Rowse, A.L., *The End of an Epoch: Reflections on Contemporary History* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1947).

Rowse A.L., *All Souls and Appeasement: A Contribution to Contemporary History* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1961).

Rubinstein, William D., *The Myth of Rescue: Why the democracies could not have saved more Jews from the Nazis* (London: Routledge, 1997).

Samuel, Raphael, (ed.) *Patriotism: the Making and Unmaking of British National Identity, Vol. 1 History and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1989).

Saunders, David, 'Britain and the Ukrainian Question (1912-1920) *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 103, No. 406. (Jan., 1988), pp. 40-68.

Sayer, Derek, 'British Reaction to the Amritsar Massacre 1919 – 1920', *Past and Present*, No. 131, (May, 1991) pp.130-164.

Schleunes, Karl, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz: Nazi Policy Toward German Jews 1933-1939* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990).

Self, Robert, *Neville Chamberlain: A Biography* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

Shannon, R.T., *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation 1876* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1963).

Sharf, Andrew, *The British Press and the Jews Under Nazi Rule* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964).

Shatzkes, Pamela, *Holocaust and Rescue: Impotent or Indifferent? Anglo-Jewry 1938-1945* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

Shefftz, Melvin C., 'The Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Act of 1927: The Aftermath of the General Strike *The Review of Politics*, Vol.29, No. 3. (Jul., 1967), pp.387-406.

Shelmerdine, Brian, *British Representations of the Spanish Civil War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

Sherman, A.J., *Island Refuge: Britain and Refugees from the Third Reich 1933-1939* (London: Paul Elek, 1973).

Sompolinsky, Meier, *The British Government and the Holocaust: The Failure of Anglo-Jewish Leadership* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1999).

Southworth, Herbert Rutledge, *Guernica! Guernica! A Study of Journalism, Diplomacy, Propaganda and History* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1977).

Spender, Stephen, *World Within World* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977).

Spies, S.B., *Methods of Barbarism: Roberts and Kitchener and Civilians in the Boer Republics January 1900 – May 1902* (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 1977).

Springhall, John, 'Baden-Powell and the Scout Movement before 1920: Citizen Training or Soldiers of the Future? *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 102, No.405. (Oct., 1987), pp.934 – 942.

Stannage, Tom, *Baldwin Thwarts the Opposition: The British General Election of 1935* (London: Croom Helm, 1980).

Stevenson, John and Cook, Chris *The Slump: Society and Politics During the Depression* (London: Quartet, 1977).

Stevenson, John, *British Society 1914-45* (London: Penguin, 1990).

Steyn, Juliet, *The Jew: Assumptions of Identity* (London: Cassell, 1999).

Stone, Dan, (ed.) *Historiography of the Holocaust* (London: Palgrave, 2004).

Stone, Dan, *Responses to Nazism in Britain, 1933-1939: Before War and Holocaust* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

Strachan, Hew, *The First World War: Volume 1: To Arms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

Stray, Christopher, *Classics Transformed* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

Symons, Julian, *The General Strike* (London: Cressett Press, 1957).

Symons, Julian, *The Thirties: A Dream Revolved* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975).

Taylor, A.J.P., *English History 1914-1945* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965).

Taylor, A.J.P., (ed.), *Lloyd George: Twelve Essays* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1971).

Taylor, A.J.P., *The Trouble Makers: Dissent over Foreign Policy 1792-1939* (London: Panther, 1969)

Taylor, D.J., *Bright Young People: The Rise and Fall of a Generation: 1918 – 1940* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2007).

Todman, Dan, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: Hambledon and London, 2005).

Van Hensbergen, Gijs, *Guernica: The Biography of a Twentieth-Century Icon* (London: Bloomsbury, 2005).

Vernon, Betty D., *Ellen Wilkinson 1891 – 1947* (London: Croom Helm, 1982).

Walder, David, *The Chanak Affair* (London: Hutchinsons, 1969).

Waley, Daniel, *British Public Opinion and the Abyssinian War 1935-6* (London: Maurice Temple Smith, 1975).

Ward, Paul, *Britishness Since 1870* (London: Routledge, 2004).

Ward, Stephen R,. 'Intelligence Surveillance of British Ex-Servicemen, 1918-1920', *The Historical Journal,* Vol.16, No. 1, (Mar., 1973), pp.179-188.

Warwick, Peter and Spies S.B., (eds.) *The South African War: The Anglo-Boer War 1899 – 1902* (Harlow: Longman, 1980).

Wasserstein, Bernard, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945* (London: Clarendon Press, 1979).

Watkins, K.W., *Britain Divided: The Effect of the Spanish Civil War on British Political Opinion* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1963).

Watson, J.S.K., *Fighting Different Wars: Experience, Memory, and the First World War in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Weaver, J.R.H., *The Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937).

Webster J., and Cooper N., (eds.) *Roman Imperialism: Post-colonial Perspectives: Leicester Archaeology Monographs* No. 3, 1996.

Weland, James, 'Misguided Intelligence: Japanese Military Intelligence Officers in the Manchurian Incident September 1931' *The Journal of Military History*, Vol.58, No. 3 (Jul., 1994), pp. 445-460.

Williams, E.T. and Palmer, Helen M. (eds.) *The Dictionary of National Biography 1951-1960* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).

Wilson, Trevor, 'Lord Bryce's Investigation into Alleged German Atrocities in Belgium 1914-1915', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.14 (1979) pp.368-383.

Winter, J.M. *The Great War and the British People* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985).

Winter, Jay, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: the Great War in European cultural history* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)

Wrench, John Evelyn *Geoffrey Dawson and Our Times* (London: Hutchinson, 1955)

Zeidner, Robert F., 'Britain and the Launching of the Armenian Question', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.7, No.4. (Oct. 1976) pp.465-483.